

**THE EMOTIVE 59<sup>TH</sup> FOOT ARMY OF INDIA AND 9<sup>TH</sup> FOOT SUTLEJ TO OFFICER'S FATHER AND SON MEDALS AND PORTRAIT GROUP, THE LATTER DYING OF WOUNDS RECEIVED DURING THE ATTACK ON THE SIKH GUNS AT THE BATTLE OF FEROWESHAH, HIS LIFE INITIALLY SAVED BY AN ENEMY SOLDIER**



ARMY OF INDIA MEDAL 1799, CLASP BHURTPOOR 'ASST. SURGN. F. SIEVWRIGHT, 59TH FOOT.', SUTLEJ 1845, MOODKEE REVERSE, CLASP FEROWESHUHUR 'LIEUT. FR. SIEVWRIGHT 9TH REGT', THREE DAGUERREOTYPE PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHS

Francis Sievwright senior was born in Edinburgh in 1795 and joined the army as a Hospital Assistant on 7 June 1813. Appointed Assistant Surgeon on 13 March 1817, he appears to have served with the 6<sup>th</sup> West India Regiment, before being appointed supernumerary Assistant Surgeon in the East Indies. He joined the 59<sup>th</sup> Foot on 29 March 1821, serving with this Regiment in India, including the siege and storming of Bhurtpoor, 1825-6, his regiment playing a prominent role during the storming. In 1827 he joined the 11<sup>th</sup> Light dragoons and though it is not clear when he joined the 9<sup>th</sup> Foot, he had been appointed Surgeon and Medical Doctor, 25 October 1835 and was certainly serving with the 9<sup>th</sup> in 1839. He was promoted to Staff-Surgeon 2<sup>nd</sup> Class on 1 October 1842 and to 1<sup>st</sup> Class Staff-Surgeon in 1855 and appears to have served for many years the staff surgeon at the Mauritius. He Died in Edinburgh on 23 January 1872.

Francis Sievwright junior, was born in 1826, presumably in India, where his father's Regiment, the 59<sup>th</sup> Foot, was stationed. Aged 15, he was Commissioned Ensign, 9<sup>th</sup> Foot (his father's Regiment), on 3 December 1841, joining his Regiment in India in 1842. He was promoted Lieutenant, 22 December 1843 and served with his Regiment during the Sutelej campaign of 1845.

Siewwright took part in the battle of Moodkee, 18 December 1845, the first battle of the campaign, where the 9<sup>th</sup> Foot suffered 52 Officers and men killed and wounded. However just three days later the battle of Ferozeshah would be fought. During this bloodbath of a battle, fought over two days, the battle was very nearly lost by the British, the 9<sup>th</sup> Foot suffering no less than 273 Officers and men killed and wounded, with only the 62<sup>nd</sup> suffering more with 299.





With the battle raging, during the early evening of the 21 December, the Brigade of which the 9<sup>th</sup> Foot formed a part, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Taylor of the 9<sup>th</sup>, led an attack against the Sikh guns. With light failing and advancing into the thick smoke and dust of battle, Taylor's Brigade saw nothing ahead of them until they were at the very muzzles of the Sikh guns. In the Chaos that reigned when the guns opened up on them, the 9<sup>th</sup> suffered a very large percentage of the casualties they would during the battle. Among those lost was Lieutenant Colonel Taylor, who was killed and here also, Lieutenant Sievwright was very severely wounded and would die several days later of the terrible wounds he received. He was just 20 years of age. The following is an often-quoted account of what happened to young Sievwright:

*"..The wounded, many of whom had been lying for twenty four hours on the ground untended, were now looked after. Their sufferings had been terrible, and many had fallen victims to the merciless cruelty of the Sikhs ; but it is again gratifying to be able to give one instance of humanity on the part of the enemy. Lieutenant Sievwright, an officer of H.M.'s 9th Foot, had been desperately wounded in front of the Sikh battery, and lay all that night in dreadful anguish on the field with a shattered leg, helpless and unable to move. At daylight, finding that the Sikhs were cutting up the unprotected wounded, he managed with incredible difficulty to drag himself some short way further off. Seeing a Sikh soldier approaching, Sievwright grasped his pistol and challenged him ; to his relief, the Sikh replied, " Salaam, sahib." Seeing that he was clearly kindly disposed, Sievwright called him up; the man sat down beside him, and after some conversation it was arranged that the Sikh soldier should carry him to the nearest succour. This good Samaritan took his wounded foe on his back, and carried him, at the peril of his own life, some two miles to the rear, where he met a dooli, in which Sievwright was placed, and conveyed into Ferozepore. Acts of kindness between enemies have often been heard of on a battle-field, but never one that could surpass this. The Sikh remained with Lieutenant Sievwright, and tended him in hospital; but it is melancholy to relate that the gallant young officer himself died only a week after from the effects of his wound, which necessitated the amputation of his*



leg above the knee. Records do not show what became, of the brave and kind-hearted Sikh, but it may be certain that his generous humanity did not pass unrewarded.."

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Ferozeshah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ferozeshah)



#### THE DAGUERREOTYPE PORTRAITS

Of the three 1840's Daguerreotype portrait photographs, two are circa early to mid 1840's single portraits and a third slightly later, this with its brass preserver, perhaps mid 1850's. The first is a fine portrait of the young Francis Sievwright in uniform. The second is of another young gentleman, almost certainly Francis's younger brother; Allan, who slightly older, is also in the photograph Francis senior and his wife Mary. Allan Sievwright, born in 1828 and was Commissioned Ensign in the 9<sup>th</sup> Foot on 1 April 1846. He later became Major and Paymaster in the Regiment.

#### THE STORMING OF BHURTPPOOR

"Considerable progress having been made towards effecting practicable breaches, the 59<sup>th</sup> regiment received orders to prepare to lead one of the attacks at the storming of this celebrated fortress, and on the morning of the 18th of January, 1826, it marched to the front to await the explosion of a mine. The 14 and 59<sup>th</sup> regiments had the honour of being selected to head the two attacks, and they were directed to wheel as soon as they had entered the breaches, one to the right and the other to the left, and, continuing their career round the ramparts, to drive the enemy before them till they met. Some delay occurred in the mine, and the soldiers stood seven hours anxiously waiting for the moment to commence the assault, during which time the thunder of the artillery was tremendous.

General Lord Combermere arrived at the spot where the 14<sup>th</sup> were formed, and seeing the mouth of the mine near, he anxiously enquired if all was safe, to which the engineer replied in the affirmative. His lordship returned soon afterwards, and repeated the question, when he was again assured that all was safe. In a few minutes afterwards the bastion, beneath which the mine had been formed, heaved, as if by the power of an earthquake; the ponderous wall rocked to and fro, and then sunk down again, when, with a sound far exceeding the loudest thunder, the exploding mine rent the massive bastion

into fragments, forcing stones, logs of wood, guns, men, and earth, into the air, with a violence which it is impossible to describe, and filling the atmosphere for a considerable distance with so dense a cloud of smoke, dust, and fragments of the ruined bastion, that it was difficult to breathe. Brigadier Combermere was stunned, and several soldiers were injured by the falling fragments and bursting mine.



As soon as the tremendous crash was over, the soldiers rushed through the cloud of smoke and dust, and began to ascend the breach. They encountered some opposition, but nothing could withstand the bayonets of the British and their valour soon overpowered all resistance, and they gained the summit with little loss. As they were scouring the ramparts, and overcoming all opposition in gallant style, they met the soldiers who had turned to the left at the breach, and proved victorious over every opponent; it was a moment of intense interest, and a scene of glorious emotions : Bhurtpoor was won ! the stain of a former repulse was wiped from the British arms, and they hailed each other with a hearty and cordial cheer. The 59th suffered the second highest number of casualties on the day of the assault and capture losing 10 officers and 113 O.R's. killed or wounded

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege\\_of\\_Bharatpur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Bharatpur)

## **THE BATTLE OF FEROSHAH FROM THE HISTORY OF THE NORFOLK REGIMENT**

*"..For details regarding the 9th we must again refer to Borton's long letter of January 11, 1846. In it he encloses a copy of his private report to Colonel Davis, temporarily commanding the brigade when it was written on December 25, 1845. Borton was temporarily commanding the 9th from the 21st to the 24th. The report states that on December 21st the junction with Sir J. Littler's force was affected about 3 p.m. some nine miles from Ferozpur. A move was at once made to the right for the attack on the enemy's entrenched position. At this time Colonel Taylor of the 9th was commanding the brigade as a consequence of the death of Sir J. McCaskill at Moodkee. Colonel Barnwell commanded the 9th. The 9th now deployed in a rather thick jungle, and halted till about 4 p.m., when it was ordered forward. Emerging in an open plain, it found itself within round-shot range of the enemy. Pushing on to within 800 yards of the entrenchments the men were ordered to lie down as the fire was very galling. During this period, Littler's force, engaged on the extreme left, had been repulsed and retreated across the front of the 9th, passing to the rear through the right of the brigade.*



The enemy's fire increased before Taylor's brigade was ordered to advance again. When the 9th were within 400 yards of a powerful enemy battery they charged. In passing over this long space a break occurred in the centre of their line, and the grenadier company, with part of the right wing of the regiment, passed round the left of the enemy's battery, penetrating into the enemy's camp without much loss.



The left of the regiment, prevented by the smoke and dust from choosing its line, charged straight against the front of the battery. A terrible fire of grape and canister mowed it down. At this time Borton was wounded in the right arm and carried back a short way by his horse. When he got back to the line he found the left wing retiring in some confusion caused by the alarming cry of "cavalry." Taylor, who had himself been with this wing had been killed after dismounting. Barnwell succeeded to the command of his brigade and Borton found himself in command of the regiment. He at once reorganized it and led it forward against the battery, which had now collapsed owing to the appearance of the right wing of the 9th in its rear. Captains Dunn and Field had been killed with Taylor.

As night fell Wallace, who had succeeded McCaskill in command of the division, brought the goth over to the centre of the British position. When the regimental call was sounded there many men who had got separated in the action rejoined the colours, especially grenadiers who had followed Captain Daunt round the battery into the enemy's camp.

During the night which followed the men lay on their arms, suffering much from want of water and the severe cold; they were, too, generally under shell fire.

Towards daybreak the troops were again deployed and put in position. It was still early morning of December 22nd when the commander-in-chief ordered the regiment to attack the village of Ferozeshah, which, with many of their own guns, the enemy had recaptured in the night. "Advancing in beautiful style," the 9th stormed the village, bayoneting many Sikhs and again taking the guns.



Thence they were presently withdrawn to the entrenched camp, where, on the 24th, the governor-general, riding through their line, called out Borton, shook hands with him, and "spoke in most flattering terms of the conduct of the regiment, saying that he had seen them fight day after day in the Peninsula. He had now again seen them fight two consecutive days and was confident he could rely on their services if he required them on the morrow."



Here we part company, for the moment, with Borton, whose wound necessitated his absence from the field and his return on leave to England. One more incident from his papers may be mentioned. There is a letter from Lieutenant Sivewright of the 9th to his mother, written after he was wounded in the leg at Ferozeshah, and before the subsequent amputation which caused his death. Lying out under fire during the night of the 21st-22nd, he heard close by the cries of some of our wounded who were being cut up by Sikh stragglers. A Sikh approached him intending, as he thought, to murder him. Sivewright levelled his pistol at him, but the Sikh had no evil intentions. He said the battle was a question of fate, and eventually, becoming quite friendly, he carried the wounded officer into the British lines, and was with him till his death on the 28th. Sivewright was one of Borton's particular friends.

The victory of Ferozeshah was as hardly won as any battle in which the British army had been engaged. The trophies were seventy-two pieces of artillery, their losses 2,415 killed and wounded. What the enemy's losses may have been can never be known.

If the 9th had gained great glory by its conduct in this bloody battle, it had paid dearly for it in losses. The casualties were as follows :

**Officers.**—Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor, Captains Dunn and Field, killed ; Captain Borton, Lieutenants Taylor, Vigors, Sivewright, Cassidy, and Ensign Foster wounded. Also Captain Havelock attached to the cavalry division as D.A.Q.M.G.

**Other ranks.**—One sergeant and 99 men killed ; six sergeants, one drummer, and 162 men wounded.

Total killed and wounded of all ranks, 273."





Condition, some minor EK's, original long ribbons, that have been rolled and sewn to sit in case. Medals in a fitted case by an Edinburgh jeweller, with space for a later relatives IGS 1895 and QSA medals. One side of cases securing clip missing. The Daguerreotype's are in very good condition, however the case cover for Allan's portrait is missing.

An extremely fine and emotive group to father and son with medals to Officers killed or dying of wounds during the Sutlej campaign, rarely coming onto the market