

A RARE M.G.S. 1793 AND DOUBLE-ISSUE WATERLOO GROUP AWARDED TO A 32ND FOOT CAPTAIN AND ADJUTANT, LATER BREVET LT-COLONEL, WHO AFTER SERVING AT THE RETREAT TO AND BATTLE OF CORUNNA IN 1808-9, THE PYRENEES, JULY AND AUGUST 1813, THE CROSSING OF THE BIDASSOA, THE BATTLES OF NIVELLE AND NIVE, HE WAS SLIGHTLY WOUNDED AT QUATRE BRAS WHERE THE BATTALION WAS INVOLVED IN SOME OF THE HEAVIEST FIGHTING OF THE DAY. TWO DAYS LATTER, AT WATERLOO, HE WAS SEVERELY WOUNDED; THE 32ND BEING REDUCED TO JUST 130 OFFICERS AND MEN AT THE END OF THE DAY. LATER SERVED ON LT GENERAL SIR WILLIAM CLINTON'S STAFF IN THE DIVISION THAT PROCEEDED TO PORTUGAL IN 1826 IN THE ATTEMPT TO SUPPORT PORTUGUESE FORCES DURING THE FIRST MIGUELIST WAR



MILITARY GENERAL SERVICE 1793, 4 CLASPS, CORUNNA, PYRENEES, NIVELLE, NIVE 'D. DAVIS, LIEUT. 32ND FOOT); WATERLOO 1815 'ADJT. CAPT. DAVID DAVIES, 32ND REGIMENT FOOT.'; TOGETHER WITH A SECOND WATERLOO 1815 'CAPT. DAVID DAVIES, 32ND REGIMENT FOOT.' BOTH FITTED WITH STEEL CLIP AND RING SUSPENSION,

David Davies, the son of the Reverend Thomas Davies, rector of Llandderfel, Merioneth was born circa 1787. He was first Commissioned Ensign in the 18th Foot (without Purchase) on 16 April 1807. Soon after, he was appointed Lieutenant (without Purchase) in the 8th Garrison Battalion, 18 June 1807, before being appointed to 32nd Foot, 6 November 1807

Lieutenant Davies served with the 1st Battalion, 32nd Foot (1/32nd) in Lieutenant General John

Moore's campaign in Portugal from August 1808 which as part of Major General Rowland Hill's Brigade, took part in the withdrawal to and the subsequent battle at Corunna, 16 January 1809, where the Battalion lost 250 men. On his return from Spain, Davies was appointed Adjutant of the 1st Battalion but by 1810 had transferred as Adjutant of the 2nd Battalion, then serving in Ireland. He was married at St Pauls Church, Cork on 4 September 1810, his first child being born on 22 June 1811. Remaining with the 2nd Battalion until late 1812, he transferred back to the 1st Battalion (Adjutant) in December 1812, joining the Battalion in the Peninsular, which would spend the next few months in winter quarters.

By mid 1813, the 1/32nd were serving in Major General John Lambert Brigade, part of Major General Henry Clinton's 6th Division. Playing no role at the battle of Vittoria, Davies and the 1/32nd were present in the actions in the Pyrenees, July and August 1813, at the crossing of the Bidassoa, in those battles along the Nivelle, 10 November, and the Nive 9-15 December 1813. In June 1814, the 1/32nd moved to Ireland and amalgamated with the 2nd Battalion. However on news of Napoleon's escape from Elba, they sailed for Ostend formed part of Wellington's Army preparing to face their old foe.

THE BATTLES OF QUATRE BRAS AND WATERLOO

At the battle of Quatre Bras, 16 June 1815, as part of Sir James Kempt's 8th British Brigade (along with the 28th, 79th and 95th Rifles) in Sir Thomas Picton's 5th Infantry Division, the 32nd, 662 strong, was involved in some of the heaviest fighting of the day. An Officer of the 32nd would write:

"..We were now in the thick of it, Such a fire of shells, cannon and musketry. I was told by the oldest Officers had never before been witnessed... we were driving them like so many devils. Finding that they advanced rapidly we prepared to charge as soon as they entered the field before us. The corn was breast high, so they got pretty close before they came in sight. The word was given and we advanced with shouts that drowned the fire to the charge. Nothing could have withstood us. They already turned and we were following them down the hill, when I was desired to stay where I was by a piece of shell.."



The 32nd suffered 1 Officers and 20 men killed, 12 Officers and 225 men wounded. Davies, who as Adjutant would have been in the thick of the action, was among the wounded, though as his wound was only slight, he was able to be patched up and carried on the fight.

Two days later, and greatly reduced in numbers, at Waterloo, the 32nd were stationed around the centre and left of the Allied line - undoubtedly the most exposed and dangerous part of Wellington's position. The 32nd endured the worst of fire from the French 'Grand Battery', participated in the defeat of d'Erlon's vast infantry assault (during which time Picton was shot dead and carried off the field by two men of the regiment) and stood solidly in square for several hours repulsing French cavalry charges. During the battle, Adjutant Davies, who would have again been in the thick of the action, was wounded again but this time severely, his obituary noting him receiving three wounds at the battle.

Casualties to the regiment were again extremely high, especially when considering how many Officers and men were lost at Quatre Bras. According to the Regimental history, a further 28 men were killed, with 8 Officers and over 300 wounded. However the latter figure seems at odds with official casualty lists, which notes the number of casualties for both battles at 370 Officers and men killed and wounded, or a 56% casualty rate. These numbers do not take into account Officers and men on other duties such as baggage, sick etc. As such the actual number of men of the 32nd that were in action would have been 50 to 100 less, making the percentage of casualties far higher. This is the case of any regiment at Waterloo and any other battle and is usually not accounted for. After the battle, an officer of the 32nd noted the battalion had been reduced to just 130 men.



Note; Some casualty rolls spell his name Davis in error which was not picked up by Dalton when publishing his Waterloo roll. His name is also spelt Davis in other books (the Regimental history users both spellings!), so worth searching for both spellings when research.

POST WATERLOO

Whilst still on active service in France, Davies was promoted to Captain and Company Commander (without Purchase), on 19 July 1815. Davies next served Staff at Corfu, 1824-6 and as Assistant Adjutant General (Captain 32nd) on Lieutenant General Sir William Clinton's Staff, in the Division that proceeded to Portugal in 1826 in the attempt to support Portuguese forces during the First Miguelist War. Returning from Portugal in April 1828, Davies exchanged to half-pay, unattached, 24 July of that year. Awarded the Brevet of Major, 10 January 1837, Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, 11 November 1851, he was appointed to 45th Regiment, 14 July 1854 but soon after retired; 4 August 1854.

Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Davies died in Sutherland Square, Walworth, on 6 October 1854, and was buried in Nunhead Cemetery, London.

Davies's 1851 Army List entry:

'Captain David Davies served in the Peninsula with the 32nd, and was present at the battles of Corunna, Pyrenees, Nivelles and Nives, for which he has received the War Medal with four clasps. He also served in the campaign of 1815 with the 32nd, and was slightly wounded at Quatre Bras, and severely at Waterloo



TWO WATERLOO MEDALS

This is an unusual, though not unique instance of two Waterloo medals being awarded to the same officer. The reason this happened is because Davies appears on the original medal roll for the 32nd Foot; once as Adjutant on the Staff page and a second time as Captain commanding a Company (rolls with research). The latter after being promoted Captain on 19 July 1815, which

was prior to rolls being submitted. Both medals are as originally sent to Captain Davies in 1816/17.

List of Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, Drummers & Band of the 3rd Regiment of Foot who were present at the Battle of Waterloo on the 18th June or in the preceding Battles of the 16th & 17th Camp near Paris 7th September 1815

294

1	Colonel			
2				
1				
2	Lieut. Colonel			
3				
4				
1		<i>John Hicks</i>		<i>Lieut Colonel in the Army</i>
2		<i>John Cabot</i>		<i>Lieut Colonel in the Army</i>
3	Major			
4				
1		<i>David Davies</i>		<i>Surgeon in the Reg^t sent back to Captains</i>
2	Adjutant			
1	Quarter-Master	<i>William Stephens</i>		

ORIGINAL WATERLOO MEDAL ROLL PAGE. DAVIES AS ADJUTANT

Captain David Davies's Company. 1817

No. of rank	Rank.	Names.	Effective and belonging to the Corps.		REMARKS, explanatory of the Reasons and Duration of Absence, and Causes of broken Periods of Officers and Men; also specifying the precise Dates of Appointment of Commissioned and Non-commissioned Officers, and of Enlistment of Recruits, and the Dates on which each Officer and Man ceased to be effective as belonging to the Corps.
			From	To	
1	Captain	<i>David Davies</i>			323
2					
1	Lieut.	<i>A. J. Belcher</i>			
2		<i>George Small</i>			
1	Ensign				
2					

ORIGINAL WATERLOO MEDAL ROLL PAGE. DAVIES AS COMPANY COMMANDER

Note: This is something to bear in mind on all Waterloo rolls, ie, the roll page an Officer or other ranks appears on for Waterloo, is not always the company or rank they served in during the battle. Because of all the losses and promotions directly after the battle, many Officers and men switched company and it also must be remembered that the roll sent in by a Regiment was only to show who was entitled to a medal. The company they were in had no relevance to the issuing of the medals themselves. Regimental musters are far more accurate in establishing where a soldier was on 16-18 June 1815



Condition GVF. All three metals fitted with silver ribbon buckles, the last with light obverse contact marks. Ex Christies 1984; Buckland Dix & Wood, September 1994.

An extremely fine and rare group of medals to an Officer who saw a great deal of action and was wounded at both Quatre Bras and Waterloo where his regiment sustained a devastation number of casualties