

**THE FINE NAVAL GENERAL SERVICE 1793 AND BALTIC GROUP AWARDED TO A NAVAL OFFICER WHO AS WELL AS SERVING DURING THE SYRIAN OPERATIONS, SAW MUCH SERVICE ON ANTI SLAVER DUTIES ON WEST AFRICA AND WAS MENTIONED IN ADMIRALTY DESPACHES FOR HIS SERVICE IN THE BOATS DURING AN ATTACK ON PIRATES. LATER, BETWEEN SERVING AS NAVAL SURVEYING OFFICER, HE WAS PROMOTED TO THE RANK COMMANDER FOR HIS SERVICES DURING THE BALTIC CAMPAIGN, FINISHING HIS CAREER AS CHIEF SURVEYOR ON THE WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND**



NAVAL GENERAL SERVICE 1793-1840, 1 CLASP, SYRIA 'R. B. CREYKE, MATE.', BALTIC 1854-55, UNNAMED AS ISSUED; ST. JEAN D'ACRE 1840, SILVER, UNNAMED AS ISSUED, FITTED WITH CONTEMPORARY REPLACEMENT SILVER BAR SUSPENSION

At the start of his service in The Royal Navy, the young Richard Boynton Creyke, served as a 13 year old 1<sup>st</sup> Class Volunteer aboard H.M.S. *Atholl*, a 28 gun 6<sup>th</sup> rate Frigate, from July 1829. Leaving shortly after for West Africa on anti slaver duties, *Atholl* was a relatively successful ship on the station. Some of here captures including:

1 Oct 1829 the French slave vessel, *La Laure*, with 372 slaves on board; 4 Oct 1829 arrived from off the Rio Grande, a large French schooner, with 470 slaves on board; 9 Dec 1829 the *Sybille* and *Atholl* detained the Brazilian slave brigantine *Amelia / Emelia*, with 187 slaves, bound from Whydah to Bahia; Dec 1829 off Prince's Island, a Dutch vessel, sailing under French colours, was taken; 3 Aug 1830 detained the Spanish slave schooner *Santiago* alias *Polasqui*, with 165 slaves on board; 17 Oct 1830 detained Spanish slave schooner *Nueva Isabelita*, alias *Numero Filomino Xiro*, with 141 slaves

on board; 10 Nov 1830 detained the *Dos Amigos* slaver which would be renamed the *Fair Rosamond* and would become one of the finest anti slavers.

Creyke transferred to the 20 gun sloop, H.M.S. *Medina* on 22 April 1831, serving as a Midshipman. On 19 April, *Medina* was reported to have arrived with the *Atholl*, and *Sea Flower*, at Prince's Island from Fernando Po. Here they joined the *Dryad* and her tenders, the *Fair Rosamond* and *Black Joke*. It was also reported that *Medina*'s Master and a Boy had died of fever and her Commander was also suffering from the disease. Shortly after *Medina* left West Africa for England, Creyke leaving the ship on arrival

He joined the H.M.S. *Ocean* as a midshipman in December 1831, the *Magpie* in November 1832, and the *Rolla* in November 1833. In these vessels he was employed at Sheerness, and on the North Sea and Lisbon stations. He went to the Mediterranean in April 1834, in the *Revenge*, and as a Mate became attached to the *Bellerophon* in May 1838. In the *Bellerophon*, as a Mate, he took part in the operations on the coast of Syria, and was present at the bombardment of St. Jean D'Acree. (Naval General Service and Syrian Medals)

In July 1841, he was appointed to the revenue cutter *Defence*, employed in the North Sea, and was transferred, in July 1843, to the steam vessel *Blazer*; Captain John Washington (afterwards Hydrographer) employed on surveying service in the same neighbourhood. He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in September 1843.

#### **FURTHER ANTI SLAVER SERVICE ON THE WEST COAST OF AFRICA**

13 years after his last anti slaver service and now an experienced Lieutenant, Creyke served aboard H.M.S. *Penelope*, a 5th Rate Frigate (24), between 2 February 1844 and 18 May 1844. Creyke was for several months, attached to H.M.S. *Alert*, an 8 gun Brig on the same station, before rejoining *Penelope* between 7 August 1844 and 9 August 1845. He then briefly joined H.M.S. *Growler*, a 6 gun Sloop on 10 August 1845, which in September 1845, left the Coast of West Africa to England



H.M.S. *Penelope* (24) Frigate  
By Captain J. J. G. and the Officers of the Ship.

H.M.S. *Penelope* played a significant role as flagship of the newly promoted Commodore Jones when he commanded a British squadron tasked with enforcing the ban on the Atlantic slave trade. On 3 April 1844 she captured the Spanish schooner *Maria Luisa*. On 20 October 1844 *Penelope* captured the brig *Virginia* or *Allerto*. On 26 September 1845 she captured the steamer *Cacique*, and on 30 September 1845, *Legeira*. Much of the correspondence from aboard *Penelope* was published shortly after in 'General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners' H.M. Stationery Office, 1846 (this can be viewed online) also here:

<https://sites.rootsweb.com/~pptyc/18-1900/P/03440.html>

Without checking the Admiralty reports, it is not clear the exact reason for Creyke short service aboard *Alert* between May and August 1844, however it was likely to take the place of one of *Alert's* Officers who was ill (or had died). During his short service with *Alert*, *Alert* is reported to have detained a Portuguese slave brig on 4 June 1844. Creyke is also reported commanded the boats of the *Alert* in an attack on pirates at the Arguin islands, near Cape Blanco, for which he was mentioned favourably in the despatches of the Commodore. The attack in question had taken place after the report that of part of the crew of a British merchant brig had landed on the island of Arguin (off the West Coast of Africa) and had subsequently been killed by pirates and their boats stolen. Details of the subsequent action taken by boats of H.M.S. *Alert*, during which several of the boats crew were killed or wounded, were published in the Evening Mail 21 November 1844. This in the form of a letter from Lieutenant Creyke.:

**Sept. 9, 1844.—Her Majesty's sloop Alert anchored off Cape Salinas, having ascertained, by sounding in the boats, that there was not water for her to proceed further. Sept. 12.—The pinnace and two gigs were sent manned and armed (5 officers and 30 men in all, including Kroomen) in search of the Island of Arguin, to ascertain the fate of some men who had been detained there from two English merchantmen. On making the island, we observed a large number of men coming down towards us, armed with muskets and favelina. At noon we anchored off the town, and saw five boats hauled close up under the cliff, three of which we immediately perceived were English, and concluded that they belonged to the Margaret and Courier. At 2 p.m. an officer was sent in one of the gigs, under cover of the pinnace and second gig, to hold a conference with the natives relative to the objects of our search. The chief, who spoke good English, stated that all their prisoners had been ransomed and taken to Portendic, on their way to the Gambia, with the exception of four, who had died of their wounds. This point ascertained, and having strict orders not to provoke hostilities, if possible, there remained nothing further for us to do but to retake the boats, which were at that time high and dry on the beach under the town, and would not be afloat before 11 p.m., when it was arranged we should pull in under cover of the night, and cut them out. In the course of the afternoon the natives, of whom we counted upwards of a hundred, armed with muskets, were trying to persuade us to land; but, knowing their treacherous character, we declined. At 9 p.m. a murmuring noise was heard on shore in the direction of the boats, supposed to arise from their hauling them higher up on the beach, above high-water mark. We immediately weighed and pulled in, until we came close in to the edge of the mud. A musket was then fired to intimidate the natives, upon which they rushed with a terrific yell down towards the**

boats, and commenced a heavy and well-directed fire of musketry upon us, which was warmly returned by the marines and small-arm men ; but, owing to the night being unusually dark, we could not judge of the position of the enemy except by the flashes of their muskets, although they were not more than two or three yards from the boats, while our party was a better mark for them, the ripple of the water, and the white jackets and accoutrements of the marines, making us more conspicuous. In a few minutes we had one man killed and five wounded. It being then too dark to land, and not knowing for certain the enemy's number, we hauled off for the night, intending to renew the attack at daylight. The following morning we landed our force, now reduced to 29 in all, and marched up towards the town, expecting at every moment to receive the enemy's fire ; but to our surprise we found the place entirely deserted, and not a vestige of either boats or people to be seen. After a strict search among the huts, where we found nothing, we tried to set fire to them, but failed, on account of the nature of the materials of which they were built. The suffering state of the wounded men in the boats demanded our immediate return to the ship, which was at a distance of five miles, and this prevented our remaining to pull down the huts ; we therefore returned to the boats, taking with us a small 6-pounder carronade which we found on our way down. The boats got on board about 10 a.m. ; the Alert weighed the same afternoon, and proceeded towards Cape Blanco, and afterwards along the coast to Portendic, off which place she arrived on the morning of the 18th. We stood backwards and forwards up and down the coast, for about 20 miles on each side of the place marked in the chart as Portendic, but of which we could see no signs ; and this is accounted for by the fact, that it is only during the season when the Arabs bring their gums down from the interior for sale that temporary huts are erected, which are afterwards removed, and the place deserted until the return of the gum season. After firing several guns during the day, and letting off rockets and blue lights during the night, to attract attention had any one been within sight or hearing, we left the coast on the evening of the 19th for Bona Vista ; Captain Boanquet considering that everything possible had been done to ascertain the fate of our countrymen, and having every reason to believe that the survivors were on their way to the Gambia.

Upon comparing this statement of the Alert's proceedings with that given by Mr. Griffiths, which he could only have gathered from common report, his mistakes are evident. Any one would suppose, from his account, that the Alert's boats fired on the natives of Arguin without provocation, and returned immediately to the ship without any attempt to recapture the English boats ; whereas the facts are very different.

You will perceive, Sir, that the whole affair, so far from having been carelessly and hurriedly gone through, was, on the contrary, carefully and zealously conducted, and was attended with considerable risk and serious loss on our side.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

R. B. CREYKE, Lieutenant R.N.

(Late of Her Majesty's ship Alert.)

Harwich, Essex, Nov. 18.



### SURVEY SERVICE AND THE BALTIC

In January 1846, he was appointed to the survey of the west coast of Scotland, under Captain C. G. Robinson, in the *Shearwater*, and in October of the same year was made an Assistant-Surveyor. In October 1847, his name was transferred to the books of the *San Josef* and subsequently to the *Impregnable* and *Fisgard*, his services throughout being continued in the survey of the west coast of Scotland.

In February 1855, Lieutenant Creyke was appointed First Lieutenant of the *Merlin*, Captain Bartholomew J. Sullivan, attached to the Baltic fleet, in which vessel he assisted in surveying the north part of Cronstadt, as well as the vicinity of Sweaborg, previous to its bombardment, at which he was present (Baltic Medal). For his services on this occasion he was so strongly recommended by the Commander-in-Chief to the favourable consideration of their lordships, that he was promoted to the rank of Commander in September of the same year, and in the following November again resumed his duties as an Assistant-Surveyor on the west coast of Scotland, under Captain E. J. Bedford, with whom, as Chief Assistant-Surveyor, he continued to serve until about the year 1861. He was promoted to be Retired Captain on 11 February 1862, in consideration of his services and the impaired state of his health. Captain Creyke died on 22 April 1886 at Goodnestone, Clevedon, Somerset aged 70.



Condition NEF. Each medal fitted with silver ribbon buckle. When sold at Glendining's in March 1998, the group was mounted in glass fronted display case with corresponding miniatures. The black-on-gold painted labels from which accompanies the group. Ex Noonans 2021