

THE RARE CRIMEAN WAR 'CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE' CASUALTY MEDAL TO A TROOPER OF THE 8TH ROYAL IRISH HUSSARS WHO WAS KILLED IN ACTION AT BALAKLAVA, 25 OCTOBER 1854



CRIMEA 1854-56, 3 CLASPS, ALMA, BALAKLAVA, SEBASTOPOL 'J. FITZGIBBON, 8TH DRAGOONS' OFFICIALLY IMPRESSED

John Fitzgibbon was born in Limerick and enlisted for the 8th Dragoons on 23 June 1847. A harness-maker prior to enlistment, he embarked for the Crimea aboard the transport Echunga on 25 May 1854. He was subsequently present at the battles of Bulganak and Alma, before being killed in action during the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, 25 October 1854.

The 8th Hussars during the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava:

"The 8th formed the right of the second wave of the brigade attack. Less one troop which remained as escort to Lord Raglan this time under the command of Captain Paymaster Henry Duberly, the 8th went in with 115 officers and men making it the smallest of the brigade's regiments. The three troops were commanded by Captain Tomkinson, Lieutenant Lord

Fitzgibbon and Lieutenant (Adjutant) Edward Seager.

Moving down the valley, as the pace intensified their lines began to separate but sufficient cohesion seems to have been retained in order for the regiment to ride through the front batteries. Furthermore, they drifted right, allowing the 4th Light Dragoons to become separated. This is perhaps unsurprising given that troop leader Tomkinson became violently dismounted and Fitzgibbon was killed as the regiment came under heavy fire.



Passing clear through the enemy's front, past the gun line they halted in the clear by up to four hundred yards forward in open ground. Rallying and wheeling to commence their retreat the rump of the 8th were blocked by three squadrons of Colonel Jeropkines Russian lancers which had descended into the valley and began forming up behind the overrun gun-line. The hussars charged with about 70 men (including 20 of the 17th Lancers), driving them off before they had completely formed up. Still under the direct command of Shewell and de Salis with Lieutenant Seager, they fought back through the front lines and the survivors made their way back up the valley as best they could."

Of the 115 Officers and men (one and a half Squadrons) who took part in the charge, the 8th Hussars would suffer 21 killed and 20 wounded, or 37% of their number, which was roughly in line with the 40% casualties suffered by the Brigade as a whole. The 8th had an additional 38 horses killed and many more wounded.



Condition NEF, lovely patina and original ribbon. First noted as having been sold at Sotheby's on 1 March 1881, and subsequently by Glendining's in September 1919, March 1927, June 1929, October 1937 and DNW on 23 September 2005 for £16,000 (inc premium)

A fine and rare Light Brigade chargers medal with a superb provenance.