

THE VERY SCARCE 'SCOTS GREYS' CRIMEA MEDAL AWARDED TO PRIVATE WHO IS CONFIRMED AS ONE OF 'SCARLETT'S 300' WHO CHARGED WITH THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA



CRIMEA 1854-56, 3 CLASPS, BALAKLAVA, INKERMANN, SEBASTOPOL 'J. WARREN, 2ND DRAGONS.', OFFICIALLY IMPRESSED NAMING, SUSPENDED BY SILVER CHAINS FROM A B. BAILEY COVENTRY SILVER FLORAL BROOCH FOR WEAR

John Warren, an 18-year-old bricklayer, from Margate, Kent, joined the 2nd Dragoons (The Scots Greys) on 5 August 1845. He saw service in during the Crimean war and is confirmed as present during the Charge of the Heavy Brigade in an article by a fellow Scots Greys veteran named Fawkes and Lieutenant Wightman of the 17th Lancers, published in the Bromsgrove, Droitwich & Redditch Weekly Messenger, May 24 1890. In this article, relating to the Crimean War and both famous charges, it relates:

"...Much has been heard lately about the scandal of the nation allowing the immortals who 'rode into the jaws of death' at Balaclava to drift into the workhouse, and another page in the painful story is

unfolded in Lieutenant Wightman's letter. Mr Wightman writes: "Strange to say I came across a man named John Warren, of the Greys (Mr Fawkes remembers this man very well) in Queen's Gate the other day, hawking cotton, needles, buttons, &c, and wearing his medals. I got into a chat with him and found he also knew my brother well. His pension was 1s 1d per day, and Government stop 6 1/2d. For the support of his wife, who is out of her mind in an asylum." This man, being in the Scots Grey, did not assist in the charge of the Light Brigade, but he took part in an achievement which was almost as daring, and far more successful, namely, the charge of the Heavy Brigade."

Additionally and confirming the above, Warren is shown in the musters as being effective from 1 October to 31 December 1854 (Forgotten Heroes - The Charge of the Heavy Brigade by Roy Dutton refers). He was recommended for the L.S. & G.C. medal on 19 April 1868, which was issued on 30 June 1868, together with gratuity of £10. Warren was discharged in Dublin on 16 May 1871 on completion of 24 years service, his conduct noted as very good and was in possession of 5 Good Conduct Badges. His name never appeared in the Regimental Defaulters Book and his intended place of residence was London. Warren's service papers indicate in 1903, his wife was still in the Asylum.

Medal roll notes Warren's medal being sent to his regiment on 11 December 1856, a date that many other medals to men in the 2nd Dragoons were sent.

Unlike participants of the Charge of the Light Brigade, where there were various publicised veterans reunions, there are very few confirmed Heavy Brigade chargers, these pretty much confirmed to those mentioned in official dispatches, regimental histories or period letters/newspaper articles. As such, Warren being mentioned as present is extremely scarce, especially for a non officer.



THE GREYS AT BALACLAVA AND THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE

The 2nd Dragoons (the Scots Greys) formed part of 'Scarlett's 300' who charged with the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava; consisting two squadrons of the Scots Greys and one of the Inniskillings. Commanded by General Sir James York Scarlett, the Heavy Brigade made a gallant uphill charge to defeat a greatly superior force of onrushing Russian cavalry. The 1st Dragoons, 4th and 5th Dragoon Guards and a 2nd squadron of the Inniskillings also took part in the charge, however the Brigade did not charge as one, these Regiments being in the second and third lines that supported the Greys and

Inniskillings after the first line had crashed into the Russian cavalry, hence the '300' title being applied to the leading line. The desperate sword on sword battle lasted but 10 minutes before the Russians retreated and the heavy Brigade reformed, with the Greys and Inniskillings suffering the brunt of the 78 casualties.

An hour and a half later, the Light Brigade fatally charged the Russian guns, resulting in the Brigade being all but wiped out as an effective fighting unit. During the charge, the Heavy Brigade supported the Light Brigade, suffering casualties from the artillery crossfire as they rode up the valley but they pulled up and reformed before entering into the Russian batteries, therefore not suffering the same fate as the Light Brigade. Casualties in the Heavy Brigade would have been far higher had it not been for the French Chasseurs d'Afrique, who bravely charged the flank of the Russian battery on the Fedioukine Heights, forcing them to drag away their guns. Again, it was the Greys and Inniskillings that suffered the brunt of the casualties from the artillery crossfire. Recorded casualties for the 700 strong Heavy Brigade at Balaclava on 25 October were 105, the Greys suffering more than the rest of the Brigade combined, with 60.

On 25 October 1854, the Scots Greys musters show only 153 effective troop horses, the latter being the lowest number of the entire brigade. Officers had their own horses, so these can be added to this number, though a number of mounted men would have been on forage or picket duties, so can be reduced again. As such, with only in the region of 150 chargers, the 60 casualties suffered by the Greys at Balaclava was a significant percentage of those who charged. As with all such cavalry charges, a large number of men would have suffered slight wounds that did not require treatment and their wounds were not recorded. This will have been the same with all Regiments. 270 Balaclava clasps were issued to the Scots Greys, which shows the issues with knowing who did charge and who were present at the camp at Balaclava but didn't actually charge.

Note; Since the Inniskillings only had 185 effective troop horses on the 25 October, split into two squadrons, only one of which were counted in Scarlett's '300', the actual number of the three Squadrons should be nearer 230. The figure of 300 was almost certainly based on the on paper compliment of three squadrons of cavalry, not the actual number of effective men on the day.



THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE FROM KINGLAKE'S 'INVASION OF THE CRIMEA,' VOL. V

"....All this while, the string of the 300 red coats were forming Scarlett's slender first line in the valley beneath, and they seemed to be playing parade. At the moment I speak of, the troop officers of the Greys were still facing their men; and their drill rules, it seems, had declared that they must continue to do so till the major of the regiment should at length bring them round by giving the order, Eyes right! Not yet would the Greys consent to be disturbed in their ceremonies by the descending column."

"A singular friendship had long subsisted between the Scots Greys and the Inniskilling Dragoons. It dated from the time of that famous brigade in which three cavalry regiments were so brought together as to express by their aggregate title the union of the three kingdoms, yet offer a sample of each (the 'Royals' represented England)....Then, as now, the Greys charged in the first line, and on the left of the Inniskillings."

The Greys were led by Colonel Darby Griffith; and the two squadron leaders who followed him were Major Clarke on the right, and Captain Williams on the left. Handley, Hunter, Buchanan, and Sutherland were the four troop leaders of the regiment; the Adjutant was Lieutenant Miller; the serrefiles were Boyd, Nugent, and Lenox Prendergast. And to these, though he did not then hold the Queen's Commission, I add the name of John Wilson, now a cornet, and the acting adjutant of the regiment, for he took a signal part in the fight."



"A soldier who was in the midst of the terrible conflict at Balaclava, and who escaped unhurt, gives the following account of what he felt and saw in that deadly struggle:—

"We charged. Oh, God! I cannot describe it; they were so superior in numbers; they "out-flanked" us, and we were in the middle of them. I never certainly felt less fear in my life than I did at that time; and I hope God will forgive me, for I felt more like a devil than a man. We fought our way out of them as only Englishmen can fight; and the 4th, 5th, and 6th were there up with us. I escaped without a scratch, thank God, though I was covered with blood; my horse was not even wounded. But oh! the work of slaughter that then began—'twas truly awful; but I suppose it was necessary. We cut them down like sheep, and they did not seem to have power to resist. The plain is covered and covered with dead Russians, and, of course, we left some of our poor comrades on the field. We only lost two and about seven wounded. Well, when we had finished this lot we thought of going home to breakfast; but no, they (the enemy) had some guns over the hills that Lord Raglan sent word were to be charged, and captured at any cost. So off we went again. They received us very quietly into their ground—Lord Lucan leading the Heavies, and Lord Cardigan the Light Brigade. The Light charged first this time,

took the guns, cut down the gunners, and then, when they thought all was right, they were met by thousands of Cossacks, who had been in ambush. The Royals, the Greys, the 4th, 5th, and 6th, now charged again. The butchering was repeated; when suddenly a cross front and rear fire opened upon us from the hills—cannon, rifles, and file firing.

"I cannot attempt to describe to you the scene that ensued—balls, shells, and rockets whizzing about our ears. The men on the right and left of me were both killed on the spot. We hacked our way out of it as well as we could, but were obliged to leave the guns. Colonel Yorke had his leg broken, and all the officers in the front rank were wounded. The Heavy Brigade have not lost many men; but, sad to tell, out of about 600 of the Light Brigade that went into the field, only 400 came out; but this is nothing to what the enemy suffered."



Condition VF. Original ribbon, most unusually and attractively suspended by silver chains from a silver floral brooch for wearing, the reverse stamped 'B. BAILEY COVENTRY' and 'REGT OCT 10 1856 NO 3888'. Sold with copy service papers, medals rolls and newspaper article(digital)

A fine and very scarce medal confirmed to a Scots Greys Heavy Brigade charger