

**A RARE SECOND AFGHAN WAR OFFICER CASUALTY MEDAL TO A MAJOR AND SQUADRON COMMANDER 3RD BENGAL CAVALRY (SKINNER'S HORSE) WHO WAS MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES FOR HIS SERVICE AT THE ENGAGEMENT AT SHEKABAD, 25 APRIL 1880 AND WAS WOUNDED IN THE NECK AT THE BATTLE OF KANDAHAR, AGAIN MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES LATER COMMANDANT OF SKINNER'S HORSE**



AFGHANISTAN, 1878-80, CLASP, KANDAHAR 'MAJ. G. W. WILLOCK. 3. BL. C.'

Colonel George Woodward Willock was born on 24 January 1843. The son of Major George Willock, 6th Madras Cavalry and nephew of Lt Colonel Sir Henry Willock, Chairman of the East India Company. George's cousin, Captain Francis Gore Willock, was killed in action at Delhi 21 August 1857.

George Woodward joined the Bengal Cavalry as a Cornet on 20 October 1859 and was advanced to Lieutenant, General Cavalry List, 21 February 1861. Brevetted Captain, 12 October 1871 and Captain, Officiating Squadron Officer, 3rd Bengal Cavalry, 14 February 1872. With the renewal of the Afghan War, his Regiment (strength 401 Officers and men) was detailed to Brigadier General Arbuthnot's Brigade and advanced into the Khyber Pass in September 1879. Promoted Major, 3rd Bengal Cavalry, 22 December 1879, his service during the Afghan Campaigns of 1878-80 is recorded in Shadbolts as follows:

*"Major G. W. Willock served with the regiment throughout the campaign, taking part in the action at Shekabad, the march from Kabul to the relief of Kandahar, the reconnaissance of 31 Aug 1880 and the battle of Kandahar. twice Mentioned in Despatches (and was) wounded at battle of Kandahar"*

As a Squadron Commander, he was mentioned in despatches for his service at the engagement at Shekabad, 25 April 1880, when elements of his Regiment was involved in a direct attack on enemy positions. In June 1880, the 3rd Bengal Cavalry joined General Gough's Cavalry Brigade, along with the 9th Lancers, 3rd Punjab and Central India Horse. On 8 August 1880, it would form part of the famed Kabul – Khandahar Field Force under Lord Roberts that would march across 300 miles of rough terrain to relieve Kandahar, fighting a battle there on 1 September:

<https://www.britishbattles.com/second-afghan-war/battle-of-kandahar/>

During the battle, Major Willock was wounded in the neck, one of 11 Officers wounded during the battle (3 killed) and was again mentioned in despatches for his service. Total British casualties at the battle were 100 killed and 218 wounded.

Promoted Lt Colonel, Commandant Commanding 3rd Bengal Cavalry 20 October 1885 and Colonel, 20 October 1889. Retiring in 1892, Colonel Willock died in January 1906

His obituary from the *Army and Navy Gazette* - Saturday 10 March 1906

**Col. George Woodward Willock, retired list, Indian Army, died on the 1st inst., aged 63. Joining the Indian Army in 1859, he ultimately commanded the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, Skinner's Horse, Jan. 17, 1887, to March 24, 1892, when he retired. He served in the Afghan War, 1879-80, including the operations in Kohistan, affair of Saidabad, march from Kabul to Kandahar, and battle of September—wounded (twice mentioned in despatches, medal with clasp and bronze decoration). A correspondent writes:—**

“Many old comrades will notice with deep regret the death of Col. Willock. He came of a family distinguished in the Army, the Civil Service, and the Church. He was the son of Major Willock, of the Madras Cavalry, nephew of Sir Henry Willock, a director of the East India Company, grandson of the Rev. Richard Woodward, D.D., rector of Glanworth, Co. Cork, great grandson of the Bishop of Cloyne, and great-great grandson of the Archbishop of Cashel, while many soldiers bore his name. A man of fine physique, skilled in arms, and devoted to his profession, he was an admirable regimental officer. But he was more than this, for he was a man of great culture, possessing much intellectual power, and, had the opportunity been given him and health allowed, would have risen to high rank. The Indian Army is full of such men. A perfect gentleman, modest and gentle in manner, he was a type of all that is excellent as a soldier and a man. He leaves a widow, herself the daughter of an Indian officer, and a son in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, to mourn his loss.”

3RD REGIMENT BENGAL CAVALRY

Originally raised in 1814 as the 2nd Regiment of Skinner's Horse, they became the 3rd Bengal Cavalry (Skinner's Horse) in 1901 and 3rd Skinner's Horse in 1903.



OFFICERS, 3RD BENGAL CAVALRY, CIRCA 1878. WILLOCK ALMOST CERTAINLY ONE OF THIS GROUP

For clear image see:

<https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?q=searchType%3Dsimple%26resultsDisplay%3Dlist%26acc%3D1955-04-41&pos=5&total=19&page=1&acc=1955-04-41-27>

*“Commanded by Lt. Colonel A. R. D. Mackenzie. The 3rd Bengal Cavalry were moved into Afghanistan after the Kabul massacre in September 1879, where they held posts from Jamrud to Gandamak, including communication lines, convoy escort duty and taking part in expeditions throughout the territory. In February 1880 they moved onto Kabul, and in April they followed General Ross to meet with Stewart's column that had marched up from Kandahar, subsequently operating in the Logar and Maidan districts, seeing action at Shekabad, and in June at Kotal-i-Takht. In August they marched to Kandahar and were involved in action at Pir Paimal during the reconnaissance of Ayub Khan's position, and the following day helped defeat the Afghans at the battle of Kandahar, including pursuing their retreat into the evening. After an operation against the Achakzai tribe, the regiment returned to India and Mian Mir.”*



Condition GVF, very minor contact wear from Kabul to Khandahar Star (to which he was also entitled, very attractive patina and a rare Officer casualty medal for the battle of Khandahar being one of just 11 Officers wounded).