

A FINE WATERLOO TO 1ST ROYAL DRAGOON WHO WAS CAPTURED DURING THE CAVALRY BATTLE AT MAGUILLA 11 JUNE 1812 AND WAS SEVERELY WOUNDED AT THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO WHERE HIS REGIMENT FORMED PART OF THE UNION BRIGADE, LOSING 50% OF ITS NUMBER DURING THE GREAT CHARGE



WATERLOO 1815 'WILLIAM MERRICK, 1ST OR ROYAL DRAGOONS'

William Merrick was born in Bradley, Stafford and joined the Royal Artillery circa 1799. Transferring to the 1st or Royal Dragoons on 25 September 1806, he served in Captain Phipp's troop in the Peninsula and at Waterloo and was finally discharged in consequence of a diseased testicle on 12 December 1816, aged 42

Merrick's service papers are damaged and hard to read, but enough can be seen to see he was taken prisoners near Valencia Los Torres on 11 June 1812; the cavalry battle of Battle of Maguilla. He was also severely wounded at the battle of Waterloo. Frustratingly, a further note for August 1810 is incomplete but perhaps a muster check will reveal what this was.

Merrick also received the Military General Service medal with clasps; Fuentes d'Onor, Vittoria and Toulouse, He had also applied for Badajoz clasp but this clasp was not granted to the Regiment, despite its presence.

1ST ROYAL DRAGOONS IN THE PENINSULAR AND AT WATERLOO

In 1809, the 1st Royal Dragoons moved to the Peninsular War, helping to cover Wellington's retreat to Torres Vedras in 1810 and charging at Fuentes de Onoro in May the following year. They also fought at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz in 1812 and at the cavalry battle of Maguilla on 11 June 1812, where Merrick was captured. At this battle, the British, with a 700 strong cavalry brigade (headed by the Royals), charged at French cavalry brigade of a similar number. The Royals broke the French, capturing over a 100 but with the blood up, recklessly plunged after the retreating French and were themselves attacked by French reserves, loosing heavily in consequence. In 1813, they were present at Alba de Tormes, Vittoria and Pamplona. In 1814 they were also present at Toulouse

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Maguilla

During the Waterloo campaign, the 1st Royal's, along with the 6th Inniskillings and the Scots Greys, formed the Union Brigade. On the morning of 18th June 1815, the Regiment, at that time under command of Lt. Col. Clifton, moved "fetlock deep in mud" with "every man soaked to the skin". Initially held in reserve, at 2pm the Union brigade charged advancing French troops who had broken through the British lines, and during the ensuing fighting Captain Kennedy Clark captured the eagle of the French 105th Line Infantry. Rather than consolidating their success, the Union brigade rode on with a lack of discipline which was soon subject to attack by French Lancers which decimated their ranks. General Ponsonby himself, his exhausted horse stuck in a quagmire, was killed by French lancers.

At Waterloo, the Regiment lost a devastating 188 officers and men killed and wounded, with a further 9 missing. This amounted to losses of 50% of their on paper strength. The other Regiments lost heavily to with the Greys losses at 51% and the Inniskillings at 55%,. These being among the highest rates of any Regiments during the battle.



The medal roll lists 394 Officers and men present at Waterloo. However, as with all Regiments, a large number of men would not have taken to the field of battle. Men would have been sick, on baggage duty, picket or a wide range of non combatant rolls. As such the percentage of losses for all Regiments would be considerably higher



Condition; with steel clip and old replacement split ring suspension. Heavy edge bruising and contact wear, though naming still clear.

A most desirable regiment for Waterloo, especially as a casualty but a rare medal for a Maguilla casualty.