

AN OUTSTANDING AND RARE 1812 WAR OFFICER CASUALTY MILITARY GENERAL SERVICE 1793 MEDAL TO AN CAPTAIN OF THE 8TH FOOT, WHO BETWEEN 1812 AND 1815 SERVED AS A.D.C. TO MAJOR-GENERAL BARON DE ROTTENBURG, COMMANDER OF THE MILITARY FORCES IN UPPER CANADA, AMONGST OTHERS, WAS PRESENT AT THE BLOCKADE OF FORT GEORGE DURING 1813 AND WAS WOUNDED IN ACTION AT THE BATTLE OF PLATTSBURG IN SEPTEMBER 1814, WHERE DE ROTTENBURG SERVED IN SECOND IN COMMAND OF THE ARMY



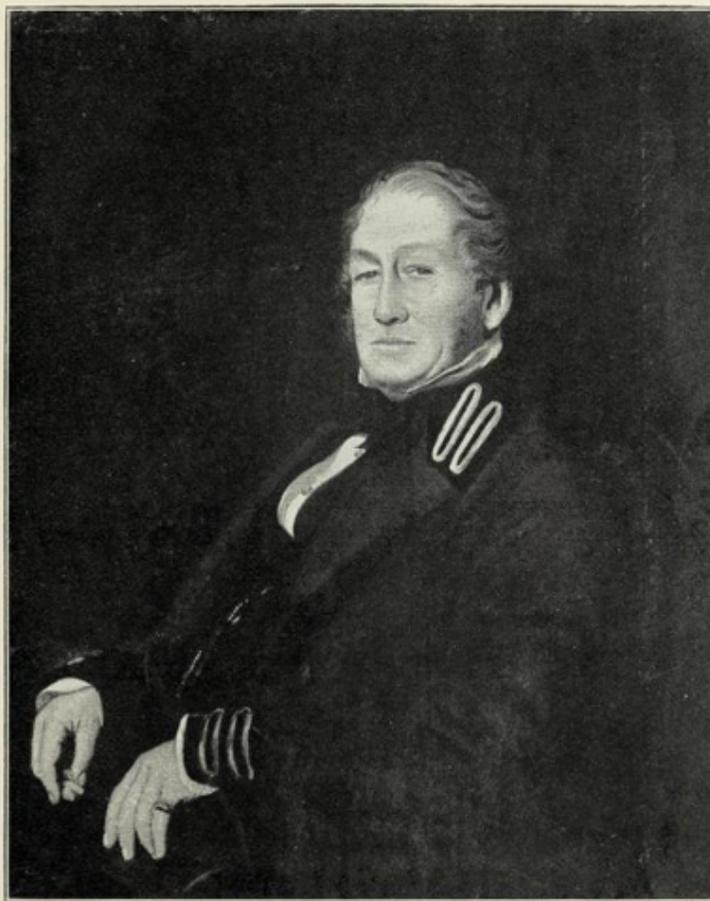
MILITARY GENERAL SERVICE 1793, CLASP, MARTINIQUE 'T. CROSSE, CAPT. 8TH FOOT'

Thomas Crosse was appointed Ensign in the 8th Foot on 12 October 1804 and advanced to Lieutenant on 22 August 1805. In November 1805, the First Battalion 8th Foot landed in Cuxhaven on the Elbe, where they would co-operate with Austrian and Russian forces against the French. But with the defeat of the latter at the battle of Austerlitz, the 8th embarked for England in February 1806 and in March, to Ireland. In 1807, the battalion took part in the expedition to Copenhagen and in January 1808, embarked for Halifax, Nova Scotia. In November 1808, they embarked again, this time for the West Indies and were present with the First Battalion during the invasion and successful taking of the island of Martinique, January - February 1809. In April 1809, the Battalion returned to Nova Scotia, Lieutenant Crosse being noted as arriving in Lower Canada from Nova Scotia in 1811. On 25 April 1812, Crosse was appointed A.D.C. to Major-General Francis Baron de Rottenburg. How it was Crosse would be picked for this appointment is unknown but it would mean he would be away from his battalion for much of the war with America, only reuniting with them when the battalion came under de Rottenburg's command before Fort George, June- December 1813.

AIDE-DE-CAMP TO MAJOR-GENERAL DE ROTTENBURG

As A.D.C. to Major-General Baron de Rottenburg, tracing where Crosse served during the war should be relatively straightforward as it's safe to assume he would be close to Rottenburg during most of the time he served as A.D.C. During battles and actions, Crosse's duties would entail much liaising between Brigade and commanding officers under Rottenburg's command, often under fire. Commanders also frequently required their A.D.C.'s to be their 'eyes' at the front, reporting directly to the General and keeping them up to date with events. Seen as a cushy job at headquarters for much of their time, during battle, it was quite the opposite as an A.D.C.'s duties were often one of the most dangerous on the field. This is reflected by the number of A.D.C.'s that are listed in casualty lists of the time. Indeed, Captain Crosse would himself be wounded at the battle of Plattsburgh.

As for Major-General de Rottenburg, from July 1812, he was serving as Civil and Military Commander of the Montreal district. On the evacuation of Fort George after the American attack on 27 May 1813, a blockade of the Fort was enacted and on 19 June, de Rottenburg replaced Sir Roger Sheaffe as commander of the forces in Upper Canada. Arriving on the Niagara peninsula on 29 June 1813, this command would include the forces on the Niagara Frontier and Crosse's own Regiment, the 8th Foot (along with the 41st and 49th), was part of Rottenburg's army. Numerous skirmishes and small actions would be fought during the period; such as that at Beaver Dams and others in cooperation with Sir James Yeo's fleet. However, the blockade finally ended on 9 October 1813, when the British army retreated on Burlington. De Rottenburg himself had left days earlier for Kingston with a large force as an attack was expected on that place.



CAPT. THOMAS CROSSE.

Having been promoted Captain on 5 August 1813, Crosse would again have followed de Rottenburg during his various movements during the campaign and it is also quite possible he would have been involved in some of the skirmishes. A period book, 'The Blockade of Fort George' (PDF), which describes the blockade and actions in detail, comes with the research.

De Rottenburg would remain as Civil and Military Commander of Upper Canada until 12 December 1813, when he returned to Lower Canada and was given the important task of the defence of Montreal. In September 1814, he was given command of three Brigades of veteran troops, for Sir George Prevost's invasion of the United States. This appointment would effectively make de Rottenburg Prevost's second in command during the campaign.

THE BATTLE OF PLATTSBURGH

The Battle of Plattsburgh, also called the Battle of Lake Champlain, fought between 6–11 September 1814 was an important American victory that saved New York itself from possible British invasion via the Hudson River valley.

In a joint land and sea operation, on 6 September, a British army of approximately 8,000 troops under Sir George Prevost reached Plattsburgh, a small settlement situated on the north-western shore of Lake Champlain, New York State. Defending Plattsburgh were some 1,500 American regulars and about 2,500 Militia, commanded by General Alexander Macomb. These supported by a 14-ship American naval squadron under Commodore Thomas Macdonough.

Prevost's army itself comprised three brigades of infantry, a strong force of Royal Artillery, and a regiment of cavalry. The three brigades were under the overall command of Major-General de Rottenburg. The Brigades themselves were commanded by three experienced peninsular war veterans and the 1st Brigade in particular, was entirely made up of battle hardened peninsular Regiments:

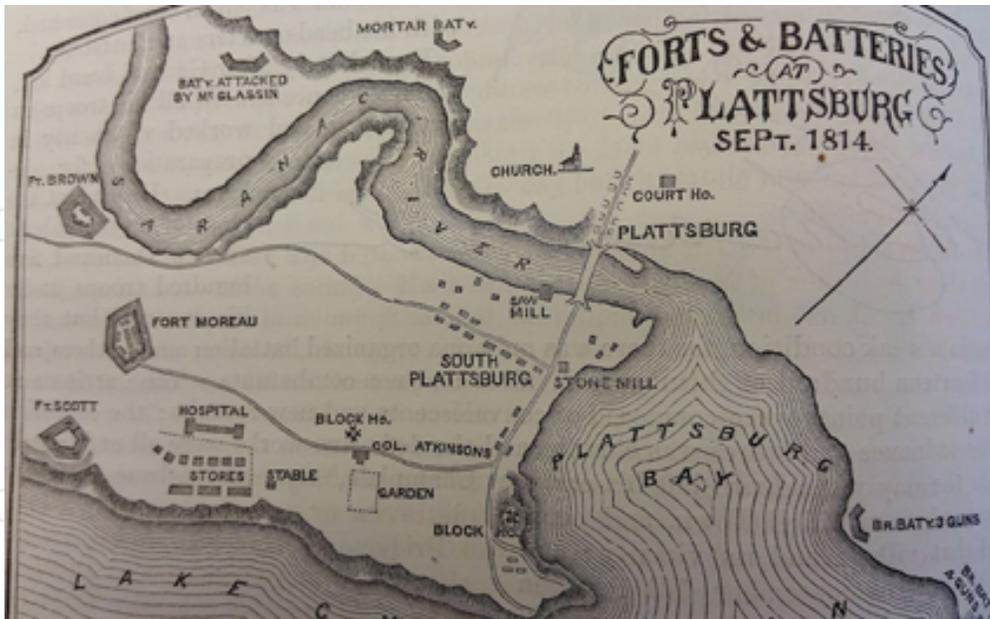
1st Brigade, Major General Frederick P. Robinson, consisting 3/27th, 1/39th, 76th, 1/88th Regiments of Foot

2nd Brigade, Major General Thomas Brisbane, consisting 2/8th, 13th, 49th Regiments of Foot, De Meuron's, Canadian Voltigeurs and Chasseurs

3rd Brigade, Major General Manley Power, consisting 1/3rd, 1/5th, 1/27th, 1/58th Regiments of Foot

On 7 September, Major General Robinson's brigade was ordered to cross the Saranac, but to Robinson's annoyance, Prevost had no intelligence on the American defences or even the local geography. Some tentative attacks across the bridges were repulsed by American regulars. However, the British located a ford across the Saranac 3 miles above the American defences and it was decided that this would be used in the planned attack.

The plan would be that when the British ships arrived, they would attack the American ships in Plattsburgh Bay, simultaneously, Major General Brisbane would make a feint attack across the bridges over the Saranac. At the same time, Major General Robinson's brigade would cross the ford to make the main attack against the American left flank, supported by Major General Power's brigade. Once the American ships had been defeated, Brisbane would make his feint attack into a real one.



As often happens, things did not go to plan. Although Prevost's attack was supposed to coincide with the naval engagement, it was slow to get under way. The American and British batteries settled down to a duel in which the Americans gained a slight advantage, while Brisbane's feint attack at the bridges was easily repulsed.

When a messenger arrived and notified Prevost that Downie's ship had been defeated on the lake he realized that without the navy to supply and support his further advance, any military advantage gained by storming Plattsburgh would have been worthless. Prevost therefore considered he had no option but to retreat, and called off the assault. Bugle calls ordering the retreat sounded out along the British lines.

Robinson's brigade had been misdirected by some British staff officers and missed the ford which was their objective. Once they had retraced their steps, Robinson's brigade, led by eight companies of light infantry soon drove the defenders back, and the British had crossed the ford and were preparing to advance, when the orders arrived from Prevost to call off the attack. The light company of the British 76th Foot had been skirmishing in advance of the main body. When the bugle calls to retire were heard it was too late and they were surrounded and cut off by overwhelming numbers of American militia. The Captain commanding the company, was killed in the act of waving a flag of truce (his white waistcoat). Three other officers and 31 other ranks of the 76th were made prisoner. The 76th also suffered one other man killed and three wounded.

After initial successes on land the three veteran Brigade commanders were furious at being ordered to retreat, when they felt they were in a position to get the better of the enemy. However they complied and the British began their retreat back to Canada after dark. Although the British soldiers were ordered to destroy ammunition and stores they could not easily remove, large quantities of these were left intact

British losses on land were heavy with 47 Officers and men killed, 221 wounded and 70 prisoners. Losses to the naval squadron were even higher.

Captain Crosses was amongst the wounded, the casualty lists showing him as the only casualty in the General Staff and it is likely he would have been wounded whilst relaying orders to Brigade or Regimental commanders during the battle

The victory at Plattsburgh influenced the terms of the December peace drawn at the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812. See the following for brief details of the battle:

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

Also, I highly recommend: '*And All Their Glory Past*' by Donald E Graves, as an excellent book about the battle and campaign

After the battle, de Rottenburg did not suffer the criticism that Prevost did and remained in Lower Canada, here commanding the troops and administering the government in Prevost's absence.

Captain Crosse rejoined his battalion in February 1815, the battalion itself leaving Canada in June 1815. Crosse was placed in half-pay on 25 February 1816 but went onto full pay again between December 1817 and June 1819. He became a Captain in the 2nd Life Guards on 16 July 1825 but retired from the army on 23 July 1825. A keen golfer, he was club secretary and treasurer at Blackheath Golf Club for 20 years and also club captain for one year. Captain Crosse died in 1868



Condition NEF. Sold with much research on CD, including Regimental histories, books on the Niagara campaign etc etc. Scare enough to find a medal to an Officer wounded during the 1812 War but rare to find one for the battle of Plattsburg, an often overlooked but key battle in the war