

A FINE IGS 1895 TO A 1ST GURKHAS OFFICER, LATER COMMANDING OFFICER AND EX 88TH FOOT WHO AFTER SEEING A GOOD DEAL OF ACTION DURING THE TIRAH CAMPAIGN, WAS STATIONED AT KANGRA DURING THE DEVASTATING 1905 EARTHQUAKE THAT KILLED 20,000 HIS WIFE DESPITE BEING INJURED WAS AWARDED THE ROYAL RED CROSS FOR HERE EFFORTS TO SAVE LIVES



INDIA GENERAL SERVICE 1895, 2 CLASPS, PUNJAB FRONTIER 1897-98, TIRAH 1897-98 'CAPT. A. V. HATCH. 2D. BN. 1ST. GURKHA. RIFLES.'

Arthur Vincent Hatch was born in Simla, India on 10 September 1860. The son of Lieutenant General George Cliffe Hatch, he was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, 88th Foot on 14 January 1880 and Lieutenant on 1 July 1881. Hatch transferred to the Bengal Staff Corps on 20 March 1882 (Rank to date from 1 July 1881) and was soon after posted to the 24th Punjab Infantry. In February 1883, he transferred to the 1st (King George's Own) Gurkha Rifles, the regiment he would serve with for the rest of his career. Appointed Adjutant to the newly formed 2nd Battalion in 1886, he served with them during the campaign in Sikkim, 1888, including the capture of the Jelapia Pass. Hatch saw further active service in the Mohmand and Tirah campaign, 1897-8, where his regiment saw a good deal of action and he was present at; the capture of the Bedmanai Pass, at the forcing of the Sampagha and Arhanga Passes, and in the operations in the Khanki, Mastura, Waran, and Bazar Valleys

During the Tirah campaign, Captain Hatch commanded 'C' company and was in action at Khwarina, when 'C' Company covered the retirement of the regiment after the destruction of the village. In October 1897, he is noted as commanding the left Wing of the 2/1st Gurkhas on a foraging expedition under Colonel Yule of the Devon's, during which the column was attacked at Ramadan and forced to retreat under constant heavy fire to Karrappa camp. On the 13 November, he commanded companies of the regiment on a similar foraging expedition, during which he took a company up onto the heights to a commanding position that would allow him to keep the enemy from flanking the British force. Regarding the eventual withdrawal of Hatch's company, the history of the Regiment gives;

"The retirement began fighting all the way. Two halts had to be made. The first was to facilitate the withdrawal of the 1st Gurkhas from the height on the left flank. They had been seriously threatened and compelled to fix bayonets as the tribesmen attempted to charge. The charge however was broken up by the fire of the companies on the low ground.."



During the latter phase of the campaign, Captain Hatch commanded the Battalion, the Colonel having been wounded in action and the Major being on leave. Hatch was promoted Major and Wing Commander, 14 January 1900

On 4 April 1905, the battalion was stationed at Dharamsala, Kangra, when a massive 7.9 magnitude earthquake struck. Destruction to the area was horrendous, with 100,000 buildings being reported to have been demolished and least 20,000 people are estimated to have been killed. Major and Mrs Hatch were in their home when the earthquake hit, the quake bringing the house down about them. Despite this, Major Hatch escaped unhurt but his wife was slightly injured. Losses to the battalion and their families, were very grievous (approx 240 killed and injured), as they were to the depot of the 1st battalion and the 7th Gurkha's who were also stationed at Dharamsala. Despite this, those that had survived worked untiringly to

rescue who they could. Major Hatch was officially mentioned for his services during the aftermath of the disaster, as were several other British and Gurkha Officers and other ranks. Mrs Hatch was one of three Ladies Awarded the Royal Red Cross for their services during the rescue efforts.

Major Hatch was promoted Colonel on 9 August 1905 and to command of the 2nd Battalion in September that year. He retired on 8 August 1910 and died in Teignmouth, Devon in January 1921.

Hatch's Army List entry:

“Major A. V. Hatch served with the Sikkim Expedition in 1888, and was present at the capture of the Jelapia Pass (Medal with Clasp). Served in the campaign in the North West Frontier of India in 1897-98 with the Tirah Expeditionary Force, and was present at the capture of the Bedmanai Pass, at the forcing of the Sampagha and Arhanga Passes, and in the operations in the Khanki, Mastura, Waran, and Bazar Valleys (Medal with two Clasps).”



Condition VF. A most interesting medal to a Gurkha Officer and Battalion Commander. Sold with an account by Hatch of the earthquake and aftermath, portrait photo in uniform, his wife's obituary with photo, details of here award etc (PDF on CD)