

**AN EXTREMELY FINE AND SCARCE PUNNIAR STAR AND SUTLEJ 1845 PAIR AWARDED TO AN OFFICER OF THE 50TH FOOT, WHO WAS SEVERELY WOUNDED BY A MUSKET BALL IN THE LEG AT THE BATTLE OF FEROSHUHUR ON 22 DECEMBER 1845, ONE OF THE BLOODIEST BATTLE FOUGHT BY THE BRITISH IN INDIA**



**PUNNIAR STAR 1843 'LIEUTT. E. C. MULLEN 50TH QUEEN'S OWN REGT.'  
SUTLEJ 1845-46, FOR MOODKEE 1845, 1 CLASP, FEROSHUHUR 'ADJT.  
LIEUT. E: C: MULLEN 50TH REGT.'**

Edward Cowell Mullen was born in 1818, the younger son of Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Mullen, K.H., 1st Foot, a Peninsular War veteran. He was first commissioned as an Ensign in the 1st Foot on 26 August 1838. He transferred upon promotion to Lieutenant to the 31st Foot on 17 July 1840, transferred again as Lieutenant to the 50th Foot on 18 June 1841, becoming Adjutant of that regiment on 5 July 1845. In late 1843, he served in the Gwalior campaign and was present at the battle of Punniar on 29 December 1843 (Bronze Star). At this battle, General Grey found a division of the Gwalior army entrenched at Punniar. The British assaulted the positions and drove the enemy from them. British casualties were 35 killed and 182 wounded, 42 of which



were suffered by the 50th Regiment. The medals awarded to the participants were made from bronze from the guns captured during the Gwalior campaign.

Two years later, Mullen took part the campaign on the Sutlej (Medal with clasp), including the great battles of Moodkee on 18 December, and Ferozeshuhur on 21-22 December 1845, at which latter he was severely wounded by a musket ball in the leg.

<https://www.britishbattles.com/first-sikh-war/battle-of-ferozeshah/>

Hospitalized after the battle, his wound never properly healed and effects of which he suffered from for the remainder of his life. The regiment having returned from India in June 1848 and still unfit for active duty, Mullen resigned his Adjutancy on 25 August 1848. Returning to Portsmouth, he died at Portsea, Hampshire, on 15 April 1850 and was buried in the garrison churchyard.

### **THE 50TH IN THE SUTLEJ CAMPAIGN**

The 50th were one of the few British Regiments to take part in all the major battles of the Sutlej War, the other being the 31<sup>st</sup> Foot. The regiment sustained 109 casualties at Moodkee, second highest of any Regiment and 124 at Ferozeshuhur. The latter was a terrible battle that has been fought and very almost a defeat. At Aliwal a further 121 casualties were sustained and at the final battle at Sobraon, the regiment was again in the thick of things, suffering a further 239 casualties, by far the highest casualties of any other regiment. So high were the Officer casualties, that it was a lieutenant of the 50<sup>th</sup> who commanded the Regiment when they left the field of battle. When one considers the regimental strength at the start of the campaign was around 800 and taking into account men wounded in more than one action, the amount of casualties they had over a period of less than two months; 593 killed and wounded, was staggering. 5 Officers were killed during the campaign and 32 were wounded, the latter includes several Officers wounded more than once





## FEROZESHAH.

Sir H. Smith's Division was in reserve on December 21st, 1845, about 300 yards in rear of the first line which opened with musketry, and advanced on the enemy's position, but the severe fire of the enemy told so heavily upon them, that the 2nd Brigade of Sir H. Smith's Division, under Colonel Ryan, was ordered to advance to their support. The 3rd Light Dragoons now made some gallant charges, and the 50th advancing soon came into a gap in the first line, and after a few rounds of musketry, charged into the enemy's trenches, driving the Sikhs back at the point of the bayonet. Corporal Hale of the Light Company, and Private Johnson of the Grenadier Company, each capturing a standard of the enemy.

(A third standard was captured later at Sobraon by Sergeant-Major Cantwell. These three standards for many years were hung in the Officers' Mess, but were transferred some years ago to All Saints', Maidstone, where they now are, enclosed in a glass case).

The 50th were the first regiment that succeeded in entering the enemy's works, they then charged on through their camp, the right wing, accompanied by Sir H. Smith, charging through the village of Ferozeshah, the left wing passing outside. It took some time to drive the enemy out of the village, which however was eventually accomplished, the 50th being reinforced by the 9th Regiment (now the Norfolk Regiment) the 1st Europeans (now the Royal Munster Fusiliers) and some Native Regiments. Eventually the two wings of the 50th were united outside the village, and formed a square for the night. Parts of other regiments formed another square some distance off. These squares retained their positions throughout the the night of the 21st, though harassed by the enemy's artillery and musketry, and by parties hovering round in the darkness, and firing into the squares, while our men were hardly able to return a shot, not knowing the position of the rest of our army.

The Light Company of the 50th were sent out a little distance from the square, but the Sikhs discovered them, and bringing up a gun in the darkness poured grape shot into them, compelling them to retire. They unfortunately lost their direction, but Lieutenant Frampton, who was with them, happened to pick up a Sikh bugle, sounded the Regimental call, which was answered from the Regiment, and they were then able to make good their retreat.





The Acting Adjutant of the 50th (Lieutenant Bellairs) in his diary writes thus of the night :—

“ No one can imagine the dire uncertainty—a burning camp on one side of the village, mines and ammunition waggons exploding in every direction, the booming of the big guns, the incessant fire of the smaller ones, the continual yelling of the enemy, together with the intense thirst, fatigue and cold, and not knowing whether the rest of the army were the conquerors or conquered—all contributed to make this night somewhat dreadful.” A Council of War in the early morning decided that a retreat to join the rest of the army was necessary, and at 3 a.m. on the 22nd they moved off, after gallantly carrying the batteries still left in possession of the enemy. The Light Company of the 50th led the way ; the remainder of the Regiment at first brought up the rear of the force, but were eventually brought to the front to meet any attack, for harassed and exhausted as the brigade now was, the artillery without ammunition, and weakened by the cavalry and some of the artillery having gone off to Ferozepore by mistake, they were threatened with a new danger from the force of Teig Singh, reported to be 30,000 strong, which was covering the retreat of the main Sikh army. The 50th then proceeded to join the main army, and came up between the British line and the enemy, and formed in front



of the centre, four of our guns being on their right flank, but then, after firing a few rounds, retired.

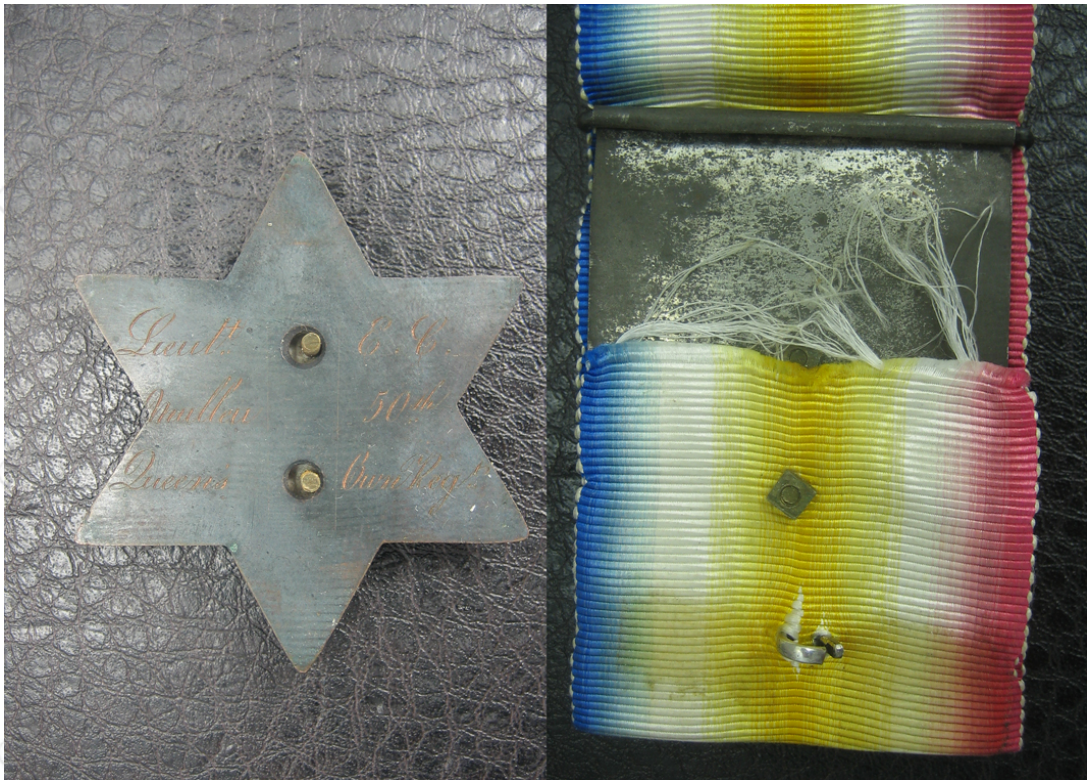
Teig Singh's artillery now opened a heavy fire, and continued their advance. Several of our men being wounded, the Light Company was thrown out in extended order, and the regiment was moved to a more favourable position behind a bank. The enemy's artillery kept up their fire for some time, the British Artillery having gone to Ferozepore for ammunition. The 50th afterwards retired into the general line, but the Light Company remained out for some time.

About 2 p.m. the enemy retired, and the men of the regiment who had had no food for two days, except what they had in their haversacks, managed to get a small bullock, which was distributed as rations. They slept on the ground that night in quarter column with piled arms. The killed and wounded during the two days' fighting were:—Killed, 24 N.C.O.'s and men. Wounded, Captain Knowles, Lieuts. Mouat, Chambers, Barnes, White, and Lieut. and Adjutant Mullen; 7 sergeants, 2 drummers, and 80 rank and file.

On December 24th the wounded were sent to Ferozepore, and the regiment marched to Sultan Khan Wallah, and on Christmas Day a despatch was read to the regiment from the Governor General congratulating them. Sir H. Smith also addressed them, and expressed his warmest approbation of their gallant conduct.











Condition GVF or better. Stars reverse with original screw posts and nuts, brass hook replaced with adapted metal plate and pin for wear; this making a most attractive fitting. Sutlej fitted with silver ribbon brooch, dark toned. An extremely attractive and scarce Officers group. Sold with Regimental history and other research both paper and on CD