

**AN EXTREMELY FINE BATTLE OF WATERLOO HANNOVER, GUELPHIC MEDAL FOR BRAVERY AWARDED TO A SERGEANT OF THE 1ST DRAGOONS, KING'S GERMAN LEGION FOR HIS GALLANTRY IN SAVING THE LIFE OF HIS WOUNDED COMMANDING OFFICER DURING A CAVALRY CHARGE. AN EARLY 1819 LIST AWARD**



HANNOVER, GUELPHIC MEDAL FOR BRAVERY 1815 'WILH. HOFFMEISTER. WACHTMR GARDE CUIRASSIER REGT' officially and attractively engraved naming, his rank and unit correctly named to his present rank and unit when he was awarded the medal, in this case 1819

The original citation for Hofmeister's award, awarded in 1819 and translated from German reads:

*"Sergeant Hofmeister, 1st Dragoons. In one of the charges which this Regiment made at the battle of Waterloo, the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Von Bulow, was wounded and just at that same moment, the regiment was forced back by superior numbers of the enemy. Hofmeister, who was in the rear, and severely pressed by the French, seeing his commanding officer lying bleeding on the ground, braved the destruction, with which the least delay threatened him, - pulled up his horse, dragged the colonel out of the fight; then placed him on his own horse and made him ride away. Hofmeister continued on Foot until he met with a stray horse, upon which he rejoined his regiment and fought during the rest of the battle."*

Sergeant Wilhelm Hofmeister, served in Captain Usler's no 6 troop at Waterloo. Interestingly a Sergeant Johan Hofmeister, who also served at Waterloo (Captain Decken's troop) was

awarded the Guelphic Medal in 1818 for his gallantry in 1812 and 1814. At the time of their awards, both were serving as Wachtmeister's (roughly a Master Sergeant rank) in the Hanover Garde Cuirassier Regiment and it may be wondered whether they were brothers.

The 1st Dragoon's, King's German Legion (Light Dragoons from 1812) were famed for the part they played in breaking three French squares at the Battle of García Hernández on 23 July 1812. Given his rank, it is most likely Hofmeister was present as he would certainly have been a Peninsula War veteran. A search of musters should establish his full service.

At Waterloo the 1st (Light) Dragoons, King's German Legion, 462 strong, were very heavily engaged, making no less than nine charges during the battle, several times forcing the French Cuirassier Regiments to retreat. They suffered 153 casualties during the battle, by far the highest number suffered by any King's German Legion cavalry regiment. As with all regiments, the strength given is 'on paper' but a large percentage of this number would be on other duties; forage or picket duties, non-combatants, those sick or horses sick etc etc and it is not unreasonable to give the number of Officers and men who were on the field of battle to be 20-30% lower.

An early 1819 list award to a still serving soldier, the Guelphic Medal being awarded from 1818 until the 1840's, to serving soldiers and veterans who had performed acts of gallantry during the Peninsula and Waterloo campaigns.



Condition a little contact wear to edges, VF, or better. With an old ribbon, faded to one side and a most attractive patina. A superb gallantry award for the battle of Waterloo