

AN EXTREMELY FINE MILITARY GENERAL SERVICE AND WATERLOO PAIR TO TROOPER IN THE 10<sup>TH</sup> HUSSARS WHO AFTER TAKING PART IN THE CAVALRY ACTIONS AT SAHAGUN & BENEVENTE WAS NOTED FOR HAVING 'DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY GALLANT CONDUCT AT THE BATTLE OF ORTHEZ' BEFORE TAKING PART IN THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO WHERE HIS REGIMENT COVERED ITSELF IN GLORY DURING SEVERAL CHARGES.



MILITARY GENERAL SERVICE 1793-1814, 4 CLASPS, SAHAGUN & BENEVENTE, VITTORIA, ORTHES, TOULOUSE 'J. RING, 10TH HUSSARS', WATERLOO 1815 'JOHN RING, 10TH ROYAL REG. HUSSARS', FITTED WITH ORIGINAL STEEL CLIP AND RING SUSPENSION

John Ring aged 18 from Yaldon, Kent, enlisted into the 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Hussars at Maidstone on 12 June 1803. Serving throughout the peninsular war with in Captain William's troop, he was awarded the Military General Service Medal with Sahagun & Benevente, Vittoria, Orthes and Toulouse, which was the full clasp entitlement for the 10<sup>th</sup> Hussars, bar several odd men. He further took part in the Waterloo campaign, serving in Captain Charles Wood's troop, a piquet of this troop being one of the first to discover the retreat of the Prussians from Ligny on 17 June, reporting this to Wellington.

He was finally discharged from the army on 24 June 1817 due to reduction of the Regiment and regarding his conduct, it was stated this had been:



*“Good, that he served in the campaigns of 1808-9 and 1813-14 and distinguished himself by gallant conduct at the battle of Orthez”*

The battle of Orthez, where Ring was noted for his gallantry. This extracted from the Regimental history:

*“Marshal Soult having collected his forces at Orthez, took up a strong defensive position, where he was attacked by the Allies on the 27th February. The main body under Wellington crossed the Gave below Orthez, and attacked the right and centre of the French, and at the same time the division under Hill forded the river above that town, with the object of cutting off their retreat. ‘The cavalry, under Sir Stapleton Cotton and Lord Edward Somerset, closely followed on their flank; but the only opportunity that occurred during the battle for the action of cavalry was taken by Cotton, who charged with the 7th Hussars, supported by Somerset’s dragoons, and took 300 prisoners; 2,000 more threw down their arms, but made good their escape.*

*The enemy lost 3,900 killed, wounded, and prisoners, and six guns in this battle; the Allies, 2,300. The Tenth had a few men slightly wounded, and one man and horse severely, by the bursting of a shell. In the pursuit the regiment was employed with the advanced guard, and drove before it the French rear guard. On the 28th the right squadron, composed of Captain Harding’s and Captain Lloyd’s troops, A and F, under Lieutenant-Colonel Palmer, being considerably advanced, came in contact with a body of French cavalry formed on the road. Captain Harding’s troop, supported by Captain Lloyd’s, immediately charged, broke the enemy’s ranks, killing several men, and took thirty-four French dragoons prisoners, at the same time capturing eight horses. The centre and left squadrons, under Colonel Quentin, which were in support, came up and drove the remainder of the French rear guard across the Adour. Captain Harding and five privates were severely wounded, four horses killed, and eight wounded. The regiment bivouacked that night on the banks of the river. In reference to this affair the following order was published :—*

*Major-General Lord Edward Somerset will be pleased to convey his best thanks to Lieutenant-Colonel Quentin and the officers and men of the 10th Royal Hussars for their gallant and steady conduct yesterday.*

*(Signed) Stapleton Cotton. “*

A good account of the 10<sup>th</sup> Hussars part in the Peninsular and Waterloo campaign can be found on the britishempire website:

<https://www.britishempire.co.uk/forces/10thhussars.htm>

### ***“Sahagun, 21 Dec 1808***

The hussars were to capture the village of Sahagun which lay on the River Cea, north of Mayorga. They left at midnight on 21 Dec and on reaching the area near their objective, split into two. The 15th Hussars under Lord Henry Paget was to wait on the south side while the 10th Hussars under General Slade were ordered to approach from the other side, attack the French Picquet at the bridge at 6.30am and force the enemy cavalry towards Paget’s hussars. It was a cold night, very dark and sleeting. On reaching the bridge, later than Paget had ordered, they found the picquet gone and the village empty of the enemy. Meanwhile the 15th Hussars saw the French dragoons drawn up and waiting for them on their side of Sahagun. They charged and were completely successful in defeating the enemy who remained stationary with carbines ready. French losses were 20 killed and a large number of prisoners; 2 lieutenant-colonels, 11 other officers and 154 men. The 10th joined in the pursuit of the remainder. That day and night the brigade stayed in the convent near the village and then returned to Mayorga where they were informed of the decision to retreat back to Corunna.

### ***Benevente, 29 Dec 1808***

The hussar brigade arrived at Benevente on 27 Dec after crossing the River Esla and destroying the bridge at Castro Gonzalo. It had rained all day and the subsequent frost made the roads impassable. They rested until 29 Dec when 600 of the French Imperial Guard cavalry waded across the river. The 18th Hussars picquets guarding the river retired until they were supported by the 3rd Hussars of the King's German Legion. They made a charge against the French which had some degree of success but soon had to retreat through the town where pandemonium broke out. Meanwhile, the 10th Hussars were formed up behind some houses and made a surprise charge. This encouraged the picquets and KGL to make a fresh attack and the combined hussar offensive, supported by the 7th Hussars forced the French cavalry into the river. It is said that Napoleon himself was watching this action, dismayed to see his elite Guard cavalry overthrown. Fifty-five of them were killed, 70 wounded and 70 more taken prisoner. There was a pursuit over the plain and a French officer was seen making his way to another part of the river. Two men of the 10th set off to catch him and he was wounded in the struggle. They discovered that their new prisoner was General Lefèvre-Desnouettes. He was later sent back to England where he was treated respectfully. He lived at Cheltenham and Malvern but in May 1812 he escaped back to France. The hussar who captured him was Private Levi Grisdall who was promoted to sergeant for his work. Sir John Moore praised the units that took part and credit was given to Lord Henry Paget and Brigadier-General Charles Stewart, later the Marquess of Londonderry.



### ***Battle of Vittoria, 21 June 1813***

On 12 June the town of Burgos was captured which involved the Hussars to the extent that they helped drive the French back into the town. But Burgos was abandoned by the enemy during the night, after blowing up the castle. There followed a memorable march northeast across the Cantabrian Mountains to reach the River Ebro and for the army to ensure the occupation of Santander as a port. Savagetta was reached on 19 June and the French, with King Joseph Bonaparte's baggage train, could only make slow progress towards the Pyrenees. Joseph ordered Marshal Jourdan to position his troops with the right wing on the River Zadora and the left wing on the Puebla mountains. Both Joseph and Jourdan lacked the respect of the army they commanded. Wellington divided his army into four parts, the Right Centre Column commanded by himself contained 4 brigades of cavalry, one of which was Portuguese. The Hussar brigade was the 2nd under Colquhoun Grant. The Right Column under Sir Rowland Hill was the first into action followed by the Left Column under Sir Thomas Graham. The Centre columns came into action after the outnumbered French began to retreat. Wellington saw that



the hill in front of Arinez had been abandoned by the enemy and ordered the cavalry to occupy it. The Tenth went in support but then the Hussar Brigade were directed to the left of the town of Vitoria and in the pursuit entered the town at full gallop. They veered to the right and came out onto the Pampeluna road. It was here that they caught up with wagons full of King Joseph's treasure.

#### ***Orthes, 27 Feb 1814***

The regiment left Pampeluna on 16 Dec and crossed the Bidassoa into France, and, after crossing the Nive were stationed at Ocuraye, employed on outpost duty until 9 Jan 1814. When the army advanced on 15 Feb the Tenth, in the vanguard, covered the right Division and dislodged the enemy from Hellette. On 25 Feb they forded the river Gave de Pau at Salvatierra. Soult deployed his army at Orthes and the battle took place on 27 Feb. The 10th Hussars were in Stapleton Cotton's Cavalry Division brigaded with the 7th and 15th Hussars under Lord Edward Somerset. The 7th saw the most action in this battle, and the 10th suffered only one man and horse severely wounded by a shell. They were, however, in the advanced guard in the pursuit of the defeated enemy. On 28 Feb, two Troops led by Lt-Col Charles Palmer were well ahead and came in contact with French cavalry. A Troop under Captain Harding charged at them, killing several, and with the help of F Troop, taking 34 prisoners and securing 8 horses. Lt-Col Quentin came up with the other two squadrons and pursued the rest of the enemy rear guard across the river Adour. In this fight Captain Harding and 5 privates were severely wounded, 4 horses killed and 8 wounded.

#### ***Battle of Toulouse, 10 April 1814***

On 8 April the regiment skirmished with enemy piquets and Lt Charles Wyndham was wounded, along with a private and two horses. At the town of Toulouse, the French had time to prepare defences, and redoubts for their artillery. Wellington's army deployed on the east side of Toulouse on 10 April with the Hussar Brigade on the right of the line. Liddell's history of the Tenth then says, 'but in the early part of the afternoon [the Brigade] was suddenly called upon to move in front of the Third and Fourth Divisions, under Marshal Beresford, who was ordered to the left of the position. To effect this it was necessary to traverse a narrow swampy plain, within range of the artillery of the French redoubts, bounded on the other side of the River Ers, a small impassable stream. This the hussars crossed by the only bridge left undestroyed and ran the gauntlet of the enemy's fire. Having reached the other bank, they drove Berton's cavalry before them.' In this action the regiment lost an officer and 4 men killed, and an officer and 6 men wounded. The horse casualties were 15 killed, 6 wounded and one missing. The battle lasted many hours and it is unfortunate that thousands of men lost their lives unnecessarily because Napoleon had abdicated only a few days before, the news reaching Toulouse on 12 April. The French army vacated the city so that Wellington and his army were received as liberators by a cheering and celebrating crowd.

#### **QUATRE BRAS AND WATERLOO 16-18 JUNE 1815**

One of the most prestigious Cavalry regiments, at Waterloo, the 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Hussars covered themselves in glory, making several charges and suffering 24% casualties

*"There were seven brigades of cavalry all under the command of the Earl of Uxbridge. The 6th (Hussar) Brigade was commanded by Major-General Sir Hussey Vivian and consisted of three regiments:*

*10th Hussars - 390 strong - CO Colonel Quentin*

*18th Hussars - 396 strong - CO Lt-Col Hon H Murray*

*1st Hussars of the King's German Legion - 493 strong - CO Lt-Col von Wissell.*

#### ***QUATRE BRAS, 16 JUNE 1815***

*On 14 June Napoleon was in personal command of his army on the banks of the Sambre and the next day was in possession of Charleroi. That evening the army began moving towards the Forest of*

*Soignies, the 10th received its orders at midnight, and the officers who had attended the Duchess of Richmond's ball changed out of their dress uniforms and joined their men on the march south to Nivelles. There was no time to rest so the next day was spent marching to Quatre Bras. The French fought two battles on 16 June, at Ligny they fought the Prussians, and at Quatre Bras Marshal Ney fought the British/Allied army. The 10th arrived too late for the battle, which mostly involved the infantry, and bivouacked in the area. Early on the 17th, two patrols were sent out, one under Captain John Grey and the other under Captain Charles Wood. Both patrols discovered that the Prussians had retreated towards Wavre and both claimed to have been the first to convey this information to Wellington.*



### **CROSSING THE GENAPPE, 17 JUNE 1815**

*Wellington's army fell back towards Waterloo as they were pursued by Ney's cavalry. The 6th Hussar Brigade presented a front to the enemy to protect the army's left flank but Wellington ordered them to continue with their retreat, and they were divided into three columns, Vandeleur's and Vivian's brigades forming the left column to cross the bridge over the Genappe at Thuy. Being hard pressed by large numbers of French cavalry, Vivian ordered the Horse Artillery to fire on them. The hussars' retreat was covered by skirmishers but there was a setback when Vivian discovered that Vandeleur's brigade had retired instead of offering support. The 18th were then ordered to charge the enemy but as they formed up to do so a terrific thunderstorm broke over the field and rain fell in torrents. The ground soon became saturated and the cavalry action had to be called off. The bridge at Thuy was choked with men and horses so there was a frustrating delay before the brigade could cross. First across were men of the 10th who dismounted and took up firing positions to cover the rest of the brigade. The King's German Legion were last over and most of them opted to find somewhere to ford the river lower down. The French came up as the last men were on the bridge, but the firing from the dismounted men on the other bank deterred them and forced them back.*



### **POSITIONED ON THE LEFT OF THE LINE**

The night of the 17th/18th June 1815 is well known for being extremely wet, so that the men had to mount up with wet clothes and march through boggy ground. The 6th Brigade was placed on the extreme left of the whole army. Vivian requested the 10th to supply a reconnaissance party which was ordered to locate the advance parties of the Prussians. This party, under Major Thomas Taylor, reached as far as Ohain, and met with a Prussian patrol and discovered that General Bülow was at St Lambert. Back at the battlefield, the French began their advance, and Hougomont came under attack at 11.30am. Vandeleur's brigade of Light Dragoons were on the right of Vivian's regiments, and they, together with the 10th Hussars were positioned to confront the French troops. Meanwhile the heavy cavalry were sent in to charge against enemy cavalry and infantry. Ponsonby's Union Brigade found themselves in difficulties when they were charged by Lancers and Chasseurs, so the 12th and 16th Light Dragoons of Vandeleur's Brigade dashed through a column of French infantry to attack the left flank of the Lancers and forced them to withdraw.

### **REMOVAL OF THE BRIGADE TO THE CENTRE**

The 10th and 18th Hussars who for several hours had withstood the French artillery barrage were ordered to move to the right along a hollow way but did not go into action at this stage. During the late afternoon, Vivian's Brigade moved further to the right. As they took up a new position Colonel Quentin was wounded in the ankle, and his place taken by Lord Robert Manners. The brigade were drawn up behind infantry units of Brunswick and Nassau which were wavering. The Nassau troops fell back so that they were almost touching the heads of the 10th's horses. Due to strong encouragement and persuasion these German soldiers were discouraged from further retreat. Vivian then ordered the KGL forward to link up with the Hanoverians and other German allies. This gave heart to the faltering men of Nassau and a forward movement took place. The 10th followed in support but were unable to attack as cavalry should, so were vulnerable to enemy musketry. They sustained many injuries including three officers.



With the approach of the Prussian army under Blücher the left flank of the allied army was more protected which had allowed Vivian's brigades to move towards the centre. And now that the French attacks were weakening, Wellington felt that it was time to send in those cavalry regiments that had

not yet been employed fully. The brigade cantered forward with the 10th Hussars leading. As they passed Vandeleur's Light Dragoons and Maitland's brigade of Guards, they were cheered on. Vivian saw masses of French troops on the left of La Belle Alliance and decided to concentrate the attack there. The 10th were ordered to incline to the right and the 18th and KGL to support them. The squadrons formed line and charged in echelon so that the right squadron under Major the Hon Frederick Howard, were first in action. The force of their charge pushed the French back and sent them off in all directions so that as the other squadrons came up they pursued fleeing troops. Vivian, having seen how the Scots Greys had charged too far, earlier in the day, called a halt and rally. The 18th were then sent in to attack the Chasseurs and Grenadiers à Cheval. But first they thwarted a movement of French artillery and captured their guns.

### **MAJOR HOWARD'S DEATH**

The Tenth, having been ordered to halt, came under attack from cuirassiers. Howard's squadron bore the brunt of the attack but could not be supported by the other two squadrons as they failed to hear the order to halt and carried on with their pursuit under the command of Lt-Col Manners. Vivian caught up with Howard who, it seems, had beaten off the cuirassiers, and ordered the squadron to charge a square formed by the Grenadiers of the Guard. This was a forlorn hope as the French Grenadiers were seasoned troops and well able to fend off the attack with a wall of bayonets. It was supposed to be a coordinated attack together with a unit of infantry but the infantry commander declined to cooperate. According to Captain Taylor, Howard consulted with him about the proposed attack and Taylor advised against it. 'Major Howard said that having been ordered to attack he thought it a ticklish thing not to do it, and gave the order accordingly.' Major Howard was killed in this action, shot through the mouth and having his head beaten with a rifle butt. With two other officers wounded (Lieuts Arnold and Bacon), and another killed (George Gunning), the squadron was extricated by Cornet William Hamilton. There is no mention of whether Captain Taylor took part. Even though the attack failed, the enemy square was forced to fall back as part of a general retreat.

### **FINAL CHARGE OF THE 10TH**

Meanwhile the two pursuing squadrons continued to a point southeast of Hougoumont, driving back cuirassiers. They then came upon the enemy infantry in retreat and recognised men of the Imperial Guard in their tall bearskins who covered the retreat by forming a defensive position. They fired on the squadrons, so Manners halted the men at a distance of 40 paces, formed the men into line and sounded the charge. The impact of the 10th against the French defence was too great and the veterans of the Imperial Guard were forced to give way. Vandeleur saw what was happening and brought his brigade to support the right flank of Vivien's men. The infantry of Adam's Brigade, on the left of the Tenth, made great progress and were soon led by Wellington himself to put the final nail in the French Army's coffin. Napoleon quit the field and his army was in full retreat. Adams's men were halted at La Belle Alliance, Vandeleur's Brigade bivouacked at the woods of Cellois. But Vivien's Brigade were led some distance further, to Hilaincourt.

The 10th Hussars lost the following; Killed - 2 officers, 21 men and 51 horses. Wounded - 6 officers, one Troop Quartermaster, one Trumpeter, 38 rank-and-file, and 35 horses."







Condition, MGS with contact marks around 3 and 9 o'clock etc; the pair were clearly worn by Ring which can't have been too common. Thus the pair about VF

Very scarce to have an enlisted man noted for his gallantry in his service papers and fine pair of medals showing full entitlement of medals/clasps for the 10<sup>th</sup> Hussars during the Napoleonic Wars.