

THE EGYPT 1882 PAIR AWARDED TO AN OFFICER OF THE 7TH DRAGOON GUARDS, WHO SHARED IN THE FAMED 'MOONLIGHT CHARGE' BY THE HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY AT KASSASIN 28 AUGUST 1882



EGYPT AND SUDAN 1882-89, DATED REVERSE, NO CLASP 'LIEUT: F. A. BARTON, 7/DN. GDS.', KHEDIVE'S STAR 1882

Army List entry: "*Captain Barton served 7th Dragoon Guards in the Egyptian war of 1882 and was present at the engagement at Mahsma and the two actions at Kassassin*"

Francis Alexander Barton was born at San Miguel Arcangel, Mexico on 26 June 1860, the son of James Barton, a shipping agent. Young Barton was commissioned into the West Kent Militia in January 1879 and thence as Cornet into the 7th Dragoon Guards in July 1880. He was advanced Lieutenant on 22 December 1880.

On 28 August 1882 an Egyptian army led by Ahmed Urabi attacked the British troops at Kassassin in order to recapture the Suez Canal, which had been seized by the British. The outcome of the battle was in the balance until the arrival of British reinforcements just as darkness began to fall. The Household Cavalry composite regiment charged the Egyptian infantry, headlong into the rifle fire, who soon abandoned their guns. The charge would go down in history as "The Moonlight Charge"

The composite Regiment, led by Dury Lowe, consisted of a Squadron from each of the 1st Life Guards, 2nd Life Guards, Royal Horse Guards and 7th Dragoon Guards with four guns of the Royal Horse Artillery. The event was immortalised by G. W. Bacon.

The following from *The Seventh (Princess Royal's) Dragoon Guards, The Story of the Regiment*

'On the morning of the 28 August the Egyptians threatened the advanced troops at Kassassin, and the Household Squadrons and the 7th Dragoon Guards, at Mahsamah, were ordered forward. All day, in burning sun and parched with thirst, they remained out in the desert. As all was apparently quiet, Drury Lowe returned at 4.30 p.m. to Mahsamah to feed. Many a time has one seen horses mad with thirst, but surely never so mad as on that day, for no sooner was the canal in sight than the horses took charge of their riders, and rushing down the muddy banks, plunged into the water girth-high, and drank as if they had never drunk before.'



Before the Brigade got back to camp guns were heard again, and immediately the order came to turnout. It was now dark and the 7th Dragoon Guards, leading, directed the advance by the evening star. A mile or two further on the flashes of the Egyptian guns, as they bombarded the camp at Kassassin, gave a more tangible objective. Drury Lowe, having received orders to attack the enemy's left, made a wide sweep to the north.

At this time the 7th were in the first line, the guns of N Battery, R. H. A., behind, and the Household Troops in support. Suddenly the Brigade came under fire from Infantry and Artillery, and the 7th were ordered to wheel outwards to uncover the guns, and then to form up in support of the Household Squadrons.

By this time the moon had risen. Squadrons showed up black, and flash answered flash as the opposing guns opened one on the other. The order now came to charge and away went the Household Squadrons led by the gallant Ewart. Into the Egyptian Infantry and up to the guns they went, the 7th following as a solid reserve in hand, but a little of this work was enough for the enemy, and they evaporated in all directions. It was now about 9 p.m., and, the firing having, ceased, all returned to camp.'

Total casualties to the cavalry Brigade were 1 Officer and 8 men killed, 1 Officer and 16 men wounded. Casualties to the 7th Dragoon Guards were 1 Officer and 1 man killed, 3 men wounded.



Barton himself was advanced Captain in March 1887 and resigned his commission in January 1888. His time with the Militia was not complete however, as he rose to become a Captain in the Royal North Devon Hussars by November 1892. Living at Little Silver, High Bickington, the good Captain died in June 1936.



Condition, contact wear, NVF