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**THE EXTREMELY FINE CONFIRMED LIGHT BRIGADE CHARGER'S GROUP OF THREE AWARDED A TROOPER OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> LIGHT DRAGOONS WHO'S THRILLING ACCOUNT OF THE CHARGE AND COMBAT AMONGST THE RUSSIAN GUNS AND CAVALRY HAVE BEEN QUOTED IN MULTIPLE PUBLICATIONS**



CRIMEA 1854-56, 3 CLASPS, BALAKLAVA, INKERMANN, SEBASTOPOL 'J. GRIGG. 4TH LT DRAGONS', OFFICIALLY IMPRESSED NAMING, ARMY L.S. & G.C., V.R. '954 SERGT JOSPH GRIGG, 5TH LANCERS', TURKISH CRIMEA 1855, BRITISH ISSUE. UNNAMED AS ISSUED.

Joseph Grigg, a Groom was born in Exeter on 24 August 1825 and enlisted into the 4th Light Dragoons at Exeter on 21 October 1843. Given regimental number 1180 he went on to serve in the Crimean War with his regiment and was present at the battle of Balaclava, 25 October 1854 where he took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade. Of the 12 officers, 118 men and 118 horses of the 4th Light Dragoons who took part in the charge, 4 officers, 54 men and 80 horses were killed, wounded or missing. Private Samuel Parkes of the 4<sup>th</sup> was awarded the Victoria Cross for his part in the charge and is mentioned in Grigg's narrative.

Grigg went on to serve at the battle of Inkerman and the siege of Sebastopol and continued to serve with the regiment until June 1861 when he transferred to the 5<sup>th</sup> Lancers and was given a new number; 954. Serving in India with the lancers, he was promoted Corporal on 27 July 1863 and sergeant on 24 January 1866. He was discharged from the army at his own request with a pension for 24 years' service, on 31 May 1869,

For his service, Grigg had been awarded the Crimean War medal with three clasps, the Turkish Crimea medal and the Army Long Service Good Conduct Medal. Despite Grigg telling how he was at Alma, both the medal rolls and his service papers state he received a medal with the clasps Balaclava, Inkerman and Sebastopol only. It may be he was at Alma but for whatever reason the clasp was not authorised to him.

Post army service, he was a Prison Warder, St Augustine's Prison, Canterbury, from 1871, a Prison Warder at Canterbury Jail of 1 Notley Street, Northgate, Canterbury and in 1881 was noted as Warder of Prison and Chelsea Pensioner, late Sergeant 5th Lancers of 23 Alma Street, Canterbury.

Grigg died aged 80 on 19 February 1904 at Herne Workhouse, described as an 'Army Pensioner of St Dunstan.'. He was buried at St Dunstan's church, London Road, Canterbury

As well as writing accounts of his experiences during the charge of the Light Brigade, quotes from which appear in multiple books on the charge and in full in the 1897 publication, *'Told From the Ranks,'* Grigg is listed as having Appeared on 1879 Commemoration Society List, attended the Balaklava Dinner in Birmingham in 1895, attended T.H. Roberts Jubilee celebrations in Fleet Street and Signed an Illuminated Address to T.H. Roberts dated 25 October 1897. In all subsequent publications on the charge, is listed as a confirmed 'charger'



Sources:

Grigg's service papers

Honour the Light Brigade

The War Correspondent, Journal of the Crimean War Research Society Vol. 28, No. 3, Oct 2010:

Joseph Grigg: From Prison Warden to the Workhouse by Chris Poole

Told from the Ranks: Recollections of Service by Privates and Non-Commissioned Officers of the British Army 1843-1901 by E. Milton Small, pub. 1901

Further details on Grigg, his service and family, can also be found on this excellent website:

<https://shadowsoftime.co.nz/4ths/dragoong/grigg1.html>



Sotheby sale of 1906 (digital copy of catalogue with research), shows 3 medals in the group, the Crimea with 3 clasps. As common with all medal groups in the catalogue, only the naming of one medal appears in the lot description, which appears to be the later medal; in this case the Long Service Medal.

Matching pawnbroker numbers appear on the upper edge of both the Crimea and Long Service Medals and also the rear strap of the balaclava clasp. The Sebastopol and Inkermann clasp have non official rivets and have been added later, which is not unusual as clasps were frequently issued loose. However since they have more wear to them and no pawnbroker stamps, this suggests they were added sometime prior to the 1906 sale. The Turkish Crimea, also has not stamp and has been added to the pair; these medal being unnamed anyway.

It is very likely that Grigg either pawned his medal before he died in the workhouse in 1904 or someone did after he died and they were then acquired by the Sotheby collector who likely added the clasps and Turkish Crimea. Backing up this is a period photograph of Grigg in old age which shows him wearing his medals with only one clasp on his Crimea medal, which matches the pawnbrokers stamps but also shows a different suspension on the Turkish Crimea.

#### **THE CHARGE OF THE SIX HUNDRED' BY JOSEPH GRIGG, 4LD**

*"The Charge of the Six Hundred.*

*My father was a soldier at the time of the Battle of Waterloo, but he had at that time to do duty in Ireland.*

*As a boy, I always had a desire to see a battlefield and made up my mind to enlist in a cavalry regiment. On the 21st October 1843, when at the age of eighteen, I joined the 4th Light Dragoons, now the 4th Hussars, at Exeter, where I was born, and where the Regiment was then stationed. I enlisted for unlimited service.*

*We were moved to various places, at each of which we stayed, as was usual in those days, twelve months.*

*In 1851 I volunteered for service at the Cape, against the Kafirs, but was not accepted, as there were more volunteers than enough.*

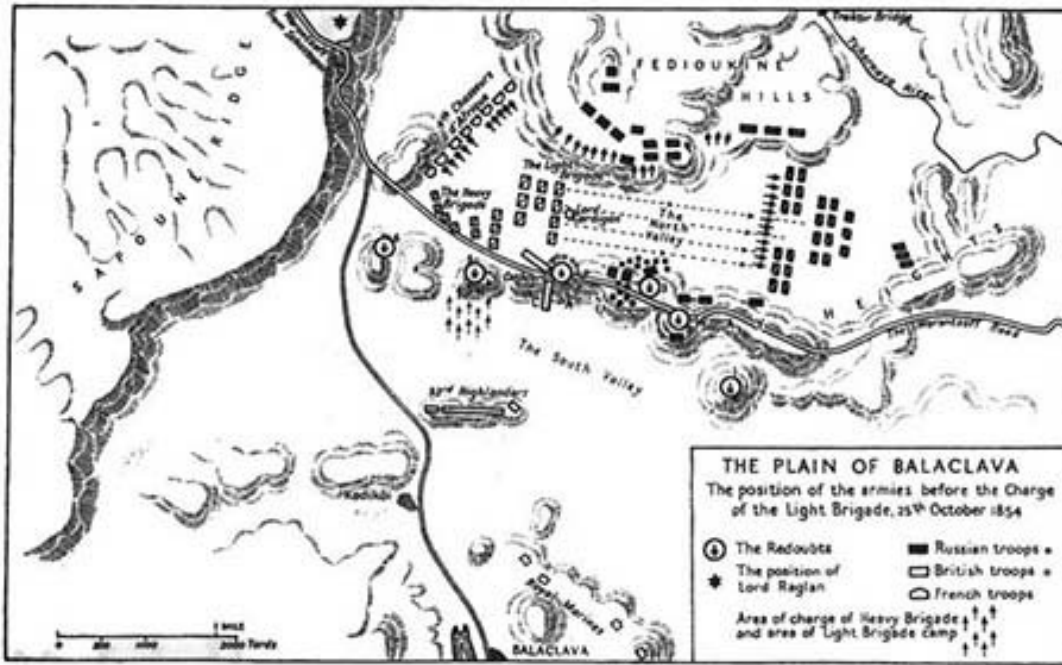
*In 1853 we were stationed at Chobham, when we were ordered to march to Canterbury, and, early in July in the following year, we marched from thence to Plymouth, where we embarked for the Crimea, on board the steamship Simla, on the 17th and 18th. The strength of the regiment was then twenty officers and three hundred and nine non commissioned officers and men, who were under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Lord George Paget, whose father, the Marquis of Anglesey, lost a leg at Waterloo.*

*Lord George was a cool-headed, brave man, and was a great favourite with all under his command. He gave us good advice during our voyage out, and in many ways endeared himself to all of us.*

*Our ship had a fast passage, doing the voyage in about fourteen days, as far as I can remember, and we had good weather during the whole time. We landed at Varna, and after a while re-embarked, and landed at Old Fort, near Eupatoria, on the 17th September. As we had to get our horses into boats, and bring them ashore, the business of disembarkation took some little time.*

*On the 20th, when in sight of the heights of Alma, we were placed on the extreme left of the line, to protect the artillery, who were on the left of the infantry; it was our duty to keep back the Cossacks in order to prevent them getting in rear of our column. We could watch the attack from where we were, and saw the Rifle Brigade and the Highlanders and Guards go up the hills like cats. Nothing but death or wounds stopped them.*

*We had but little to do, and only one or two of our men got slight flesh wounds. When our troops got to the top of the heights, we closed in towards the main body, but were not allowed to give chase, although the Russians were in full retreat. The fight, which began about noon, was over between three and four. We linked our horses together in long lines and set about getting things ship-shape, after which we had to take our horses down to the river for water. There is always plenty to do if you have a horse to look after. The men had been served out with three days' rations, and the horses carried provender to last them for the same period.*



*When we had time to look about us, we were horrified by the sight of the wounded, who lay scattered around in all directions, higgledy-piggledy as you may say; sometimes legs and arms were lying by themselves while the men were lying a little distance off. Some lay in heaps of mingled friends and foes; in other places I saw Russians and Englishmen who were grappling when death overtook them. Where shells had burst, the bodies lay scattered around; but where large shots had struck the men, they were terribly mutilated, while the bullets had struck them in all parts of their bodies.*

*Somewhere on the hill we came upon the ruins of a grand stand. It was supposed that the ships' guns had demolished it, and that it had been erected for Russian spectators, who expected it would take six weeks for us to get up the hills.*

*Each regiment, as far as possible, picked up its own wounded and buried its own dead. During the two nights we remained on the battlefield our men were employed on vedette duty, and the moans of the wounded were terrible to listen to. Our men were out the greater part of the first night attending to them. They had strict orders not to plunder the dead, but I believe there was a little of it done, especially when the Russians wore earrings. The French were less particular about this than we were.*

*One day I was mounted with my troop, waiting for orders from Lord Raglan, who was on a hill behind us, from whence he could see the greater part of the battlefield, and send an aide-de-camp with an order whenever necessary.*

*From where we were formed up, we watched the enemy place nine field guns across the valley at about half a mile from us; and two field batteries of two guns each were put into position, one on a slope on the left of the guns, and one on the right. Two squares of infantry were also posted on the left of the guns, under cover of the guns on the hillside, while others were in possession of the redoubts which the Turks had deserted.*

*I saw Captain Nolan, of the 15th Hussars, come galloping down from Lord Raglan to where Lord Lucan and Lord Cardigan were, and we knew then that there was something for us to do.*

*Our men of the Light Brigade were the 17th Lancers (Duke of Cambridge's Own), as fine a regiment as ever carried lances; the 8th Hussars, a nice lot of fellows, always ready for anything in the fighting way; the 11th Hussars, who all did their duty well; the 13th Light Dragoons, as good as any in the fight; and our 4th Queen's Own Light Dragoons, who were as ready for it as the others.*

*The Earl of Cardigan shouted out, "The Brigade will advance - March!" and Trumpet-Major Joy, who was orderly, sounded the "Trot" when we had got into walking order; and we then broke into a trot. Soon the trumpet sounded "Gallop," and afterwards "Charge," and away we went at a splendid pace. As we got nearer the guns our pace was terrific; the horses were as anxious to go as we were; mine snorted and vibrated with excitement, and I could hardly keep my seat, for we seemed to go like the wind.*



*We were in three lines: in the first, as nearly as I can remember, were the 13th Light Dragoons and 17th Lancers; second line, 4th Light Dragoons and 11th Hussars; third line, 8th Hussars. The lines were about a hundred yards apart, so when a man went down with his horse, the man behind him had time to turn his horse on one side or jump him over the obstacle. Every man thus had all his work to do to look before him, and there were not many chances to watch the dreadful work of the shots, shells, and bullets, which were showered at us from all directions.*

*The first man to fall was Captain Nolan, who went down directly we got within the range of their guns; but soon afterwards men and horses began to fall fast; the man on my right hand went down with a crash, and soon afterwards the man on my left went down also.*

*I remember, as we neared the guns, Captain Brown, who was in command of our squadron, called out to the men in the second line, who were getting too near the front, "Steady, men, steady! you shall have a go in directly."*

*Just before we got to the guns, we have three loud cheers, and then, in a moment, we were among the enemy.*

*As I passed the wheel of the gun-carriage the gun was fired, and I suppose some of the 8th Hussars*

got that shot, or shell, or whatever it was. The wind was blowing from behind us, and the smoke from the guns prevented us from seeing very well what work there was for us to do.

The first man I noticed was a mounted driver. He cut me across the eyes with his whip, which almost blinded me, but as my horse flew past him, I made a cut at him and caught him in the mouth, so that his teeth all rattled together as he fell from his horse. I can fancy I hear the horrible sound now. As he fell I cut at him again; and then I made for another driver, and cut him across the back of his neck, and gave him a second cut as he fell.

A few gunners stood in a group with their rifles, and we cut at them as we went rushing by. Beyond the guns the Russian cavalry, who should have come out to prevent our getting near the gunners, were coming down upon us howling wildly, and we went at them with a rush. I selected a mounted Cossack, who was making for me with his lance pointed at my breast. I knocked it upwards with my sword, pulled up quickly, and cut him down across the face. I tried to get hold of his lance, but he dropped it.

As he was falling, I noticed that he was strapped on to the saddle, so that he did not come to the ground, and the horse rushed away with him. His lance, like all the others used by the Cossacks, had a black tuft of hair, about three inches from the blade, to hide a hook having a sharp edge, with which the reins of their enemies are cut when the lance is withdrawn after a thrust.

Some men of the 4th, and I, made for several other Cossacks who were there in a body, cutting our way through them as through a small flock of sheep; and while thus engaged, the batteries on the slopes fired upon us, and their own men also, which was strange warfare, to say the least of it!

Just then I heard Lord George Paget call out, "Rally on me!" I turned and saw him holding up his sword, and we all turned our horses towards where he had taken up a position in front of the guns. On arriving there, we noticed a regiment of Polish Lancers, which had come out from an opening in the hills behind us and was preparing to charge our rear; we thereupon charged through the guns again, killing several Russian Hussars who were still there. It seemed to me then, in the terrible din, confusion, and excitement, that all the gunners and drivers were on the ground, either dead or wounded.

Before the Polish Lancers had time to form lines and attack us, the Chasseurs d'Afrique (a French regiment), who were coming down the valley at a sweeping pace, drove them down with great loss.

After a short engagement with the Russian Hussars, we turned our horses in the direction of our starting-place and rode back the best way we could, under fire of the infantry and the batteries on the hills.

I was in company with a comrade belonging to my own troop, and all of a sudden down went his horse, and he pitched over its head and lay helpless on the ground. I immediately dismounted and picked him up, when I found his shoulder was dislocated. Regimental Sergeant-Major Johnson, of the 13th Light Dragoons, who was coming up behind us, rode towards us, calling out, "What's the matter?" and between us we got him back in safety.

Captain Portal, who did not get a wound, rode an Irish horse called "Black Paddy." A large piece of a shell struck it in the shoulder, and directly we got back the poor animal fell dead. The captain had the hoofs cut off and preserved. I saw them some time afterwards beautifully polished, shoes and all.

Captain Hutton, I believe, was wounded in several places, and so was his horse, which also fell dead directly it returned from the charge.

Private Samuel Parks, Lord Paget's orderly, who dismounted to pick up Trumpet-Major Crawford, was taken prisoner with several others. After thirteen months he was exchanged, and Lord George Paget asked him all about his doings. He told us that General Menschikoff said to him, "Did they

*make all your men drunk before the charge?" "No Sir," he answered, "unless a pen'orth of rum in an evening would do it, for we only pay a penny a day for our allowance." "Well," said the General, as he walked away, "I never saw a prettier charge in all my life."*

*Parks also told us that he and some others were taken to St. Petersburg, where they were well treated, and allowed eightpence a day each for food, which was very cheap.*



CRIMEAN WAR VETERANS OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> LIGHT DRAGOONS

*On the following day, General Cathcart wrote to our commanding officer for an orderly, to be sent to take the place of one of the five men who were chosen for this duty, who had fallen sick. The Captain sent me up with a letter, and from that time I acted as one of the General's orderlies.*

*On the afternoon of the 4th of November there was a meeting of all the commanding officers up at Lord Raglan's quarters. General Cathcart called me to him in the evening, and said, "Don't go away, Grigg; I may want you presently." Later on he called me, and said, "Do you know where Captain Gordon is to be found?" I answered that I did not know, but would soon find him.*

*The General replied, "You know the windmill; go direct to it, turn to the left, and then inquire of the sentries."*

*The night was pitch dark when I got to where the sentry was posted. He challenged me with the usual "Who goes there?" I explained that I wanted Captain Gordon [later General Gordon] of the Engineers, and, after being passed from one sentry to another, I was at last conducted to a very little tent in the most advanced post in front of Sebastopol.*

The captain was sitting all alone in his tent, with no light burning, for fear of making a mark for the Russian gunners. The sentry called gently, "Captain Gordon." "Yes," he answered, coming to the tent door; "what is it?" "I have come from General Cathcart, sir," I answered. "Yes, and what have you got?" he asked. "A little note for you, sir," I replied, handing him the letter.

He stepped into the tent again, struck a wax match, and read the note, and I heard him say as he read it, "Prepare for action in the morning." Then, coming to the tent door again, and speaking in a low voice, he said to me, "Tell the General, 'All right.' Good-night."

I bade him good-night and found my way back, wondering what the next day would bring forth.

On arriving at the General's tent, I took up my position as usual behind it, waiting for orders. He always dressed himself ready for fighting before he lay down for the night. It was a miserable night, with a mist and fog that soaked into our clothes, and just before the day broke we heard firing in the direction of our outposts. The General came out from his tent and ordered the bugler, who stood beside me, to sound the "Assembly." The call was taken up all over the camp, and in a moment all the troops were on the move. The General mounted his horse, and I followed him.

It was not long before shot and shell were flying in all directions, and our men were moved out to meet the approaching Russians, who were creeping upon us through the dense fog. I was sent to various parts of the field with orders, and during my rides saw many shocking sights. My last order from the General was to go and bring a French battery and post them at a certain spot, and when I returned to the Staff I found the General had been in the thick of the fight and was missing. Later in the day, when we found him, he had a bullet wound in the head and three bayonet wounds in his body, and was quite dead.

As near as I can remember, it was somewhere about four o'clock in the afternoon when the Russians retreated, helter-skelter, back to their own ground round Sebastopol.

After the fight (since known as the Battle of Inkermann) I had to go to the commanding officers of the Fourth Division, to ascertain how many men were fit for night duty. I forget the exact numbers, but I know they were very much reduced.

The next few days were taken up in attending to the wounded, and burying the dead in large pits. The Turks had to most of the burying, and had ropes to put round the bodies and drag them to the pits. Our men allowed them to treat the Russian dead that way, but made them carry the English.

I saw little of these sights, as I was always riding about on orderly duty, and every now and then I had to go down to Balaklava with letters, which I handed to a petty officer of the ship that was to take despatches to England.

These rides to Balaklava were sometimes most difficult, for the roads were so muddy that the horse would sink in up to his knees, and, as fodder was scarce, the horses were nearly dead from starvation. At first we had found large quantities of grapes at Balaklava, and even fed our horses with them, but at last matters got so bad that I have known the horses eat each other's manes and tails, and bite at the men's beards and clothing. At the best of times we only gave them two feeds a day, with only six pounds of barley each feed.

About the 20th December, I rejoined my troop at Balaklava, and took my turn with the others at outlying picket duty until the fall of Sebastopol. A few days afterwards our commanding officer gave some of us permission to go into the town to see the result of our siege. The first place I noticed was a church, which had a wooden porch built over the pathway, in which a large bell was hung, having a thick rope tied to the clapper so that a man in the street might ring it. The place appeared to be utterly deserted; the churches into which I looked were empty, with large holes knocked in the roofs through which our shots had crashed. Many shots and shells were lying in the roads, and many houses were in

*ruins, for the Russians had left convicts in the town to burn it down. I don't think I saw anything intact anywhere.*



*When peace was proclaimed, I left with others for Scutari, and afterwards sailed for England, reaching Portsmouth on the celebration of the Queen's birthday, when all our ships in the harbour were illuminated.*

*After spending some time at various places, I took my discharge in 1860, and in the following year joined the 5th Lancers and went to India; returning in 1869, and finally leaving the service on the 5th of June in five years and twelve days, and having received the Crimean medal with four clasps, the Turkish medal, and one Good Conduct medal."*



The above published in 1897 in a selection of recollections of service during the Queen's reign by Privates and Non-Commissioned Officers of the British Army entitled 'Told From the Ranks,' compiled by E. Milton Small. Extracts from Grigg's narrative appear in multiple publication on the Charge of the Light Brigade and the Crimean War in general