

**A FINE EARLY VICTORIAN 'INDIA' GROUP TO AN OFFICER OF THE 53RD FOOT, WHO AFTER TAKING PART IN THE BATTLES OF ALIWAL AND SOBRAON DURING THE SUTLEJ CAMPAIGN, SERVED IN BOTH THE PUNJAB CAMPAIGN AND THE INDIAN MUTINY, DURING THE LATTER COMMANDING A DETACHMENT OF HIS UNIT IN THE BUNGAON EXPEDITION TO DESTROY THE ONE-ARMED GENERAL GUJADAR SINGH'S CONTINGENT OF MUTINEERS, THIS UNIT WAS LARGELY MADE UP OF REGIMENTS DEEMED TO HAVE TAKEN PART IN THE CAWNPORE MASSACRE**



**SUTLEJ MEDAL 1845, ALIWAL REVERSE, CLASP SOBRAON 'ENSIGN HENRY BUCK 53RD REGT.'; PUNJAB 1848-9, CLASP, GOOJERAT 'LIEUT. H. BUCK, 53RD FOOT.'; INDIAN MUTINY 1857-59, CLASP, LUCKNOW 'CAPT. HY. BUCK, 53RD REGT.'**

*"At Portsmouth, on the 21st ult., aged 36, Major Henry Buck, 53rd Regiment. The deceased officer joined the 53rd Regiment when embarking for India in 1844. He served in the Sutlej campaign of 1846, including the affair of Buddiwal, and actions of Aliwal and Sobraon, for which he received medal and clasp; also in the Punjaub campaign in 1849, including the battle of Goojerat; for this he received medal and clasp. He served against the Hill Tribes on the Peshawur frontier in 1851-52. His health failing in 1854, he returned to England in charge of invalids. The Russian War breaking out, he twice volunteered for the Crimea, declining the first appointment offered, as it would not ensure him seeing service in the field. On the first tidings reaching England of the Indian Mutiny, he received orders to join the Depot and proceed with a detachment to India. He was engaged in the Indian campaign of 1857-8-9, including the action of Khodagunge and entry into Futteghur. The storm and capture of Meangunge, the siege and capture of Lucknow, the affair of Kooisie, passage of the Goomtee, and occupation of Sultanpore, passage of the Gogra, at Fyzabad, Nov. 25th. The action of Toolsepoore, and other affairs of minor importance. He commanded the Gouda Field Force at the attack and destruction of the Fort of Bungeon, for which affair he was very favourably mentioned in despatches. For these campaigns he received medal and clasp, also a Brevet Majority for distinguished conduct in the field. In 1860 the 53rd embarked for England, and his active career*



*ended. The persevering energy of this officer in the discharge of all his duties, and of his distinguished gallantry in the field, is attested by his brother officers. His commissions are dated, Ensign, July 28, 1844; Lieutenant, Feb. 22, 1846; Captain, Sept. 29, 1857; Brevet-Major, July 20, 1858."*

Henry Buck was commissioned Ensign of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Foot on 28 July 1844. In August 1844 the 53<sup>rd</sup> Embarked for service in Bengal and landed in Calcutta in December. Proceeding to Cawnpore, in November 1845, the 53<sup>rd</sup> were and at Agra at the outbreak of the Sikh war, they proceeded to Dehli. Ordered to join the Army on the Sutlej in January 1846, the 53<sup>rd</sup> formed part of Sir Harry Smith's detached force. Buck took part in the action of Baddowal, 21 January 1846 and the brilliant victory at Aliwal a week later. On 10 February 1846, Ensign Buck was present with his regiment at the great battle of Sobron, the decisive battle of the campaign. Here the 53<sup>rd</sup> lost 1 Officer and 8 other ranks killed, 8 Officers and 105 other ranks wounded.

Having been promoted Lieutenant just 12 days after the battle of Sobraon, Buck took part in the Punjab campaign of 1848-9. Present at the battle of Goojerat, he then took part in actions against Hill tribes on the Peshawar Frontier from 1851-52 although this entitled him to no additional medals.

The excellent Soldiers of Shropshire Museum website has the following on the regiments service during the Sutlej and Punjab campaigns:

<https://www.soldiersofshropshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/53rd-in-Sikh-Wars-1-2.pdf>

### INDIAN MUTINY

Advanced Captain on 29 September 1857 Buck was back in India with the Regiment on the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny in 1857.



He saw action in a number of engagements through the Mutiny, notably the Action at Khosagunge, the Entry to Futtelghur and the Storm of Merungugne. Later the Regiment was heavily involved in the fighting around Lucknow, being part of Colin Campbell's final advance upon the city. After the fall of this last stronghold they did not join the Central India campaign but rather engaged in the final

pacification of the rebel strongholds in Oude. As a result Buck was present for the Affair of Koossie, Occupation of Sultanpore and Action at Toolsepore.

Advanced Brevet Major on 20 July 1858 he was given command of a detachment of the 53rd and ordered to join Lieutenant-Colonel Walker's force pursuing a large party of mutineers around the town of Bangaon in Western Bengal.

*'A few, more hardened in crime, and therefore more hopeless of mercy, still continued to hold out, and some of these -the regiments which had perpetrated the Kahnpur [SIC] massacre, the 1st, the 53rd, and the 56th Native Infantry, led by Gujadar Singh, a rebel whose hate to the British had not been lessened by the loss of an arm when fighting against them- succeeded in crossing the border, in marching on Sikrora, and filching thence two elephants, and finally, when pursued from that place by Colonel Walker and the Queen's Bays, with two guns, in taking up a position at Bangaon, a small dilapidated fort on the river Nadi, at the entrance of the Ghungle jungles. There, at the end of April 1859, Colonel Walker, reinforced by four hundred men of the 53rd, and sixty of the 1st Sikh cavalry, attacked and completely defeated them.'* (Key and Malleson's History of the Indian Mutiny refers)

The men of the 53rd Foot cleared the fort of Bangaon and drove the rebels into the jungle with the goal of forcing them onto the rest of Walker's force. The pursuit was bloody but the vast bulk of the mutineers were totally wiped out.

*'So resolute was the advance of the 53rd, that I was obliged to cease firing to allow them to enter the fort, which was taken in twelve minutes by the main body of that regiment, led in the most gallant manner by Captain Dalzell, who was the first man on the top of the bank. Major Buck then pushed this portion of the force through the jungle to the northward, and I caused Lieutenant Prunce, with the party from B causeway, to re-enter the jungle in the same direction.'* (The dispatch written by Lieutenant-Colonel B. Walker, London Gazette 25 July 1859 refers).



Condition NVF and better, contact wear and EK's to 1st, less so to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Sold with copy Service papers and other research.