

A SUPERB OFFICERS ARMY OF INDIA FOR LASWARREE AND CAPTURE OF DEIG. ONE OF THE STORMING PARTY AT DEIG WHERE HE WAS SEVERELY WOUNDED BY A MARATHA SABRE AT THE BREACH. A FRIEND OF LIEUT JOHN PESTER (3 CLASP MEDAL), HE IS MENTIONED EXTENSIVELY IN PESTER'S BOOK 'WAR AND SPORT IN INDIA 1802-1806, AN OFFICERS DIARY' AND WAS BRIGADE MAJOR OF THE 2ND BRIGADE IN LORD LAKE'S ARMY 1803-4



ARMY OF INDIA 1799-1826, 2 CLASPS LASWARREE, CAPTURE OF DEIG 'LIEUT W P ANDERDON, 8TH N.I.'

Capt. William Proctor Anderdon, born Bath in 1781, he entered the East India Company (Bengal) Army in as a Cadet 1796, arriving in India 9th Oct 1797. Promoted Lieutenant 10th Sept 1798 he was selected in 1801 the raise and train one of the new Light Infantry Companies, taking part in the operations in Jumma Doab and Sasni.

In 1803 now with the 8th NI, Anderdon served as Brigade Major of Colonel Clarke's 2nd Brigade of Major General St John's Left Wing in General Lord Lake's Grand Army. Serving as such during the first phase of the Hindustan campaign, second Mahratta War.

Anderdon was present at siege and capture of Agra 10-18th October 1803, at one point narrowly escaping and ambush. He also took part in the great battle of Laswarre on 1st November. In what would be one of the most hotly contested battles ever between the British and Indian's, General Lake's army took on Scindhia's well supplied and well drilled Veteran

Army. During a ferocious battle in which both sides were equally matched and in which both sides suffered very heavy casualties, the British only just prevailed. After the battle Lake would tell how;

'I was never in so severe a business in my life or anything like this and pray to God I never may be again...these fellows fought like devils or rather like heroes..'

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Laswari

Lake's Army was reorganised in September 1804 for what would be the second phase of the Hindustan campaign. During this campaign, Anderdon serving as adjutant of the 8th NI, part of Colonel Ball's 3rd Brigade. The 1/8th took part in the Battle of Deig on 14th November 1804 and although the Regiment was entitled to the clasp, Anderdon did not receive it. He may have been on other duties during the battle or perhaps just didn't bother applying as the Regiment was in reserve. However he was certainly present during the siege and storming of Deig; 11th – 23rd December 1804. During the storming itself on the 23rd, the 1/8th, along with the flank companies of the 22nd and 76th Foot, formed the main storming column attacking the breach at the heavily defended Shah Burj (King's Redoubt). On entering the breach Anderdon was cut down by a maratha sabre and dreadfully wounded. Anderdon would have been one of the very first men into the breach as most of the casualties were caused by artillery and gunfire. However the first men into the breach were met Marathas who sabred the attackers and 'fought like demons' before retreating on their guns inside the town.

After recovering from his wounds, Anderdon was sent in charge of Cadets at Dholepoor in 1805 and was promoted Captain 8th NI 23rd Feb 1807. He went on furlough 22nd Jan 1810 and retired from the Army in 1812. Captain Anderdon died in Bath in 1859, aged 79



'WAR AND SPORT IN INDIA 1802-1806, AN OFFICERS DIARY'

Anderdon is mentioned extensively in Lieut John Pester's book; *'War and Sport in India 1802-1806, an Officers Diary'*. Pester himself was Brigade Major of the 4th Brigade and received the Army of India medal with 3 clasps (Sold Spink 2018)

Pester makes a many mentions of hunting expeditions with Anderdon, close shaves with tigers, dining etc but also of the battles they served in. During one such hunting expedition;

'..We all loaded a double barrel each with small (buck) shot, and fired in the direction I pointed out.. This had the desired effect. The young ones bellowed out a ghastly noise, and the crashing of the jungle soon convinced us what was coming. The tigress, on hearing the cubs roar, instantly sprang forward, bore down everything before her, made a most savage and desperate charge on us. The roar was really like a clap of thunder when she attacked us. Peyron and Anderdon both fired, and wounded her, but she sprang upon the elephant nearest to her, and shockingly wounded three of the people; one of them died almost immediately ! She was fairly fast on the elephant's poll with her teeth sticking in her neck, and the hind claws fast deep in the poor elephant's trunk and face. This was a subject which the best artist would have been puzzled to have done justice to. The tigress was nearly the size of a Bengal bullock, and presented a fair mark to me although closed with the elephant, and I immediately fired my two-ounced double barrel at her; she instantly quitted her hold, dropped from the elephant (which I firmly believe she would have brought to the ground in an instant more), and slunk back, apparently stupefied, into the jungle, all of us saluting her as she returned. She staggered into the briars, evidently mortally wounded..'

Pester mentions himself and Anderdon and narrowly escaping and ambush during the siege of Agra, horrific sights the both saw of the glasis at Agra after the storming, regimental duties, campaign life and still time to hunt!;

'Rode down in front this morning at daybreak. The bastions and ramparts appeared crowded with people. Breakfasted with Christie, after which Anderdon and Grand myself mounted our horses, and determined on reconnoitring the fort narrowly, and for which we had Agra. nearly paid the forfeit of our lives. About two hundred and fifty yards from the walls of the place, and in a road which ran through the ravines (in which we thought ourselves completely covered from the shot of the garrison, and from the view of the enemy on the ramparts), my groom came up, and told me that he saw several Infantry among the broken ground close to us. The man himself immediately turned short and galloped off. We were at this moment entering an arched gateway which extended across the road, but as we had no conception the enemy were so near us we put spurs to our horses and dashed on. On clearing the arch our surprise was great to find a party drawn up behind it on the road's side. They were actually not fifteen yards from us, when they fired directly in our faces, and most miraculously without effect. It was so sudden that we had barely time to draw our pistols and give our fire. The man nearest us staggered back and fell. We both fired at him ; he seemed to be at the head of the party, and was not hardly a sword's length from my stirrup. We pushed on and got clear to camp, completely annoyed at our folly.

The people from the Fort had seen us coming, and had evidently sent out this party to cut us off, and a more complete ambush men were never drawn into. This affair was seen from the piquet's, and made a great noise in camp. We were very justly blamed for our temerity ; had the enemy been but steady, we must both have inevitably fallen, nothing could have saved us'

On hearing of Wellesley's victory at Assaye at the Grand Army's camp, 27th Oct 1803;

'The pleasing news of General Wellesley's action put the Brigadier in high spirits. About five o'clock this evening the most severe hurricane came on I ever witnessed. The greater part of the tents in the line were smooth in five minutes, and nothing could exceed the scene of confusion occasioned by this unexpected salute. The thunder rolled tremendously, and the lightning was most vivid. It was accompanied by a deluge of rain that came down in torrents, and the tents blown down were soon nearly overwhelmed. It ran like a river through

those remaining, drenching our beds and every particle of our clothes most completely. I dined with Anderdon, and we were absolutely necessitated to cut a trench round the table in the tent to draw off the water sufficiently to enable us to sit to eat our dinner, of which and a bottle of claret each we made an end about eleven o'clock.'



Of the Storming of Deig and Anderdon being terribly wounded;

'Between our batteries and the breach the ground was very much broken, and in the dark it was utterly impossible to preserve such distance and order as could have been

wished ; the troops were as silent as death on our approach, but we were no sooner discovered from the works than the whole face was completely illuminated by the enemy's cannon and musketry. The shot flew like hail, and many a gallant fellow dropped; it was, no check to us, and instead of returning a single shot we rushed on, with the bayonet, and gained the summit of the breach, in spite of the formidable resistance opposed to us and the obstinacy with which they disputed every inch of ground.

We immediately scoured the works of the Shah Burge, and were shortly in possession of the whole ; about twenty minutes as sharp fighting as was perhaps ever witnessed put us also in possession of all their batteries under the walls on the flanks of the breach. I was well aware that the tremendous fire they had kept up on us must have caused us great loss; for a very considerable time we were literally exposed to a shower of shot, and the blaze of cannon and musketry from the works was so very brilliant that we could plainly see the flanking columns closing with the enemy, although at a considerable distance from us. By twelve the enemy had all retired (those who escaped) into the fort and to those parts of the town under its fire, and almost all firing ceased. On enquiring after the officers of my own Corps, I was distressed to find that the 2nd had again suffered considerably; poor Bowyer was killed, and Forrest lost an arm and was otherwise dreadfully wounded ; he appeared quite senseless and in a dying state. I found him lying at the foot of the breach, and Bowyer was shot a few paces only distant from it. In the breach I heard Anderdon's voice (my Bareilly friend). He had received a dreadful wound in his shoulder, and was almost fainting with loss of blood, and begging for assistance to be carried to camp, which we instantly procured him. Near Anderdon lay Captain Young of the same Corps (8th Infantry), a very intimate friend of mine ; he had received a grape through his breast and was dying in horrid agonies, entreating those about him in a most distressing and earnest way to put him out of his misery. We sent him off in a litter, but he expired before he reached 1804.

About twenty officers were killed and wounded in Deig. I thank Providence, escaped with no further injury than some severe blows from splinters and stones thrown up by the cannon shot.'

And later;

'I was extremely anxious to see my wounded friend, Anderdon and Forrest, in the lines and mounting Lassuary, I galloped up to the camp. Anderdon had received a dreadful sabre cut down his shoulder and lay in a very precarious state, much weakened by loss of blood'

Just 30 Laswaree and 36 Capture of Deig clasps were issued to East India Company Officers and Men.



Condition NEF, 'D' of surname stamped over 'S' at time of naming. One of just two officers medals to the 8th NI for the capture of Deig. Sold with a copy of 'War and Sport in India..' on CD. A superb and rare medal with a great deal more research potential.

The outstanding Army of India medal with 3 clasps; Allighur, Battle of Delhi, Capture of Deig, awarded to Anderdon's friend, Lieutenant John Pester, sold at Spink in 2018 for an incredible £48,000

THE BATH CHRONICLE 21 APRIL 1859

MEMOIR OF THE LATE CAPT. WM. PROCTOR
ANDERDON, LATE OF THE HON EAST
INDIA COMPANY'S SERVICE.

(Contributed by one who served with him.)

William Proctor Anderdon, whose death is announced this day in our obituary, descended from a family connected with Bath and Bridgwater, for the last two centuries, and whose monuments are still preserved on the walls of the churches of Newton St. Loe and Bridgwater. He was the son of Ferdinando Anderdon, Esq., and nephew of Edmund Anderdon, who, during the latter part of the last century, served for three successive tours, as Mayor of Bath..

He entered the service of the East India Company as a cadet, in the year 1796. He served through all the campaigns of Lord Lake, and he was wounded in the trenches before Agra by a musket shot in the shoulder. In 1808, being considered one of the most intelligent, and active, and able officers of the Bengal Army, he was selected for the command of one of the Light Infantry Battalions, which were then first embodied, for the purpose of instruction and exercise on the plains of Cawnpoor, after the model of the Camp at Shorncliffe, in 1802, under Sir John Moore.

Captain Anderdon's health failing him a few years after, he returned to England, and retired from the service in the year 1812, and has ever since lived at Bath, dispensing the surplus of the income of his patrimony amongst the charities of this city, and, as is well known to those gentlemen who have, for the last forty years, employed themselves in the collection of charities for the poor and destitute, for any purpose of public good or private benevolence. Capt. Anderdon's house in St. James Square, was the first on the list to call at, because the appeal was sure to be readily and handsomely responded to.

This was the good centurion. He died at his house in St. James's Square, Bath, aged 79, on Saturday, the 16th inst.