

**THE OUTSTANDING AND VERY RARE VICTORIAN ROYAL NAVY OFFICER GROUP OF MEDALS, JOURNALS, LETTERS, DOCUMENTS AND TWO LARGE PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS BELONGING TO LIEUTENANT THOMAS FRANCIS ABBOTT, WHO WAS CONSPICUOUS FOR THE IMPORTANT PART HE PLAYED AT THE START OF THE PERAK CAMPAIGN IN 1875, MULTIPLE MID'S. WHILST WITH HMS SHAH, COMMANDED THE STEAM TORPEDO PINNACLE IN THE ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THE PERUVIAN "IRONCLAD" HUASCAR IN 1877. AGAIN MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES FOR HIS SERVICE WITH THE NAVAL BRIGADE IN THE ZULU WAR OF 1879, HE FUTURE LANDED WITH THE NAVAL BRIGADE AT ALEXANDRIA DURING THE EGYPTIAN WAR OF 1882**



INDIAN GENERAL SERVICE 1854, CLASP PERAK 'SUB. LIEUT: T. F. ABBOTT. R.N. H.M.S. "THISTLE", SOUTH AFRICA 1877-9, CLASP 1879 "'SHAH" LIEUT: T. F. ABBOTT. R.N. H.M.S.', EGYPT 1882, NO CLASP 'LIEUT: T. F. ABBOTT. R.N. H.M.S. "MINOTAUR", KHEDIVES STAR 1882. Mounted as worn, with corresponding set of miniatures awards, mounted as worn. All contained in fitted leather case, top level can be removed and at lower section are the miniatures, spare ribbons and the named card box lid for the Egypt medal

#### NAVY LIST ENTRY:

*Abbott, T. F., Sub-Lieutenant of "Thistle;" accompanied Mr. Birch, H.M. Commissioner, to Passir Sala, Malay Straits, in 1875, where Mr. Birch was murdered, when he took charge of the Residency, and, with the small force at his command, took effective steps for its defence; for his services on this occasion he was highly commended by the Commander in Chief, also by the Governor of the Straits Settlements; served at attack on Marahajah Selah with the field forces and was actively employed on shore against the enemy for three months ; promoted (Perak Medal and Clasp) ; Lieutenant of " Shah ' in the attack on the Peruvian "ironclad ... Huasear," and commanded the steam torpedo pinnacle in the attempt to destroy the Huascar at Ylo 31st May 1877; mentioned in despatches; Served with the Naval Brigade in Zululand 1879; transported the Eshowe Relief column over the Tugela river; afterwards joined General Crealock's Column and advanced to Port Durnford ; mentioned in despatches (Zulu*

*Medal and Clasp) ; Lieut, of Minotaur " during Egyptian war 1882 (Egyptian medal, Khedive's Bronze Star). '*

10 Mar 1854 Born: Ireland, Son of Admiral Jonas Abbott

Entered Navy as Naval Cadet in April 1867, 28th Jan 1869 Midshipman, serving on HMS Scylla, HMS Sultan and HMS Modeste from June 1869 until Jan 1874, having been advanced to Sub-Lieutenant on 28th July 1873.

Having been appointed to composite gun vessel HMS Thistle on 30th Sep 1874. On 6<sup>th</sup> October 1875, Lieutenant Abbott detailed to Command troops at Residency fort at Banda Bahru, Malay Straits. On 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1875, he accompanied Mr. Birch HM Commissioner to Passir Sala and as commander of the 12-man Sikh escort. On arrival, Birch went about meeting local chiefs and with no expected 'issues', Abbott immediately went out shooting for game and on the opposite bank to the settlement. During this time Birch's party was attacked, Birch was murdered and several of his escort killed or wounded. Warned of the attack Abbott and under heavy fire, the remaining escort retreated down the river eight kilometres to the Residency fort.

Rather abandon the Residency and make for friendly forces, Abbott decided to take charge, and with the small force at his command; four seamen from the *Thistle* and around 50 Sikh sepoy, took effective steps for its defence and an expected attack from overwhelming numbers and held off the Malays until a relief force arrive a couple of days later.



On arrival of the relief force commanded by Captain Innes, Royal Engineers, which consisted of 62 Officers and men of the 1/10th Foot, 25 policemen, 20 Malay and local Chinese scouts and intelligence agents, it was resolved to make an attack on Passir Sala.

On 7th November a force of 20 Malays, 2 Officers and 50 men of the 10<sup>th</sup> Foot, 4 seamen of "*Thistle*," with coolies carrying rockets, under Lieutenant Abbot, and Captain Innes and 47 Sepoys with 27 police under Superintendent Plunkett, advanced up-river towards Pasir Sala. Underestimating the force against them, an attack was launched on the stockade by assault and rockets but the attack was repulsed with heavy loss. Captain Innes was killed, both 10<sup>th</sup>

Foot officers wounded, one 10th private and one Sepoy killed. 10 10<sup>th</sup> and one Sepoy wounded.

After arrival of further reinforcements, on the 14<sup>th</sup> November another attack was made on Passir Sala (again including Abbott). This attack was a success and Passir Sala was taken with only minor loss

For his services on this occasion he was highly commended by the Commander in Chief, also by the Governor of the Straits Settlements; served at attack on Marajah Selah with the field forces and was actively employed on shore against the enemy for three months.

Abbott's various Mentions in Dispatches:

*'Sub-Lieutenant Thomas F. Abbott, of the "Thistle" (28th July, 1873), "was at both attacks on Passir Sala" (whose name is already before their Lordships), and is spoken of by the Governor "in the highest terms" Captain Buller informs me.'*

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*'I have already had the pleasure of bringing to your notice the gallant conduct of Sub-Lieutenant Thomas F. Abbott, of the "Thistle," at the time of the murder of Mr. Birch. His Excellency the Governor speaks of him in the strongest terms, and I trust you will consider his conduct deserving of being prominently brought to the notice of their Lordships. He was at both attacks at Passir Sala, and since that time has most ably conducted the naval affairs at the Residency.'*

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*'In submitting these reports I have the honour to draw their Lordship's attention to the position in which Sub-Lieutenant Thomas F. Abbott was placed on the 2nd and 3rd of November, and the efficient way in which he anticipated and prevented" the attacks of the Malays by fortifying the Residency at Banda Bahru, which probably discouraged the other tribes from joining in the aggressive movements of the murderers of Mr. Birch.'*

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*'I beg to enclose Sub-Lieutenant T. F. Abbott's report of events that have occurred here from the 1st of November, and would desire to bring strongly before your notice the great judgment and coolness he has displayed in circumstances of a most trying and difficult nature; and it is without doubt owing to his vigorous arrangements for the defense of the Residency (of which he was in charge after Mr. Birch's murder) that it was not attacked before the arrival of reinforcements. His Excellency the Governor has also expressed to me his high appreciation of his conduct.'*

See <http://www.kaiserscross.com/304501/471964.html> for an excellent write up of events.

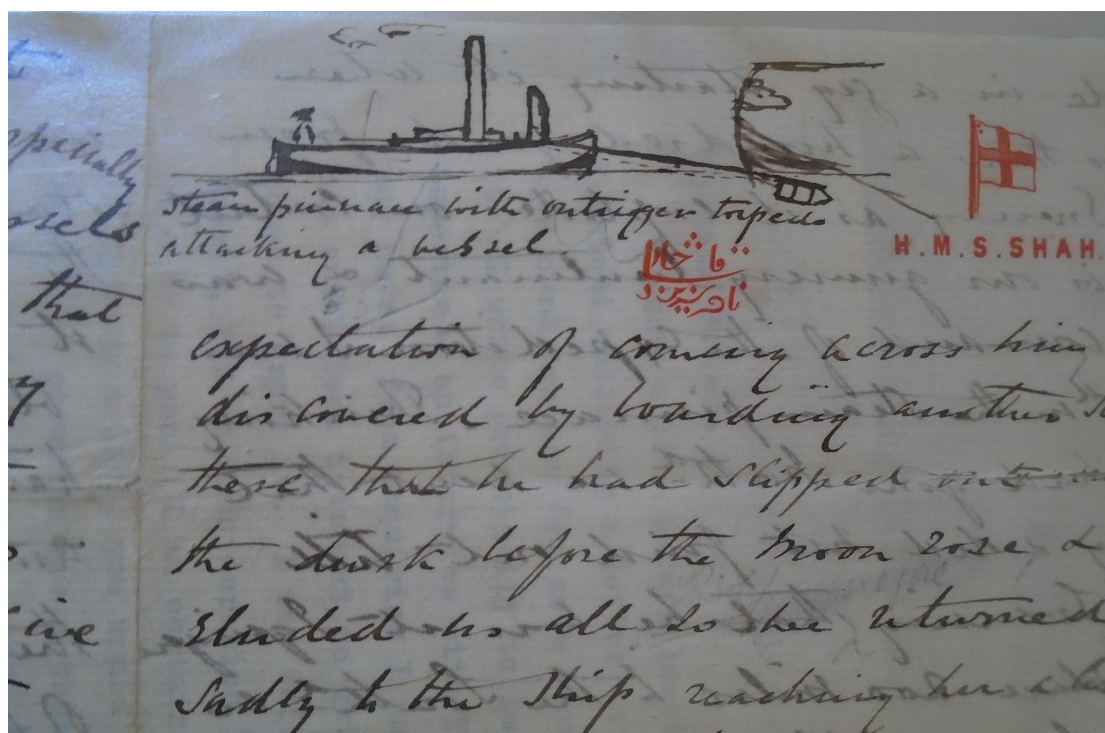
On 28 Jan 1876 Promoted to Lieutenant for efficient and active services against Malays in the Straits of Malacca.

On 14 Aug 1876 Abbott was appointed Lieutenant on HMS Shah and participated in the



attack on the Peruvian ironclad *Huascar* and commanded the steam torpedo pinnacle in the attempt to destroy the *Huascar* on 31st May 1877;

The naval Incident of Pacocha took place on 29 May 1877 when Nicolas de Pierola was leading a revolution to overthrow then Peruvian President Piérola's supporters used the Peruvian monitor *Huascar* as a raiding ship. She harassed the shipping especially off El Callao, the main commercial port of Peru. However, after she boarded some British merchant ships, British authorities sent Rear Admiral de Horsey to capture the vessel. The Peruvian warship managed to outrun the British squadron after a fierce exchange of fire. *Huascar* guns were undermanned, and the monitor fired just 40 rounds. *Shah*'s mast was damaged by splinters. On the British side, *Shah* fired 237 shots and *Amethyst* 190, but none of them carried armour-piercing ammunition. *Huascar* was hit 60 times, but her armour shield defeated all the rounds. There was a last-ditch effort to stop or sink the rebels when two small torpedo rams from *Shah* attempted to find the *Huascar*, but the Peruvian ship managed to escape under the cover of darkness. The rebel crew was forced to surrender their ship to the Peruvian government just two days later.



See <http://dawlishchronicles.com/hms-shah-vs-huascar-an-indecisive-but-significant-single-ship-action/>

HMS *Shah* whilst returning from the Pacific in 1879 called in at St. Helena. It was here that her crew learnt of the defeat at Isandhlwana and taking on board troops from the garrison (one company of the 88th foot the Connaught Rangers and a field artillery battalion) provided by the island's Governor, she sailed for the Cape Colony. Arriving on 7th March 1879, she disembarked 16 officers and 378 men of her crew at Durban, led by Commander John Brackenbury to join the newly formed Naval Brigade. Lieutenant Abbott was put in charge of transporting the Eshowe Relief column over the Tugela river and served at Ft. Tenedos, with 2 other officers and 37 men, during the Eshowe Relief,

On 18th March 1879, the force heading to relieve Eshowe was joined by 10 officers and 218 seamen from HMS Boadicea, led by Commander Francis Romilly They fought at the Battle of Gingindhlovo on 2nd April where the Royal Navy and their guns held the corners of the British square. After the relief of Eshowe on 4th April Lieutenant Abbott was Stationed at Fort Chelmsford with part of the Shah brigade prior to second invasion. During the second invasion he served with that part of the naval brigade that accompanied General Crealock's column to Port Durnford, again performing valuable service. During the War, Abbott served ashore from 7th March to 21 July 1879. Again, for his services, Abbott was Mentioned in Despatches



On 5th Feb 1880, he was appointed to HMS Alexandra (Flagship, Mediterranean) and on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1882 to HMS Minotaur (Flagship, Channel Squadron, Temporarily assigned to Mediterranean). During Egyptian war, 1882. On 15<sup>th</sup> July 1882, Abbott was landed with all the marines from Minotaur (150 men), 2 field and 2 Gatling guns and their crews at Ras-el-tin palace. After an unfortunate 'friendly fire' incident, the force from Minotaur were employed on police duties in Alexandria; patrolling the streets, apprehending rioters etc etc. Rejoining Minotaur on the 20<sup>th</sup>, they took part in various fleet activities and actions, the marines being landed again on the 31<sup>st</sup> August and it appears Abbott was left aboard this time, taking part in more smaller bombardment actions and boat expeditions

On 4 Sep 1884 Lieutenant Abbott was appointed to Victoria & Albert (Royal Yacht, Portsmouth). However on 30 May 1886 Died having recently taken ill with sunstroke while on "Victoria & Albert". Lieutenant Thomas Francis Abbott was just 32 years old

1 Jun 1886 Funeral at St. John's church, Brading. Among those in attendance included former shipmates from HMS Shah, Lieutenant . P. Henderson, Boatswain J. Crocker

## GROUP ITSELF CONSISTS OF:

Cased set of full sized and miniature medals; Indian General Service Medal with Perak clasp, South Africa Medal with 1879 clasp, Egypt Medal 1882 and Khedive's Star.

Four Journals covering the period from January 1st 1874-jan 1882, which describe where he was and what he was doing during his various cruises and service on land. Much detail on his service in Perak, HMS Shah's action against Huascar, including the torpedo expedition, exercises with newly developed torpedos etc. Also his service with the Naval Brigade during the Zulu War and during the Egypt campaign.

To compliment this are approx 100 letters written aboard the ships during his service, giving even more details of above. All his certificates of service and recommendations from his ships

Two massive photo albums with photos of his service, some of places he visited during peacetime, others during the Perak, Zulu and Egypt campaigns; Officers, ships compliments and ships themselves.

Finally, the papers of his Father, Admiral Jonas Abbott



A Breakdown of the paperwork content:

1) Perak various letters orders and a fair number of pages in journal directly relating. Also a paper map of Perak River used by Abbott (in several pieces). Journal does have pages on Shah vs Hauscar also



2) Shah vs Hauscar and Torpedo party, various letters orders and a fair number of pages in journal directly relating

3) Shah Zulu War, various letters orders and a fair number of pages in journal directly relating

Egypt 1882 landed with Naval Brigade at Alexandria in Zulu era journal but no letters relating to campaign.

4) Lots of letters with envelopes but most of little value separately. A couple posted from Perak and a couple from Zulu War are of a fair value themselves (without letters)

5) 2 very large photo albums 18" x 12" ish. Some really good Navy related, Shah, Zulu War, page with portraits of Shah's Officers landed with Naval Brigade (SA wearing campaign hats), lots of scenic, places visited, several rare photos of Abbott with Naval Brigade at Perak and with Commissioner Birch. A few of destruction at Alexandria 1882; My favourites probably of the Officers Wardroom on Shah with all the painting etc- I didn't think they did such things.

6) Large number Abbotts of ships service recommendations, examination and qualification certificates; seamanship, navigation, gunnery etc.

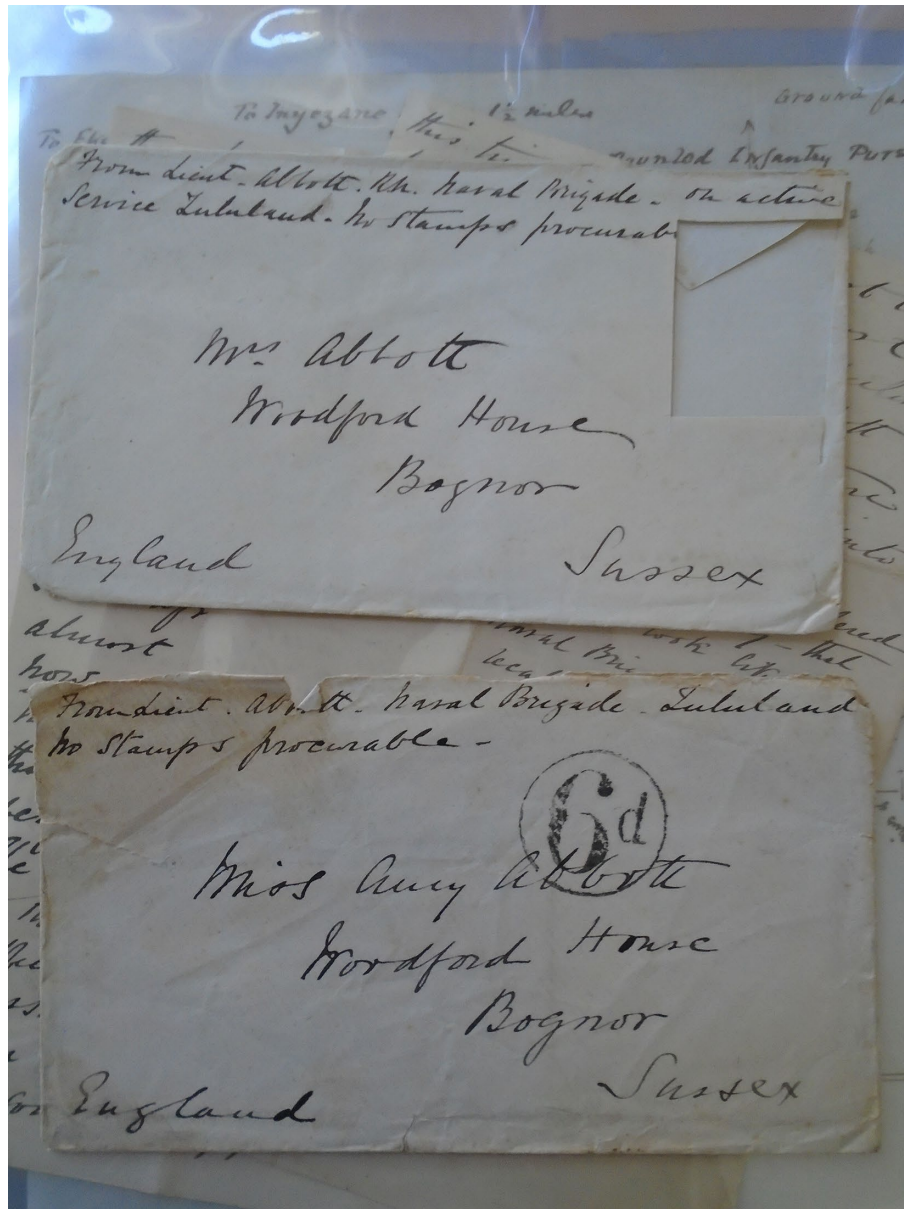
7) Box with various photos and letters; pretty similar to above, includes portraits of Abbott in uniform and a rare Zulu War CDV of Abbott in campaign dress.

8) Abbotts Commission documents as Sub Lieutenant and Lieutenant, Royal Navy



9) Admiral Abbott's Commissions up to appointment of Admiral, Court Martial booklet, various letters, a prize money certificate. I've not really looked at him but here he is up until a Commander.

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A\\_Naval\\_Biographical\\_Dictionary/Abbott,\\_Jonas\\_Archer](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A_Naval_Biographical_Dictionary/Abbott,_Jonas_Archer)



Condition; medals GVF, a little contact wear. Photographs of the entire group can be emailed on request. A quite outstanding and complete group, the content of which would surely form the basis of a book for anyone so inclined!

Note: There will be a lot more to the group as I've really only read in brief the Perak campaign, Huscar action, Zulu War and Egypt letters/orders and journals.