

A SCARCE VICTORIA CROSS CARTES DE VISITE OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR GERALD GRAHAM WHO WAS AWARDED THE VICTORIA CROSS FOR GALLANTRY AT THE HEAD OF A LADDER PARTY AT THE ASSAULT ON THE REDAN AT SEBASTOPOL, GOING OUT ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS TO BRING IN WOUNDED OFFICERS AND MEN



Lieutenant Graham, Royal Engineers For

“determined gallantry at the head of a ladder party at the assault on the Redan on the 18th June 1855. Devoted heroism in sallying out of the trenches on numerous occasions to bring in wounded officers and men”

Sir Gerald Graham (1831-1899) was born in Acton, Middlesex on 27th June 1831, the only surviving son of Robert Hay Graham, who hailed from Cumberland, and his wife, Frances Oakley, who was from Yorkshire. Gerald was educated in Dresden, Wimbledon and

Edinburgh, before attending the Royal Military College, Woolwich. He was gazetted to the Royal Engineers on 19th June 1850, and was promoted to Lieutenant on 17th February 1854, just a week before he embarked for Turkey to take part in the war with Russia.

It was exactly three years later that he was one of the first group of men gazetted for the new decoration – the Victoria Cross. On his arrival in the area, he was employed at Gallipoli on the defensive works of Boulaïr; went to Varna in May 1854, and was involved in the engineering preparations for the expedition to Crimea. He was present at the Battles of Alma and Inkerman, and was also heavily involved in the siege of Sebastopol. He was slightly wounded on 13th April 1855 in No 7 Battery. He led the ladder party of Sir John Campbell's column in the unsuccessful attack on the right flank of the Redan on the 18th June 1855, and after the first check made a second attempt. Graham was also involved in numerous sorties into the open ground to bring in wounded men under heavy fire.

He was wounded for a second time on 9th July 1855, and had to go to Therapia, but returned in time for the final operations on 8th September. After the fall of Sebastopol, he was employed in the destruction of the docks, when he, with Major Nicholson, made a gallant attempt to rescue a man who had been poisoned by the foul air from the bottom of the shaft. Besides the award of the VC, Graham was awarded the Brevet of Major, Crimean Medal with three clasps, Legion of Honour, Turkish Medal, the 5th Order of the Medjidie, and was twice mentioned in despatches on 21st December 1855 and 15th February 1856.

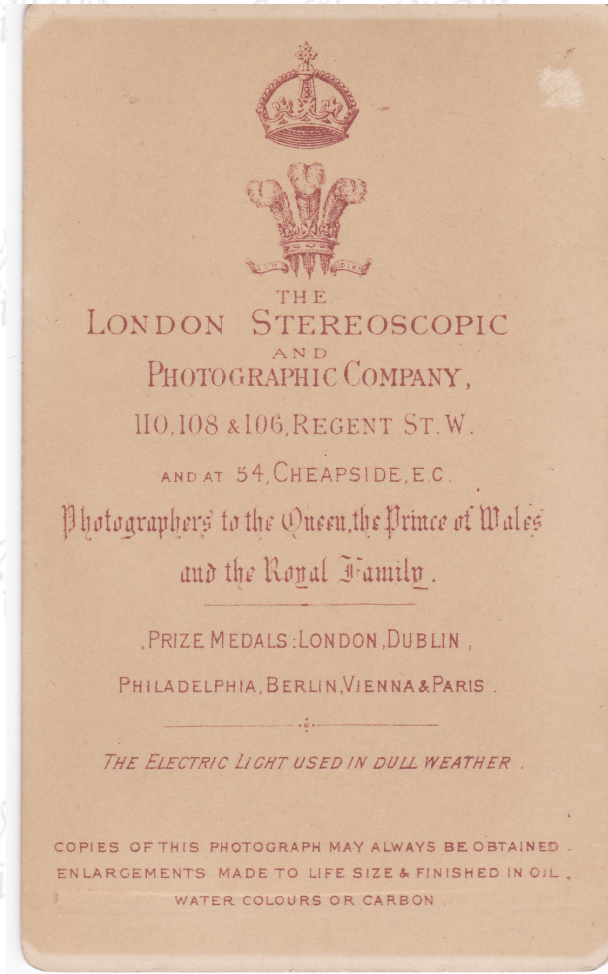
He was decorated with the Victoria Cross at the first investiture at Hyde Park on 26th June 1857. He was next employed in Scotland and at Aldershot, and went out to India in August 1858, to take command of the 23rd Company, Royal Engineers, becoming Captain on 28th October 1858. The Indian Mutiny was coming to a conclusion, and in 1859, he took his company to Canton. In the spring of 1860, he joined Sir Hope Grant's force to take part in the Anglo-French Expedition against China. He was seriously wounded on 21st August 1860, whilst directing the bombing party at the successful attack on the Taku Forts, but was recovered in time to be present at the taking of Peking. He was mentioned in despatches on 4th November 1860, and received the Brevet of Colonel, before returning to England in May 1861.

On 20th April 1862, he married Jane Durrant, daughter of George Durrant of South Elmham Hall, Suffolk in St Peter's, Eston Square. He was then employed as Commandant at Shorncliffe, and later at Aldershot, before from May 1866, he became (for three years) Commandant in Montreal, Canada. On his return home, he was briefly at Chatham and Manchester, before six years in York from 1871. In December 1877, he became Assistant Director of Bombing at the War Office. In 1881, he was promoted to Major General, and in 1882, he commanded the Second Infantry Brigade in Egypt throughout the campaign under Sir Garnet Wolseley, and he was in command at the Battle of Kassassin.

He was frequently mentioned in despatches (5 times), and was mentioned in both Houses of Parliament, receiving the campaign medal and clasp, the Bronze Star, the 2nd Order of the Medjidie, and was created KCB. At the end of January 1884, he accompanied General Gordon from Cairo to Korosko, on Gordon's last journey to Khartoum. Graham was appointed to command an expedition to Eastern Sudan, and fought in the Battle of El Teb, and entered Tokar. He then fought the Second Battle of Tamai, burned the village and destroyed an large amount of ammunition. He was also keen to open up a route to relieve Gordon at Khartoum, but was turned down. He was mentioned in despatches another 5 times, and received the Egyptian Medal, the Grand Cordon of the Medjidie, and was promoted to Lieutenant General.

In 1888, he declined the Governship of Bermuda, and on 14th June 1890, he was placed on the Retired List. He was created a GCB on 20th May 1896 and was appointed Colonel

Commandant of the Royal Engineers in 1899. He died after a short illness at Springfield, Bideford, Devon on 17th December 1899. On his death, Lord Wolseley said of Graham “a man with the heart of a lion and the modesty of a young girl”. Graham was buried in the East-the-Water Cemetery, Bideford. His medals are displayed at the Royal Engineers Museum, Chatham, Kent.



LOCATION OF MEDAL: ROYAL ENGINEERS MUSEUM, CHATHAM, KENT.
BURIAL PLACE: EAST-THE-WATER CEMETERY, BIDEFORD, DEVON. SECTION C,
GRAVE 523

The above taken from the fine vconline website; <http://www.vconline.org.uk/sir-gerald-graham-vc/4586807038.html>

A scarce original period VC recipient VC CDV