

A SCARCE VICTORIA CROSS SIGNED CARTES DE VISITE OF GENERAL SAM BROWNE WHO WAS AWARDED THE VICTORIA CROSS FOR ACTIONS ON THE 31ST AUGUST 1858 DURING THE INDIAN MUTINY AT SEERPORAH, ROHILKAND, UTTAR PRADESH. DURING WHICH HE RECEIVED A SWORD CUT TO HIS LEFT ARM, AT THE SHOULDER, WHICH SEVERED THE LIMB. SUBSEQUENTLY THE INVENTOR OF THE EYPONYMOUS SAM BROWNE BELT WHICH ALLOWED HIM STABILISES THE SCABBARD OF A SWORD IF WORN



"For having at Seerporah, in an engagement with the Rebel Forces under Khan Allie Khan, on the 31st of August 1858, whilst advancing upon the Enemys position, at day break, pushed on with one orderly Sowar upon a nine-pounder gun that was commanding one of the approaches to the enemys position, and attacked the gunners, thereby preventing them from re-loading, and firing upon the Infantry, who were advancing to the attack. In doing this, a personal conflict ensued, in which Captain, now Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel James Browne, Commandant of the 2nd Punjab cavalry, received a severe sword-cut wound on the left knee, and shortly afterwards another sword-cut wound, which severed the left arm at the shoulder, not, however, before Lieutenant-Colonel Browne had succeeded in cutting down one of his assailants. The gun was prevented from being re-loaded, and was eventually captured by the Infantry, and the gunners slain."

Sir Samuel James Browne (1824-1901) was born on 3rd October 1824, but his place of birth was a subject of debate. Various obituaries for him state it was either Alnwick, Northumberland, Dinapur in India, or Barrackpore in India. He was the son of Dr. John Browne in the Bengal Medical Service so the two locations in India seem more likely. He followed his father into service though not through medicine, in the Honourable East India Company Army at the age of just 16 in 1840. He served with the 46th Bengal Native Infantry and took part in the 2nd Sikh War before transferring into the 2nd Punjab Cavalry in 1849. He rose to command the regiment in 1851 and by the time of the outbreak of the Mutiny in 1857, he was brevet major.

During the operations to clear the last pockets of resistance from Rohilkhand, Browne commanded a complete Field Force. It was at Seerpoorah on 31st August 1858, that Browne would be involved in the incident that saw him awarded the VC. On that day, Browne's force came into contact with a rebel force led by Khan Allie Khan. At dawn, Browne advanced on the rebel position, and he pushed on with one orderly Sowar upon a 9 pounder gun that was commanding one of the approaches. He charged the gunners, thereby preventing them from reloading and firing on the infantry, who were advancing to attack. In doing this, a personal conflict ensued, in which Captain Browne received a severe sword cut wound, which severed his left arm at the shoulder, not, however, before he had succeeded in cutting down one of his assailants. The gun was stopped from being reloaded, and was eventually captured by the infantry, and the gunners killed.



Browne also received a severe sword cut to the left knee. With these terrible wounds, it was something of a miracle that he survived infection or was not invalided out of the Army. Before the Mutiny, he had experimented with a more efficient way of wearing a sword, which entailed using a belt and a cross belt. It was fortuitous that his design suited his now special needs and very soon the "Sam Browne System" had been adopted by the Indian and British Armies.

Browne's was one of the late recommendations for the VC and his citation was not published until 1st March 1861. He received his VC from Major-General Sir Sydney Cotton at a parade at Peshawar in December 1862. He went on to command the Peshawar Valley Field Force during the 2nd Afghan War and retired as General Sir Samuel James Browne in 1888. He moved to the Isle of Wight, where he died on 14th March 1901. His ashes were interred in the Town Cemetery, Ryde, Isle of Wight. His medals are held by the National Army Museum, Chelsea.

LOCATION OF MEDAL: NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM, CHELSEA, LONDON.

BURIAL PLACE: TOWN CEMETERY, RYDE, ISLE OF WIGHT. ASHES INTERRED.

The above taken from the fine vconline website:

<http://www.vconline.org.uk/sir-samuel-james-browne-vc/4586003953.html>

A scarce original period VC recipient VC CDV