

A SCARCE VICTORIA CROSS CABINET CARD OF LIEUTENANT HOWARD CRAFTURD ELPHINSTONE WHO WAS AWARDED THE VICTORIA CROSS FOR ACTIONS DURING THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL IN WHICH HE VOLUNTEERED TO COMMAND A PARTY OF VOLUNTEERS TO SEARCH FOR AND BRING BACK THE SCALING LADDERS AFTER A FAILED ASSAULT.



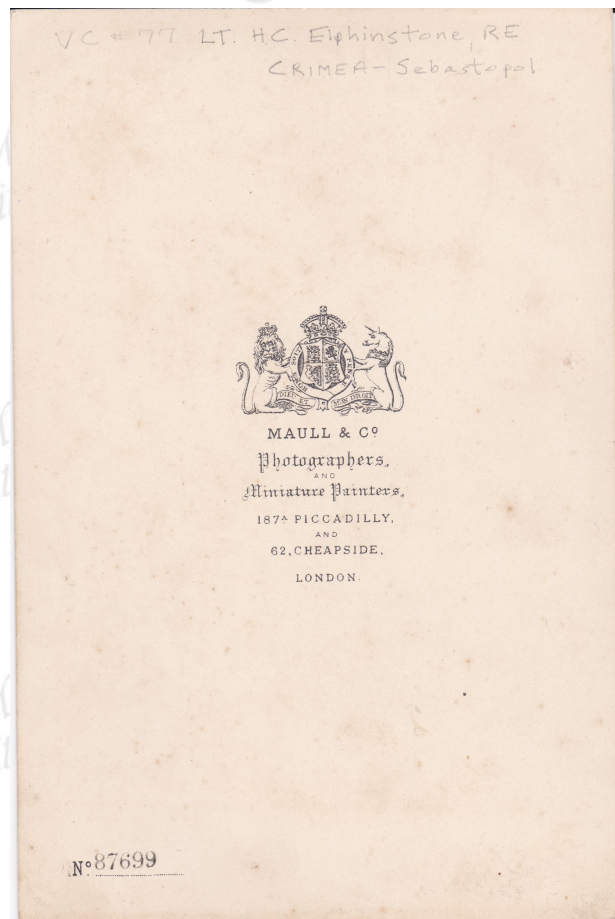
"For fearless conduct, in having, on the night after the unsuccessful attack on the Redan, volunteered to command a party of volunteers, who proceeded to search for and bring back the scaling ladders left behind after the repulse; and while successfully performing this task, of rescuing trophies from the Russians, Captain Elphinstone conducted a persevering search, close to the enemy, for wounded men, twenty of whom he rescued and brought back to the Trenches"

Howard Craufurd Elphinstone (1829-1890) was born on 12th December 1829 at Cumenhof, Russia, the 4th son of Captain Alexander Francis Elphinstone of the Royal Navy. Howard

was educated abroad, and at the Royal Artillery Academy in Woolwich. He was commissioned into the Royal Engineers on 18th December 1847, just after his 18th birthday. He was then promoted to Lieutenant on 11th November 1851.

In 1853, he attended the Military Reviews in Prussia in an official capacity, and from then until March 1854, he was employed by the Ordnance Survey in Scotland. From there he went to Malta, Bulgaria before arriving in the Crimea. He reached Balaklava on 29th September 1854, and served in the trenches of the Right flank, being on duty for 81 days and 91 nights. He was forefront in the assault on the Redan on 18th June 1855, actions which would later lead to the award of the Victoria Cross.

On the night of the attack, he volunteered to lead a group of volunteers. He proceeded to search for and bring back the scaling ladders after the attack had been repulsed. He also conducted a search, close to the enemy lines, for wounded men, and rescued twenty such men and returned them to British lines. He later took part in the final assault on Sebastopol on the 8th September 1855, where he was wounded in the left eye by a splinter and lost the sight in that eye.



Elphinstone was later mentioned in despatches on 21st June and 21st December 1855 for his actions. He was also awarded the Crimean Medal with clasps, given Brevet of Major, made a Knight of the Legion of Honour, awarded the 5th Order of the Medjidie, and the Turkish Medal. He was awarded the Victoria Cross on 2nd June 1858.

Elphinstone's post Crimean career saw numerous promotions from Captain in 1856, Brevet Major in December 1856, Major in July 1862 and finally he was created a Military

Companion of Bath in August 1865. He was given the Brevet of Lieutenant Colonel in April 1868, and in 1870, he was created CMG and on 3rd July 1871, a Civil Knight Commander of Order of Bath. He was promoted to Colonel on 23rd May 1873.

He was a great favourite of Queen Victoria and was entrusted with the training of the Duke of Connaught from the time when Prince Arthur was just eight years old. He was also Treasurer and Comptroller of the Duke of Connaught's Household. He was also in command of the Royal Engineer Troops at Aldershot from 1873 to 1874. On 1st October 1877, he was given Brevet of Colonel, and less than a month later, was appointed Aide-de-Camp to Queen Victoria. He then became Commanding Engineer at Aldershot from 1881 to 1886; and was temporary Military Attache to Berlin during that period. At the end of 1881 he was appointed as Officer Commanding Royal Engineers in Mauritius, a post he was reluctant to take up, so much so that he was prepared to resign from the army; however under customs then allowed in the British Army, a posting could be avoided if another officer was prepared to take the posting instead. Normally this involved payment to the substitute officer but Elphinstone was fortunate to meet fellow Royal Engineer officer, Colonel Gordon (Gordon of Khartoum) who was willing to take the posting to Mauritius without payment. He was promoted to Colonel in 1884, and to Major General in 1887.

From 1st April 1889, he was given command of the Western District, and with Lady Elphinstone and one of his daughters he was a passenger to New Zealand on one of the New Zealand Shipping Company's steamers. On the night of 8th March 1890, he was swept overboard and drowned off the coast of Madeira. His body was never recovered. He was survived by his wife and four daughters. His medals are displayed as part of the Ashcroft Collection in the Imperial War Museum.

LOCATION OF MEDAL: LORD ASHCROFT GALLERY, IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM, LONDON.

BURIAL PLACE: LOST AT SEA OFF MADEIRA, PORTUGAL.

The above taken from the fine vconline website:

<http://www.vconline.org.uk/howard-c-elphinstone-vc/4586629519.html>

A scarce original period VC recipient VC CDV