

A SCARCE VICTORIA CROSS CARTES DE VISITE PORTRAYING MAJOR HENRY TOMBS, AWARDED THE VICTORIA CROSS FOR ACTIONS DURING THE INDIAN MUTINY

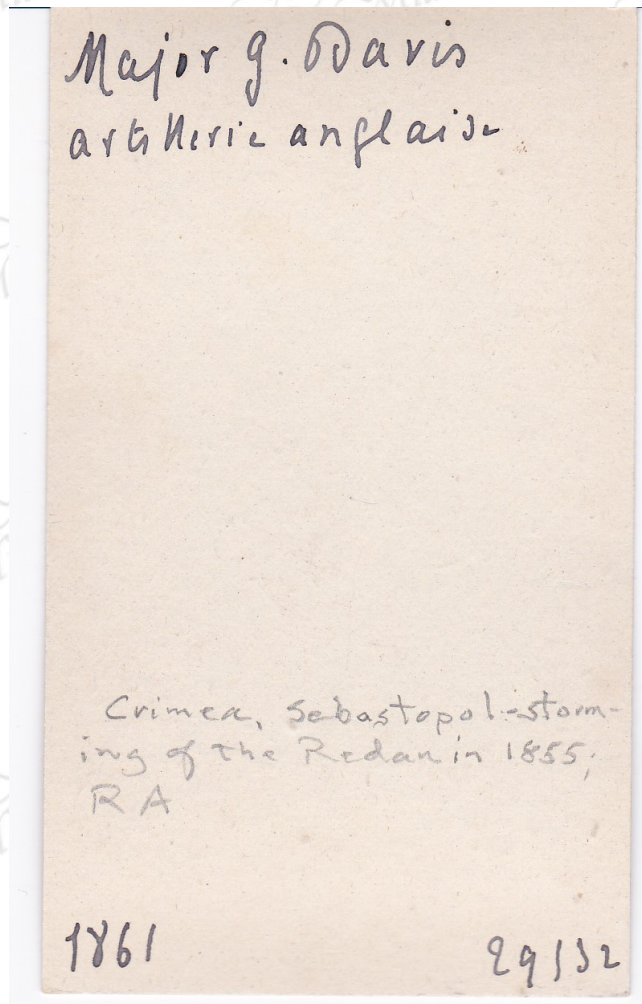


Sir Henry Tombs (1825-1874) was born on 10th November 1825 in Calcutta, India, the son of Major General John Tombs and Mary, younger daughter of John Remington, of Barton End House, Stroud, Gloucestershire. His father was a career soldier and commanded the 3rd Bengal Cavalry at the Siege of Bhurtpore from 1824-1825, His father died in Malta in 1848 when Henry was 23. Henry who was the seventh son, was christened in Calcutta on 10th January 1826. He was sent to England for his education, and entered the Royal Military College, Sandhurst in February 1839 at the age of 14, remaining there until June, when he moved to Addiscombe until June 1841, when he was gazetted to the Bengal Artillery as a 2nd Lieutenant. First saw active service aged 18 during the Gwalior Campaign. He first distinguished himself whilst fighting at the Battle of Punnier with the No.16 Light Field Battery (horsedrawn) and was awarded the Bronze Star in 1843. During the First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-1846) Henry Tombs became Aide-de-Camp to Lieutenant General Sir Harry

Smith and was present at the Battle of Moodkee, the Battle of Ferozeshah and the Battle of Aliwal. He was awarded a Sutlej Medal with two clasps (for Ferozeshuhur and Aliwal) in 1848.

During the Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848–1849) Henry Tombs was promoted to Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General of Artillery and was present at Battle of Ramnagar, the Battle of Chillianwallah and the Battle of Goojerat. He received the Punjab Medal with two clasps (for Chillianwallah and Goojerat) and a was subsequently promoted Major.

Henry Tombs' saw service for a fourth time during the Indian Mutiny during which he commanded a troop of Horse Artillery. On the 31st of May, 1857 his horse was shot from beneath him for a first time. He fought at the Battle of Budleekeserai where two horses were shot from under him. Tombs was also present at the Siege of Delhi during which he commanded the Bengal Horse Artillery. It was during this siege, on the 9th of July, 1857 that he performed the act of gallantry for which he was to be awarded the Victoria Cross.



On that day, he was acting on behalf of Lieutenant Hills in defending a position from the enemy. Also, on two separate occasions, he went to the aid of his subaltern, and killed two men in defending him. His award of the Victoria Cross was gazetted on 24th April 1858. His medal was presented to him later that year in India. On 28th April 1861, he was promoted to Regimental Lieutenant Colonel and relinquished command of his troop. He was appointed to the 2nd Brigade Royal Horse Artillery to command at Meerut. On 16th May 1863, he was

appointed Brigadier General and command of the Gwalior District, and from February to April 1865, he was given command of the right column of the Bhutan Field Force to recapture Dewangiri. He was congratulated for his command and made Aide de Camp to Queen Victoria.

He was awarded KCB on 14th March 1868. On his promotion to Major General, he returned to England. In 1869, he married Georgina Janet, youngest daughter of Sir James Stirling, and Ellen, daughter of James Mangles MP. They went on to have three children: Dorothea, Mabel and Henry, though sadly Henry died as an infant. In August 1871, he was given command of the Allahabad Division, and from 1st April 1872, transferred to the Oudh Division.

At Christmas 1873, Henry fell ill and was sent from Lucknow in February 1874, on sick leave. On his route home, his condition worsened at Marseille, and he was forced to undergo an operation in Paris. On reaching England, he was told the news that his condition was incurable, and he decided to live his final days in Newport, Isle of Wight. He passed away on 2nd August 1874, aged 49 and he was laid to rest in Carisbrooke Cemetery. On the news of his death Sir James Hill-Johnes VC stated that Tombs "was the greatest commander I served under".

CDV approx 10.5 x 6.3cm. The above taken from the fine vconline website:

<http://www.vconline.org.uk/sir-henry-tombs-vc/4588341260.html>

A scarce original period VC recipient VC CDV