

**AN EXTREMELY FINE SUTLEJ 1845 AWARDED TO AN OFFICER OF THE 10TH FOOT WHO WAS WOUNDED IN THE HEAD AT THE BATTLE OF SOBRAON, ONE OF THREE OFFICER CASUALTIES TO THE REGIMENT FOR THE CAMPAIGN**



SUTLEJ 1845-46, FOR SOBRAON 1846, NO CLASP 'LIEUT. H. R. EVANS 10TH REGT'

Henry Roe Evans was born in August 1822, and commissioned Ensign, 38th Foot, in May 1839. He transferred as Lieutenant to the 10th Foot, in July 1842. He served with the Regiment during the Sutlej campaign, 1845-46, and was wounded in the head at Sobraon, 10 February 1846. At the latter the 10th Foot suffered casualties of one officer, one N.C.O. and twenty-eight men killed, and two officers, two N.C.O.'s and ninety-eight men wounded. Evans transferred to the 63rd Foot in June 1848.

#### THE 10TH FOOT AT THE BATTLE OF SOBRAON

From the Regimental history: "*The regiment marched from Meerut, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Franks, on the 16th December, 1845, and joined the Army of the Sutlej on the 8th January, 1846, both officers and men animated with the laudable desire to share the dangers, and to reap some of the laurels already acquired by the army in this brief but exciting campaign.*

*A month, however, passed without the main army being employed in any occurrence of note, the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief taking advantage of the interval to collect the munitions of war; while on the other hand, the Sikhs, having been strengthened by*



reinforcements, continued to hold strong positions on the banks of the Sutlej; and notwithstanding their defeat in the battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshah on the 18th, 21st, and 22nd December, 1845, they subsequently formed a strongly entrenched camp at Sobraon. Although the intelligence of the victory of Aliwal on the 28th January, 1846, and the sight of the numerous bodies which floated from the vicinity of that battle-field to the bridge of boats at Sobraon, apparently disheartened the enemy, and caused many of them to return to their homes, yet in a few days they appeared as confident as ever of being able in their entrenched position to defy the Anglo-Indian army, and to prevent the passage of the Sutlej.

The heavy ordnance having arrived on the 8th February, the day on which the forces under Major-General Sir Henry Smith, who had been detached to Loodiana, and had obtained a signal victory over the enemy at Aliwal, rejoined the main body of the army, it was determined on coming at once to a battle with the Sikhs, to storm their entrenchments, and finally to drive them out of Hindoostan. This was an undertaking of some magnitude. From observations made during the time the head-quarters of the army were stationed at the village of Nihalkee, it was ascertained that the position at Sobraon was covered with formidable entrenchments, and defended by thirty thousand of the élite of the Khalsa troops; besides being united by a good bridge to a reserve on the opposite bank of the river, on which was stationed a considerable camp, with artillery, which commanded and flanked the enemy's field-works on the British side of the Sutlej.

About daybreak on the 10th February, the mortars, battering guns, and field-artillery were disposed on the alluvial land, embracing within its fire the enemy's works. As soon as the sun's rays cleared the heavy mist which hung over the plain, the cannonade commenced, but notwithstanding the admirable manner in which the guns were served, it would have been visionary to expect that they could, within any limited time, silence the fire of seventy pieces of artillery behind well-constructed batteries, or dislodge troops so strongly entrenched. It soon became evident to the Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Hugh Gough, that musketry and the bayonet must ultimately decide the contest.



Accordingly the seventh brigade, in which was the Tenth foot, reinforced by the fifty-third regiment, and led by Brigadier Stacy, was ordered to head the attack, to turn the enemy's right, to encounter his fire before his numbers were thinned, or spirit broken, and (to use the soldier-like expression of the Commander-in-Chief General Sir Hugh Gough) "to take off the rough edge of the Sikhs in the fight." An opportunity was now afforded for the Tenth to distinguish itself, and the regiment nobly availed itself of this opportunity. At nine o'clock the brigade moved on to the attack over the sandy flat in admirable order, halting to correct, when necessary, any imperfections in its line. For some moments, notwithstanding the regularity and coolness of the assault, so hot was the fire of the Khalsa troops, that it seemed almost impracticable to gain the entrenchments. A brief halt ensued, the brigade again advanced, and persevering gallantry triumphed. The Tenth foot, under Lieutenant-Colonel Franks, now for the first time brought into serious contact with the enemy, greatly distinguished itself. With cool and steady courage, the regiment marched on with the precision of a field-day, and "never fired a shot until within the works of the enemy"; a forbearance much to be commended, and worthy of constant imitation, to which the success of the first effort, and the small loss sustained by the regiment, may be attributed.

Other brigades, at the moment of this successful onset, were ordered forward in support. The thunder of upwards of one hundred pieces of ordnance reverberated through the valley of the Sutlej, and it was soon perceived, that the weight of the whole force within the enemy's camp was likely to be thrown upon the two brigades (sixth and seventh) that had passed the trenches. The Sikhs fought with the energy of desperation, and, even when some of their entrenchments were mastered with the bayonet, endeavoured to recover with the sword the positions they had lost. It was not until the weight of all three divisions of infantry, in addition to several regiments of cavalry, with the fire of every piece of field-artillery that could be sent to their aid, had been felt, that the enemy gave way. The Sikh regiments retreated at first in tolerable order, but the incessant volleys of the British soon caused them to take to a rapid and discomfited flight. Masses of them precipitated themselves on to their bridge, which being broken by the fire of the British, was incapable to sustain the multitude pressing forward, and the sudden rise of the Sutlej rendered the ford almost impassable, adding another obstacle to the escape of the enemy. A dreadful carnage ensued. The stream was red with the bodies of men and horses, the bridge in many places had given way, and it is considered, that, at least a third of the Sikh army perished in this battle; sixty-seven of their guns fell into the hands of the victors, together with two hundred small camel-swivels (zumboo-rucks), numerous standards, and vast munitions of war.

In this manner ended the Battle of Sobraon; at six in the morning it commenced; at nine it became a hand-to-hand conflict; and by eleven the victory was gained. The Tenth regiment had Lieutenant Walter Yonge Beale, one serjeant, and twenty-eight rank and file killed. Lieutenants Henry R. Evans and Charles J. Lindam, two serjeants, and ninety-eight rank and file wounded."



Condition NEF, with attractive patina and original ribbon. The suspension contemporarily altered to take a wide ribbon, with contemporary silver ribbon buckle and top ribbon bar, the last engraved 'Sobraon'. A lovely looking medal and a rare Officer casualty medal for the 10th Foot. Ex Sotheby 1975. Sold with copy service record, regimental report for the 10th Foot during the Sutlej campaign and the original Sotheby 1975 catalogue.