

A RARE SECOND AFGHAN WAR MEDAL AWARDED TO A LIEUTENANT OF 4TH PUNJAB INFANTRY, WHO WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED ON 14 DECEMBER 1879, WHILE FORCING THE ZAWA PASS DURING THE EXPEDITION AGAINST THE ZAIMUKHTS

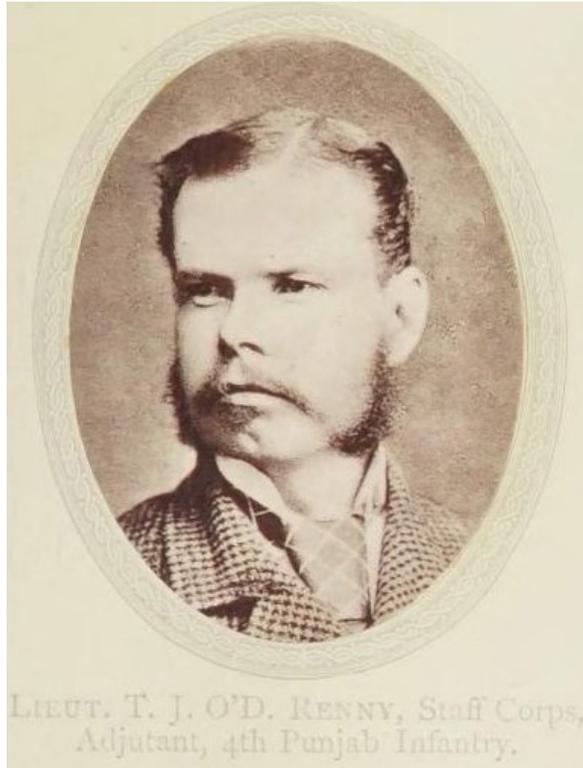


AFGHANISTAN 1878-80, NO CLASP 'LT. T. J. O'D. RENNY, 4TH PUN, INFY.'

Thomas John O'Dwyer Renny was born at Mussoorie on 15 August 1846, third son of Colonel Robert Renny, C.B., Bengal Staff Corps. He entered H.M.'s Service on 11 April 1868, as an Ensign in the 31st Foot, but was transferred on the same day to the 36th Foot, and being in India when he was gazetted, he joined the latter regiment at Peshawar in the succeeding June. In November 1869 he accompanied the regiment to Rawal Pindi, and, on 28 October 1871, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. On 5 January 1872, he was appointed Second Wing Subaltern in the 4th Punjab Infantry, on probation for the Bengal Staff Corps, into which he was subsequently admitted with effect from that date. He joined this regiment at Abbottabad, and at that station from February 1873 to April 1874 he officiated as Quarter-Master of the corps, acting also as Adjutant, in addition, from the month of January. In April 1874 he was appointed First Wing Subaltern, and, still officiating as Adjutant, he, in December of that year, marched with the regiment to Kohat, at which station he continued officiating as Adjutant of the corps until February 1870. From September 1876 to May 1877 he again officiated as Quarter-Master, and during this period a reorganisation of regimental appointments having taken place, his permanent appointment received the designation of "Wing Officer".

In August 1877 he took part with the regiment in a raid into the country of the Jowaki Afridis, carried out in reprisal of Jowaki incursions into British territory, and in the following winter, as

Adjutant of the regiment (to which post he was permanently appointed in November 1877'), he served with the corps throughout the arduous operations against that troublesome clan (India Medal and Clasp). On the termination of this campaign he accompanied the regiment to Edwardesabad, arriving there in April 1878, and during the cold season of 1878-79 he was actively employed with the corps in protecting the Tank border against the Mahsud Waziris, who had at that time been making a series of unusually daring raids into British territory.



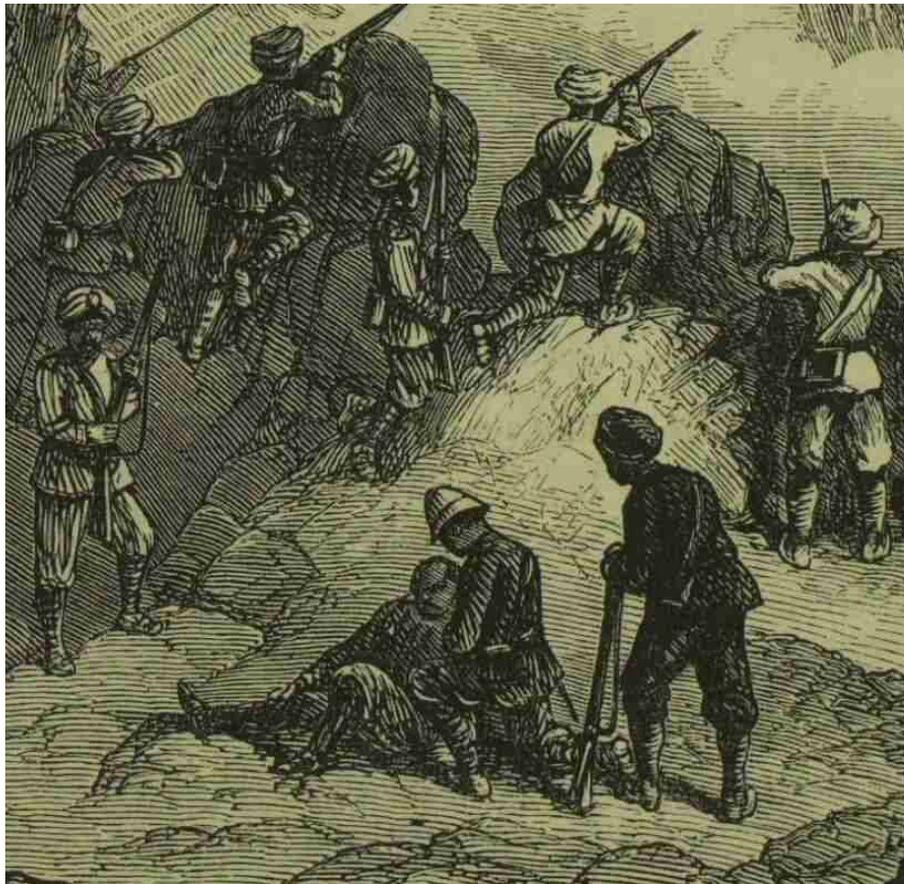
In the autumn of 1879, on the renewal of the Afghan War, he accompanied the regiment to the Kuram Valley, and in December of the same year he took part with it in the expedition against the Zaimukhts, a tribe which had been conspicuously troublesome in its plundering and murdering incursions on the line of communications. In the operations which followed he unfortunately lost his life, having, on the 14th December, fallen mortally wounded, shot through the head in the assault of Zawa, the Zaimukht stronghold. He died of his wound on the following day, in camp at Chinarak, whence his remains were afterwards removed to Kohat, and there interred.

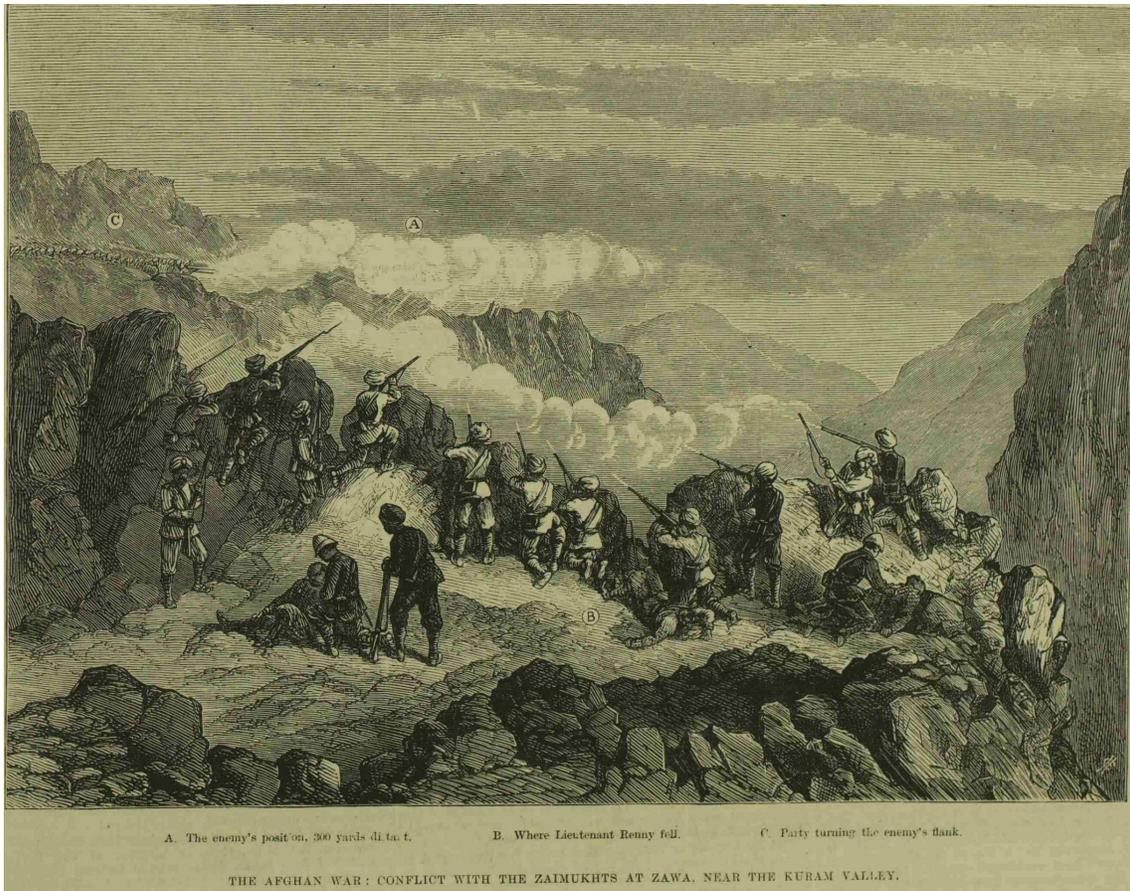
The Illustrated London News, 14 February 1880 included the following narrative of the action in which Rennie died, along with an illustration showing where he was shot (and him being trended to):

ZAIMUKHT EXPEDITION.
The expedition of Brigadier-General Tytler, V.C., C.B., in December last, against the Zaimukht tribes, who inhabit the valley north of the route

from Thull to the Khoorum or Kuram, by which General Roberts entered Afghanistan, has obtained but a passing notice. The force under General Tytler's command was made up of four guns of the 1st battery, eighth brigade Royal Artillery Mountain Train Battery, two guns No. 1 Kohat Mountain Battery, the 85th King's Light Infantry, 250 Native Cavalry, and four native regiments—viz., the 4th Punjaub Infantry, 13th Native Infantry, 20th Native Infantry, the 29th Punjaub Infantry, and a company of Native sappers and miners. There was but one serious conflict, on Dec. 14, at a place called Zawa, eight miles from Chanarak, among the mountain ranges that separate the Zaimukht Valley, northward, from the abode of the Barak and Zerak Afreedi tribes. Here, in a mountain pass, the precipitous sides of which were intersected with ravines and gorges, interspersed with crags and rocks forming a natural stronghold of the most forbidding aspect, the hostile Zaimukhts and Alisherzais had taken their stand, collecting here their women and children, cattle, and stores of grain. Our Illustration, from a Sketch by a military correspondent, shows the manner in which this place was captured. As General Tytler, with the left column of his force, advanced up the pass, large bodies of the enemy were seen on the heights on both sides, and were effectively shelled by the artillery. Meanwhile parties were sent to the heights and the main body pushed up the river bed. Arriving at the bottom of the pass leading into Zawa, the infantry moved up in single file, under a heavy fire of the enemy and a shower of rocks hurled from three or four thousand feet above. Moving rapidly up the side of the hill, they found on reaching the crest that the path turned sharply round to the left. At this point Lieutenant and Adjutant Renny, of the 4th Punjaub Infantry, was mortally

wounded while gallantly leading his men, and with him fell four men of his regiment. When the summit of the pass had been gained, the cluster of villages which form the settlement of Zawa appeared below, nestling in a horse-shoe shaped valley, and surrounded with trees. After the troops had been given a short rest parties were detailed to burn the villages. This having been accomplished, the troops commenced their retirement unmolested. General Tytler returned to his standing camp at Chanarak on the 15th, having been joined en route by the right column. A week later, the force marched into Thull, the programme laid down by the Government having been carried out in the short space of a fortnight. The punishment inflicted on the Zaimukhts and Orakzais has been most signal. Besides having twenty villages burnt and seeing their defensive towers blown up even in the villages that were spared, they have been compelled to pay a fine of over 34,000 rupees and to give up over 1000 stand of arms. Their country, never before traversed by a European, has been thoroughly surveyed and opened out. One of the murderers of Lieutenant Kinloch and two men implicated in the outrages committed on our camp followers were apprehended and shot in presence of the tribal representatives and of our own troops. Our communications along this line have now been rendered secure, and the effect of the expedition upon the border tribes has been most salutary.





Lieutenant Renny's grave is located in Kohat Cemetery, the inscription reads:

“In memory of Lieut R. O'D Renny, adjutant, 4th Punjab Infantry who died at Chinarak on 15th Dec 1879 from the effects of a wound received the previous day while gallantly leading his men at the forcing of the “Zawa Pass”, deeply regretted by his brother Officers who have erected this stone in his memory”

Condition GVF, minor edge bruise or better. A rare medal, being one of 74 Officers killed during the Afghan War of 1878-80 (72 were also wounded)