

**A MOST INTERESTING ASHANTEE 1873 TO A CAPTAIN IN THE 2ND WEST INDIA REGIMENT WHO WAS TWICE WOUNDED IN ACTION, FIRSTLY DURING AN ACTION IN 1861 AGAINST THE TIMMANIES IN SIERRA LEONE AND SECONDLY DURING THE ACTION AT ESSAMAN DURING THE ASHANTEE CAMPAIGN**



ASHANTEE 1873 'CAPT: E. M. FORBES, 2ND W.I. REGT. 1873-4.'

Edward M'Mahon Forbes was commissioned Second Lieutenant in November 1857 and saw action with a detachment of the 2nd West India Regiment in West Africa during the operations against the King of Quiah, November 1861 - February 1862. He was present at the defeat of Pa Caney and his men at Kabal, where he was wounded.

In November 1862, Captain Jones, Lieutenant Forbes, Assistant Surgeon Oaks and 126 NCO's and men were marched to Waterloo (near Freetown) and onto Madonkia. Where they would remain until reports arrived of attacks by the Timmanies on Songo people in British Quiah. Next morning,, 27 November, Captain Jones, accompanied by Forbes, Oaks and 95 men, with one rocket tube, advanced on Songotown and then in pursuit of the enemy. Arriving at the banks of the river Ribbee, the enemy were seen lining the banks on the opposite side and both sides fired several volleys without much effect before some rockets were fired which drove the Timmanies away.

After a short rest, the troops started on their return, Lieutenant Forbes in charge of the rearguard. However having not marched more than 400 yards, the enemy attacked the rear of the column which was quickly reinforced by Captain Jones and a heavy firing commenced before the enemy disappeared. This not before the Timmanies had come into the open, brandishing their weapons and

shouting their war cries. Casualties amounted to one NCO killed, Lieutenant Forbes and six men wounded. Enemy casualties amounted to 30 killed and many more wounded.

### ASHANTEE

Having advanced to Captain, with the outbreak of War with the Ashantee, Captain Forbes and his regiment were landed at Cape Coast Castle in July 1873. During the rest of the year and until the arrival of British reinforcements in January 1874, the 1st and 2nd West India regiments, locally raised troops and Royal Navy landing parties, took the conflict to the Ashantee.

Forbes himself was present at several early operations, including Akimfoo and Ampenee and was slightly wounded by a slug in the right hand at during the raid on the enemy encampment at Essaman under Lt Col Wood VC, 14 October 1873. The previous day, 200 officers of men of the 2nd West India Regiment, along with approximately the same number of blue jackets and marines, 130 Houssas and 300 labourers (carriers etc), were landed from HMS Barracouta and Decoy and advanced on Essamann. Advancing through the jungle, on the 14th, the advanced forces engaged Ashanti scouts about a mile from where Essaman was believed to be and a confused general action commenced that would last several hours before Essaman was captured.

Casualties amounted to Colonel McNeill VC, Captain Forbes, 2nd WI Regt, Captain Fremantle and 2 ratings, Royal Navy wounded, 2 Marines, 16 Houssa's and 3 Coolies were also wounded.

Captain Forbes was advanced to Major in August 1874 and was placed on half-pay in November of the same year, possibly as a result of the wound he received at Essaman. Forbes is mentioned several times in '100 Years' History of the 2nd West India Regiment: 1795–1892'

Army List entry:

*"Lt Colonel E. M. Forbes served against the King of Quiah from Nov. 1861 to Feb. 1862, and was present at the defeat of Pa Caney and his men at Kabal (wounded). Served in the Ashanti war in 1873, and was slightly wounded in the action of Essaman (medal)"*



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