

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL RICHARD BRUNTON'S  
PORTUGUESE DECORATIONS FOR THE  
PENINSULAR WAR.

BY A. A. PAYNE, L.R.C.P., *etc.*

IEUTENANT-COLONEL RICHARD BRUNTON, it is claimed, had the honour of being awarded by King John VI. of Portugal the gold star or cross for commanders and the officers' cross for the Peninsular Campaign, instituted in 1816, and promulgated at the palace of Rio de Janeiro in the same year.

Only within the last two years have I been aware that this decree<sup>1</sup> and an official list of the recipients of these Portuguese decorations are extant, and through the courtesy and kindness of Major John H. Leslie I have been able to obtain a copy of each.

By article seven of the decree, referring to the commanders' gold star, it is stated that

All the officers attached to a general, who receives the distinction, and who shall have been with him in the battles or sieges for which their general receives it, if they have the grade of major, or another superior to it, will have the right to the distinction for such a battle.

The STAR, which is of gold, consists of eight arms with double points, enamelled white, and terminating in gold knobs, resting on a gold wreath of laurel on a blue enamelled ground, edged with gold. On each of the arms is an oval, enamelled green, on which is inscribed the name of one of the actions at which the recipient was

<sup>1</sup> The decree is set out in full in Mr. Winter's paper in this volume.

present, or eight in all, namely :—FUENTES D'ONORO, ARROYO DE MOLINOS, ALMARAZ, MAYA, VITTORIA, NIVELLE, PYRENEES, NIVE. In the centre of the obverse, within an ornamental gold band in relief, is the bust of King John VI of Portugal to the right, also in relief, and in gold, on a light blue enamelled ground. The reverse is similar, except that within the gold band, on a white enamelled ground, are the initials of the recipient—*R.B.*, for Richard Brunton.

The OFFICERS' CROSS is also of gold, and consists of four arms, one inch and eleven-twentieths in diameter, with broad ornamental borders, resting on a laurel wreath in green enamel, and surmounted by an ornamental projection for suspension. In the centre of the obverse, within a blue enamelled circle edged with gold and inscribed GUERRA PENINSULAR, are the arms of Portugal in gold, surmounted by a crown on a convex ground. The reverse is similar, except that in the centre, within a circle of laurel leaves, is IV, all in relief and in gold.

The star was worn suspended from a ribbon round the neck, and the officers' cross from a straight gold bar upon the left breast. The suspenders of Colonel Brunton's decorations having been lost, a gold loop has been added to each of them.

The campaigns for which the crosses were granted were for four or more of the six campaigns, namely :—

First campaign, 1809 ; second, 1810 ; third, 1811 ; fourth, 1812 ; fifth, 1813 ; and sixth, 1814.

For fewer than four campaigns the cross was to be of silver.

For the non-commissioned officers and men the cross had no laurel wreath, and was one inch and a tenth in diameter.

Colonel Brunton entered the army as ensign on the 10th of November, 1808, was appointed lieutenant in the Forty-third Foot on the 12th of December, 1809, captain in the Sixtieth on the 10th of November, 1813, and placed on half-pay on the 25th of December, 1818. He was appointed captain in the Thirteenth Light Dragoons on the 29th of April, 1819, major on the 2nd of March, 1826, and lieutenant-colonel of the Thirteenth on the 31st of December, 1830.

He sold out in 1845, and died on the 27th of July, 1846, at Bath.

Colonel Brunton served in the Peninsula from May, 1809, to February, 1814, and was with the Sixth Caçadors. At Waterloo he was deputy-assistant-quarter-master-general, and was wounded whilst defending the baggage.

As it may appear to some that, because the colonel did not attain his majority until 1826, he could not, therefore, be entitled to the commanders' star, it will be well to quote a statement from the *Narrative of the Peninsular War*,<sup>1</sup> by the Marquess of Londonderry:—

“ Much umbrage was taken, because the officers attached to the Portuguese Corps received, not only an additional step in the British Army, but a second advance, as soon as they took their places in the ranks of our Allies. By this arrangement a British Captain, who might happen to volunteer into the Portuguese Army, was promoted to a British Majority ; and was still further pushed on by receiving the Portuguese rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, immediately on his attaching himself to a Portuguese Battalion.”

Again, the Colonel's services, with the exact names of the actions enumerated on his commanders' star, are mentioned in his records in Hart's *Army List* from its publication in 1840 until the year 1845 when he retired from the army. Had he not been entitled to have these battles inscribed on his star it is scarcely probable that he would have had them thus recorded, and by so doing have rendered himself liable to be criticised by his fellow officers.

It is allowed that in most medal-rolls discrepancies, inaccuracies, and omissions occur, and I think in none more than those of foreign origin. Although, according to the list, Colonel Brunton is only credited with three campaigns, if he served from May, 1809, to February, 1814, he should certainly be entitled to at least four, as indicated by the number IV on his cross.

<sup>1</sup> Page 290.

It appears to me that in some instances mistakes have occurred through entering the officer's British rank instead of that of his Portuguese advancement.

Though all these awards were made at the same time, in the list of the recipients of the Cross is the name of George Murphy, as *tenente*, that is, lieutenant, whereas amongst the names of those who were awarded the star, the same officer is mentioned as a major. His full name should have been George Henry Edward Murphy, and he served with the Twenty-third Portuguese, receiving the gold medal for Toulouse, and the commanders' star for Nive and Toulouse. Notwithstanding that he served in the Peninsula from December, 1808, until the end of the war, according to the list he was only entitled to receive a cross for three campaigns.

An illustration in colours of the orders and honours "for Distinguished Service" conferred upon Major-General Sir Denis Pack, K.C.B., and on his son, Colonel Reynell Pack, C.B., which forms the frontispiece of *Sebastopol Trenches* by the latter and contains some twenty honours, shows the commanders' star awarded to General Pack. Upon it are inscribed the names of eleven actions, but, unfortunately, they are not clear enough to be deciphered.

Though the name of the General is amongst the list of brigadiers who received a cross for four campaigns, his name is not amongst those who were awarded the commanders' star. Neither is his officer's cross depicted in the illustration containing his other decorations.

These beautiful and rare decorations seldom find their way into collectors' cabinets. In Colonel A. E. Whitaker's collection there are two. One officer's cross for "V" campaigns, without a record of his name; another cross for "VI" campaigns, that belonged to Sir Richard Armstrong, C.B., yet the roll only allowed him the cross for "five campaigns."

In the late Colonel John Murray's collection were the commanders' star for four actions:—Fuentes d' Onor, Gariz, Pyrenees, and Orthes; and the same officer's cross for "VI" campaigns. Yet Gariz is not mentioned in the Official List, and the list, again, only allowed the Colonel the cross for five campaigns.

Colonel Murray also had in his collection the commanders' star for four actions awarded a Colonel William Henry Sewell, namely, Nivelles, Nive, Orthes, and Toulouse; and Colonel Sewell's officer's cross for "V" campaigns. Yet he also is not recorded in the list of recipients of the cross.

As a proof that many recipients had their decorations manufactured in England, I find that to the name of "Tenete-Colonel Roberto João Harvey" in the list, I have added a note:—"At the King's Levée, 21st March, 1821, Colonel Harvey wore his Cross, being of gold with VI in the centre. This he had had made at his own expense."

A further example is that at the distribution of the "Order of the Douranée Empire" in the citadel of Kabul, by Shah Sujah-ul-Mulk, on the 17th September, 1839, it was found that sufficient of the decorations had not been made, therefore those who had been selected to be thus honoured had to have their decorations manufactured at their own expense. It is also a well-known fact that after the Crimean campaigns many officers had a special die engraved for their Turkish medals.

Besides the Portuguese decorations of Colonel Brunton, I have still in my collection, amongst the eight honours awarded to Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Edward Brackenbury, another gold officer's cross for IV campaigns. Also a silver cross for "2" campaigns, a silver gilt cross, without a number, bearing the arms of Portugal on both the obverse and reverse, and another silver-gilt cross for VI campaigns. Neither of these crosses bears the laurel wreath.

The case of Colonel William Mayne, K.T.S., is an instance in which an officer having held high rank in the Portuguese army, took a lower grade on again joining the British forces. After having attained the rank of major, he sold out in 1802. Afterwards he joined the Portuguese, and was placed in command of the Loyal Lusitania Legion in the Peninsular War. In 1809 he was in command of a body of 2000 men, which formed the advance of General Mackenzie's corps, composed of a militia regiment and the

Lusitania Legion. Yet we find him a lieutenant in the First Life Guards on the 26th of September, 1811, with which regiment he served at the Battle of Waterloo.

These explanations should, in my opinion, establish the validity and genuineness of Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Brunton's decorations.