

The Burning of the *Sarah Sands*

Roger Willoughby and Alan Coles



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THE BURNING OF THE *SARAH SANDS*



The *Sarah Sands* off the Tuskar Rock lighthouse c. 1852 (from a painting by James Morton)

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Roger Willoughby
and
Alan Coles



The Orders and Medals
Research Society

This book is dedicated to
Leo George Tevos Willoughby

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A fragment from the Regimental Colour that was saved from the fire
(The Keep Military Museum)

PROLOGUE

On Christmas Eve 1904 the funeral of 82-year-old Captain John Squier Castle (1823-1904) took place at Sidcup in Kent. Among the floral tributes was a wreath from the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the 54th Regiment (2nd Dorsets), inscribed:

A tribute to the memory of one whose gallant conduct on the occasion of the burning of the *Sarah Sands*, 11th November, 1857, added lustre to the traditions of the regiment, and will never be forgotten.¹

Reported in newspapers nationwide, the death of Captain Castle, on 21 December, awoke memories of those events almost half a century earlier, when the troop transport SS *Sarah Sands*, bound for Calcutta with the Headquarters of the 54th (West Norfolk) Regiment aboard, had caught fire in the Indian Ocean.

Tributes and eulogies to the Captain appeared in the press throughout the following week, the tale of the *Sarah Sands* unfolding in terms of high praise: of stout hearts and cool heads on board the ship;² of the heroic conduct and staunch discipline of the 54th Regiment;³ of hours of peril, when hundreds of lives depended on the courage, coolness and resourcefulness of the late Captain;⁴ a truly heroic struggle against the forces of fire, wind and water.⁵

This book tells the story of that struggle – of the ship and of the men aboard her – of a night long ago when the strength of construction of the one, and the courage and discipline of the other, combined to fight the forces of nature – a tribute to those who designed, built and sailed in the *Sarah Sands*, and to the officers and men of the 54th Regiment of Foot. It also tells the story of deeply personal animosities within the regiment, its Lieutenant Colonel traduced, an un-awarded Victoria Cross, and most of the *Sarah Sands*' crew disparaged.

1 *Sidcup District Times*, 30 December 1904.

2 *Queen*, 31 December 1904.

3 *The Times*, 24 December 1904.

4 *Daily Telegraph*, 23 December 1904.

5 *Queen*, 31 December 1904.



Captain John Squier Castle

CHAPTER 1

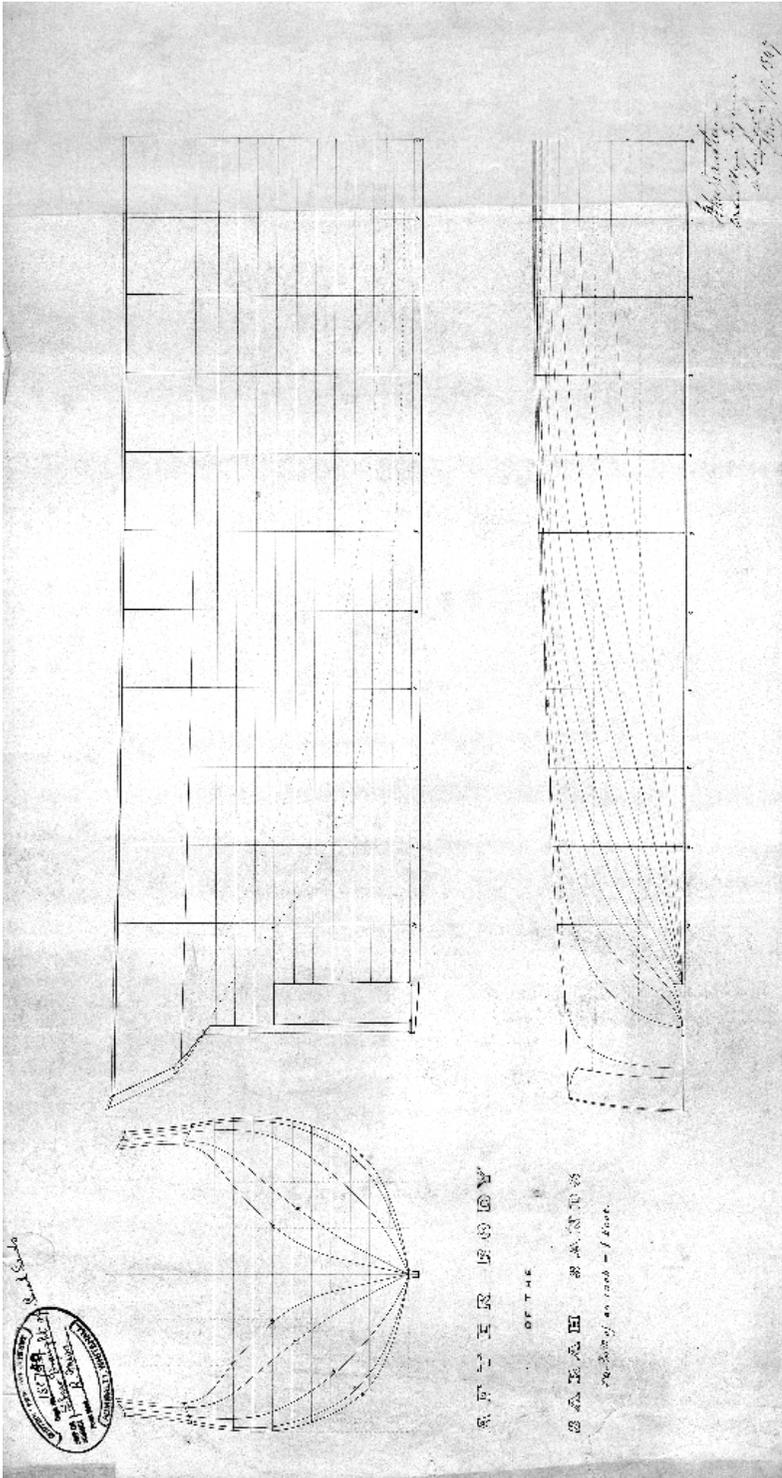
Construction and Trials

During that era when iron was replacing wood in shipbuilding, when the method of motive power was changing from sail to steam, and the means of propulsion from paddle-wheel to screw, the *Sarah Sands* became the second ocean-going, iron-built, screw-steamship (after the *Great Britain* of 1845).¹

Constructed at Brunswick Dock, Liverpool, by James Hodgson & Co,² and launched in September 1846,³ the vessel was of 1,300 tons, with length of keel 188 feet between perpendiculars and 220 feet overall, and breadth of beam 32 feet.⁴ Having lower, main and spar decks, with three watertight bulkheads, the depth from the top of the floors up to the main deck was 19 feet six inches, and thence to the spar deck a further seven feet six inches.⁵ Space above the main deck was appropriated to the crew and passengers, and below to the engine compartment, coal bunkers and cargo holds - the engine compartment (commencing about 80 feet from the stern post) being 36 feet long, and comprising the two engines and six boiler furnaces (of the wet-bottomed type), plus stowage space for some 300 tons of coal, whilst the cargo capacity was calculated at approximately 900 tons of weight and measurement goods.⁶

Supplied by Bury, Curtis & Kennedy, of Liverpool, the engines comprised two 75 horse power oscillating steam cylinders (total 150hp nominal engine power), the cylinders being 50 inches in diameter, with a length of stroke of three feet, situated beneath the main crank and propeller shaft.⁷ The *Sarah Sands* was the largest of several vessels built in the mid-1840s utilising auxiliary steam power, and fitted with direct acting engines and screw propellers without intermediate gearing (the ordinary marine condensing engine applied with direct action to the propeller shaft, without the intervention of a secondary motion).⁸ The screw, on Woodcroft's principle with expanding pitch,⁹ was 14 feet in diameter, made of cast-iron with four wrought-iron blades, the pitch being some 23 feet at the leading part of each blade, and nearly 30 feet at the after part (the coarse pitch being advantageous under sail).¹⁰ Clencher-built and double-riveted - the inherent strength of these features would stand her in good stead in the years ahead - the *Sarah Sands* had a clipper bow, was barque-rigged with the addition of a short mast forward (making four masts in all), and had a single funnel midway between the fore and main masts.

Designed by John Grantham (1809-74), a naval architect and consulting engineer in Liverpool, Grantham's early experience had been gained in Ireland in the establishment of steam vessels and an improved system of navigation on the canals between Dublin and Limerick, and in the employment of steam on the River Shannon. Joining Mather, Dixon & Co, who constructed marine engines, locomotives, sugar-mills and a variety of machinery, Grantham subsequently became a manager and partner before the company ceased business, whence he began to practice on his own account. He planned and executed several large iron sailing and steam ships employed around this time (the *Pacific*, *Antelope*, *Empress Eugenie*, etc), took out several patents for screw propellers (then in the process of being introduced), and contributed many works to engineering literature, notably *Iron*



Plan of the after part of the Sarah Sands's hull by John Grantham, 16 January 1847
(© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich)

Shipbuilding in 1858, a standard book on the subject, 'constantly referred to by Judges and Counsel when engaged in trials relating to iron ships, and by others for practical purposes connected with their construction'.¹¹

The vessel was built for Sands & Co (Thomas and Joseph Sands), and named after Sarah Sands (née Branson: 1790-1863), wife of Thomas Sands (1790-1867),¹² a former Chairman of the Docks Committee of Liverpool, an ex-Mayor of Liverpool, a Magistrate of the Borough of Liverpool, and the major owner of the *Sarah Sands*, with one quarter of the 64 shares. (By an Act of 1825 it had been laid down that the ownership of any vessel must be divided into 64 shares).¹³

Registered on 19 December 1846,¹⁴ the *Sarah Sands*'s trials, according to the press: 'have been looked forward to with great interest, she being the largest vessel in which the principle of auxiliary steam-power has been fairly tested'.¹⁵ Commanded by Captain William Corscaden Thompson (1802-after 1882), himself an owner, the:

Sarah Sands was taken out of dock on Tuesday [29 December] for a private trial, Messrs Sands, Ripley, Pace, McTear, Grantham, and others being on board...On Wednesday [30 December] she again started, in light ballast trim, having on board Mr Atherton, an engineer from Woolwich, sent expressly by the Admiralty to witness the trials. At the Bell Buoy Mr Atherton and Mr Grantham left her ... after which she proceeded to sea, with Captain Thompson and Captain Nicolson, Mr Grantham's superintendent'.¹⁶

Though the foggy weather was very unfavourable for the trial, an opportunity occurred of testing her sailing qualities when near Holyhead, and under canvas, she performed admirably, being remarkably stiff and manageable. The speed of the vessel under steam alone, and with thirty revolutions per minute, was eight knots - steam pressure varying from four to 10 pounds per square inch, cut off at from three-quarters to one-half the stroke¹⁷ - though: 'for a short time, when the steam-pressure was at its best, the revolutions reached thirty-four-and-a-half, and the vessel rather exceeded nine knots'.¹⁸ With full steam, the speed of the engines was expected to reach thirty-five to forty revolutions.

The *Sarah Sands* remained at sea for three days, returning on Friday, 1 January 1847, to take in a cargo for New York. *The Albion* considered:

... the facts developed by the vessel possess the greatest interest to the ship-owners of this country. The *Sarah Sands* has cost about half the money generally expended upon steamers of her class, with speed very little short of theirs, with even superior accommodation for passengers, requiring about half the quantity of coals, and capable of taking about four times the amount of cargo, thus putting beyond question the practicability of having steam communication for the more valuable cargoes to all ports of the world. In addition to these advantages the *Sarah Sands*, being a fully rigged ship, will be perfectly safe if anything should happen to her machinery, the idea that she would be tender under canvas, or difficult to manage on account of her length, proving quite fallacious. She is, on the contrary, perfectly stiff, and has elicited the unqualified admiration of all who were on board her.¹⁹

It was further stated in *The Albion*, that the rates of freight for fine goods would be 78 shillings, and for coarse goods 50 shillings, per ton measurement - the *Sarah Sands* being ready to receive cargo on or after 5 January. The rate of passage (without wines or liquors) was fixed at 25 guineas plus 1 guinea steward's fee. The cabins being considered much superior to anything yet produced in Liverpool, leaving the celebrated New York liners behind in both arrangement and magnificence. The cabin arrangement forward admitted

of three rows of dining tables, affording ample room for nearly 70 passengers, while it was expected the side tables and sofas would form the favoured lounging places.²⁰

Departing on 20 January 1847, the *Sarah Sands* completed her first voyage to New York in 20 days 10 hours. Finding adverse weather, and not knowing the capabilities of his vessel, Captain Thompson reduced fuel consumption as much as possible. During the first part of the voyage the engines were stopped for 30 hours to repair the working gear, which had been strained by a piece of iron falling into it. They were also stopped for several short periods, when the wind was favourable, the engines being worked less than 17 days, with sail alone being used during the remainder of the time.²¹

Remarking upon the state of the weather, one of the most powerful of the Halifax steamers, preceding the *Sarah Sands*, was 19 days plus on her voyage to Boston, and the following steamer took some 17 days reaching the same port. The *Sarah Sands* passed about six of the fine New York sailing packets that had started before her, and whose passages averaged some 48 days each.²²

Arriving at New York, fuel was left for about four days, average consumption being less than 17 tons of coal per day. Steam pressure averaged seven pounds per square inch, cut off at less than half the stroke. 'Her slowest progress when steaming head to wind, was 130 miles in the day, and her quickest speed was 269 miles in the day'.²³ Some peculiar circumstances attended the second voyage, the *Sarah Sands* leaving Liverpool on 6 April 1847, drawing 23 feet of water, with a heavy cargo and 330 tons of coal on board. Weathering a severe gale, she averaged 95 knots per day - a remarkable speed, for, though nominal engine power was 150hp, the motion of the piston never reached 150 feet per minute (instead of the usual standard of 180 feet for a length of stroke of three feet), and the actual power employed could not have been more than 125-130hp.²⁴ From the report of the passengers (published in *The Albion* of 17 May 1847), the weather and all circumstances appeared unusually adverse during the voyage:

... attended, from the day of our departure, by an almost constant succession of head winds, and with opposing seas. About three-fourths of the time the wind has been directly or nearly ahead, and we cannot reckon, in all, more than four days of favourable weather. Under these discouraging circumstances ... we have occasion rather to be surprised that we have made the passage so quickly ... a success which we are constrained to attribute as well to the efficiencies of the propeller as to the superior sailing qualities of the ship ... whenever the weather has favoured her, the vessel has admirably performed her part.²⁵

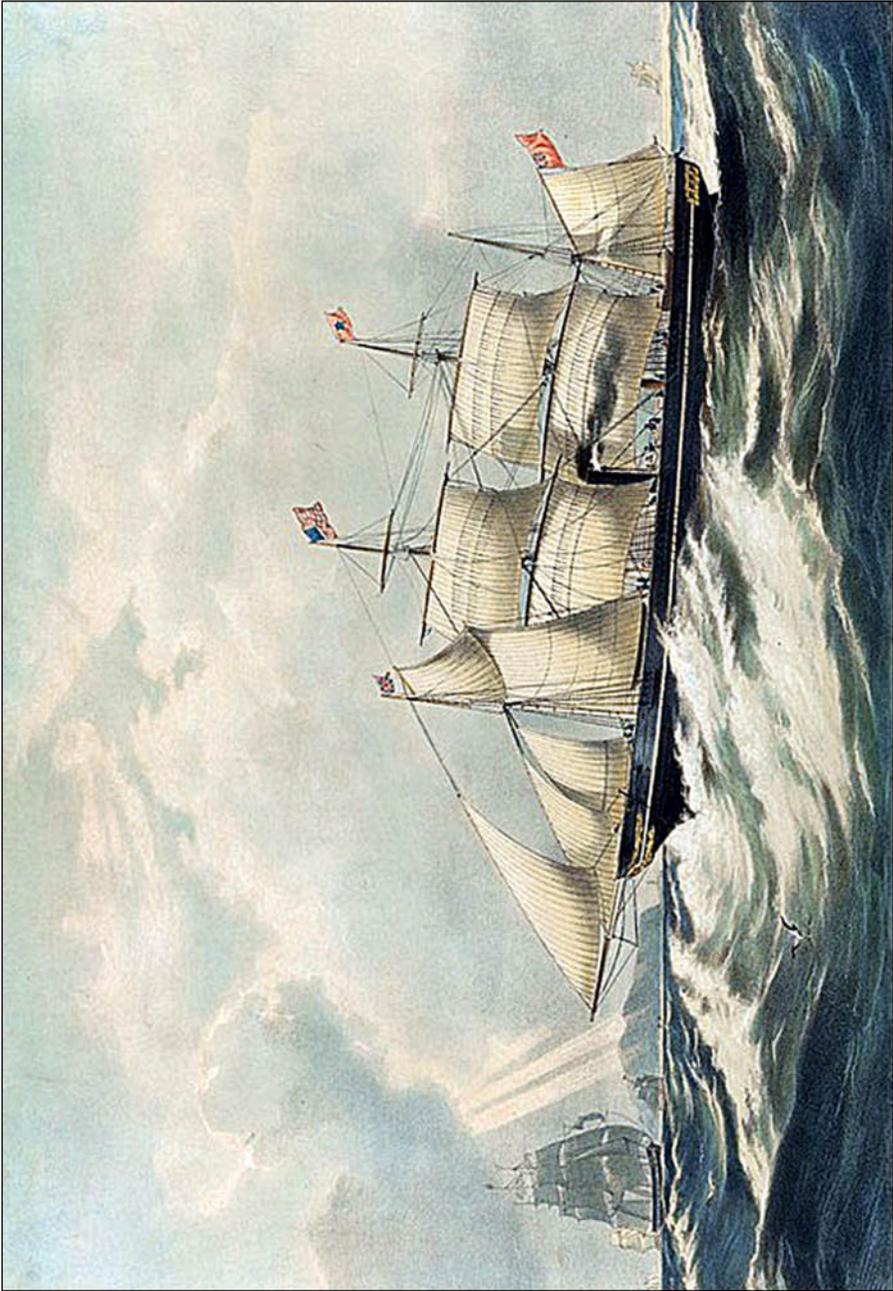
An extraordinary result had been obtained, with the voyage being completed in 23 days, during the last seven of which she was nearly without fuel and had only four boiler furnaces working. Her progress appeared to have been equal to that of the powerful paddle-wheel steamers in similar weather.²⁶

During the time of these voyages, the fine American liners, which generally made rapid passages, were as long as 60, 70 and 80 days on each trip, being driven far off course by the heavy weather.²⁷ It should be noted, however, that the vessels to which auxiliary steam had been applied, were of a fine class which would make good passages under canvas in almost any weather, but they became extremely serviceable when, aided by the screw, they could be kept on a course nearer to the wind.²⁸

1 N.R.P. Bonsor (1955), *North Atlantic Seaway*, Vol 1, p 199.

2 J.H. McGivering, 'The *Sarah Sands*: A Prolegomenon', *The Kipling Journal*, 1976, p 2.

- 3 Bonsor, 1955, *op cit*, p 184.
- 4 John Grantham, 'Description of the *Sarah Sands* and other steam vessels, fitted with direct acting engines and screw propellers, without intermediate gearing,' *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, Vol VI, 1847, pp 283-297 (Bonsor quotes 1,299 tons, 182 feet length of keel, 215 feet overall, and 33 feet breadth of beam).
- 5 *Ibid*
- 6 *Ibid*
- 7 *Ibid*
- 8 *Ibid*, p 284.
- 9 Bennet Woodcroft (1803-79), a noted Consulting Engineer and Patent Agent, was a one time Professor of Machinery at University College London: see <http://www.steamindex.com/library/woodcroft.htm>
- 10 Grantham, 1847, *op cit*, p 287.
- 11 'Memoir of John Grantham', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, Vol 39, 1875, pp 266-268 (a much fuller account of the career and achievements of John Grantham will be found in Appendix H).
- 12 Sarah and Thomas had been married since 1814, and by 1850 had six surviving children, and were living at their mansion at Elms Wood, Mosley Hill, Co. Lancaster (*Burke's Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol 3, p 285).
- 13 Records of the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen.
- 14 TNA ref: BT 107/305 (Transcripts and Transactions).
- 15 *Liverpool Albion*, 4 January 1847.
- 16 *Ibid*
- 17 Grantham, 1847, *op cit*, p 287.
- 18 *Liverpool Albion*, 4 January 1847.
- 19 *Ibid*
- 20 *Ibid*
- 21 Grantham, 1847, *op cit*, p 288.
- 22 *Ibid*
- 23 *Ibid*, p 289; William Glover was the ship's engineer at this point and his association with the *Sarah Sands* was recalled in his obituaries (see: *Nottingham Evening Post*, Monday 26 August 1907, p.5; *Grantham Journal*, Saturday 31 August 1907, p 6).
- 24 *Ibid*, p 290.
- 25 *Ibid*, pp 290-1.
- 26 *Ibid*, p 290.
- 27 *Ibid*, pp 290-1.
- 28 *Ibid*, p 292.



SS Sarah Sands (lithograph by Samuel Walters)

CHAPTER 2

Early Voyages

Chartered to the Red Cross Line, when a mooted England-Australia run did not materialise, the *Sarah Sands* operated from Liverpool to New York between 1847-49, completing 12½ round voyages (plus a further two round voyages in 1852).¹ Most of her passages were considerably faster than the contemporary sailing packets, with which she was intended to compete, rather than with the paddle steamers of the Cunard Line.² Though records are contradictory regarding departure and arrival dates, for the years 1847-49 she averaged approximately 22 days westbound and 18½ days eastbound, with two voyages during the first half of 1849 being prolonged due to storms. On her third voyage, departing Liverpool on 15 June 1847, the *Sarah Sands* broke some of her valve gear when five days out, returning under sail to Cork on 23 June for repair. Leaving for New York again on 29 June, she arrived there after 34 days, though taking only 21 days from Cork.³ To her credit, she was the first North Atlantic steamer since the *Sirius*, nine years earlier,⁴ to cater for steerage passengers, often carrying a good complement. For example, leaving Liverpool on 8 August 1848 the *Sarah Sands* carried 106 cabin and 200 steerage passengers; then, the following year she carried 35 cabin and 277 steerage passengers to New York on 2 May 1849;⁵ and on 7 April 1852 carried 124 cabin and 238 steerage passengers.⁶

Still under Captain Thompson, the *Sarah Sands* was next chartered to the Empire City Line,⁷ the discovery of gold in California having created a demand for all kinds of shipping. Sailing from New York on 13 December 1849, she rounded Cape Horn for San Francisco (calling at Rio de Janeiro, Valparaiso and Panama en route),⁸ not arriving however until 5 June 1850, through having to put into port short of fuel 90 miles below Monterey⁹ (many of her passengers, eager gold-seekers, continuing from there to San Francisco overland). Operating between San Francisco and Panama, the *Sarah Sands* completed four or five round voyages (dependent upon whether San Francisco or Panama is regarded as the point of origin), continuing from October 1850, with the take-over of the Empire City Line, under the aegis of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company.¹⁰

Sometime in the Spring of 1851, Washington Ilsley (1815-92) took over as Master aboard the *Sarah Sands*. First Officer since her maiden voyage, Ilsley had been previously in command for her ninth round voyage to New York between 11 October and 5 December 1848. Departing San Francisco on 1 September 1851, Ilsley brought the *Sarah Sands* back to Liverpool (via Panama, Callao, Valparaiso and Rio de Janeiro),¹¹ arriving on 29 January 1852 - the ship had been reported aground on Little Burbo, below Rio, but had got off without sustaining any apparent damage.¹²

Shares in the ownership of the *Sarah Sands* had changed hands regularly between August 1847 and January 1852, with 24 transactions being recorded.¹³ William Leach, a Manchester merchant and an original owner, was the major shareholder for much of that period - at one time holding 30 of the 64 shares (including all 16 of Thomas Sands' by November 1847), though between January 1848 and December 1851 he made no transactions, retaining 18 shares throughout.¹⁴ William C. Thompson, with acquisitions in

December 1851 and January 1852 bringing his total to 16 shares, now briefly took over as majority shareholder.¹⁵ Returning as Master in 1852 for two round voyages to New York (between 7 April and 26 July), Thompson remained in command when the *Sarah Sands* sailed for Sydney on 18 September. On this date, Thompson sold his holdings to Charles Oddie, a Liverpool merchant and an original owner, involved in several transactions over the years, who now held 23 shares.¹⁶

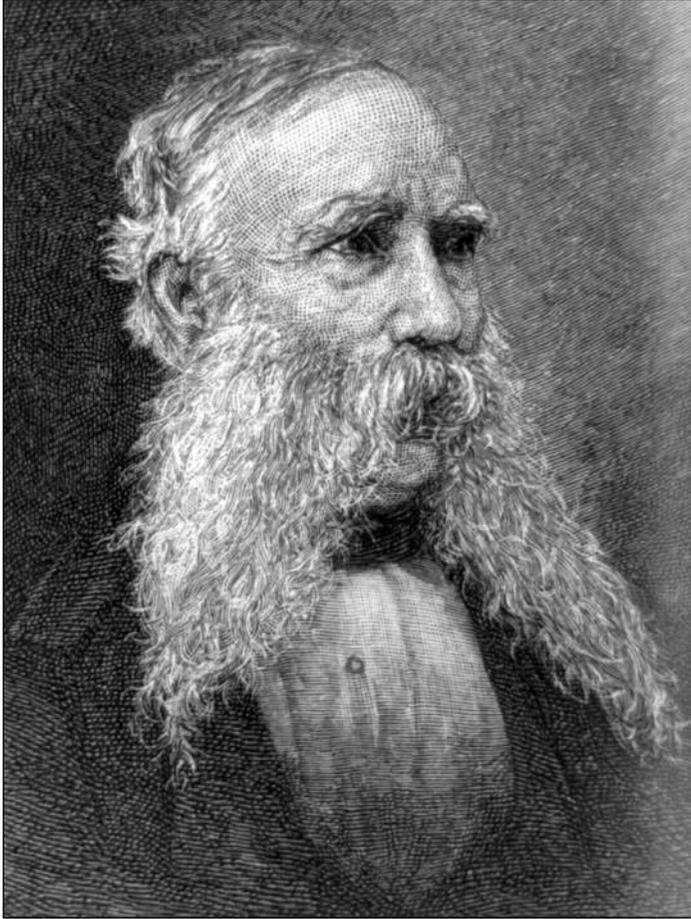
The *Sarah Sands* sailed to Australia under an agreement with the Melbourne Gold and General Mining Association,¹⁷ departing from Liverpool on Sunday 19 September 1852 and calling at Cork and Cape Town¹⁸ before arriving at Melbourne on 17 December and Sydney on 24 December.¹⁹ With the discovery of gold in Victoria in 1851, the population of 77,000 had doubled during the first year of gold-fever, immigrants pouring into Melbourne in 1852 at the rate of 2,000 per week, whilst the value of imports and exports multiplied tenfold between 1851-53.²⁰ Consequently, when the *Sarah Sands* left Sydney a month later, on 29 January, she carried 23,214 ounces of gold (10,000 ounces each for the Bank of Australasia and the Union Bank of Australia, plus 19 smaller amounts),²¹ and on departing Melbourne, on 11 February, a further 40,929 ounces (20,000 ounces for the Bank of Australasia, plus 61 smaller amounts).²²

On arrival at Melbourne, on 4 February, the passengers had conveyed: 'their sense of Captain Thompson's worth as a gentleman and a sailor, by presenting him and his lady with a purse containing fifty guineas, as a memento'.²³ The same source had spoken of the crew's regard for Captain Thompson, noting that: 'not a single man has absconded from the vessel since she left Liverpool. Policemen were not required on board to prohibit them from running away; they were too firmly attached to their Captain and ship'.²⁴ All the more remarkable considering the excitement in the Victorian gold-fields, with three major nuggets being found in Canadian Gully at Ballarat during that January of 1853 (these weighing approximately 93, 84 and 134 pounds),²⁵ the largest being accompanied by its finders to England aboard the *Sarah Sands*.²⁶

The impact of the latter nugget, and the shipping of it, lingered awhile - certainly a nugget was named after the *Sarah Sands*, probably one of the three mentioned, though exactly which is difficult to determine.²⁷ More visibly, a Sarah Sands Hotel was opened on 12 December 1854 by one John McKenzie Barry in Brunswick,²⁸ one of Melbourne's oldest suburbs, leading to the road to the gold-fields. When the hotel was rebuilt in 1872, the builders mistakenly put the launch year of the *Sarah Sands*, 'Est. 1846', on the facade, this being still visible on the hotel today.

With the return of the *Sarah Sands* from Australia, calling at Cape Town and Fayal (this last stop due to contrary north-easterly winds and shortage of provisions),²⁹ William Thompson completed his final voyage in command, departing the ship either at Plymouth on 28 May or, more likely, at Liverpool on 2 June.³⁰

Washington Ilsley now returned as Master for the next phase of the *Sarah Sands'* ocean-going life. This stemmed from the opening, in 1852, of the St Lawrence and Atlantic Railway, between Montreal and Portland, Maine, which brought Montreal within reach of the sea, even during the months the St Lawrence River was closed to navigation due to ice. The Canadian government had arranged for the establishment of a transatlantic steamship line, running direct to Quebec and Montreal, via the St Lawrence, in the summer, and connecting with the railway at Portland in the winter.³¹ McKean, McLarty & Lamont of Liverpool contracted, in 1852, to carry the Canadian mails twice a month in summer



Captain William C. Thompson (*Harper's Magazine*, 1883-84, p 218)

The Burning of the Sarah Sands

(Liverpool-Quebec) and monthly in winter (Liverpool-Portland), utilising steamers of at least 1,200 tons, capable of eastbound crossings in 13 days and westbound in 14. This led to the foundation of the Canadian Steam Navigation Company, a much smaller concern than that envisaged by McKean, McLarty & Lamont, which operated these services from April 1853 until their cessation in March 1855.³²

Fares in October 1853, for First Cabin, Second Cabin and Steerage to Portland, were 20, 12 and six guineas respectively, with First Cabin including onward rail fare to Montreal³³ - by October 1854, proposed fares, for the same accommodation, were 20, 14 and eight guineas respectively to Portland, or 21, 15 and nine guineas including onward transportation by rail or steam to Montreal, Boston or New York.³⁴

The *Sarah Sands* made nine round voyages - four to Quebec and Montreal and five to Portland - on her third voyage inaugurating the winter service to Portland.³⁵ The arrival of the first transatlantic steamship, on 17 December 1853, proved quite an occasion for Portland: 'announced by the discharge of cannon on board, and a flight of rockets', while ashore 'a brace of heavy brass pieces ... gave the news a wider circulation.' Soon after, 'the wharves and shipping in the vicinity of the steamer were ... packed with humanity'; British and American flags were run up on the most important and prominent buildings; and 'all the bells in the city commenced a merry peal ... answered by a national salute' and 'two guns extra for the *Sarah Sands*, two for Portland and two for Montreal.'³⁶

The City of Portland sought to promote the advantages of the harbour over the long established rival ports of Boston and New York, noting that: '... it can be entered or left at any hour of the night as well as day, without a pilot', pointing to the arrival of the *Sarah Sands* just after midnight, in sole charge of Captain Ilsley, as proof.³⁷ To mark the event, the Board of Trade held a dinner, on 20 December, the Bill of Fare for which proclaimed, 'On the arrival of the first European steamer' - nearly 300 guests attended, among them the Captain and officers of the *Sarah Sands*³⁸ (Portland was Washington Ilsley's home town, and listed among the more prominent guests was his father, Captain Ilsley, Senior³⁹).

Throughout 1854 the *Sarah Sands* suffered several accidents, which unintentionally demonstrated the strength of the vessel's construction. On 29-30 March, between voyages to Portland, she was aground on the Woodside Bank in the Mersey, remaining high and dry for one tide, but got off without sustaining any damage.⁴⁰ Between 6-8 June, she was aground on rocks in the Straits of Belle Isle, getting off by throwing part of her cargo overboard; upon inspection after arriving in Liverpool she was found to be perfectly sound, with not a rivet strained.⁴¹ On 7 August, she capsized in the Graving Dock at Liverpool, through her ballast not being replaced; full of water, she was righted the following day, sustaining no serious damage.⁴² Off the Bell Buoy, on 7 October, she stove in the stern of the SS *Karnac*, the latter returning to port whereas the *Sarah Sands* proceeded to Portland without damage.⁴³

The severe winter of 1854, stated to be the worst for 50 years, caused serious delays to the company's services. The St Lawrence was normally open to navigation by mid-April. However thick ice was encountered in the approaches of the Gulf of St Lawrence through late April and into May, often closing the route, and on one occasion necessitating a diversion to Portland.⁴⁴ Those ships sailing on 11 April, 25 April and 10 May all experienced heavy delays⁴⁵ - the *Sarah Sands*, on 8 May (at Latitude 45°N and Longitude 47°W) in: 'thick fog, passed close to heavy icebergs, and continued steaming among a great many very large bergs, some as high as 200 feet, till 6am of the 9th, having occasionally to stop the

engines.⁴⁶ (Much later in the season, having sailed from Quebec on 6 July, she encountered icebergs and thick fog after passing the Straits of Belle Isle⁴⁷).

In the Autumn of 1854, three of the company's main steamers, *Charity*, *Ottawa* and *Cleopatra*, were taken up by the British Government as transports for the Crimean War,⁴⁸ while the Company's replacement steamer, *Canadian*, after one voyage was also taken up, leaving only the *Sarah Sands* in service.⁴⁹ Departing Liverpool on 7 December, she encountered appalling weather conditions, putting back to Queenstown on 25 December⁵⁰ for repairs to damaged sails,⁵¹ before eventually resuming her voyage. On her return to Liverpool, on 2 March 1855, the *Sarah Sands* concluded her last voyage for the company, and also closed the company's activities on the North Atlantic route.⁵²

On 21 May 1855, the *Sarah Sands* was herself taken up as a Crimean War transport,⁵³ sailing from Liverpool on 15 June that year for Constantinople and Balaclava,⁵⁴ carrying over a dozen officers for various regiments,⁵⁵ including Colonel John Lawrenson, 17th Lancers, who was appointed Brigadier General in command of the Heavy Brigade on arrival.⁵⁶ *En route*, they called at Queenstown and Malta,⁵⁷ at the former port embarking three officers and 55 men of the 17th Lancers (plus 100 horses as remounts), two officers and 35 men of the 11th Hussars, one officer and 60 men of the 72nd Highlanders and six-and-a-half tons of camp equipment.⁵⁸

During the voyage, cholera broke out amongst the crew, two men dying from the disease - Patrick Hughes, a trimmer, on 5 July near Malta and William Dixon, boatswain's mate, on 18 July at Constantinople.⁵⁹ From the evidence of these dates, and that of James Pugh, a steward, who deserted at Balaclava on 16 July,⁶⁰ it would appear that the *Sarah Sands* had reached her destinations by mid-July. At least one intermediate Mediterranean trip seems to have been undertaken, for the ship arrived at Malta on 26 August, from Marseilles,⁶¹ with 126 officers and men, plus 110 horses, and towing the *Wide Awake* sailing transport.⁶² Returning to the Black Sea by mid-October,⁶³ the *Sarah Sands* left Constantinople on 14 December,⁶⁴ and sailing via Malta and Queenstown, arrived back at Liverpool on 17 January 1856.⁶⁵

Her second voyage to the Crimea, though not as long in duration, followed much the same pattern. Embarking a detachment of officers and men of the Royal Artillery,⁶⁶ the *Sarah Sands* departed Liverpool on 6 March 1856,⁶⁷ sailing via Gibraltar and Malta.⁶⁸ An intermediate trip saw the *Sarah Sands* calling at Genoa and Malta in May,⁶⁹ before returning to Constantinople;⁷⁰ while the homeward leg in June, after calling at Malta and Gibraltar,⁷¹ diverged to Plymouth, Portsmouth and Deal, en route to London.⁷² With this voyage, Washington Ilsley's three-year spell in command came to an end (having been broken only once, when Thomas William Glover (1825-) had sailed as Master to Quebec and Montreal on 15 August 1854⁷³). The *Sarah Sands* was now laid up, remaining so for over a year, possibly because of financial difficulties on the part of the by now major owner, Charles Oddie.

Since September 1852, when Charles Oddie had purchased William Thompson's 16 shares, thus bringing his total shares in the ship to 23, he had steadily increased his holdings. Thus, in the 14 sales of shares in the ship up to February 1855, Oddie had been involved in 13 of these transactions. By the time the *Sarah Sands* returned from the Crimea, in June 1856, Oddie held 50 shares.⁷⁴ These were signed over to the City Bank, London, on 26 July 1856, by Deed of Mortgage for £6,500 (at 5% interest),⁷⁵ being redeemed by Oddie a year later, on 6 August 1857, in a double transaction involving their resale to Charles and

William Walton, ship-owners, of London.⁷⁶ Throughout July and August of 1857, Walton & Sons purchased all but four of the 64 total shareholdings (including those of the designer of the *Sarah Sands*, John Grantham, an original owner with one share, which he had modestly increased to six over the years⁷⁷).

New ownership, coinciding with the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny, was to lead to the *Sarah Sands* re-establishment as a troop transport, and the emergence of the ship, and the regiment aboard her, into unexpected prominence.

1 Bonsor, 1955, *op cit*, p 184.

2 *Ibid*

3 *Ibid*

4 *Ibid*, p 185.

5 A transcription of the passenger list for this voyage, when the ship was commanded by William Thompson, has been published online by the Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild at <http://immigrantships.net/v3/1800v3/sarahsands18490502.html>

6 Bonsor, 1955, *op cit*, p 184.

7 *Ibid*

8 *Lloyd's List*.

9 *Lloyd's List*, 23 July 1850; see also R.E. Bidlack (1965) 'To California on the *Sarah Sands*: two letters written in 1850 by L.R. Slawson', *California History Magazine*, 44: 3: 229-236; 8 <http://www.maritimeheritage.org/PassLists/ss050550.html>.

10 Bonsor, 1955, *op cit*, p 184.

11 *Lloyd's List*.

12 *Lloyd's List*, 30 January 1852.

13 TNA ref: BT 107/305.

14 *Ibid*

15 *Ibid*

16 TNA ref: BT 107/341 (Transcripts and Transactions).

17 N.R.P. Bonsor, manuscript notes (compiling *North Atlantic Seaway*) relating to the *Sarah Sands*, from *Liverpool Albion* 28 June 1852.

18 Arriving there on Saturday 6 November 1852, the passenger list may be found at: www.sagenealogy.co.za/Sarah%20Sands.htm

19 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 December 1852.

20 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th Edition, 1911, pp 963-4.

21 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 January 1853.

22 *Melbourne Morning Herald*, 12 February 1853.

23 *Melbourne Morning Herald*, 5 February 1853.

24 *Ibid*

25 J. Flett (1970), *The History of Gold Discovery in Victoria*, Melbourne: Hawthorn Press.

26 *Melbourne Argus*, 10 and 11 February 1853; the latter notes the four finders as Daniel Evans, John Evans, John Lees and W.P. Green.

27 *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, Saturday 3 April 1875, p 2, noted the '*Sarah Sands* nugget', found at Ballarat in 1853, contained 1,423 ounces of gold and was valued at £5,332, though other sources note it as containing 1,117 ounces of gold.

28 Les Barnes (1981), *It Happened In Brunswick: 1837-1981*, Brunswick: BCHG, p 5.

29 Bonsor, manuscript notes, *op cit*, from British press and *Jersey Times* 3 June 1853.

30 *Lloyd's List*.

31 Bonsor, 1955, *op cit*, p 262.

- 32 *Ibid*
- 33 Bonsor, manuscript notes, *op cit*, from *The Times* 6 October 1853.
- 34 Bonsor, manuscript notes, *op cit*, from *The Times* 31 October 1854.
- 35 Bonsor, 1955, *op cit*, p 263, quotes eight round voyages - note: the fourth voyage, to Quebec/Montreal of 25 May to 22 July 1854, is missing from Bonsor, manuscript notes, *op cit* - see *Lloyd's List*, 27 May, 29 June, 10 July, and 22 July 1854.
- 36 'Arrival and Reception at Portland, Me, of the Ocean Steam Navigation Co's Vessel *Sarah Sands* (Washington Ilsley, Commander), 17 December 1853' - Facsimile Pamphlet.
- 37 *Ibid*
- 38 *Ibid*
- 39 *Ibid*
- 40 *Lloyd's List*, 30 and 31 March 1854.
- 41 *Lloyd's List*, 3 July 1854; Bonsor, manuscript notes, *op cit*, from *Liverpool Albion* 28 August 1854, puts the events in notes 37 and 38 within one voyage, whereas the first occurs on the voyage to Portland of 31 March to 19 May, and the second on the voyage to Quebec/Montreal of 25 May to 22 July (as per note 34).
- 42 *Lloyd's List*, 7, 9 and 10 August 1854.
- 43 *Lloyd's List*, 9 October 1854.
- 44 Bonsor, 1955, *op cit*, p 263.
- 45 *Ibid*
- 46 *Lloyd's List*, 20 May 1854.
- 47 *Lloyd's List*, 24 July 1854.
- 48 Bonsor, 1955, *op cit*, p 264; these ships made four, four and three voyages to the Crimea respectively.
- 49 *Ibid*
- 50 *Ibid*
- 51 *Lloyd's List*, 28 December 1854.
- 52 Bonsor, 1955, *op cit*, p 264.
- 53 *Ibid*, p 185.
- 54 *Lloyd's List*, 16 June 1855.
- 55 *The Times*, 20 June 1855; also noted aboard are Lieutenant Crocker, 77th Regt, Lieutenant Prescott, 33rd Regt, Lieutenant Mears, 20th Regt, Lieutenant Birton, 9th Regt, Major Vesey, 46th Regt, Brevet Major Marmion, 2nd Dragoon Guards, Cornet Curzon, 17th Lancers, Lieutenant Maskeleyne, Ensigns Patrickson, Holmes, Edridge and Nunn, Reverend Shiel, and Surgeon Mitchel.
- 56 W.M. Lummis and K.G. Wynn (1973), *Honour The Light Brigade*, London: J.B. Hayward, p 241.
- 57 *Lloyd's List*, 19 June and 9 July 1855.
- 58 *The Times*, 20 June 1855 notes the officers as Captain Watson, Lieutenant Boynton and Lieutenant Seymour, 17th Lancers, Captain English and Cornet Corban, 11th Hussars, and Lieutenant Fielden, 72nd Highlanders; the cargo is noted in *The Times*, 15 June 1855.
- 59 Notes on 'Voyages of the *Sarah Sands*'.
- 60 *Ibid*
- 61 *Lloyd's List*, 3 September 1855.
- 62 *The Times*, 5 September 1855.
- 63 *Lloyd's List*, 26 October 1855.
- 64 *Lloyd's List*, 4 January 1856.
- 65 *Lloyd's List*, 18 January 1856.
- 66 *The Times*, 8 March 1856: the officers noted were Captain Mercer, Captain Grylles, Lieutenant Still, Lieutenant De Visnes, RA, and Assistant Surgeon Bradshaw.
- 67 *Lloyd's List*, 7 March 1856.
- 68 *Lloyd's List*, 25 and 31 March 1856.
- 69 *Lloyd's List*, 12 and 23 May 1856.

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70 *Lloyd's List*, 27 May 1856.

71 *Lloyd's List*, 12 and 17 June 1856.

72 *Lloyd's List*, 19, 21 and 24 June 1856.

73 *Lloyd's List*, 16 August and 19 September 1854; and Bonsor, manuscript notes, *op cit*, from *Liverpool Albion*, 21 August 1854.

74 TNA ref: BT 109/4 (Transcripts and Transactions).

75 TNA ref: BT 109/5 (Transcripts and Transactions).

76 TNA ref: BT 109/16 (Transcripts and Transactions).

77 *Ibid*

CHAPTER 3

Outbreak of the Indian Mutiny

India, in the year 1857, the Honourable East India Company (HEIC), the source of British authority in India, had managed to create serious widespread discontent among many major groups in the native population.

Land reforms had deprived many native landlords of their estates, thus disturbing the balance of feudal relationships, and social reforms, such as the suppression of *suttee*¹ and female infanticide, although desirable from a Western viewpoint, often appeared as threats against the traditional structure of Indian society. As political control was gained by the HEIC, so too was it lost by the indigenous Indian rulers. The doctrine of lapse, with the refusal to allow adoption by Hindu rulers without direct heirs, led to the seizure of some semi-independent States, notably Nagpur, Satara and Jhansi. The annexation of Oudh, in 1856, caused much disaffection among the indigenous population, and especially in the Bengal Army, which had been primarily enlisted in this region.

Alongside these changes, as the area of the HEIC's control widened, many of the more ambitious officers, frustrated by the slow promotion rate in the Company's army, took civil appointments. Of those officers remaining, some held the native soldiers in contempt, and lacked respect for their religious views. Moreover, the native soldiers' belief that their faith was being undermined, was reinforced by the activities of proselytising officers.

The combined assault upon tradition and religion, and the attempt through educational reforms to impose Western values on Indian society, appeared to an increasing number to be part of a general conspiracy. In the Bengal Army, rumours flew concerning the introduction of a new cartridge allegedly greased with a mixture of the fat of pigs and cows (the former offensive to Muslims and the latter sacred to Hindus), the use of which would defile the sepoy and break his caste, thus depriving him of his religion and forcibly converting him to Christianity. The situation was critical.

On Sunday 10 May, at Meerut, some 40 miles north of Delhi, the 3rd Light Cavalry, together with the 11th and 20th Native Infantry Regiments, mutinied, massacring whatever Europeans they came across. The mutinous regiments then marched to Delhi, arriving the following day, where the scenes of massacre were re-enacted. Soon, native regiments at other stations followed their example, until most of the Bengal Army was in open rebellion.² Delhi and Lucknow became two major centres of rebel activity. In Delhi, the rebels declared the aged King of Delhi, Bahadur Shah II,³ to be their emperor, the symbolic leader of their religious and patriotic war. At Lucknow, the British were besieged in a fortified area centred on the Residency, under the initial leadership of Sir Henry Lawrence (1806-57), Chief Commissioner of Oudh. European troops in India as a whole were outnumbered almost eight to one by their native counterparts.⁴ Clearly, large numbers of British troops were needed if the British position in India was to be salvaged.

Lord Canning (1812-62), Governor General of India, was not slow to react. Several British regiments en route to China, to join Rear Admiral Sir Michael Seymour's (1802-87) expedition there, were diverted to India to assist in suppressing the rebellion. Further

units were withdrawn from Burma, as well as the other Indian Presidencies of Bombay and Madras, which were generally unaffected by the mutiny. These forces however were far from sufficient to quell the outbreak, and thus Canning sent urgent requests to Britain for more troops to be despatched post haste.

In London, at East India House in Leadenhall Street, the headquarters of the HEIC, the Court of Directors requested the necessary military forces from the British Government. This request was sanctioned with the usual proviso, that the said regiments would be paid for by the Company.⁵

Immediately, the HEIC began looking for ships suitable to act as troop transports. On 15 July, the Court of Directors, as recorded in its Minute Books, sanctioned: 'the engagement of six screw steam vessels and eleven sailing-ships for the conveyance of troops of HM's service to India.'⁶ Later, it was noted that:

Mr Partridge, the Assistant Engineer of Woolwich Dockyard, has been directed to place himself in communication with the Company's Surveyor [of Shipping] for the purpose of assisting him in the inspection of the machinery etc of the screw steam vessels engaged by the Court.⁷

Tenders were invited from the various ship-brokers and owners for the contract.

On learning this, Charles Walton and Sons wrote two letters to the HEIC, on 27 and 29 July, offering their steamship the *Sarah Sands* as a suitable transport. The Court of Directors referred the matter to the Finance and Home Committee who, on 1 August:

Resolved that having considered the tenders which have been received for the conveyance, diet and accommodation of 650 men of HM's service for whom freight is still required to Calcutta, that the tender of the screw steam vessel *Sarah Sands* be accepted at the rate of £40 per man, and that as many troops be placed on board the vessel as the Company's officers can find sufficient and suitable accommodation for.⁸

The resolution being subject to the approval of the Board of Commissioners, this was sanctioned by a letter of the same date from Sir George Russell Clerk (1800-89), Secretary to the Board.⁹

The Assistant Engineer of Woolwich Dockyard, Mr Partridge, together with the Company's Surveyor of Shipping, on 4 August surveyed the *Sarah Sands*, inspected all compartments and tested its machinery. Both men reported to the Court of Directors that the ship was fit and eligible for the service for which she had been tendered.¹⁰ However, the Admiralty had apparently refused to employ the *Sarah Sands*. The Court of Directors wrote to the Secretary of the Admiralty, enquiring why their Lordships were refusing to employ the vessel in the public service, pointing out the favourable verdict of the two surveyors.¹¹ In view of this the Admiralty consented and the East India Company, having agreed to the terms offered by Charles Walton and Sons, now took-up the *Sarah Sands* as a troopship.

On 5 August John Squier Castle (1823-1904) joined the *Sarah Sands* as Captain,¹² promptly proceeding to the Shipping Office in the East India Road, Poplar,¹³ where the crew were signed on, most of them joining by the evening of 6 August.¹⁴ The *Sarah Sands* sailed from London on 7 August, bound for Portsmouth to embark her consignment of troops.¹⁵ Arriving off Portsmouth on 9 August,¹⁶ a Sunday, she docked the following day and began to prepare for the embarkation, which was scheduled for 13 August.

In the meantime, regiment after regiment had been given notice of their intended departure and, in due course, had gone to their various ports of embarkation. One of these units, coming from the newly erected hutted camp at Aldershot, was the 54th Foot, the West Norfolk Regiment (later to become the 2nd Battalion, the Dorsetshire Regiment).

Half of the 54th, consisting of five companies, under Major J.C.H. Jones, had sailed on 4 August in the SS *Lady Jocelyn* from Portsmouth. The other wing of the 54th, allocated to the *Sarah Sands*, had arrived at Portsmouth on 7 August. In addition, *The Times* noted on 10 August, that a party of 50 NCOs and men of the 82nd Regiment would proceed to Portsmouth, under the command of Lieutenant J.A. Brock, to embark on the *Sarah Sands*.

However, all was not well. The Major General Commanding at Portsmouth, Sir James Yorke Scarlett (1799-1871), made an inspection of the *Sarah Sands*. He reported to the HEIC, via Horse Guards, in a letter dated 14 August, that:

the ship *Sarah Sands* has been found capable of accommodating only 15 officers and 370 men, and that as, in accordance with the information received from the Court, 509 of HM's 54th Regiment had been appropriated to that vessel, additional tonnage will be required for 186 men and 7 officers of that Regiment.¹⁷

Colonel O'Brien at the Horse Guards, in forwarding this letter to the Court of Directors, sent them a covering letter, dated 17 August, regarding the accommodation on board the *Sarah Sands*, and requested that in future: 'in taking up tonnage for the conveyance of troops, space may always be allowed for the regulated quantity of luggage'.¹⁸

Captain Castle obviously kept the owners fully informed of the various inspections and complaints, as on 14 August Charles Walton and Sons wrote to the Court of Directors indignantly expressing their opinion: 'that the officials of the Horse Guards are acting under some erroneous impression as to the capabilities of the vessel'.¹⁹ In spite of their indignation, the owners were obviously very keen to pack as many men as possible into the ship, conditions being very crowded on board when the *Sarah Sands* eventually sailed, provoking several complaints to this effect. The major problem was one of accommodation for the men, space being available for, at most, 15 officers and 370 men. As the party of the 82nd Regiment had increased to 90, it was decided that these would embark on the SS *Australian*, which was also lying at Portsmouth²⁰ (though later this decision was altered, and they eventually sailed on the SS *Victoria* from Woolwich²¹). A detachment of the 54th would have to go in another ship and, to effect this, the Court of Directors requested Horse Guards, on 19 August: 'that the 150 men, for whom accommodation on board that vessel [*Sarah Sands*] could not be found, may be brought to Gravesend' so that they could be embarked on the SS *City of Manchester*.²² Consequently, two companies of the 54th, under Lieutenant Colonel Charles Edward Michel (1810-93), were allocated to the *City of Manchester*, these departing on 24 August from Gravesend. With these alterations, the transportation for the 54th was at last finalised and the size of the detachment travelling on the *Sarah Sands* was restricted to that laid down by Major General Scarlett.

As an aside, though communications seem to have been acted upon with some urgency, it is evident that some delay occurred before they appeared on the agenda of the Court of Directors. For example, the tenders of Charles Walton and Sons, of 27 and 29 July (sanctioned on 1 August) are recorded in the Minute Book on 5 August;²³ and the letters of Major General Scarlett and Colonel O'Brien, of 14 and 17 August respectively, and that of Charles Walton and Sons of 14 August, are all recorded on 19 August, four days after the *Sarah Sands* had sailed.

As noted, 13 August was to have been embarkation day; however, Major General Scarlett's report had delayed matters, and, despite the *Sarah Sands* having been at Portsmouth since 10 August, it was found to be in a filthy state, necessitating further delay while the vessel was cleaned.²⁴

By Saturday 15 August the *Sarah Sands* was ready to embark the men of the 54th,



Major William F. Brett



Lieutenant Colonel Bowland Moffat



Mrs Fanny Moffat

having been totally cleaned, coaled and provisioned, and with its cargo of government stores safely stowed in the hold. Included in this cargo were 128 barrels of gunpowder,²⁵ divided between the port and starboard magazines at the stern of the vessel. The soldiers had been issued with 180 cartridges each,²⁶ for use in their Enfield rifles; these too being stored in the magazines, together with a quantity of ship's signalling powder.

All being ready, the remainder of the 54th Foot boarded the *Sarah Sands*: the Headquarters (consisting of Lieutenant Colonel Bowland Moffat, Major William Brett, Captains James Thomson and Prideaux Gillum, Lieutenant and Adjutant Thomas Houston, Lieutenants William Galbraith, Joseph Hughes, George Cronyn, Frederick Schlotel and John Wood, Surgeon James Grant, Assistant Surgeon Daniel O'Donovan, Pay-Master Samuel Daniel and Quarter-Master Thomas Hipkin), the Grenadier Company, No. 5 Company, the Light Company and the Band. The total strength was some 368 officers and men, broken down as follows: 14 officers, 22 sergeants, 15 corporals, 10 drummers and 307 rank and file.²⁷

Also aboard were a number of civilian passengers, consisting of the wives and families of officers and non-commissioned officers of the 54th. A press report noted these consisted of: 'Mrs Moffat and two daughters, Mrs Thomson, Mrs Hipkin and child, three women and four children.'²⁸ The unnamed 'women' were the wives of non-commissioned officers. Major General Henry Breton later stated there were five officers' wives and one child and five soldiers' wives and four children.²⁹ The exact number of civilian passengers varies from source to source - the Embarkation Report notes 'None' against the columns headed 'Women' and 'Children', but does list 'One Regimental Schoolmistress', of which there is no further mention³⁰ - however, the names and numbers quoted here are as correct as it has been possible to determine given the available sources.

The officers, with their respective families, were accommodated in the small cabins on the main deck that opened onto the ship's saloon, or onto the twin corridors leading to it. Despite the limitations on space, Lieutenant Colonel Moffat and his family appropriated several of these cabins for their own use, with the agreement of Major General Scarlett, Captain Castle, and several other officers.³¹ The troops were accommodated on the main and lower decks. When in barracks, married non-commissioned officers and men, with their families, were often only separated from their fellow soldiers by a blanket suspended from the ceiling to act as a makeshift wall,³² and it is probable that this system continued while aboard the *Sarah Sands*.

The saloon was to act as Regimental Headquarters and Orderly Room for the 54th during the voyage. As a symbol of the saloon's new status, and no doubt as a splendid decoration, the Queen's and Regimental Colours were firmly secured to the panelling at the head of the saloon; one of the ship's quartermasters, Richard Richmond, being responsible for their erection.

When sufficient steam was raised, Captain Castle ordered the ship to be cast off, and the *Sarah Sands*, propelled by its single screw, slowly worked out of Portsmouth Harbour. Once out in the Channel, Captain Castle would have ordered the crew to hoist sail and have plotted a course, via the Cape Verde Islands, to the Cape of Good Hope; the first leg of the long voyage to Calcutta.

One of the officers aboard was Frederick Schlotel, a 23-year-old Lieutenant, who had transferred to the 54th just three months previously. He described the mood on board in the following terms:

Many must have looked with sorrowing gaze on their native land for the first time

receding from their view, a land which not a few would never again behold; but mingled with this was an impatient longing to bring assistance to our countrymen and women beset by the mutinous Sepoys, and to inflict well-deserved retribution for the atrocious deeds which were filling England with horror and dismay.³³

- 1 *Suttee*: Hindu custom of widows immolating themselves on their husbands' funeral pyres.
- 2 The rebellion was generally confined to the Bengal Army - only a few units of the Bombay and Madras armies became disaffected.
- 3 Bahadur Shah II was 82 years old and the last of the Moghul emperors; at the start of the Mutiny he had virtually no power and was a pensioner of the British (Rs.100,000/£10,000 per month).
- 4 Approximately 235,000 Indian troops to 35,000 European soldiers: see C. Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny: India 1857*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980, p 63.
- 5 Approximately 40,000 men were despatched from England and Sir Colin Campbell was sent out as Commander-in-Chief.
- 6 IOL&R, East India Co. Minute Books, B1/234, p 899.
- 7 *Ibid*, p 901.
- 8 *Ibid*, p 1174.
- 9 *Ibid*, p 1196.
- 10 *Ibid*; see also *The Times*, 7 August 1857
- 11 *Ibid*, p 1232c.
- 12 Obituary Compilation, J.S. Castle, and TNA ref: BT 98/6742 (Agreements and Crew Lists).
- 13 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.
- 14 TNA ref: BT 98/6742 (Agreements and Crew Lists).
- 15 *Ibid*
- 16 *Lloyd's List*, 10 August 1857.
- 17 IOL&R, B1/234, *op cit*, p 1434.
- 18 *Ibid*, p 1436b.
- 19 *Ibid*, p 1434b.
- 20 *The Times*, 12 August 1857.
- 21 *The Times*, 13 August 1857.
- 22 IOL&R, B1/234, *op cit*, p 1439b.
- 23 *Ibid*, p 1207.
- 24 *Nautical Magazine*, February 1858, p 107.
- 25 *Commercial Gazette*, 25 November 1857; by contrast Private Phillip Folland stated there were 89,645 rounds of ammunition and 189 barrels of powder loaded in the magazines, see *North Devon Journal*, Thursday 18 February 1858, p 8.
- 26 IOL&R, B1/234, *op cit*, p 958.
- 27 TNA ref: WO 12/6447, Regimental Musters, 54th Regiment; newspaper reports give slightly varying breakdowns of the troop aboard, see for example *Liverpool Mercury*, Wednesday 19 August 1857, p 5, *Hampshire Advertiser*, Saturday 22 August 1857, p 8.
- 28 *Commercial Gazette*, 24 November 1857.
- 29 *Correspondence on the Subject of the Dispatch of Troops to India*, London: HMSO, 1857, p 40.
- 30 Embarkation Report of Queen's Troops aboard *Sarah Sands*, Portsmouth, 15 August 1857, to Finance and Home Committee of East India Co; there is no schoolmaster/schoolmistress shown on the Muster Roll for 1 July to 23 August 1857 (TNA ref: WO 12/6447), although an Ann Reilly was shown on the Depot Muster for April to June 1855 at the Tower of London at £20 per annum (TNA ref: WO 12/6445), and also as a schoolmistress with the 54th in Gibraltar.
- 31 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Statement of J.S. Castle, 18 December 1857.
- 32 J.M. Brereton (1986), *The British Soldier: A Social History from 1661 to the Present Day*, London: Bodley Head..
- 33 Frederick Schlotel (1870), *Narrative of the Burning of the Sarah Sands*, London: Bemrose & Sons, p 9.

CHAPTER 4

Bound for India

Aboard the *Sarah Sands*, both seamen and soldiers were settling into their new ship. The Captain, John Squier Castle, was born in Folkestone on 3 June 1823, the son of a local tradesman. Now 34 years old, he had over 20 years of maritime experience behind him. On 28 February 1850, at Trinity House, London, he sat the Board of Trade's voluntary examination of competency for men intending to become masters of foreign-going British merchant ships, gaining a second-class certificate.¹ In 1854, he was apparently present at the bombardment and capture of Bomarsund by an Anglo-French naval force, though in what capacity is not known.² Castle's last ship, prior to joining the *Sarah Sands*, was the SS *Australian*, of London.

The other ship's officers were a generally experienced group. First Officer Septimus Robert Welch (1828-76), a 29-year-old from London, had gained both his Mate and Master certificates;³ he later went on to command the *Great Eastern*.⁴ Second Officer was John Arscott Tickell (1826-96), a 31-year-old qualified mate from Cornwall.⁵ Third Officer, John Gutch Verey (1839-77), aged 18, and Fourth Officer, George Wood (c.1837-), aged 20, were both from London. The engine-room staff were all good, tried men, capably led by the First Engineer, John Fraser (c.1820-?), a 37-year-old from Aberdeen. Fraser was thoroughly familiar with the *Sarah Sands*, having been the ship's first engineer during its service as a Crimean transport.

The ship's officers and crew amounted to some 66 men, of which only four were on their first voyage, and, contrary to popular belief (which has maintained that the crew were: 'a rabble of worthless foreigners'),⁶ only five men appear to have been foreign nationals. The crew thus seem to have consisted largely of sound professional seamen, some of whose actions during the voyage were to be misinterpreted by some of the soldiers, this being perpetuated by regimental histories and memoirs of individual soldiers.⁷ How this arose, will unfold later.

Conditions for the 368 officers and men of the 54th Regiment were cramped. Lieutenant Colonel Moffat's appropriation of several stern cabins for himself, his wife and their two teenage daughters, as noted, had the approval of Major General Scarlett and Captain Castle. The regimental surgeon, Dr James Grant, in a conversation with Castle and Moffat during the embarkation, had 'expressed himself much pleased with the arrangements'⁸ about the cabins. Though Moffat's subordinate officers did not overtly dispute the allocation of cabins during or immediately after embarkation, they may have considered themselves unduly cramped by Moffat's utilisation of several cabins. Possibly some officers had to share cabins, but at least they had the comfort and convenience of the saloon, and the freedom to tour the ship at will.

Not so for the men, whose conditions, in contrast, were very different. The Grenadier Company was quartered aft on the lower deck, beneath the saloon,⁹ while No. 5 Company, the Light Company and the Band were on the forward main and lower decks. Access to the spar deck was restricted, the men only being allowed above according to a strict rota. Thus,

for example, a man might expect to get on deck one day in three, weather permitting.¹⁰ Meals were served to the men on long, scrubbed wooden tables, each man being provided with a tin pot and plate for this purpose. Typical troopship fare of the period consisted, for example, of cocoa and biscuit for breakfast, pork and pea soup or beef and pudding for dinner, one pint of tea and biscuit for tea, and one dram of rum per day.¹¹ At night, the mess tables served as beds for some, while others slept on the decks. Most, however, slept in canvas hammocks, slung closely together from hooks securely fixed into the overhead deck planking. Soldiers' knapsacks and general kit were stowed in makeshift racks close to their individual owners' 'berths'.

Apart from the soldiers' usual kit, various miscellaneous items were required while on board. In the House of Commons, on 18 August 1857, the matter of these items was inter alia mentioned by Sir John Ramsden (1831-1914), thus:

... with regard to clothing for the voyage, by a regulation at present in force, soldiers ordered to a foreign station received an advance of three months pay. Out of the advance certain articles called 'sea necessaries' were provided by the commanding officers, the total cost of which amounted to rather more than £2, and the balance of the pay was handed over to the commanding officer to be expended in any articles which might conduce to the soldier's comfort on the voyage.¹²

Despite their pay being used by Lieutenant Colonel Moffat to purchase articles conducive to their comfort, the soldiers of the 54th on board the *Sarah Sands* were, by their own standards, cramped and uncomfortable; however, they were bound for active service, and such inconveniences were borne by them with good grace.

The *Sarah Sands*, under both sail and steam, slowly worked its way south. Winds and weather were favourable as the vessel made her way down the Channel, through the Bay of Biscay and around the coast of West Africa. Towards the end of August, she passed the Cape Verde Islands. As the weather continued to be favourable and fuel consumption had not been heavy, Captain Castle did not put into the coaling station at Porto Grando on Sao Vicente, but instead pressed on for the Cape of Good Hope with all possible speed. The officers and men of the 54th would have, in all probability, relished a short stop there to stretch their legs on dry land and deposit letters for the next homeward bound ship to collect.

On 1 September, a day or so after passing the Cape Verde Islands, at latitude 12° North, longitude 23° West, the *Sarah Sands* passed HMS *Industry*, bound for Portsmouth.¹³ The sighting of a ship no doubt relieved slightly the monotony of the voyage for the passengers, on whom time probably hung heavily. A few days after this strong head winds were encountered, considerably impeding progress; at this time, the *Sarah Sands* would probably have been off the coast of Guinea, or possibly that of Sierra Leone. Despite the wind, temperatures would have been very high, and this, combined with the high humidity, would have made the passengers already cramped conditions even more uncomfortable. Some relief was probably gained from canvas awnings that were spread over the deck to protect the passengers from the direct rays of the sun, a measure standard on transports chartered by the East India Company.¹⁴

The officers of the 54th continued activities to maintain the morale and fitness of their men, in spite of the conditions. Drills, inspections, fatigues and other duties were the standard methods used to attain these ends. They were probably effective to some degree, sufficing also to relieve the men's monotonous existence, but anything of a vigorous nature

must have proved trying under the conditions. However, there was sufficient spare time to indulge in other shipboard recreations. The Band, conducted by Drum Major James Wellard, played on deck for an hour around noon each day, apart from Sundays. In the evenings it played in the saloon, at which times the few ladies aboard were probably besieged by officers requesting the somewhat dubious pleasure of dancing. Both officers and men indulged in numerous card and board games, reading and conversation, as well as writing journal-style letters home. As was usual aboard ship, some of the officers practiced target shooting, no doubt thinking of the conflict in still distant India, wondering if they would have the opportunity of using their guns in action; after all, by the time they arrived the rebellion might well be over.

The conversation among the 54th's officers was not completely innocuous. The condition of the ship's toilets had apparently deteriorated, giving rise to some annoyance. This was only a minor issue however, compared with the discontent expressed by several of the officers about cabin space, and the share of this occupied by their Commanding Officer and his family. Moffat had served over 25 years in the 54th Regiment, being promoted Lieutenant Colonel in September 1856, and appeared to have been a solid, though undistinguished, regimental officer, with a strict sense of propriety. Despite his long standing in the Regiment, he was not a popular man, at least with some of his subordinate officers. It was Moffat's second-in-command, Major William Brett, who was to emerge at the centre of the discontent over the cabin allocations.¹⁵ Several officers met with Brett over this issue, with Captain James Thomson,¹⁶ Lieutenant and Adjutant Thomas Houston,¹⁷ Pay-Master Samuel Daniel,¹⁸ and Surgeon James Grant¹⁹ being prominent. Earlier, during the embarkation, Grant had openly expressed his satisfaction with the cabin distribution; what led him to alter his opinion is unclear, though he may have been siding with the majority.

On Wednesday 30 September, what had previously been fairly discreet and private grouses, took on a more public appearance. Several of the officers held a meeting, at which the cabin situation and the condition of the toilets were discussed. At the conclusion of the meeting, a deputation, led by Major Brett and supported by Pay-Master Daniel, Surgeon Grant and others, approached Captain Castle with their complaints. On receipt of these complaints, Castle informed Lieutenant Colonel Moffat about them, and of their source, later stating that the complaints were:

relative, as they alleged to the unfair distribution of the cabins, and the bad condition of the water closets and requested me to ask you [Lieutenant Colonel Moffat] to change your cabins and make a fresh distribution of them.²⁰

Moffat subsequently inspected the toilets and on finding them in a somewhat poor condition requested Captain Castle to have them refurbished. This was immediately dealt with, and Castle had another large toilet, abaft the main mast, placed at the passengers' disposal.²¹ Strangely, in view of the complaints, when the offer of this additional closet was made known, it was declined. The cabin situation remained unaltered.

Lieutenant Colonel Moffat, possibly feeling that his authority and position as Commanding Officer had been challenged by the incident, did not simply leave the matter here. In his opinion, some mild course of disciplinary action was called for; this taking the form of a reprimand, published in the Regimental Orders of the following day, 1 October, thus:

No. 1 - A meeting of officers having been held yesterday which was most irregular

and without authority, the Commanding Officer hereby annuls the proceedings and cautions the officer who convened the meeting and any officers who may have assisted in bringing about the same to be more guarded in their conduct in future and to make themselves acquainted with the regulations of the service on that point.

No. 2 - The Commanding Officer most positively forbids any officer communicating with the Captain of the *Sarah Sands* on matters connected with the accommodation and distribution of the cabins except through the proper channels.²²

With this, Moffat was satisfied to let the matter rest. The Regimental Order seemed to be sufficient reproof, while, by omitting mention of any specific officer(s), it would appear to have been phrased to minimise ill-feeling. Subsequent events, however, indicate that the matter of the cabin allocations was not an isolated grouse, but was indicative of a more general dislike felt by some of the officers towards Moffat.

Prior to arrival at Cape Town, another incident occurred. This was described by Private George Diggins, at the time acting as batman to Assistant Surgeon O'Donovan. Diggins states:

There was a fine, high-spirited man amongst the crew - a Dutchman, I think - who was the very life of us. He was always cheerful and always full of sport, which he worked off in merry-making. One day he was skylarking, when he suddenly fell overboard. Strangely enough, we never saw a sign of him again, except his cap, which came to the surface. But we were in the tropics then and sharks swarmed about the transport.²³

Of the five crewmen who were foreign nationals, only one was recorded as being Dutch: 24-year-old Able Seaman Victor Barwick, from Amsterdam.²⁴ This unfortunate accident left the crew somewhat despondent, being already depressed about the state of their rations, which they felt were inadequate. Despite their discontent, to this most universal of seamen's complaints of the day, the crew remained obedient, performing their duties satisfactorily.

The *Sarah Sands* continued to encounter contrary winds, resulting in a heavy dependence on the engines, and progress was slow. It was 15 October before the ship arrived in Simon's Bay at the Cape,²⁵ finding the flagship of the Cape Station, HMS *Boscawen*, commanded by Captain Richard Ashmore Powell (1816-92), lying at anchor there. After two months at sea, the passengers were glad to see the shore, while the gentle motion of the ship riding at anchor was a welcome change from the often vigorous Atlantic swell. The troops probably remained on board during their stay at Simon's Bay, although the officers and passengers would most likely have gone ashore. Once ashore, they would have taken rooms, if they could be found, in Simonstown, passing a pleasant few days away from the ship, while a few possibly travelled to neighbouring Cape Town, some 23 miles distant.

Captain Castle took the opportunity to write to William C. Thompson, the ship's former captain, that everyone was well and in good spirits. Commenting on the ship, Thompson claimed the *Sarah Sands* 'has probably the best working engines and is...the strongest and safest screw-steamer afloat'.²⁶ In view of what was to come, Thompson's opinion appears prophetic.

Those passengers who managed to go ashore were fortunate, for back on the *Sarah Sands* the messy business of coaling was in progress. Stocks in the ship's bunkers had been severely depleted by the long voyage and coaling was both essential and prolonged. As usual, the whole ship's company were engaged in this task, possibly assisted by some of the soldiers of the 54th. After it was completed, all would have to set-to cleaning up the

inevitable layer of coal-dust that covered everything.

Provisions were brought aboard until the ship's stores and pantry were full, several live fowl being included, destined for the saloon,²⁷ to be slaughtered as and when necessary. The four large iron water-storage tanks in the afterhold were also topped-up with fresh water. A substantial quantity of additional ballast, in the form of sand, was also added to this hold.

By Tuesday, 20 October, all the supplies were stowed away, and those officers and passengers who had gone ashore had returned. Several men of the 54th were on the sick list and, before they left the Cape, Doctors Grant and O'Donovan reviewed each of their cases; three men were considered too unwell to continue the voyage at that time. These three, Corporal John Sellers, and Privates Patrick Moynihan and Thomas Osborne,²⁸ were duly disembarked and despatched to the care of the local military hospital, with orders to follow, when recovered, by the first available transport.

The *Sarah Sands* was almost ready to get under way, when the crew refused to weigh anchor, stating they wished to complain to the Admiral about the condition of their rations.²⁹ To have pursued such a course of action indicates that the seamen had brought their dissatisfaction to the attention of the ship's officers, and no doubt the Captain. As a result, they had not achieved what they considered to be an adequate improvement in the situation and thus, in pursuing the matter further, had approached higher authority. This was a serious step, and to have taken it the seamen must have felt their grievances warranted, for to have failed in proving their complaint rendered them liable to be treated as being insubordinate, or even mutinous. Apart from refraining from duty, the crew remained quiet and civil.³⁰ However, in a vessel crammed with soldiers, they were not really in a position to do otherwise.

Captain Castle evidently regarded the seamen's grievances as being groundless, or at least insufficient to merit further discussion. He signalled HMS *Boscawen*, not to pass on the complaint, but rather to request a detachment from that vessel to assist the *Sarah Sands* to weigh anchor, and deal with the situation in general. Shortly afterwards, there arrived a party of 20 blue-jackets under a lieutenant, who, after ascertaining a few particulars, had Adjutant Houston of the 54th post a guard. Then, the more prominent of the refractory sailors, or 'mutineers' as they were subsequently termed by some of the soldiers, were put in irons,³¹ before the blue-jackets weighed anchor and returned to the *Boscawen*.³² Steam was quickly raised by the engine-room crew, who were apparently working normally, and at around 4pm the *Sarah Sands* steamed out of Simon's Bay, the seamen in general resolving to accept their lot.

Five years earlier, another troopship, the *Birkenhead*, commanded by Captain Robert Salmond (-1852), with 638 persons aboard, had steamed out of Simon's Bay. Shortly before 2am on 26 February 1852, eight hours after leaving Simon's Bay, the *Birkenhead* struck an uncharted rock off Danger Point and sank in 20 minutes with the loss of 445 men.³³ Many on board the *Sarah Sands* would have been familiar with the story of the *Birkenhead*; certainly Captain Castle was no doubt careful to give the coast in general, and Danger Point in particular, a wide berth. A last letter home from the Cape by a young officer of the 54th probably echoed the sentiments of many, in being: 'full of hope of a good voyage to Calcutta.'³⁴

1 TNA ref: BT 122 (Registers of Certificates of Competency and Service), Certificate number 2314 and Ticket number 27747.

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- 2 *Sidcup District Times*, 30 December 1904.
- 3 TNA ref: BT 122, *op cit*, Certificate numbers 3682 and 22640 respectively.
- 4 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.
- 5 TNA ref: BT 122, *op cit*, Certificate number 8182.
- 6 John Fortescue (1930), *History of the British Army*, Vol 13..
- 7 See for example: *Records of the 54th West Norfolk Regiment*, Roorkee: Thomason Civil Engineering Press, 1881; C.T. Atkinson (1947), *The Dorsetshire Regiment*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.; Schlotel, 1870, *op. cit.*, and George Diggins 'Soldiers Save the Sarah Sands' in Walter Wood (ed.) (1974), *Survivors Tales of Famous Shipwrecks*, Wakefield: EP Publishing Ltd.
- 8 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Castle, 18 December 1857, *op cit*.
- 9 William Murray (1906), *The Narrative of the Burning of the Sarah Sands Steam Transport*, Alnwick: M. Smith, p 9 (an earlier account by Murray apparently appeared in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, 1897); *T.P. Weekly*, 6 January 1905, notes that about 120 men were quartered there.
- 10 This appears to have been typical routine on troopships of the period; cf. G. Moore (ed.) (1978), *Three Chose War*.
- 11 Moore, 1978, *op cit*, p 12.
- 12 *Hansard's Debates*, 3rd Series, No 147 (1857), 18 August 1857, p 1814.
- 13 *Lloyds List*, 2 October 1857 (vessel spoken with); *Morning Post*, 3 October 1857, p 7.
- 14 *Hansard's Debates*, *op cit*.
- 15 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Major General Breton's letter, 15 December 1857.
- 16 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Lieutenant Colonel Moffat's 'personal' report, 4 April 1858.
- 17 *Ibid*
- 18 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Castle, 18 December 1857, *op. cit*.
- 19 *Ibid*
- 20 *Ibid*
- 21 *Ibid*
- 22 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Regimental Orders, 54th Regiment, 1 October 1857.
- 23 Diggins account in Wood, 1974, *op cit*, p 87.
- 24 TNA ref: BT 98/6742, *op. cit*.
- 25 *Lloyds List*, 10 December 1857; *London Standard*, 11 December 1857, p 5; *Cork Examiner*, 11 December 1857, p 2, notes the arrival date as 14 October 1857.
- 26 *Belfast News-Letter*, 26 December 1857, p 2.
- 27 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 8.
- 28 TNA ref: WO 12/6447, Regimental Musters, 54th Regiment (see Appendix B).
- 29 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 8.
- 30 *Ibid*, p 29.
- 31 *Ibid*, p 8.
- 32 *Ibid*, p 9; the Log of HMS *Boscawen* (TNA ref: ADM 53/6579) only states 'sailed the *Sarah Sands* transport'.
- 33 D. Bevan (1972), *Drums of the Birkenhead*, New Malden: Larson.
- 34 Ms. letter of Lieutenant J.W. Hughes, 23 November 1857, Regimental Archives, The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester (a version being apparently published in the *Newcastle Daily Journal*, January 1905).

CHAPTER 5

The Fire

On the morning of 21 October the seamen who had been put in irons the previous day were released and returned to their duty.¹ Private Philip Folland noted one sailor 'stood firm and would not work', though his continuing lone protest did not impact on the ship's progress.² Full sail was set in the afternoon and, as a stiff breeze was blowing, the *Sarah Sands* made good progress. Intermittent patches of bad weather were occasionally met with. On 7 November a gale struck the ship and carried away the head of the short foremast: 'a small jigger-mast ... on which a small fore and aft sail was set.'³ As the broken mast-head trailed half overboard, suspended by its rigging, the seamen, with the assistance of Lance Corporal John McCullum and other soldiers, quietly secured the wreckage.⁴ The following day, make-shift repairs to the mast were carried out and the jib sails were again set.

A few days later, during the afternoon of Wednesday 11 November, the conditions had eased to what Captain Castle described as: 'half a gale ... with a high sea running'.⁵ Two ships had been briefly sighted homeward bound that day according to Privates Philip Folland and Thomas Smith.⁶ The soldiers had finished their dinner and were: 'sitting about, chatting and laughing, and passing the time pleasantly enough, as shipboard life went.'⁷ The ladies and officers were dressing for dinner, which would begin shortly. Sergeant William Murray, who had been on the spar deck, went below to the lower deck, beneath the saloon, where his company were quartered,⁸ to organise a working party to collect provisions for the following day.⁹ On reaching the lower deck, Murray got a distinct smell of smoke, which seemed to come from the hatch leading to the stern hold. The time was about 3.45pm and the ship was in the middle of the Indian Ocean at Latitude 13° 48' South, Longitude 76° East, several hundred miles from the nearest land.¹⁰ The *Sarah Sands* was on fire.

Murray, realising the danger, remained calm, and quickly returned to the upper deck and located First Officer Welch, quietly informing him of his discovery. Welch, accompanied by William Chambers, the ship's carpenter, went down to the lower deck to investigate.¹¹ Private George Diggins had gone down to the lower deck shortly after Sergeant Murray, and had been: 'instantly met by an awful smell of burning'. In a panic, he rushed to the upper deck to give the alarm, reaching the top of the hatchway as Chambers was coming down. Diggins exclaimed: 'I believe the ship's on fire' to which Chambers, not wanting Diggins' obvious panic spread among the passengers, replied: 'Shut up. You'll be put in irons if you say that.'¹²

Welch and Chambers, on reaching the lower deck, opened a small hatchway into the hold, near the stern, and a large volume of hot smoke belched forth, enveloping them. Quickly replacing the hatch cover, the two men, coughing with the smoke, returned to the spar deck and the fresh air, Welch immediately seeking to inform the Captain.¹³ Captain Castle was in his cabin at this time, presumably preparing for the impending dinner. While thus engaged he had himself smelt smoke and hurriedly enquired as to its origin.¹⁴ At this juncture, Major Brett, who happened to be on the quarterdeck, observed the ship's store-keeper¹⁵ pass the First Officer's message down to the Captain, that there was fire in the after

hold. Castle, on hearing this, immediately went to investigate the situation for himself, and, on reaching the scene: 'found a fierce fire burning'.¹⁶

The acute seriousness of the situation having been confirmed, Castle went up on deck, where he ordered the engines to be stopped, all sail taken in and the ship's head brought to the wind - measures which he hoped would restrict the fire as much as possible to the stern.¹⁷ In addition, all the ports and skylights on the quarter-deck were kept shut and wet blankets were placed over them to further limit the supply of oxygen to the fire.¹⁸

News of the fire began to spread throughout the ship, and while Captain Castle had been inspecting the scene of the fire for himself, Lieutenant Colonel Moffat had been informed and had given: 'orders for parties to be sent immediately to work the pumps'.¹⁹ By the time Castle again came on deck, several hands were busy following Moffat's orders, having fire hoses passed below.²⁰

Under normal circumstances, in the event of a fire, there would have been a chance of saving the ship, especially an iron-built vessel. On this occasion, however, the odds were against it, for the two magazines, containing 128 casks of gunpowder and ammunition, were close to the site of the fire. When the flames reached these magazines, the resultant explosion would in all likelihood destroy the *Sarah Sands*, and all aboard her. The magazines had to be cleared of their deadly cargo if any hope of saving the ship was to remain, and this was what Captain Castle now requested of Lieutenant Colonel Moffat. Leaving Moffat with the task of organising his men to clear the magazines, Castle returned to his cabin, off the now smoke-filled saloon, to remove some vital charts and instruments to a less hazardous location. It was now about 4pm, fifteen minutes since the initial discovery of the fire.

In his cabin, 20-year-old Lieutenant Joseph Hughes was preparing for dinner, apparently still unaware of the fire, when, as he later wrote to his brother:

... the frightful cry of 'fire' ran through the ship, and as I left my cabin I found the saloon filled with smoke. Hurrying on deck I found the ladies rushing about with wild despair on their countenances, and the Captain running up from his cabin with a chart and sextant ... This first began to convince me that it was serious, and as the smoke issued from every hatchway there was no longer any doubt of the fearful reality. My first care was to throw some powder I had in my cabin overboard, and then to get parties of men to provision the boats.²¹

The ladies mentioned by Hughes, had, like the officers, been dressing for dinner when the alarm was raised. They had been rushed on deck, being given time only to don the nearest garment, as a result of which some were partially wrapped in blankets,²² or clothed in miscellaneous apparel. Moffat sent them to the forward part of the ship, escorted by one of his officers, where he thought they would be out of immediate danger.²³

While Captain Castle was below, collecting charts, a compass and a sextant, Moffat had been calling for volunteers to clear the magazines. Numerous soldiers quickly came forward for this duty, and Moffat sent them down to the magazines with a ship's quartermaster, who was to superintend the work there.²⁴ Moffat himself stood close by on deck, in a position to both co-ordinate and supervise operations.

There was, however, only one door leading from the deck, via a half-landing, to the stern cabins, and thus to the magazines. In the restricted space it was difficult to access both magazines simultaneously. Consequently, the men entered the starboard magazine initially. From its dark smoky confines, the volunteers manhandled some of the heavy casks up to the deck, while some tied ropes to other casks and hauled them up. As each

cask reached the deck, it was quickly cast over the side.

The heat and smoke made this strenuous work extremely difficult and as time ticked on the conditions only worsened. The men could only remain below for a few minutes before they were forced to seek respite in the fresh air above. Several men were overcome by the smoke and were hauled up by the ropes previously used on the casks.²⁵ After being revived, most volunteered to return immediately to the magazine. With such determination, the clearance of the starboard magazine was completed and its contents despatched overboard. A private of the 54th (probably Private Thomas Cranham) brought the last cask out of the magazine and reported this to Lieutenant Colonel Moffat. The latter was well aware that, despite this progress, the port magazine was still untouched.²⁶

By this time: 'the whole of the after part of the ship was so much enveloped in smoke that it was scarcely possible to stand'.²⁷ The only hatchway by which the port magazine could be approached was: 'belching forth volumes of hot suffocating smoke, and none knew how soon the flames might reach the ammunition'.²⁸ With Lieutenant Hughes willing to lead men in an attempt to clear this magazine, Lieutenant Colonel Moffat:

... asked for volunteers, when the soldiers near at hand came forward most willingly; I then sent with them one of the stewards whom I knew to be well acquainted with the cabins as I anticipated some difficulty in opening the trap door on that side which had been caulked down by the Carpenter about a month previously.²⁹

When the magazine was located and opened, amid the heat and smoke, the men descended, led by Hughes, and commenced heaving up the casks, Hughes himself passing up the first one.³⁰ The arduous routine that had occurred in the starboard magazine was repeated, except now the heat and smoke were more stifling. Casks were constantly being drawn up with ropes, but so too were the gallant volunteers, many men being lifted out almost suffocated, and some of them taking several minutes to revive. Those men who came up exhausted and in need of air, as well as those who had been revived, went back down with wet towels around their faces, and it was only by this means that the work could continue.³¹

Despite the difficulties, the clearance of the port magazine was almost totally achieved, Quartermaster Sergeant Richard Barwick methodically noting the number of casks in his pocket-book as they came up and were disposed of over the ship's side.³² Unfortunately, Private James Piggie, carrying what was thought to be the last cask, was overcome with the heat and smoke and collapsed.³³ Though Piggie himself was safely hauled on deck, the cask that he had been carrying rolled away into the smoke, and all the exertions of those still in the magazine failed to retrieve it. After the valiant labours undertaken to empty the magazines, this was a cruel blow. The men in the magazine, as one of those present – Private Philip Folland – said, 'stood until the flames surrounded us'.³⁴ Further attempts to locate the cask were now impossible, and the port magazine was abandoned to the fire.

Unknown to the soldiers at this time, there was a further danger lurking in the port magazine: the ship's supply of signalling powder. Its presence there was only discovered when it was too late. The smoke and flames in the abandoned magazine now prevented any possibility of re-entry. It was only a matter of time before the flames reached the powder. Private Diggins expressed the thought that was perhaps uppermost in the minds of many at the time when he later recalled: 'there was no one who believed the *Sarah Sands* would survive the explosion'.³⁵

While the magazines were being cleared, the remaining passengers and crew were not

The Burning of the Sarah Sands



The Sarah Sands at the start of the fire (by Harley Crossley, 1978)

idle, and Captain Castle, after fetching his necessary navigational implements from his cabin, decided that it would be prudent to lower the lifeboats. Each of the seven boats was provisioned with a supply of fresh water, as well as whatever foodstuffs could be found in the confusion.³⁶ When fully provisioned, Castle had seamen stand by each boat in readiness to man them. As more men were needed for this duty than could be spared from the sailors, the boat crews were augmented by a number of soldiers, some of whom had been employed in the garrison boat crews when the 54th was stationed at Kingston on Lake Ontario in 1853-54.³⁷

Seeing the boats being prepared for launching, some men of the 54th lost their composure, possibly feeling the crew considered the ship's plight helpless and meant to abandon it, leaving the rest of them to their fate. On noting this reaction, Lieutenant Colonel Moffat assured the men nearest to him:

that there was no cause for apprehension, such measures being only the usual precautions adopted under all similar circumstances and that by coolness and good order the fire would soon be extinguished.³⁸

As the boats were now fully prepared for launching, Captain Castle considered it high time to place the women and children in them: 'as a precautionary measure.'³⁹ He informed Moffat of this, adding that the new patent port lifeboat would be used to hold them. Moffat, requesting that Castle ensure that his wife and family were safely deposited in the boat, then returned to continue supervising the clearance of the magazines, as well as co-ordinating the fire-fighting operations.

The ship's third officer, John Verey, was given command of the port lifeboat, and charged with the safety of the women and children that were taken aboard. In view of the grave danger the *Sarah Sands* was in, from both fire and explosion, as well as the heavy swell prevailing, Castle gave Verey: 'positive instructions to keep away from the vessel until recalled'.⁴⁰

The women and children were brought from the fore-castle, where Moffat had previously sent them for safety, and were assisted into the lifeboat. The husbands of the various women, and the officers on hand, saw them safely aboard, trying to calm the more agitated of them. Mrs Moffat refused to enter the boat without first seeing her husband, asking the Captain if this could be arranged. Castle escorted her to Moffat and left him to get her into the lifeboat. Moffat walked back with her while he: 'endeavoured to calm her fears by assuring her that the fire would be extinguished quickly, when she would be allowed to return on board'.⁴¹ With this Mrs Moffat got into the lifeboat, her husband saying his farewell to her, their youngest daughter and the other ladies in the boat.

The Moffats' eldest daughter, Fanny, refused to leave the burning ship, preferring its dubious safety to the lifeboat. In a highly distracted state, she ignored her father's remonstrations to board the boat with the others. Moffat was then called away, but before going, he asked that Fanny be placed, or carried if necessary, into the lifeboat.⁴² When he returned, however, Moffat found that Fanny was still not in the boat, and was becoming still more frantic and upset. As none of the immediate seamen or soldiers seemed inclined to manhandle the Lieutenant Colonel's daughter, he picked her up himself and, assisted by Third Officer Verey, forcibly placed her aboard.⁴³ With all the women and children now in the lifeboat, all that remained was to carefully lower it into the sea. Now, the reactions of the Lieutenant Colonel's family were to lead to serious repercussions for Moffat himself.

Several of the other women and children were very nervous, and some were crying,

despite the reassurances offered to them. Their natural anxiety and distress was, however, dwarfed by the state of Moffat's family, who: 'were crying and screaming after him.'⁴⁴ Mrs Moffat repeatedly called for the Lieutenant Colonel.⁴⁵ The elder daughter, Fanny, was recalled as by now being 'hysterical', standing up in the lifeboat and grabbing the bulwark of the ship, as if attempting to regain the deck of the vessel.⁴⁶ Moffat had been standing by on the quarter-deck, but seeing his daughter clinging to the bulwark, he climbed into the lifeboat and placed her on a seat. Having forsaken the bulwark, Fanny now clung to her father,⁴⁷ who sat down with her and attempted to pacify his family, when – without warning – the lifeboat was lowered into the sea.

A very heavy cross sea was running at the time, which rendered it unsafe for the boat to remain beside the ship.⁴⁸ As a result, Third Officer Verey shoved off immediately, having the crew pull away to a safe distance. The unfortunate Lieutenant Colonel was now separated from his command. The time was somewhere between five and six o'clock.

The lowering of the boat had been ordered by First Officer Welch, who later described the circumstances that led to the apparently sudden launching:

I was not aware that Colonel Moffat was in the boat when I gave directions for the boat to be lowered, but the boat was very full and I observed one of the davits (Iron Suspenders) bend with the weight and I feared it would break which would have been most dangerous and probably have caused much loss of life. Observing the davits bend I at once ordered my men to lower the boat immediately without giving notice to those in the boat.⁴⁹

With the women and children now off the ship, those remaining could work unhindered, one of these being Quartermaster Sergeant Barwick who, having seen his wife safely into the lifeboat, and his Lieutenant Colonel inadvertently launched along with it, took over Moffat's task of superintending the final clearance of the port magazine.⁵⁰

Some of the boats had been launched prior to the port lifeboat. After the launch of the latter, First Officer Welch had the cutter and the longboat hoisted out in the fore part of the ship, while the gig was one of the final boats to be lowered, command of which was given to Fourth Officer Wood.⁵¹ Although it seems to have taken some time, all the boats were safely got away, despite the heavy seas which, as Captain Castle stated: 'rendered it both a difficult and dangerous service.'⁵²

Apart from Lieutenant Colonel Moffat's unintentional departure, very few men (whether seamen or soldiers) left the vessel without orders. Four decades later Captain Castle recalled that only three firemen left the ship without orders,⁵³ and Major Brett, in his contemporary report to Lieutenant Colonel Moffat, reported that twelve soldiers left, including those ordered to man the boats.⁵⁴ While it is not clear from this whether any men of the 54th left without orders, it is evident that a few of the crew did. It was not, however, the untoward departure of this minority which resulted in the majority of the crew being subsequently labelled as deserters. Rather, it was the very launching of the boats and seeing them row off to a safe distance, at which they remained. This led many officers and men of the 54th to falsely conclude that the crew were panic-stricken, abandoning the ship without orders and leaving those who remained to their fate.⁵⁵

There was one man who, apparently, did panic and abandon ship, as stated by Major Brett: 'It is my duty to report that Surgeon Grant ... left the ship when the boats were lowered.'⁵⁶ By absconding at a time of danger, and when his particular skills might have been required at any moment, Grant's action should have resulted in a severe reprimand,

if not a court-martial. Nothing of this kind was instituted. Nor did his actions lead to any widespread overt criticism. Whether the lack of consequences was due to Grant's standing with Brett and the junior officers or whether Moffat's predicament served to overshadow his desertion is not clear. As it was, Grant left in one of the last boats to be lowered,⁵⁷ his duties falling on Assistant Surgeon O'Donovan, who remained aboard.

While the boats were being launched, and knowing they were insufficient to hold everyone aboard the *Sarah Sands*, Captain Castle ordered rafts to be constructed. Collecting spare spars, as well as whatever other timber could be found, working parties of seamen, assisted by soldiers, commenced their assembly. The wooden tables and benches from the forward troop decks were commandeered and nailed to the other timbers to form rough decking, thus increasing the buoyancy and strength of the rafts. Under Castle's supervision, three rafts were thus constructed, two of them being launched over the side and moored on either side of the bow, while the third was kept on the forward deck for quick and easy launching.⁵⁸ If forced to abandon ship however, these rafts could have accommodated only a portion of the men, while many others would have had to seek a place in the boats or grasp at pieces of floating wreckage.

For those who could not be accommodated either in boats or on rafts, the chance of life would have been extremely slim: even if they were able to swim or cling to wreckage, there was a further peril to be faced in the water. Shortly after the fire broke out, a huge shoal of sharks congregated around the burning vessel, increasing as the evening wore on, until: 'one of the ship's officers said he doubted whether such a shoal had ever before been seen.'⁵⁹ The possibility of having to face these terrifying creatures while floundering helplessly in the water was, for several, the major memory they retained of the events of this voyage.⁶⁰ Considering the vessel's isolated position, survival for the majority would probably have been dependent upon the relatively remote possibility of a being sighted by a passing ship.

With Lieutenant Colonel Moffat's absence, military command devolved upon Major William Brett, the officer at the centre of the 'cabins controversy' and the anti-Moffat feeling. Shortly after the alarm was given, Brett left the quarterdeck, going down to the forward troop decks to ensure discipline was maintained, and that there would be no unseemly rush onto the upper deck. Entering the quarters of the Light Company, Brett found the men grouped in twos and threes, engaged in somewhat excited conversation, speculating about the situation.⁶¹ His presence being sufficient to impose order and leave the men reassured, Brett then went to the Sick Bay on the lower deck where its sole occupant, Drummer Henry Callaway, was sitting in his bunk, wrapped in his greatcoat, crying. Callaway implored the Major not to forget him, upon which Brett assured him that he would be looked after.⁶²

Looking for an update on the fire's progress, Brett visited the engineer's mess, where he found hot smoke issuing fast from the stern hatchway. Going on deck and making his way to the forecabin, Brett saw four or five boats within a short distance of the ship. As he laconically stated later: 'I became aware that I was in charge of the Reg[imen]t as I saw the Colonel with his family in a boat on the port bow, about 400 yards from the ship.'⁶³ While Brett's thoughts and feelings at this moment may only be imagined, it was an opportunity fate had delivered him that he would seize. The time was about 6pm – the last boats were being hoisted out; the rafts had been constructed; the magazines had been cleared as much as possible; and the pumps and hoses were fully manned in an unceasing effort to fight the fire.⁶⁴



Wiles and Richmond saving the Colours

Due to the excitement and activity created by the fire, the regimental colours had initially been overlooked.⁶⁵ They were hanging in the saloon, attached to the after bulkhead. The saloon had been filled with hot suffocating smoke for some time, and any attempt to recover the treasured colours would be fraught with danger. Lieutenant Hughes and the Adjutant, Lieutenant Houston, made a gallant effort, dashing into the darkened saloon, only to be driven back by the heat and smoke.⁶⁶ Captain Prideaux Gillum spoke to Captain Castle about saving the colours,⁶⁷ as a result of which one of the ship's quartermasters, Richard Richmond, volunteered to attempt the dangerous task. Appropriately, Richmond had been the person who had erected the colours in the saloon on the day the *Sarah Sands* had sailed, nearly three months previously.⁶⁸

The only protection against the effects of the heat and smoke that could be provided was a wet cloth, which Richmond placed over his nose and mouth. With this, and armed with an axe, he made his way into the saloon. Guided by the tables, he groped his way to the far end of the saloon, eventually coming upon the colours. Wielding his axe, Richmond managed to hack them from the wall, and gathering them up in his arms, he started back for the deck and the fresh air.

The men on deck waited expectantly for Richmond's return. Would he be successful where others had failed? Or would he come out at all? As the seconds slowly ticked by, it seemed as if Richmond had failed and would pay with his life. Among those awaiting Richmond's reappearance, Private William Wiles decided he was not going to emerge. With a wet cloth clasped to his face, Wiles made his way into the saloon, where he found Richmond slumped on the floor, overcome by heat and smoke. Wiles half lifted and half dragged the semi-conscious Richmond out of the saloon, not forgetting the colours. Once on deck, they held the colours aloft, to the cheers of the men, and promptly collapsed from the effects of smoke inhalation and exhaustion.⁶⁹

The Adjutant, Lieutenant Thomas Houston, was now given the colours.⁷⁰ In order to ensure their safety and preserve the regiment's peace of mind, it was decided to place them on one of the rafts. A sergeant having volunteered to do this,⁷¹ he took them and climbed down the ship's side, lashed both colours securely to the raft, and returned to the ship; not an easy task in the prevailing conditions.⁷²

Encouraged by the rescue of their colours, the men of the 54th continued to fight the fire by all means available. Gangs of four men each worked the pumps in shifts of ten to fifteen minutes,⁷³ while others directed the water thus provided onto where the flames appeared fiercest. A human chain was formed to provide more water, and every container capable of holding liquid was pressed into service. Each man had been given eight yards of lashing with which to tie himself to a raft, should they be forced to abandon ship,⁷⁴ and these ropes were now used to good effect to haul containers of water up from the sea. Although no flames had as yet penetrated the upper deck, the saloon on the main deck was now ablaze. The ferocity of the fire and the density of the smoke was gradually driving the men from the quarterdeck.

Around 7 o'clock, or shortly thereafter, the ship began to broach to and Captain Castle called for volunteers to assist him in setting the spanker-boom sail on the mizzen-mast, thus bringing the ship's head more into the wind.⁷⁵ Lieutenant Hughes and Private William Appleyard were among a dozen men who accompanied Castle in this effort. Having to approach the mast over the quarter-deck with the fire raging below, the wooden decking was patently hot under the men's feet. The volunteers were unsuccessful, as Appleyard

later recalled, 'as the ropes were all put out of their places in the confusion and the smoke was so dense that we were not able to see what we were doing'.⁷⁶ When Castle returned he asked to speak with Major Brett on the fore-castle.⁷⁷ Details of when this conversation took place vary considerably between Brett's account, as used here, and Castle's (of which see later).

In the presence of First Officer Welch and Adjutant Houston, Castle informed the Major: 'that he had but small hopes of saving the ship, that he saw the flames bursting through the quarter-deck when up in the mizzen rigging'.⁷⁸ Similarly, Appleyard recalled having seen 'the flames burst out with terrific violence from the colonel's cabin and then I thought I must prepare myself for the worst'.⁷⁹ Castle asked Brett: 'to keep as much order as possible in getting the men onto the rafts when the time might arise'.⁸⁰ Major Brett had earlier directed the Adjutant to: 'place a Sergeant over the small Drummer boys to see that they were the first placed on the raft and lashed'.⁸¹ Brett now communicated Castle's information to his subordinate officers, adding that they: 'had determined to fight the fire inch by inch in hopes to hold to the ship till day-light', directing them 'to maintain all order, and to pass by companies as far as possible onto the rafts in case it became necessary to leave the ship'.⁸²

The flames that Castle and Appleyard reported bursting through the quarter-deck clearly hindered setting the spanker sail and soon afterwards: 'volumes of flame ascended the mizen rigging',⁸³ making further efforts impossible. The mizzen-mast was soon blazing fiercely and quickly burnt through, falling: 'with a crash over the ship's side, to hang there, half supported by the burning rigging, an encumbrance which would cause: 'the stern of the vessel to veer round to the wind'.⁸⁴ Clinging to the bulwark, Lance Corporal John McCullum, hatchet in hand, hacked away at the rigging until the burning mast and spars were released, dropping clear of the ship into the sea.⁸⁵

At this stage, with the fire advancing by degrees, efforts to limit its progress by starving it of fuel began. The first such effort was led by Captain Gillum who commanded a party that cut away the bridge and the deck cabins, throwing all inflammable materials overboard.⁸⁶ Though no bridge is visible in the plan of the *Sarah Sands*, a deck-bridge, abaft the saloon, is mentioned in one source, which may well have been raised, as the account speaks of men taking refuge there, having been driven by the heat and smoke from the quarter-deck.⁸⁷ Appleyard notes the bridge as separating the quarter-deck from the main deck.⁸⁸

With the heart of the fire being in the stern hold and lower stern decks, halting its progress from there was going to be essential. Acting on a suggestion of John Fraser, the Chief Engineer, 'with the view of preventing the fire from communicating with the fore part of the vessel',⁸⁹ holes were cut in the upper deck with hatchets and men lowered by ropes to the main deck. The watertight iron stern bulkhead, which only reached to that level, had so far substantially restricted the fire to the stern, where the saloon was situated. Ahead of it lay the centre of the ship, which housed the hospital or sick-bay, with the engine-room below and the coal-bunkers. With the fire heating the ship's ironwork, the coals were already smouldering and their ignition would make the fire unstoppable. Having accessed the main deck, the soldiers then cut this away by the bulkhead aft of the engine-room, enabling water to be thrown onto the smouldering coals in the bunker beneath.⁹⁰ It was here that Major Brett and Captain Castle had: 'determined to make every effort to stop the progress of the fire'.⁹¹

In the rear of the engine-room, adjacent to its bulkhead, an additional barrier made

from wet blankets and bedding was constructed across that part of the ship, and this was kept constantly doused with water in an effort to keep it fire-proof.⁹² Sergeant Murray took a leading part here supervising the men's efforts. It was here, as one officer noted, that 'the most daring courage was witnessed'.⁹³ The men: 'were employed throwing water with the buckets and shifting the coals forward' from the heated bunker.⁹⁴ They were: 'passed down wrapped in wet blankets,' where 'it was impossible to remain' for long, 'so great was the heat and smoke, several being pulled up senseless and nearly suffocated'.⁹⁵ On recovering, on the windward side of the ship, many: 'insisted on being passed below again'.⁹⁶ It was hellish work.

By now it was quite dark, with the ship, broadside to the waves, rolling heavily in the swell: 'and more than once volumes of fire and smoke had swept the decks'.⁹⁷ Fearing the vessel would run before the wind, Captain Castle tried: 'to haul the boats, to get them to make fast to the jib-boom end, in order to haul the ship's head into the wind'.⁹⁸ In the high seas, the small boats 'were sufficiently occupied in keeping afloat',⁹⁹ and only one responded to the Captain's request.

At about 9pm, with the whole poop and quarter-deck blazing fiercely: 'a frightful explosion took place in the port magazine, which all knew to be the remainder of the powder'.¹⁰⁰ What was left of the stern cabins, was blown fifty feet into the air, most of the resulting shower of timbers and debris fortunately falling overboard.¹⁰¹ The exploding ammunition, along with: 'the flames raging from the midships to the stern, gave to the vessel the appearance of a volcano in eruption'.¹⁰²

Lieutenant Schlotel recalled that: 'the concussion caused by the explosion was so great' that the ship trembled and lurched, the stern dipped and for a moment was under water, and the vessel seemed about to: 'settle down with all on board'.¹⁰³ There was an awful pause, during which work ceased; some men, expecting the worst, shook hands with each other, while others looked to see if the ship showed signs of sinking, and everyone thought: 'that they were about to be launched into eternity'.¹⁰⁴ Private George Diggins was to describe the moment thus:

Not a human being in the transport who felt the shock, not a wretched soul in the boats who saw the awful sight, believed that the vessel would survive, and yet, when the shudder had passed through her, when she had recovered from that sickening dip, the *Sarah Sands* rode still.¹⁰⁵

When nothing more alarming occurred, the passing of this long anticipated danger brought relief.¹⁰⁶ Captain Gillum cried out to the men: 'The old lady is all right; in again my lads',¹⁰⁷ and a loud cheer floated over the water, letting those in the boats know the ship was not foundering.¹⁰⁸ Appleyard recalled the Adjutant encouraging the men at this time as well, quoting Houston as saying: 'All is right, men, work away, and by God's help, we will soon get the fire under'.¹⁰⁹

The force of the explosion had blown a large hole down to the water-line in the port quarter,¹¹⁰ and: 'as the ship rolled heavily from laying broadside on to a very high sea and strong breeze',¹¹¹ the seas poured in through the torn hull, adding clouds of steam to the conflagration above. Consumed by the fire, and rent asunder by the explosion, the poop, cabins, saloon and lower decks in the stern had totally vanished, and in between the flames, smoke and steam billowing forth could be glimpsed the buckled and distorted iron framework of the vessel. It was at this time that Captain Castle, according to his statement in the *Commercial Gazette*, of Port Louis, Mauritius, of 25 November 1857 (repeated

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A view from the lifeboats (*The Royal Magazine*, 1906)

almost verbatim in a letter to the ship's owners),¹¹² thought: 'it scarcely possible to save' the ship¹¹³ - all other sources record this occurring just after the flames burst through the quarterdeck, as per Brett's account, quoted earlier.

Calling Major Brett forward, Castle told him his opinion, 'requesting him to endeavour to keep order amongst the troops till the last, but at the same time to use every exertion to check the fire'.¹¹⁴ In response, sources allege Brett to have replied: 'We shall fight till we are driven overboard',¹¹⁵ or 'We shall fight the fire to the fore-castle',¹¹⁶ or words to that effect. Brett's own self-report of his reaction, however, as recorded in his report to Lieutenant Colonel Moffat, was: 'I said, "We must hope". I turned round to the Chief Officer and said, "What, is there no hope?"',¹¹⁷ following which, of course, the Major may well have said something along the lines of the comments attributed to him, in that spirit of determination 'to fight the fire inch by inch' and 'hold to the ship till day-light'. Regardless of whenever the above occurred, or whatever Brett said in response, the officers of the 54th, in retrospect, had nothing but praise for the men under their command. With the *Sarah Sands* continuing afloat after the explosion, the soldiers were encouraged by that brute fact as well as by the officers themselves to make fresh exertions.¹¹⁸ Lieutenant Schlotel thus recalled how:

The troops were still pursuing their arduous work, and to their credit be it recorded, not a man attempted to rush upon the rafts. The men obeyed their officers as though they had been on a barrack square.¹¹⁹

Schlotel's younger colleague, Lieutenant Hughes recorded:

How our men worked that night, as men can only work for their lives, and yet as steadily and quietly as on parade, and scarcely a sound but the raging of the flames and the voices of the officers cheering them on and calling for the reliefs for the pumps.¹²⁰

While Brett himself – with no subtle self-promotion – reported:

... during the 18 hours I had charge of the regiment all of the officers and men executed themselves to the utmost, and I consider the conduct of all on board merits every praise.¹²¹

At around 10pm the main topsail-yard began to catch fire and threatened to spread the fire to the forward parts of the ship.¹²² First Officer Welch ordered one of the ship's firemen, Walter Woodward,¹²³ to place some blankets in a tub of water, and, finding there were no seamen available, Welch volunteered to go aloft himself and wrap the wet blankets around the smouldering yard.¹²⁴ Privates Andrew Walsh, Philip Folland and Edward Slavin: 'went up after him with wet blankets, which they handed him',¹²⁵ other soldiers and one of the ship's quartermasters, James Livingston,¹²⁶ also climbing the rigging and passing further blankets up until they: 'eventually succeeded in stifling the fire',¹²⁷ but not before: 'the yard and mast were nearly burnt through'.¹²⁸

So the night wore on, with the pumps working incessantly and the lines of buckets passing from hand to hand;¹²⁹ with exhausted men being replaced by slightly less-exhausted men, their uniforms scorched by fire, their skins blackened by smoke;¹³⁰ with the *Sarah Sands* the centre of a scene of: 'phantom-like splendour'.¹³¹ Lieutenant Schlotel described this thus:

The iron sides of the vessel were becoming red-hot ... Every particle of wood in the after part of the ship was destroyed, and as the flames shot up from below a blue vapour arose which hung over the red-hot iron underneath ... For miles around the sea wore a deep scarlet tinge.¹³²

From midnight onwards: ‘the admirable conduct and extraordinary exertions’¹³³ of the men of the 54th began to make an impression on the fire, driving it back inch by inch, gradually subduing the blaze.¹³⁴

By 3am, with the bulkhead still holding and the flames showing signs of exhaustion,¹³⁵ they began to see that the fire had been stayed. ‘Hoses still played on the main mast and coal bunkers’, the mainmast being: ‘found to be afire as far as the upper deck.’¹³⁶ Sometime after 6am the fire was brought under control, being now confined to the completely shelled-out stern,¹³⁷ where the dwindling flames and smoke eventually gave way to steam alone.¹³⁸

1 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 9.

2 *North Devon Journal*, 18 February 1858, p 8.

3 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.

4 *Ibid*; Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 9.

5 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.

6 See the *North Devon Journal*, 18 February 1858, p 8 and the *Lancaster Gazette*, 13 February 1858, p 4 respectively for the accounts by Folland and Smith.

7 Diggins account in Wood, 1974, *op cit*, p 89.

8 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 9.

9 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.

10 *Commercial Gazette*, 25 November 1857, Statement of J.S. Castle; TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Statement of J.S. Castle, 25 November 1857.

11 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 9.

12 Diggins account in Wood, 1974, *op cit*, p 89.

13 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 9.

14 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.

15 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Major Brett’s report, 20 November 1857; the storekeeper was probably George Canvin, listed as such on the Crew List; see also the letter from an unidentified 54th officer who noted the storekeeper informed the Third Officer of the fire and the latter informed Castle, *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 January 1858, p 2 (and the earlier brief summary from the same officer in the *Belfast News-Letter*, 5 January 1858, p 1).

16 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.

17 *Commercial Gazette*, 25 November 1857, Statement of J.S. Castle.

18 As noted in the letter from an unidentified 54th officer, *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 January 1858, p 2.

19 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Lieutenant Colonel Moffat’s ‘official’ report, 4 April 1858; Private Phillip Folland stated there were only two pumps aboard, a very small ‘steam pump named the donkey pump’ and a ‘patent hand pump, the hose of which leaked as much water as it carried to the fire, and had to be bound up in all parts with pieces of blankets’, *North Devon Journal*, 18 February 1858, p 8.

20 *Commercial Gazette*, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*.

21 Ms letter, Hughes, 23 November 1857, *op cit*.

22 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 11.

23 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat’s ‘official’ report, *op cit*.

24 *Ibid*

25 Diggins account in Wood, 1974, *op cit*, p 95.

26 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat’s ‘personal’ report, *op cit*.

27 *Commercial Gazette*, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*.

28 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 13.

29 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat’s ‘personal’ report, *op cit*.

30 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 13.

- 31 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat's 'official' report, *op cit*; see also the account of this work by Private Phillip Folland, *North Devon Journal*, 18 February 1858, p 8.
- 32 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 67.
- 33 Ms notebook of Sergeant William Murray, p 7, Regimental Archives, Dorset Military Museum.
- 34 *North Devon Journal*, 18 February 1858, p 8.
- 35 Diggins account in Wood, 1974, *op cit*, p 95
- 36 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 10; *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.
- 37 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 10.
- 38 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat's 'personal' report, *op cit*.
- 39 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 40 *Ibid*
- 41 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat's 'personal' report, *op cit*.
- 42 *Ibid*
- 43 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, J.G. Verey's statement, 21 November 1857.
- 44 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Seaman G.H. Lewis's statement, 10 December 1857.
- 45 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, QMSgt R. Barwick's statement, undated.
- 46 *Ibid*
- 47 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Steward William Henry Hill's statement, 17 December 1857.
- 48 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Statement of J.S. Castle, 6 November 1858.
- 49 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, S.R. Welch's statement, undated.
- 50 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat's 'official' report, *op cit*.
- 51 *Commercial Gazette*, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 52 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 53 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.
- 54 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 55 See for example the account of Private William Appleyard, *Carlisle Journal*, 26 February 1858, p 9.
- 56 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 57 Possibly the starboard longboat or the gig, commanded by Fourth Officer Wood; cf. Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 10.
- 58 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 11; *Commercial Gazette*, 25 November 1857.
- 59 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 19.
- 60 Private Thomas Thompson (No. 2529) often related the story of the *Sarah Sands*, making special mention of the sharks; Private William Appleyard similarly noted more fearful than the fire was the sight of 'sharks swimming round and round the ship, ready at any time to devour any one unfortunate enough to fall into their jaws', *Carlisle Journal*, 26 February 1858, p 9.
- 61 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 62 *Ibid*
- 63 *Ibid*
- 64 *Ibid*
- 65 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, pp 11-2.
- 66 *Commercial Gazette*, 25 November 1857, states it was Lieutenant's Hughes and Cronyn; all other sources confirm it was Lieutenant Hughes and Adjutant Houston (Murray, p 12 and Diggins, p 92).
- 67 Private James Stacey, account in *Regimental Journal*, 1913.
- 68 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 12.
- 69 Murray, p 12; Diggins, pp 92-3; *Records of the 54th*, p 67; an unidentified 54th officer anomalously noted Richmond rescued the Queen's Colour first and then returned to retrieve the Regimental Colour, he being accompanied by Wiles in the latter effort, *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 January 1858, p 2.
- 70 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.

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- 71 Possibly one of the four sergeants quoted in Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit* - Henry Robinson, Thomas Page, James Doyle and James Houston.
- 72 TNA ref: WO 98/2, letter from Lieutenant Colonel Brett, 6 August 1860.
- 73 Stacey, 1913, *op cit*.
- 74 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 15.
- 75 *Commercial Gazette*, 24 November 1857; an abridged account from the notes of Hospital Sergeant James Manion.
- 76 Private William Appleyard, *Carlisle Journal*, 26 February 1858, p 9.
- 77 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 78 *Ibid*; this version of events is corroborated by a letter from an unidentified 54th officer, see the *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 January 1858, p 2.
- 79 Private William Appleyard, *Carlisle Journal*, 26 February 1858, p 9.
- 80 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 81 *Ibid*
- 82 *Ibid*
- 83 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 13.
- 84 *Ibid*
- 85 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 13; anomalously, Appleyard stated the mizzen mast fell overboard at about 10.30pm and the explosion occurred very shortly afterwards: see *Carlisle Journal*, 26 February 1858, p 9.
- 86 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 67.
- 87 *Nautical Magazine*, January 1905, p 39
- 88 Private William Appleyard, *Carlisle Journal*, 26 February 1858, p 9.
- 89 *Commercial Gazette*, 24 November 1857, Manion, *op cit*.
- 90 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p.12; Private William Appleyard, *Carlisle Journal*, 26 February 1858, p 9.
- 91 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 92 *Commercial Gazette*, 24 November 1857, Manion, *op cit*.
- 93 *Isle of Wight Observer*, 16 January 1858, p 3.
- 94 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 95 *Ibid*
- 96 *Ibid*
- 97 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 69.
- 98 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 99 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 69.
- 100 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*; Captain Castle letter to Messrs Walton, *Morning Post*, 30 December 1857, p 5; several others report the explosion as occurring somewhat later, at around 10pm or even later at 11.30pm, see for example Private Phillip Folland's account, *North Devon Journal*, Thursday 18 February 1858, p 8 and that by an unidentified 54th officer, *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 January 1858, p 2.
- 101 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat's 'official' report, *op cit*.
- 102 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 14.
- 103 *Ibid*
- 104 *Commercial Gazette*, 24 November 1857, Manion, *op cit*.
- 105 Diggins account in Wood, 1974, *op cit*, p 98.
- 106 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 68.
- 107 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 14.
- 108 *Ibid*
- 109 Private William Appleyard, *Carlisle Journal*, 26 February 1858, p 9.
- 110 Diggins account in Wood, 1974, *op cit*, p 98.
- 111 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat's 'official' report, *op cit*.

- 112 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Castle, *The Globe*, 30 December 1857, *op cit*, and *Morning Post*, 30 December 1857, p 5.
- 113 *Commercial Gazette*, 25 November 1857, Castle, *op cit*.
- 114 *Ibid*
- 115 Diggins, p. 97; *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 68.
- 116 Ms letter, Hughes, 23 November 1857; Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 13.
- 117 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 118 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 68.
- 119 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 14.
- 120 Ms letter, Hughes, 23 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 121 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 122 *Commercial Gazette*, 25 November 1857, Castle, *op cit*.
- 123 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 16.
- 124 *Ibid*
- 125 *Ibid*; Folland describes standing outside of the bulwarks being handed buckets of water by Welch to keep the rigging damp during this period, see *North Devon Journal*, 18 February 1858, p 8.
- 126 *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal*, No 19, September 1993, p 46.
- 127 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*; Appleyard reported the fire was extinguished here through the efforts of 'the chief officers and boatswain's second mate', *Carlisle Journal*, 26 February 1858, p 9.
- 128 *Commercial Gazette*, 25 November 1857, Castle, *op cit*.
- 129 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 68; Private Phillip Folland described the inadequate nature of the available buckets, these consisting of either 'our mess kids, which only hold one gallon of water, and large horse buckets which hold six, which were as much too large as the others were to small', *North Devon Journal*, 18 February 1858, p.8; similar criticisms were made by Private Jones who wrote how they had to 'use our tea buckets, as fire buckets there were none on board, and we had only one small fire engine. The ship was not provided with anything in case of fire', *Western Daily Press*, 26 June 1858, p 2.
- 130 Diggins account in Wood, 1974, *op cit*, p 97.
- 131 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 15.
- 132 *Ibid*
- 133 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat's 'official' report, *op cit*.
- 134 *Commercial Gazette*, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 135 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 69.
- 136 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 137 *Ibid*
- 138 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 16.



Fighting the fire (original painting in The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester)

CHAPTER 6

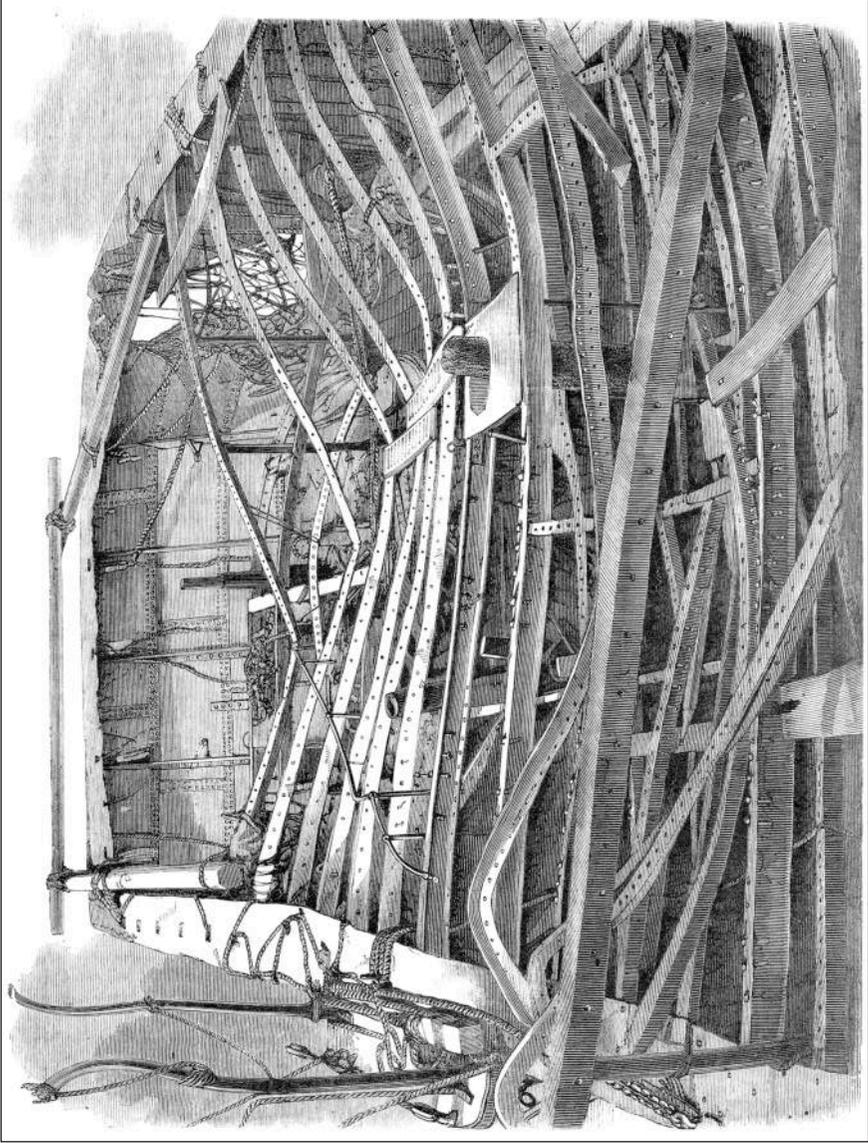
On to Mauritius

By the light of day, the *Sarah Sands* appeared in a fearful plight. A steaming chasm aft of the mainmast revealed: 'a gutted mass of ironwork ... with only bare girders and gaunt walls visible'.¹ With 'the ship rolling heavily and taking in large quantities of water' through the ruptured stern quarter,² there was some 15 to 20 feet of water in the after compartments. At every roll of the ship, four large iron water-tanks thundered against the sides of the hold: 'threatening to breach the bent and weakened plates'.³

Given the state of the ship, there was some: 'apprehension the stern might give way and the ship founder'.⁴ Following makeshift refreshments in the form of a glass of pale brandy and a little ship's biscuit each at about seven o'clock, everyone again set to work.⁵ Captain Castle and First Officer Welch organised repair parties which secured the water-tanks, once cool, in order to prevent further damage.⁶ Then: 'two cables were passed round the stern and a spare yard lashed across to strengthen it',⁷ while spare sails, hammocks and blankets were sent aft to plug the hole in the port quarter caused by the explosion,⁸ and a barricade of canvas, timber and debris was built up which effectively limited the leak.⁹ Throughout the day the men of the 54th continued manning the pumps: 'to ease the ship of the large quantity of water which had been thrown into her during the night'.¹⁰

Physical damage to the ship's human cargo was light: Lieutenant George Cronyn and Corporal William Singer had been injured as a result of being thrown down a hatchway by the force of the explosion in the magazine,¹¹ and Sergeant Henry Robinson had fallen through a hole in the deck when descending to the main deck and broken three ribs. He was placed on the raft on the forecastle in the care of Sergeant James Doyle.¹² In his report, Major Brett was: 'happy to state that no serious accident occurred to any man on board during the night'.¹³ There appears to have been: 'a kindly rivalry among the men of No 5 and the Light Company', quartered forward and whose kits had been saved, to replace the torn and scorched clothing of their comrades.¹⁴ However, they could not fully or permanently outfit them, for later, when paraded for inspection on Mauritius, the Grenadier Company were: 'in their shirt sleeves and all kinds of head-dress, and the other companies in their tunics, which were not damaged in any way'.¹⁵ In addition to the loss of uniforms, many of those aboard had whatever personal possessions they owned destroyed, while iconic regimental items such as the book detailing the regiment's record of service and other objects were lost or damaged.¹⁶ Some items were salvaged from the wreckage however, the most valuable of which perhaps was the Paymaster's cash box. Sergeants James Doyle and William Murray went down into the wreckage and water of the afterhold in search of it. Doyle managed to find it, the contents of which – reputedly £500 in coin – was undamaged.¹⁷

Between 10 o'clock and noon the boats were gradually brought alongside, and no doubt the women and children were greatly relieved to step back aboard the *Sarah Sands*. Though the gig had been swamped, there had been no casualties: 'and the crew, under Mr Wood, Fourth Officer, got into another of the boats'.¹⁸ Given the damage to the ship, the boats, once emptied, were initially moored at the fore and aft ends of the *Sarah Sands* in



The burned-out stern after the fire (*Illustrated London News*, 22 January 1859)

readiness should they be required again in a hurry.¹⁹

The women from the ship's boats had been preparing for dinner when the fire broke out and: 'had escaped to the boats with but little clothing ... and when it was extinguished, their time was principally employed making sail-cloth dresses, which were fashioned with much taste, notwithstanding the coarseness of the material.'²⁰ With all on board now compelled to share the fore-part of the ship, separate accommodation for the ladies took the form of canvas partitions nailed to the upper deck.²¹

As discussed earlier, it is difficult to determine with any degree of accuracy the number of seamen who were ordered to man the boats, or those who took to them without orders, compounded as it is by the major sources being from the 54th Regiment who misinterpreted the behaviour of some of the ship's crew. Murray states each of the seven boats was manned by two soldiers and three sailors,²² but went on to record that Captain Castle later assembled what remained of the crew: 'first and second mates, the boatswain, a naval pensioner, chief, second and third engineers, and six firemen',²³ which tallies with Brett's statement: 'that the majority of the ship's crew had gone off in the boats excepting the petty officers'.²⁴

The *Records of the 54th* mention the concern among seamen in the boats about the sort of reception they might receive back on board.²⁵ Diggins claimed the sailors got: 'a reception which made their ears tingle',²⁶ while both Schlotel and Murray note the captain's annoyance with the crew when the boats were called back to the *Sarah Sands*.²⁷ Possibly Castle, with the *Sarah Sands* having survived the ordeal of the night, expressed his strain on the boat-crews for having mostly failed to approach the ship when hailed to assist in keeping the vessel's head to wind during the fire. Captain Castle's letter to the ship's brokers following the fire, perhaps understandably, makes no mention of difficulties with the crew.²⁸ Later, in 1898, he noted only three firemen as leaving without orders (these men being prosecuted on arrival at Mauritius receiving one month's imprisonment each), and put on record: 'the noble and self-sacrificing aid afforded me by my own officers and the large majority of my crew'.²⁹

Most of the ship's provisions had been destroyed by the fire. Lieutenant Schlotel recalled the surviving stocks as consisting of a cask of rum (which was dealt out sparingly), a quarter-cask of sherry, 'a barrel or two of salt beef, and one or two of flour'.³⁰ Additionally, Sergeant Murray noted that the water condensers: 'were so damaged as to be almost useless, and the water produced by them could not be considered wholesome'³¹ though it undoubtedly aided in sustaining life for the remainder of the voyage.

At daylight on 13 November the ship's boats that had been moored fore and aft were finally hoisted aboard, though several were severely damaged by this time, having been buffeted against the ship's hull during the preceding 24 hours.³² That afternoon, the depth of water in the after hold was considered sufficiently reduced to allow the *Sarah Sands* to get under way.³³ Captain Castle sought an interview with Lieutenant Colonel Moffat, who fully concurred with his opinion: 'that the only chance of safety was to put about and make for the Mauritius aided by a favourable trade wind'.³⁴ With the mizzenmast gone, and the mainmast so: 'burnt and damaged that it became necessary to lower the yards and main-topmast',³⁵ a foresail and foretopsail were set on the one sound mast,³⁶ and possibly a small jib-sail, for only the head of the small jigger mast had been carried away in the squall of 7 November.³⁷

The carpenter had made a stand for the compass abaft the mainmast, one of the ship's

quartermasters being stationed there, with another quartermaster posted at the stern, close to the rudder.³⁸ A jury-rigged steering system was improvised. This involved wooden platforms being constructed on the port and starboard sides of the stern, on which two teams of six men (relieved by watches) alternatively pulled and slackened ropes attached to the horizontal rudder bar, orders being passed via the quartermaster on duty at the stern.³⁹ Keeping a close watch on the steering operations, Captain Castle had a tent erected on sails spread over the gutted iron framework where the stern cabins had once been.⁴⁰ At 5pm on 13 November, with at least the foresail and foretopsail set, the *Sarah Sands* set out for Mauritius, which was some 800 miles distant.⁴¹ They were fortunate in having: 'a steady fair wind, which never changed for eight days, [as a result of which] the sails only required bracing up occasionally.'⁴² Castle had few surviving navigational aids available to face this voyage. When the fire had broken out two days previously, accounts suggest he had managed to stow either a chart and sextant (according to Brett and Hughes),⁴³ chart and compass (Schlotel),⁴⁴ or chart, compass and sextant (Murray).⁴⁵ Whether these survived the ordeal aboard the *Sarah Sands* is not noted, or perhaps known, only the compass being mentioned again. The *Records of the 54th* states: 'charts, compasses, chronometers, all were gone.'⁴⁶ Schlotel affirms that: 'the chronometers were destroyed' and 'nautical calculations were made by means of watches belonging to the officers.'⁴⁷ Castle himself only refers to navigational aids much later, in 1898, and then only with reference to the ship's approach to Mauritius: 'I had neither chart nor sailing directions for the island of Mauritius, all my books, etc, having been burned.'⁴⁸

For all those aboard: 'the monotony of the voyage ... was varied with suffering,' caused by the scarcity of food and the poor quality of the water, and through anxieties that some untoward event might occur, such as a squall, that might lead the severely damaged ship to founder.⁴⁹ In the event of such a circumstance all those on board the *Sarah Sands* would have stood little chance of survival, several of the ship's boats being damaged and no other ship that might assist them being seen until their arrival at Mauritius.⁵⁰ In seeking to address the possibility of the ship foundering and everyone – along with their story – being lost, several of those on board wrote accounts of the events, sealed them in bottles and cast them overboard in the hope that they might be found and others might thus know the story of the burning of the *Sarah Sands*. No message in a bottle relating to the *Sarah Sands* is known to have ever turned up.⁵¹

Moffat used some of the time aboard to begin his own writing, composing an official report on the fire and gather evidence to support his own position. Major Brett took the opportunity to be similarly engaged, writing his own version of the same events, nominally for Lieutenant Colonel Moffat's information, though a more senior audience was arguably intended. These reports, together with related testimonies and inquiries, will be discussed in the next chapter.

The island of Rodrigues was sighted on 19 November,⁵² and three days later, at about 4pm on 22 November, the peak of Peterbot on Mauritius. As Schlotel recalled, this caused: 'much excitement and delight after so long an imprisonment on board a wreck, and despairing of being fortunate enough to reach a haven.'⁵³ The engines were not worked before land was sighted. As the sea was calm, the captain: 'after consulting the engineer, resolved to try the effect of one revolution.' There was great anxiety as they watched the shaft make its first turn in the hollow after-skeleton of the ship. Although it shook the vessel considerably, Captain Castle decided that the engines might be worked

very slowly.⁵⁴

Arriving in darkness, and without a chart or sailing directions for Mauritius, Captain Castle thought that a light-house, erected since his last visit, now marked the entrance to Port Louis instead of the old Bell Buoy. However, on not finding the soundings that he expected, Castle: 'considered it more prudent to stand off the land and wait for daylight'.⁵⁵ On the morning of Monday 23 November the *Sarah Sands* entered the harbour of Port Louis and dropped anchor in the roads.

Around 10am that day Major General Henry William Breton (1799-1889), GOC at Mauritius, boarded the *Sarah Sands*, informed Lieutenant Colonel Moffat there was plenty of room in the barracks for the men of the 54th, and that they could land at 2pm.⁵⁶ 'The news of the dangers we had passed through', Lieutenant Schlötel recalled, 'spread like wildfire in the town, and the inhabitants prepared to give us an enthusiastic reception.'⁵⁷ Two tugs ferried the 54th to shore and they then marched to the barracks, played all the way by the band of the 4th 'Kings Own' Regiment, 'which delighted the good people of the Mauritius'.⁵⁸

Four days later, on 27 November, the regiment was paraded for inspection by the Major General, Breton addressing them and complimenting the officers and men of the 54th on their 'gallant conduct', referring to Major Brett's report and those mentioned within as having: 'particularly distinguished themselves.' The brigade-major read out the names of those thus mentioned and Breton stated that the substance of the report had been forwarded to the General Commanding-in-Chief at the Horse Guards.⁵⁹ Not hearing his name among those read out, Private James Piggie grumbled somewhat, though others were unsympathetic, blaming him for the severity of the explosion due to having dropped a powder barrel as he was overcome by smoke. Sergeant Murray self-righteously noted in a private notebook that 'every man on board [k]new he dropped it'.⁶⁰

The people of Mauritius, who were mainly French, gave the men of the 54th and the crew of the *Sarah Sands*: a 'perfect ovation' throughout their stay on the island, a period of some four weeks, the memories of which were: 'to many who were on board the *Sarah Sands*, the only enjoyable reflection connected' with the voyage.⁶¹ Not all of the 54th appreciated the island however, one of them – identified merely as 'G.G.' – writing to his parents in Trowbridge that: 'This island is a most awful dear place, nothing but natives hardly on it, who go through the streets nearly naked, and the sun is burning hot'.⁶²

On 3 December the pages of the local Port Louis newspaper, the *Commercial Gazette*, noted: 'that the Colony have determined to invite to a public banquet the soldiers and sailors who distinguished themselves during the fire on board the *Sarah Sands*'.⁶³ Though the Colony had already contributed to the Indian Relief Fund, the newspaper felt sure: 'that the heroic courage displayed ... will find a response in every breast and that this banquet will be liberally supported'.⁶⁴ Six days later, on 9 December, preparations for the banquet were well advanced and the same newspaper reported that the meal was: 'to be offered to about 100 of the officers and men of HM's 54th Regiment and to the officers and men of the ship *Sarah Sands* in testimony of their gallant conduct during the fire on board that vessel'.⁶⁵ By permission of the Mayor, the banquet was to take place in the Upper Bazaar on 12 December, the Colonial Secretary presiding, and tickets would be 10 dollars each (and one shilling at the door for those wishing to just see the Banquet).⁶⁶ The day before the banquet, the *Commercial Gazette* again drew the attention of the public to the occasion, drumming up support with the confident hope: 'that the number of subscribers will be

as large as this interesting Colonial demonstration entitles us to expect.⁶⁷ Additional inducements to attend included the provision of: 'a number of seats ... for those ladies who wish to see the entertainment', it being – apparently – the duty and privilege: 'of the Fair to do honor to the Brave', while the:

famous band of the 54th, one of the highest repute in the British Army, ... kindly promised for the occasion, ... will be well worth the attention of all who can appreciate harmony.⁶⁸

At the banquet, covers were laid for 220, although some 200 actually sat down for the meal; a suitable gallery was erected for the spectators, the Bazaar being decorated with flags and evergreens, with the rescued Colours of the Regiment suspended between the visitors' gallery and the head table. The Band of the 54th played: 'remarkably well a choice selection from the best operas.'⁶⁹ The attendance included the great and the good of Port Louis: the Colonial Secretary, Humphry Sandwith, various members of the Legislative Council, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and officers of the garrison. The *Sarah Sands* contingent was headed by Major Brett and Captain Castle. Notable by his absence was Lieutenant Colonel Moffat, who was 'unavoidably prevented from attending'. The different speeches all expressed: 'the same feeling of strong admiration for the guests', the eloquence of the Colonial Secretary, whose words were: 'greeted with loud hurrahs', was emulated by those who followed him, while the dinner: 'passed off very well, the soldiers and sailors in particular seeming delighted with the honor paid to them.'⁷⁰

A few of the sailors however had a somewhat different reception on the island. Several of the men of the 54th were critical of the sailors and saw their manning of the boats during the fire as desertion. It is unclear exactly how many sailors actually left in the boats without orders, though in 1898 Castle stated three firemen had done so and these were prosecuted and sentenced – as he then recalled – to one month's imprisonment in Mauritius.⁷¹

On 26 November the Governor, in Legislative Council, had appointed a Special Committee:

to draw up and present a suitable address to the commanding officer, officers and men of Her Majesty's 54th Regiment and to the captain, officers and crew of the transport steamer *Sarah Sands* expressing the Board's high admiration of their heroic and gallant conduct.⁷²

The proceedings of this committee, as reported in the *Commercial Gazette* of 18 December, after hearing two letters from Major General Breton of 24 and 27 November, and one from Captain Castle of 27 November, all relating to the circumstances of the fire aboard the *Sarah Sands*, unanimously approved the following address:

That His Excellency the Governor of Mauritius and the Legislative Council, in the name of the Colony at large, express their highest admiration of the devoted and heroic courage shown by the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of Her Majesty's 54th Reg[imen]t and by the captain, officers, and men of the ship *Sarah Sands*, during the fearful fire on board that vessel. Not less heroic than the noblest deeds of bravery displayed by the British army in the battlefield, are the undaunted courage and discipline which these brave men exhibited, when, in most perilous circumstances, they faced and overcame an enemy more terrible than mortal foe. And the Council considers this Colony as honored in having been the first to receive a band of heroes, who, under God's good providence, did, by conduct beyond all praise, deliver themselves and their fellow-passengers from an appalling death.⁷³

This address was amended on 29 December, at the request of the Colonial Secretary, to specifically mention Major Brett (as being: 'in temporary command on the occasion') and Captain Castle.⁷⁴ However, by this time, the men of the 54th had departed from Mauritius, having re-embarked for Calcutta nine days earlier, on 20 December.⁷⁵

Leaving Port Louis aboard their replacement ship, the *Clarendon*, they had passed the 7th Dragoons, whose vessel had put in for coal. While doing so, the Dragoons' band struck-up and their men gave the 54th three hearty cheers.⁷⁶ Captain Castle accompanied them for some five miles, when, after being chaired three times round the ship to the tune of 'See the conquering hero comes', he departed in a small boat to the strains of 'Auld lang syne', being cheered until he was out of sight.⁷⁷

The *Clarendon* was not quite a ship fit for heroes.⁷⁸ With evident feeling, Lieutenant Hughes noted that:

There were some very disagreeable wishes given vent to for the General at Mauritius... [who had said] he should be sure to get us a good ship and take care that we should be comfortable,

the *Clarendon* being procured out of at least 20 other vessels in harbour, the owners of which were: 'anxious for the contract at a little more money'.⁷⁹ Hughes went on to unflatteringly describe it as: 'a ship condemned at the Cape as not seaworthy, all her passengers leaving her there, again disallowed at Calcutta as unfit for carrying coolies'.⁸⁰ In comparison to the much complained about *Sarah Sands*, the *Clarendon* was both smaller and less comfortable,⁸¹ the men having to lie and take their meals on deck, each with but a single blanket, while the officers were: 'obliged to sleep on the saloon tables or chairs, or anything that: 'might afford the luxury of a night's quiet repose'.⁸²

Two days after sailing, the *Clarendon* encountered a hurricane,⁸³ the ship having to lay to for two days, despite the sea being kept down by the torrents of rain.⁸⁴ Though the ship behaved well, the memories of the hurricane were: 'not such that the witnesses of it would care to experience its repetition'.⁸⁵ 'Two more disagreeable nights I never spent', Hughes wrote home to his brother, 'everything was wet, the ship leaked so much into our cabins ... add to this intense heat and the foulest atmosphere you can imagine'.⁸⁶

During this period the captain of the *Clarendon*, John Thornhill, who had over 50 years experience at sea, 'was on the poop for 48 hours'.⁸⁷ The effects of this exposure, combined with dysentery, led to his death.⁸⁸ Near the end, 'conscious he could not survive much longer', Thornhill asked for Captain Gillum, whose: 'many excellent qualities' endeared him to all who knew him, 'to wish him a last farewell'.⁸⁹

Others suffered on board also. In another letter home to his mother, Hughes wrote: 'all of us were taken ill, two men died and I fear another will never get over it'.⁹⁰ While he does not identify these men, the regimental musters note that Private Bartholomew Canavan, one of those mentioned in Major Brett's report for distinguished conduct, died at sea on 19 January 1858. The death toll during their time ahead in India would be considerably higher.

Reaching the Sand Heads, at the mouth of the River Hooghly, the engine cylinder cover was blown off, but a temporary repair enabled the ship to continue upriver towards Calcutta.⁹¹ A shortage of tobacco resulted in some of the men now smoking rope yarn,⁹² before an American ship, the *Hamlet*, was approached in the Hooghly and resupplied them. The captain of that ship, Commander Lecran, gave the men 400 pounds of tobacco (each man receiving two sticks weighing a pound) and 1,000 Manillas for the officers,

refusing payment for them on two occasions.⁹³ ‘Our band played “Yankee Doodle”, blue lights were burnt, rockets sent up, the signal-gun fired ... to convey ... our appreciation of their kindness’ wrote Lieutenant Schlotel in his account, to which the American sailors responded ‘by sending up rockets, and climbing the rigging and giving three cheers for old England.’⁹⁴

The Headquarters of the 54th reached Calcutta, at long last, on 27 January 1858,⁹⁵ the last element of the regiment to reach India, the *Lady Jocelyn* having arrived on 4 November and the *City of Manchester* on 10 November.⁹⁶

1 Diggins account in Wood, 1974, *op cit*, p 100.

2 *Commercial Gazette*, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*; Appleyard estimated the hole in the ship’s side was 11 feet in length, see *Carlisle Journal*, 26 February 1858, p 9.

3 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 69.

4 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 17.

5 Private William Appleyard, *Carlisle Journal*, 26 February 1858, p 9.

6 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 70.

7 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat’s ‘official’ report, *op cit*.

8 *Commercial Gazette*, 25 November 1857; *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 70.

9 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 70; *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.

10 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.

11 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 68.

12 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 16, who incorrectly notes his first name as ‘Thomas’.

13 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.

14 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 70.

15 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 20.

16 *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, Thursday 18 February 1858, p 3; *York Herald*, 20 February 1858, p 5.

17 Sergeant William Murray’s unpublished notebook, The Keep Military Museum archives, Dorchester. Murray suggests Doyle was mentioned in the subsequent General Order for this action rather than any action during the fire itself.

18 *Commercial Gazette*, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*.

19 *Ibid*

20 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 20.

21 *Ibid*, p.19.

22 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 10.

23 *Ibid*

24 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op cit*.

25 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 69

26 Diggins account in Wood, 1974, *op cit*, p 99.

27 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p.17; Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 17.

28 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, letter from Commander J.S. Castle, printed in *The Globe*, 30 December 1857.

29 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.

30 *Ibid*, p 18.

31 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 18.

32 *Commercial Gazette*, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*.

33 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat’s ‘official’ report, *op cit*.

34 *Ibid*

35 *Ibid*

36 *Ibid*; *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.

- 37 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.
- 38 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p. 17.
- 39 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 18; Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 18.
- 40 *Ibid*
- 41 *Commercial Gazette*, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 42 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 18.
- 43 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Brett, 20 November 1857, *op.cit*; Ms letter, Hughes, 23 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 44 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 10.
- 45 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 10.
- 46 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 70.
- 47 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 17.
- 48 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.
- 49 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 20.
- 50 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 19.
- 51 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 19.
- 52 *Commercial Gazette*, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 53 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 20.
- 54 *Ibid*, p 19.
- 55 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.
- 56 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 20.
- 57 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 21.
- 58 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 20.
- 59 *Ibid*, pp 20-1.
- 60 Sergeant William Murray's unpublished notebook, The Keep Military Museum archives, Dorchester.
- 61 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 21.
- 62 *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, 18 February 1858, p 3.
- 63 *Commercial Gazette*, 3 December 1857.
- 64 *Ibid*
- 65 *Commercial Gazette*, 9 December 1857.
- 66 *Ibid*
- 67 *Commercial Gazette*, 11 December 1857.
- 68 *Ibid*
- 69 *Commercial Gazette*, 16 December 1857.
- 70 *Ibid*; accounts of the banquet were also reproduced in the British press, see for example the *Belfast News-Letter*, 13 February 1858, p 4.
- 71 Castle, *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898; Glanville J. Davies 'The Wreck of the SS *Sarah Sands*: the Victoria Cross Warrant of 1858', *Mariner's Mirror*, February 1975, Vol 61, p 68.
- 72 *Commercial Gazette*, 18 December 1857.
- 73 *Ibid*
- 74 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Proceedings of Council of Government, 29 December 1857.
- 75 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 24.
- 76 *Ibid*
- 77 *Ibid*
- 78 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 74.
- 79 Ms letter, Lieutenant J.W. Hughes to his brother, 4 February 1858.
- 80 *Ibid*
- 81 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 25.
- 82 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 24.

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- 83 Ms letter, Lieutenant J.W. Hughes to his mother, 3 February 1858.
- 84 Ms letter, Hughes, 4 February 1858, *op cit*.
- 85 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 25.
- 86 Ms letter, Hughes, 4 February 1858, *op cit*.
- 87 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 24; Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 25.
- 88 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 25; Hughes, 3 February 1858, *op cit*.
- 89 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 25.
- 90 Ms letter, Hughes, 3 February 1858, *op cit*.
- 91 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 25.
- 92 *Ibid*, p 26.
- 93 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 26; Murray, 1906, *op cit*, pp 25-6.
- 94 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*, p 27.
- 95 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 75.
- 96 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 26.

CHAPTER 7

Moffat's Defence

Lieutenant Colonel Moffat was well aware that the events aboard the *Sarah Sands*, including his own conduct, would be subject to official scrutiny. Prior to their arrival at Mauritius, Brett had penned his own account of the events aboard the ship, which he dated 20 November 1857. At the same time Moffat was composing his own reports. To supplement these he began taking statements from eight witnesses, who had been either on the ship or in the port lifeboat, gathering evidence to show that his presence in the lifeboat was unintentional, and that his requests to be returned to the ship were beyond his authority to enforce. These witnesses were:

1. Third Officer J.G. Verey (in charge of the lifeboat).
2. Private E. Plummer, 54th Regiment (aboard the lifeboat).
3. Private T. Cranham, 54th Regiment (aboard the lifeboat).
4. Mary Barwick (aboard the lifeboat).
5. Seaman G.H. Lewis (aboard the lifeboat).
6. Midshipman F. McLoeg (standing by the lifeboat).
7. Steward William Henry Hill (standing by the lifeboat).
8. QMS R. Barwick, 54th Regiment (standing by the lifeboat).

As additional support, Moffat could point to the statement made by Captain Castle on 25 November 1857, plus, to a lesser extent, a certificate by the Captain dated 1 December 1857.¹

The testimony contained within these statements, clarified in certain instances by later evidence, is summarised below, with apologies for some unavoidable repetition from earlier material that dealt with the story of the fire.

After leaving Lieutenant Colonel Moffat to oversee the clearance of the magazines, Captain Castle had: 'thought it high time I placed the ladies and children in the boats as a precautionary measure,' a task complicated as: 'Mrs Moffat refused to leave the ship unless accompanied by her husband.'² Mary Barwick confirmed how: 'Mrs Moffat before going into the boat entreated of the Captain to send her husband that she might take leave of him which she did on the quarterdeck.'³ On being called to another part of the ship, Castle then left the boat in charge of Third Officer Verey, who stated that: 'Colonel Moffat's family was ... in a very distracted state,' and that he had assisted him in forcing his eldest daughter into the boat.⁴ This use of force by Moffat is mentioned by several witnesses, including Quartermaster Sergeant Barwick, who emphasised that the Lieutenant Colonel had ordered his daughter: 'to be put into the boat, which was not done till he repeated the order ... when she was put in by force.'⁵ Both Private Plummer and Seaman Lewis stressed that Moffat's family were in such consternation, crying and screaming after him, that: 'he stept [sic] into the boat' to pacify them,⁶ while in QMS Barwick's opinion: 'it was to see his daughter seated,' for she was still clinging to the bulwark.⁷

At this juncture, according to all the witnesses aboard the lifeboat, the boat was quickly lowered, without the least warning, whereas those witnesses standing by on the deck testified that orders were given for the boat to be lowered, which were instantly acted upon.

Moffat himself confirmed these views in a statement he took and submitted to the Adjutant General on 8 November 1858, in which First Officer Welch stated:

I had charge of the lowering of the port patent life boat ... I was not aware that Colonel Moffat was in the boat when I gave directions for the boat to be lowered, but the boat was very full and I observed one of the davits (iron suspenders) bend with the weight and I feared it would break which would have been most dangerous and probably have caused much loss of life. Observing the davits bend I at once ordered my men to lower the boat immediately without giving notice to those in the boat.⁸

Midshipman McLoeg noted that: 'I am sure there was no time for the Colonel to get back to the ship',⁹ while the steward, William Hill, stated: 'I am of opinion that Col Moffat had not an opportunity of getting out of the boat from the time the order was given',¹⁰ clearly corroborating the speed with which the order to lower the boat was carried out.

On reaching the water, QMS Barwick noted that the lifeboat: 'was immediately pulled from the ship',¹¹ Verey shoving off to a sufficient distance, whilst Moffat attempted to calm his family. Discovering the plug had worked itself out kept them busy bailing for a time, after which, as those in the boat all observed, the Lieutenant Colonel desired to be returned to the ship, saying: 'his duty was on board with his men'.¹² The Captain had given his Third Officer: 'positive instructions to keep away from the vessel until recalled',¹³ and Verey, in refusing Moffat's request, reiterated to him that his orders were: 'to keep the boat clear of the burning ship',¹⁴ and, as several witnesses stressed, Verey made it clear that: 'he was in command of the boat'.¹⁵ Moffat repeated his request to close with the ship several times, especially after the explosion and again at daylight, but Verey refused on each occasion.¹⁶ It was evident, as Verey emphasised, that: 'Colonel Moffat had no means of getting on board, as the other boats would not go alongside'.¹⁷ Captain Castle had mentioned that: 'there was a heavy cross sea running, which rendered it both a difficult and dangerous service' to launch the boats.¹⁸ Throughout the night the heavy seas continued, swamping the gig, which was under command of Fourth Officer Wood, this having to be abandoned. During this time, in the port lifeboat, Mary Barwick was under the impression that Third Officer Verey 'went to sleep several times', despite the waves constantly 'washing over us' and on one occasion 'nearly swamping the boat', the occupants repeatedly calling 'to Mr Verey to attend to the helm'.¹⁹

A later statement by Captain Castle, dated 6 November 1858, forwarded by Lieutenant Colonel Moffat to the Adjutant General, along with that of First Officer Welch, reports that, despite the stormy conditions, Moffat returned to the ship alone sometime after daylight, he: 'having got the boat alongside the ship contrary to my orders and I had the boat ordered off again with the ladies, the ship being in danger of foundering at the time'.²⁰ Castle had stated on 1 December 1857 that: 'no person that was lowered in the port life boat rejoined the ship *Sarah Sands* until the following morning about 10 o'clock',²¹ though whether this timing related to Moffat's lone return to the ship is unclear. The general recall of the boats only occurred once the ruptured stern was reasonably secure, with that containing the women and children being among the last to return about noon.

Having gathered such evidence on the journey to and while in Mauritius, Moffat reported to Major General Breton, the GOC on the island. With assurances from Moffat, Castle and others, Breton's initial opinion was that: 'the utmost with which he could be charged was a want of presence of mind under singularly peculiar and most distressing circumstances'.²² In reporting this to the Adjutant General at Horse Guards, Breton went

on to note that not long afterwards, however: 'reports...having accidentally reached my ears, showing that a bad impression prevailed in his corps, I recommended him to apply for a Court of Inquiry'.²³

Breton went on to suggest that the 'bad impression' that existed against Moffat originated among a group of the officers and had been: 'formed I very much suspect upon a difference ... prior to arriving at the Cape' [the 'cabins incident' and the consequent reprimand in Regimental Orders of 1 October 1857].²⁴ Major Brett was at the centre of this chatter and he took matters further when he began to gather written evidence from one of the sergeants in his own room.²⁵ Breton challenged him, documenting in his report to the Adjutant General how:

I gave the Major clearly to understand it was his duty to let his commanding officer know what was passing. He did so in so far as the men were concerned, detailing remarks they had been heard to make, but not one of which had been noticed at the time; and it might have been expected in his desire to uphold the authority of the commanding officer, a point upon which he strongly expresses himself, he would equally have brought forward the opinions so publicly expressed by the officers upon which however he is altogether silent.²⁶

It was evident to Breton that:

... a party had been formed against the Lt Colonel, and through the worst of motives ... confirmed by the conduct of the Adjutant, Lieutenant Houston, who, when called upon for proof in support of an assertion made in my presence, and that of the officers of the corps and which, if true, would most seriously have damaged Lt Col Moffat's case, curtly writes ... he must have been misinformed, the real fact being opposed to what he had believed. For so gross an outrage he offers not one word of apology or regret.²⁷

Compounding his verbal claims, Houston had written to Lieutenant Colonel John Norman (c.1786-1872) lauding Brett's courage and misleadingly suggesting he had been in command throughout the whole time the fire raged; publication of his letter in the press concretised these views further.²⁸

In the event, the Court of Inquiry at Mauritius exonerated the Lieutenant Colonel, or at least that is what Moffat initially claimed. In his 'personal' report, Moffat described Breton as: 'publishing a Garrison Order [which was read out to the men on parade] ... to the effect that my absence from the ship was unintentional' and that it was 'out of my power to return'. Moffat further added that the most prominent officers in the gossip and cabal against him (Major Brett, Captain Thomson and Lieutenant Houston) 'were reprimanded by the Major General in presence of all the officers for their improper conduct'.²⁹

This version of the proceedings was a rather selective account of the views expressed. Though Major General Breton evidently supported Moffat with regard to the questionable conduct of some of his subordinate officers, Breton found him obviously wanting as a commanding officer. Thus, after 'careful consideration of the evidence', Breton declared that he saw:

... no real necessity for Lieut Colonel Moffat's entering the boat – that his presence may have been necessary for the moment at the side of his distracted family, I can quite understand; but then ... the feelings of a husband and parent should have been put aside for the stern duty of a soldier. The boat appears to have been upon the davits, and therefore much upon a level with the bulwark ... cannot have been difficult to reach the persons placed in it; whereas the Lieut Colonel not only got in but sat down among his family; an act calculated to create alarm and confusion among the men; who must

naturally have concluded he intended to desert them; and consequently that he looked upon their case as hopeless.

Breton did however add that once Moffat was separated from the ship, he 'became powerless in any attempt to return', however much he 'desired to do so'.³⁰

While Moffat's actions could have been anticipated to 'create alarm and confusion among the men', as Breton suggested, it is unlikely such interpretations (or misinterpretations) were restricted to the non-commissioned ranks. Of course, the pre-existing antipathy towards Moffat among a number of the other officers would only make jumping to assumptions so much easier. Lieutenant Hughes, for instance, in writing to his brother from Mauritius on 23 November, the day the Regiment disembarked, expressed sentiments that others may have felt:

I am ashamed to say that the Colonel's private feelings prevailed over his duty and he left the ship the first man with his wife and daughters, a step he bitterly repents. Our Surgeon too followed his example and few but very few of the men.³¹

If there had been a possibility of Moffat regaining the allegiance and confidence of Hughes and his other regimental officers before the fire, the lifeboat incident rather cemented their negative views of him.

The regiment was going to need reform if it was to function more efficiently and one shortcut to this might be a change of leadership. Moffat had already been privately convicted as wanting by a cohort of his key subordinates and now as he faced Breton's Inquiry, this finding was to be repeated, though this time in a way that would carry more immediate consequences. Breton in his remarks on the Inquiry continued thus:

It is unquestionable that upon occasions of danger, presence of mind is everything; it is a quality indispensable in a Commanding Officer; for without it the safety of his men may be often jeopardized. That the Lieut Colonel was wanting in this essential is certain.³²

Sorely tried by his family's distress, Breton contended that Moffat had:

... lost sight of all else until too late ... [and was] taken altogether by surprise; but this can hardly be admitted in excuse; it being one of the first duties of a Commanding Officer on board of ship to arrange in his mind all he should do in the event of shipwreck, fire, or other accident. All under him ... suppose him prepared for any such contingency ... they have only to await his orders.³³

However, the GOC Mauritius did not feel himself 'called upon to take any further steps in the matter beyond forwarding the Proceedings' of the Court of Inquiry to the Commander-in-Chief in India.³⁴ Breton enclosed a copy of his 'Remarks' of 2 December along with his letter of 15 December to the Adjutant General, the combined statements being 'for the information of His Royal Highness [the General Commanding in Chief] pending a full report' from the Commander-in-Chief, India.³⁵

In due course, Lieutenant Colonel Moffat was requested by the Horse Guards, in a letter dated 9 February 1858, to furnish a report on the conduct of the officers and men aboard the *Sarah Sands*, the request 'conveying an expression of surprise from the General Commanding in Chief that no account had yet reached him'.³⁶ Moffat responded from Allahabad, where the Headquarters of the 54th was stationed, with two reports, both dated 4 April 1858, addressed to the Military Secretary at Horse Guards.

In the first 'official' report, the Lieutenant Colonel stated that a description had been forwarded 'immediately on my arrival in Calcutta', though the names of the officers and

men 'who particularly distinguished themselves ... were, by desire of the Major General Commanding, given in at Mauritius for transmission to the Horse Guards together with a full report from him'. The Lieutenant Colonel could not provide a copy of his report as 'my papers and memorandums are with my baggage in Calcutta ... left behind when my regiment proceeded up country'. He then delivered a detailed four page report, summarising the events surrounding the fire, and mentioning by name Major Brett, Captain Gillum, Adjutant Houston, Lieutenant Hughes, Pay-Master Daniel and Quartermaster Hipkin, plus 35 other ranks (including 13 from Brett's report) for their conduct in the magazines and bunkers, and Private Wiles for saving the Colours. Of the ship's complement, after correctly naming the Captain, the First and Second Officers, the Chief Engineer and ship's Quartermaster Richmond, Moffat then misnames the ship's Carpenter as well as the Second, Third and Fourth Engineers, also listing an Able Seaman Thompson. Regarding the boats, he briefly states: 'The ladies were put into the port life boat and the whole were lowered without any accident or confusion', without mentioning the presence of himself, or that of Surgeon Grant, in the boats.³⁷

Lieutenant Colonel Moffat then took it upon himself to enclose a second 'personal' report: 'a statement of my own case showing the unfortunate and most painful position in which I was placed through an accident over which I had no control'.³⁸ In essence, this followed the lines of the various testimonies that Moffat had taken at Mauritius, and presumably these statements were forwarded to the Horse Guards along with his reports.

The Captain's decision to lower the boats, provision and man them 'produced some little excitement', and Moffat told the men around him 'that there was no cause for apprehension such measures being only the usual precautions adopted'. Castle, having decided to place the women and children in the port lifeboat, had been requested by Moffat to ensure his family were safely aboard it. In attempting to do this, Castle went back to Moffat 'bringing my wife to see me ere she left ... [and] I endeavoured to calm her fears'. When his daughter then refused to leave the ship, and finding 'that all my remonstrances failed, I was compelled to put her into the boat by force and whilst I was placing her on a seat, the lashings were suddenly cut without any warning', the boat dropping into the sea and pulling to windward while the ship drifted to leeward.³⁹

The plug working out and filling the boat half full of water created great consternation; when replaced and the water partly bailed out, Moffat stated that he had 'ordered the officer in charge to put me on board immediately which he positively refused to do ... [claiming] he had orders not to approach the ship and that he would not do so under any circumstances'. The other seamen in the boat similarly declared they would not approach the ship. The Lieutenant Colonel repeated his request several times throughout the night, saying his 'duty was to be on board with my men', but they refused to listen.⁴⁰

In the morning 'a very heavy sea struck the boat, filling and nearly swamping it which induced the officer in charge to put about, run down and take shelter under the lee of the ship when the boat was warned not to come alongside by orders from the commander'. Moffat 'hailed some of my own men and ordered them to lower the ladder ... which was immediately done, and the officer in charge then steered alongside', enabling him to board the ship. Years later, Corporal Shierson recalled some wag on board joking with Moffat that 'He would have to ask Jimmy Ducks if he could come on board'.⁴¹ The Captain 'stated that the ladies must be kept off as there was considerable danger of the ship foundering' and they were not brought aboard until about noon, 'with much difficulty owing to the heavy

sea running⁴²

As mentioned earlier, Moffat now referred to having laid the matter before Major General Breton, who – he suggested – was satisfied that his absence from the ship was accidental and unintentional. In a possible attempt to bolster this claim Moffat further noted that with regard to the ‘movement’ among certain officers against him, the Court of Inquiry vindicated his position. In closing his report, the Commanding Officer of the 54th stated:

I am aware that in the performance of a public duty nothing should have drawn me even for a moment from my post but I trust that I stand exonerated from neglect of duty and that the peculiar circumstances of the case may be taken into consideration. I beg to state that I have suffered the deepest pain and mortification in having lost the opportunity (though unintentionally) in sharing the exertions and dangers of the men under my command on the trying occasion of the fire on board the *Sarah Sands*.⁴³

Events though were to overtake Moffat, for the Commander-in-Chief in India, General Sir Colin Campbell, guided by the evidence of the Court of Inquiry and by the candid opinion of Major General Breton, had come to the conclusion ‘that it will be quite impossible for Lt Colonel Moffat to retain the command of Her Majesty’s 54th Regiment in future either with advantage to the State or honour or credit to himself’.⁴⁴ Accordingly, the unfortunate Lieutenant Colonel found himself relieved of his command, returning to England in June 1858, whereupon he set about contesting the decision.

In response, the Adjutant General, Sir George Wetherall, quoting Campbell in a letter of 19 October 1858, was to uphold that judgement, and though he noted Moffat’s protests against the decision (the Commander-in-Chief, India, ‘having made no enquiry and because some of the officers having caballed against him during the voyage’), they failed to influence the outcome. Wetherall disregarded the ‘so called cabal’, as it ‘in no respect invalidates the fact that he did, in a moment of danger, desert his post, urged to do so by the distracted state of his family’. The Adjutant General closed with the telling comment: ‘The motive may excuse the man, but not the soldier’.⁴⁵

Lieutenant Colonel Moffat, in a letter dated 8 November 1858, made a final attempt to regain his command, and thereby restore his honour, enclosing the later statements of Captain Castle and ex-First Officer Welch, ‘with a renewal of my protest against being deprived of my command’, plus an epitome of the further evidence that he could offer.⁴⁶ Nothing came of this – surprisingly, Moffat did not request a court martial in order to clear his name – and, in December 1858, he was placed on half-pay.

1 TNA ref: WO 1/1138.

2 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Statement of Commander J.S. Castle, dated 25 November 1857.

3 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Statement of Mary Barwick, dated 12 December 1857.

4 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Statement of Third Officer J.G. Verey, dated 21 November 1857.

5 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Statement of QMS R. Barwick, 54th Regiment, undated.

6 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Statements of Private E. Plummer, 54th Regiment, dated 24 November 1857, and Seaman G.H. Lewis, dated 12 December 1857.

7 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, QMS Barwick, *op cit*.

8 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Statement of First Officer S.R. Welch, undated.

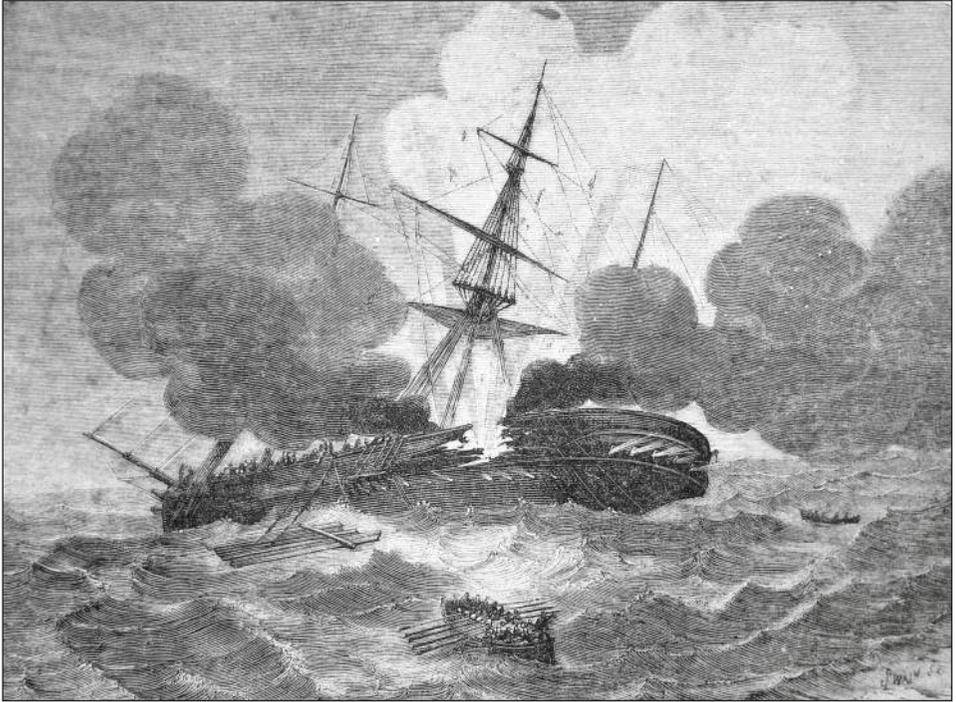
9 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Statement of Midshipman F. McLoeg, 17 December 1857.

10 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Statement of Steward William Henry Hill, dated 17 December 1857.

11 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, QMS Barwick, *op cit*.

- 12 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Lewis/Plummer and others, *op cit*.
- 13 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 14 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Verey, *op cit*.
- 15 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Lewis/Plummer/Cranham, *op cit*.
- 16 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Verey and others, *op cit*.
- 17 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Verey, *op cit*.
- 18 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Castle, 25 November 1857, *op cit*.
- 19 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Mary Barwick, *op cit*.
- 20 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Statement of Commander J.S. Castle, 6 November 1858.
- 21 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Castle, 1 December 1857, *op cit*.
- 22 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Letter from Major General H.W. Breton, GOC Mauritius, to Adjutant General, Horse Guards, 15 December 1857.
- 23 *Ibid*
- 24 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Breton, 15 December 1857, *op cit*.
- 25 *Ibid*
- 26 *Ibid*
- 27 *Ibid*
- 28 *York Herald*, 20 February 1858, p 5.
- 29 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat's 'personal' report, *op cit*.
- 30 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Report from Major General H.W. Breton, GOC Mauritius, 2 December 1857.
- 31 Ms letter from Lieutenant J.W. Hughes, 23 November 1857.
- 32 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Breton, 2 December 1857, *op cit*.
- 33 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Breton, 2 December 1857, *op cit*.
- 34 *Ibid*
- 35 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Breton, 15 December 1857, *op cit*.
- 36 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Lieutenant Colonel B. Moffat's 'official' report to Military Secretary, Horse Guards, 4 April 1858.
- 37 *Ibid*
- 38 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat's 'personal' report, *op cit*.
- 39 *Ibid*
- 40 *Ibid*
- 41 Sergeant John Shierson, unpublished letter, c.1905, The Keep Military Museum archives, Dorchester. Jimmy Ducks was apparently a slang term onboard for the cook.
- 42 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat's 'personal' report, *op cit*.
- 43 *Ibid*
- 44 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Report of G.A. Wetherall, Adjutant General, Horse Guards, 19 October 1858.
- 45 *Ibid*
- 46 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Letter from Lieutenant Colonel B. Moffat to Adjutant General, Horse Guards, 8 November 1858.

The Burning of the Sarah Sands



The Sarah Sands just after the explosion (*London Journal*, 1857)

CHAPTER 8

Mentions and Promotions

Major General Breton's report to the General Commanding in Chief, was subsequently made the basis for a General Order, issued by the Horse Guards on 27 February 1858, and ordered to be read at the head of every regiment in the British Army.¹ This read as follows:

GENERAL Order No. 700

His Royal Highness the General Commanding in Chief has great gratification in making known to the Army, the substance of a report received from Major General Breton, commanding the troops at Mauritius, recording the remarkable gallantry and resolution displayed by the officers and soldiers of the 54th Regiment, on board the ship *Sarah Sands* on 11 November 1857, under circumstances of a most trying nature, namely, when that vessel took fire at sea, having at the time a large quantity of ammunition on board.

It is under such emergency that presence of mind, high courage, and coolness – qualities which are the attributes of British soldiers – are conspicuous, and are rendered particularly so, when attended by the maintenance of that discipline which was evidently observed on the occasion.

Major General Breton states in his report, that the first consideration acted upon was to throw the powder overboard, a most hazardous and dangerous duty, which was effected (with the exception of a very trifling portion of it) by volunteers, at the risk of their being suffocated by the smoke below.

The boats were got ready – the women and children placed in them – and the greatest degree of emulation evinced by the officers and men in the performance of all that could be required of them.

For the lengthened period of sixteen or eighteen hours the ship was in extreme peril, until the fire was subdued, and the hold cleared of water, which was thrown in for the purpose of extinguishing it, or which had rushed in through the opening in the stern, caused by the explosion of the last of the powder.

The following non-commissioned officers and privates are specially named by Major Brett (upon whom the command devolved) as having particularly distinguished themselves on the occasion.²

Sergeant	Henry Robinson
Sergeant	Thomas Page
Sergeant	James Doyle
Sergeant	James Houston (Instructor of Musketry)
Lance Corporal	John Westby
Lance Corporal	John Stevenson [Stephenson]
Lance Corporal	John M'Cullum [McCullum]
Private	William Warren [Warner]
Private	John Doyle
Private	James Hopkins
Private	James Fitzpatrick

Private George Dodd
Private James Gallagher
Private William Wiles
Private Andrew Walsh
Private Thomas Holland
Private Francis Glenny
Private George Lamb
Private James Carmichael
Private Phillip Folland
Private James Buckingham
Private Robert Denton
Private Bartholomew Canavan
Private Michael Byrnes [Byrne]
Private Stewart Hall

The Colours of the Regiment appear to have been saved by Private William Wiles, 54th Regiment, and Richard Richmond, one of the Quartermasters of the ship, at the hazard of their lives.

Major Brett exerted himself to the utmost, and is entitled to high praise for his conduct throughout. He reports of the officers generally, that their conduct was admirable, and gives great credit to Captain Gillum, Lieutenant and Adjutant Houston, and Lieutenant Hughes.

By extraordinary exertions the ship was saved from destruction, and enabled to reach Port Louis.

His Royal Highness is pleased to observe, that the behaviour of the 54th Regiment during the course of this distressing occurrence was most praiseworthy, and, by its result, must render manifest to all the advantages of subordination and strict obedience to orders under the most alarming and dangerous circumstances in which soldiers can be placed.

By Order of His Royal Highness
The General Commanding in Chief,
G.A. WETHERALL,
Adjutant General.³

Sergeant William Murray, in his own account of the events, states his company were dissatisfied with his omission from those named by Major Brett, but that upon this being brought to the Major's notice, the latter regretted the omission and sent in a special report commending Murray, thus:

Number 2200 Sergeant William Murray, of the Grenadier Company 54th Regiment, volunteered at the height of the fire to go down to the main deck where the fire was raging, close to the iron bulkhead, to prevent the coals from taking fire. He superintended the men that came down from time to time to throw water on the fire, and he cut away the deck over the bunkers close to the iron bulkhead to enable the water to reach the coal. He remained below all that terrible night. The ignition of the coal must have cut off the last hope of saving the ship.⁴

However, Murray was not listed in published General Order No. 700, and no source prior to his own account of 1906 makes mention of him being added to Brett's list.

Those officers mentioned in the General Order, had rewards conferred on them in the form of promotions, in one instance nearly 10 years after the event. Major Brett and

Captain Gillum were promoted Brevet Lieutenant Colonel and Brevet Major respectively, both back-dated to 11 November 1857.⁵ Lieutenant and Adjutant Houston was promoted to Captain in the 2/4th Foot from 30 March 1858,⁶ and Lieutenant Hughes, who purchased his Captaincy on 19 December 1862, was promoted Brevet Major from 20 April 1867, a belated reward for his gallantry aboard the *Sarah Sands*.⁷

Lieutenant Colonel Moffat, in his 'official' report of 4 April 1858, also enclosed his own nominal list of those officers and men whose conduct he had personally observed, or who had been brought to his notice, 'which I beg most strongly to recommend to the favourable consideration of His Royal Highness'.⁸ That list could not be located and, consequently, those officers and men detailed below have been extracted from the body of Moffat's report. Corrections are again noted in square brackets, while those whose names also appear in General Order No. 700 are here marked with an asterisk:

- Major W.F. Brett*
- '...for maintaining perfect discipline on board as well as for his calmness and courage on this trying occasion.'
- Captain P.W. Gillum*, Lieutenant and Adjutant T.B. Houston*, and Lieutenant J.W. Hughes* '...were most conspicuous for their gallant behaviour throughout that night.'
- Pay-Master S. Daniel and Quartermaster T. Hipkin '...who by their noble example inspired the men with confidence and energy.'

Quartermaster Sergeant Richard Barwick

- '...who showed a noble example of courage and determination to the men under his directions, he remained to superintend the clearing of the magazines when it was surrounded and was close to it when the explosion took place.'
- Colour Sergeant William Crompton
- Colour Sergeant Mathias Brevett [Brevitt]
- Pay-Master Sergeant James McEttie [McEttie]
- Corporal John Cox
- Private William Warren [Warner]*
- Private Francis Glenning [Glenny]*
- Private James Piggie
- Private Francis Todd
- Private John Scofel
- Private Alfred or Charles Ray [two on Roll]
- Private Charles Ostler
- Private James Buckingham
- Private James Rafferty
- Private James Gallagher
- Private George Dodd*
- Private Edward Slavin
- Private Ezekiel Steppings [Stebbing]
- Private Gilbert or John Stenson [two on Roll]
- Private Michael Byrnes [Byrne]*
- Private Michael Loonan
- Private John Wirtley [Westby]*

Private John Stevenson [Stephenson]*

‘...were in the magazine surrounded by flames and smoke, their daring acts are beyond all praise and to their noble and persevering exertions may be attributed the saving of the ship’.

- Sergeant Major Lewis Purnell
 - Sergeant William Murray
 - Sergeant Walter Searle [Searles]
 - Sergeant Henry Robinson*
 - Sergeant James Doyle*
 - Sergeant James Houston*
 - Private John Mohan
 - Private William Newport
 - Private Robert Rose
 - Private Henry Bentley
 - Private John McCullum*

‘...behaved in a most admirable manner and were also employed to work in coal bunkers until brought out in a helpless condition and the services rendered by them were the means of the keeping the coals from catching fire’.

- Private William Wilde [Wiles]* who accompanied Ship’s Quartermaster Richmond into the blazing saloon ...and gallantly saved one of the Colours’.

In addition to these men that were listed in Moffat’s report, Sergeant Major Purnell was promoted to Ensign, on 21 September 1860, but had to decline the commission due to his hearing suffering partial damage with the explosion of the magazine aboard the *Sarah Sands*.⁹ As an alternative, he was granted the Meritorious Service Medal with an annuity of £20 (submission of 6 November 1860) a:

... reward for Meritorious Service, more particularly in Canada during the years 1851-1852-1853 and 1854, and at the wreck of the *Sarah Sands* on passage to India in November 1857.¹⁰

At this juncture, the *Records of the 54th* note Orderly Room Clerk William Echlin Turnley being commissioned Quartermaster, on 16 January 1863,¹¹ as though in reward for distinguished service aboard the *Sarah Sands*. Turnley, however, is not mentioned in either Brett’s or Moffat’s reports, but the date of his commission coincides with the promotion of Quartermaster Thomas Hipkin to Honorary Captain.¹² Possibly whoever compiled the regimental records saw a correlation between Purnell having to decline a commission and Turnley being promoted to Quartermaster, without making due allowance for Hipkin’s concurrent promotion.

What of the men and women not mentioned or otherwise recognised in these General Orders and by other means? Highlighting certain men when almost all behaved bravely was regarded as invidious by some. Sergeant Murray was highly critical of his own initial omission from the General Order and of at least one other man’s inclusion. James Piggie complained as well. Perhaps the most reflective comments on this topic came from John Shierson, who was a Corporal at the time of the fire. Writing about the events many years later, Shierson noted that:

My name, I regret to say was not mentioned amongst those who distinguished themselves for I think that every man who remained on board during the fire did display

equal gallantry, but those officers, Major Brett, Captain Gillum, Lieutenants Huston and Hughes perhaps displayed their gallantry in such a way as to make it more observable.¹³

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- 1 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 72.
 - 2 This list is re-arranged in respect of the three Lance Corporals, who were all shown as Privates in Brett's report, otherwise the order is as per Brett, with corrections in square brackets.
 - 3 TNA ref: WO 123/142; see also *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, pp 72-4; the order was widely printed or otherwise summarised in contemporary newspapers, see for example the *Morning Post*, 11 March 1858, p 4.
 - 4 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, pp 21-2.
 - 5 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 74 and Atkinson, 1947, *op cit*, p 191.
 - 6 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 74 and Atkinson, 1947, *op cit*, p 192.
 - 7 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 74 and Atkinson, 1947, *op cit*, p 193.
 - 8 TNA ref: WO 1/1138, Moffat's 'official' report, *op cit*.
 - 9 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 74.
 - 10 P.E. Abbott and .M.A. Tamplin (1981), *British Gallantry Awards*, London: Nimrod Dix, p 63; *The Preston Lad*, January 1901, p 7.
 - 11 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 74 and Atkinson, 1947, *op cit*, p 195.
 - 12 See Appendix E.



Royal Humane Society Medal (obverse and reverse) to Lieutenant Colonel B. Moffat

CHAPTER 9

Life Saving Awards

Amongst the various societies, associations and funds that rewarded individuals involved in acts of gallantry whilst saving or attempting to save life, at least three such institutions – the Royal Humane Society, the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners Royal Benevolent Society, and the Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society – considered the case of the *Sarah Sands*, which resulted in two of them making awards. In addition there was one (non-societal) public presentation to Captain Castle and a controversial non-award by the Board of Trade.

The Royal Humane Society at this time was issuing medallions in silver and bronze to ‘those who by their brave efforts and at personal risk to themselves have been the means of saving life from drowning’ etc.¹ It was eventually to grant three silver awards to those in command aboard the *Sarah Sands*. The Proceedings of the Annual General Court for 13 January 1858 (for Case 16107) reveals that it:

Resolved unanimously, that the warmest Thanks of this Court be presented to Captain J.S. Castle, Commanding the *Sarah Sands* Transport; as also to Lieut-Colonel Moffat, Commanding Her Majesty’s 54th Regt, and the men under their orders, for their cool, courageous and energetic exertions on the 11th of Nov. 1857, when the ship was on fire, and by whose united and admirable arrangements not a single life was lost. It was further resolved, that the Silver Medal be awarded to each of those gallant officers, for their laudable and heroic conduct on that occasion, and that a copy of these Resolutions be forwarded with the medals.²

Response in the regiment to their Colonel’s award was cool. Lieutenant Houston wrote to his brother:

So the Royal Humane Society have determined to give our chief a medal!! What a farce it will appear when they know the true facts. The East India Company have, I hear, given Captain Castle £1,000 – not bad.³

John Robert Godley, an Assistant Under Secretary at the War Office, notified the Royal Humane Society that ‘by discretion of Gen[eral] Peel’ Moffat’s medal ‘cannot be sent throu[gh] the War Office’ and the Society’s Secretary was directed to withhold the medal for the present.⁴ It appears that Moffat’s medal remained in the Society’s possession for the next 90 years. In May 1948 the Colonel of the Dorsetshire Regiment requested the medal (it being now described as the ‘*Sarah Sands* medal to 54th Regiment 1857’) and the Society agreed to despatch it. The medal now rests in the regimental museum.

The proposal that Lieutenant Colonel Moffat should have been awarded a medal must have particularly rankled with the Brett family, for on 9 June 1858, Captain H. Brett, of the 18th Hussars, sent a letter to the Royal Humane Society, which was submitted to the Committee on 16 June:

Referring to the case of the fire on board the *Sarah Sands* and stating that his brother, Major Brett, 54th Regt, commanded his regiment on the occasion alluded to.⁵

This was duly acknowledged on 19 June, and Captain Brett was informed that it would be

submitted to the next General Court.⁶ Presented to that body on 14 July, it was directed that Captain Brett ‘... was to be informed that the General Court has already acted upon the evidence and papers and consider the case has been decided.’⁷

There the matter rested for some two years until, in the Committee Minutes of 17 October 1860, we find the following:

A letter having been read with [a] case from Col Michel [Commanding Officer, 54th Regt], it was resolved that a medal be engraved and sent to Col Brett, and thanks for the men of the 54th who were on board the *Sarah Sands* when she was burnt.⁸

This was briefly elaborated on in the subsequent Royal Humane Society *Annual Report*, which noted that:

It was Resolved unanimously, that the warmest Thanks of this Committee are justly due and are hereby presented to Major and Brevet Lieut-Col W.F. Brett, of HM 54th Regiment, and the men under his orders, for their cool, courageous and energetic exertions displayed on 11 November 1857, when the Transport *Sarah Sands* was on fire in Lat.14°S, and Long.56°E, and by whose united and admirable arrangements not a single life was lost.⁹

This late award to Lieutenant Colonel Brett may have come about because, with his return to England from India the previous July, Brett had renewed his efforts (through Lieutenant Colonel Michel) to obtain a Victoria Cross for the regiment with regard to their actions aboard the *Sarah Sands* (see Chapter 10 - Victoria Cross Warrant of 1858).

A possible Royal Humane Society medal was thought to have been awarded to Private William Wiles, 54th Regiment, for saving the life of Ship’s Quartermaster Richard Richmond during the latter’s attempt to rescue the Colours of the 54th from the blazing saloon. The *Records of the 54th* state that the Humane Society’s medal was presented to Private Wiles,¹⁰ while his discharge papers note Wiles was ‘in possession of Humane Society Medal.’¹¹ Despite these statements, no trace of an award has been located in the extensive archives of the Royal Humane Society. However, the source of this award would seem to lie elsewhere, for the records of the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners Royal Benevolent Society (which awarded gold and silver medals ‘for heroic or praiseworthy exertions to save life from shipwreck, etc’)¹² reveal the following proposal being voted on in 1859:

A very interesting report, drawn up by Admiral Cator and Captain C.R. Egerton, RN, was read, respecting the conduct of the Captain and crew, together with that of the officers and troops, on the occasion of the fire on board the steam transport *Sarah Sands*, by which it appeared from papers in possession of the Board of Trade, that Richard Richmond, quartermaster of the ship and Private Wills [Wiles] of the 54th Regiment, were exposed to extreme danger, and were most conspicuous in clearing the Port Magazine of ammunition, and saving the colours of the regiment, being dragged up from below several times in a senseless state; also that great credit was due to Mr Welsh [Welch], chief mate, quartermaster James Livingstone [Livingston], and four or five privates, for extinguishing fire in the maintop; also remarked the steady conduct of the engineers, and of Major Brett, who in the absence of the Colonel, commanded the regiment; and of Captain Gillam [Gillum], Lieutenant and Adjutant Houston, Lieutenant Hughes, and the troops on board who behaved admirably. It was moved that the Silver Medal be awarded to Richard Richmond and Private Wills [Wiles], for the conspicuous bravery they displayed on the above fearful occasion.¹³



Major Brett's Indian Mutiny and Royal Humane Society Medals (obverses)



Royal Humane Society Medal to Major W.F. Brett (reverse)



Details of the engraving on the Royal Humane Society Medal to Major W.F. Brett (reverse)



Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners Royal Benevolent Society Medal (obverse and reverse)

This award to Private Wiles pre-dates the 1869 entry in his discharge papers regarding his possession of a 'Humane Society Medal', and its 1881 mention in the *Records of the 54th*, and it would appear to be the medal in question.

The Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society, having inquired into the case, as evidenced by the following paragraph from its *Annual Report* for the year ending 1 July 1858, was unable to grant an award:

The well known case of the steamer *Sarah Sands*, on fire near the Cape of Good Hope while conveying troops to India, was brought before the Society by a member of the committee, and they would have been well pleased to have rewarded the captain for his very meritorious conduct on that occasion, but after every enquiry, they were sorry to find that they could not bring the case within their rules.¹⁴

In the same vein, whereas those organisations mentioned above issued unofficial awards, the events aboard the *Sarah Sands* were drawn to the attention of the Board of Trade with specific regard to the first official award to civilians for gallantry displayed at sea, the 'Board of Trade Medal for Gallantry in Saving Life at Sea', otherwise known as the 'Sea Gallantry Medal', which had been instituted under the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854.¹⁵ The Board of Trade wrote to Waltons, the shipbrokers, for the names of the crew and others who had distinguished themselves. Their request was passed on to Captain Castle – after some delay – and he duly supplied details directly to the Board of Trade. The Board, however, then declined to make an award, J.H. Farrer explaining their decision on 19 June 1858 thus:

My lords have, since making the above request, carefully considered the provisions of the act, which enables them to grant rewards for gallantry in saving life at sea, and they direct me to state that they have come to the conclusion that although they are most deeply impressed with the very unusual courage, energy, and good discipline evinced by yourself and others on the occasion in question, they doubt whether the act of Parliament would justify them granting rewards in this case, and they fear that they could not grant such rewards without setting a precedent which might lead them hereafter into very great difficulties.¹⁶

Having solicited recommendations and then declining to make any awards, despite being 'deeply impressed' by the behaviour of those aboard the *Sarah Sands*, unsurprisingly resulted in a public outcry. *Punch* took up the matter and suggested striking a medal to commemorate the Board's decision, the design to incorporate: 'the profile of an upturned nose with an outstretched empty hand extended from the tip of it' this design to be encircled with the motto 'Palmas qui meruit navita non ferat'.¹⁷ The *London Standard* urged the Board of Trade to reconsider its decision.¹⁸ Provincial papers further took up the case, the *Dundee Courier* for example arguing that efforts to reverse the decision be made and failing that then public subscriptions be solicited to recognise those aboard the *Sarah Sands*.¹⁹

Following the failure of the Board of Trade to grant an award, there was a public subscription organised beginning in December 1858 by the Mercantile Marine Service Association to present Captain Castle with a testimonial in recognition of his 'coolness, courage, and skill'.²⁰ This resulted in a ceremony at the P & O offices in Southampton on Tuesday 19 July 1859, at which Castle was presented with a testimonial, a gold chronometer, and a purse of £150, with the prospect of a further grant as subscriptions were still being received. Critical of the lack of state recognition, Castle thanked the presentation organisers

and – interestingly – paid tribute to the other ship's officers and the officers of the 54th who commanded the troops.²¹

- 1 Sir A. Wilson and Captain J.H.F. McEwen (1939), *Gallantry*, London: OUP, p 34.
- 2 Royal Humane Society, Proceedings of the Annual General Court, 13 January 1858; in considering the case, the precedent of the Society's award to Colonel Fearon for his conduct during the fire aboard the East Indiaman *Kent* in 1825 was quoted in support of the current awards, see *Morning Post*, 15 January 1858, p 2.
- 3 Thomas B. Houston to M. Houston, unpublished letter dated 30 March 1858.
- 4 Royal Humane Society, Committee Minutes, 17 March 1858; the RHS Case Book suggests the medal was sent to Moffat in Calcutta on 13 March 1858, but was 'returned and pending'.
- 5 Royal Humane Society, Committee Minutes, 16 June 1858.
- 6 Royal Humane Society, Letterbook, 19 June 1858.
- 7 Royal Humane Society, General Court Minutes, 14 July 1858.
- 8 Royal Humane Society, Committee Minutes, 17 October 1860.
- 9 Royal Humane Society, Votes of Thanks, Annual Report, 1861.
- 10 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 74.
- 11 TNA ref: WO 97/1475, Discharge Papers, Private William Wiles, 2/24th Foot (late 54th and 57th Regiments).
- 12 Wilson and McEwen (1939), *op cit*, p 63.
- 13 *Life Saving Awards Research Society, Journal*, No 19, September 1993, p 46.
- 14 Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society, *Annual Report*, Year ending 1 July 1858; see also the *Liverpool Mercury*, 30 August 1858, p 2.
- 15 Wilson and McEwen (1939), *op cit*, p 59; R.J. Scarlett (2010), *The Sea Gallantry Medal*, High Wycombe: OMRS.
- 16 Letter from J.H. Farrer to Captain J.S. Castle, dated 19 June 1858, *Morning Chronicle*, 2 July 1858, p 5.
- 17 *Dundee Courier*, 28 July 1858, p 2. The suggested motto translates as 'The sailor who earned the prize does not bear it'.
- 18 *London Standard*, 2 August 1858, p 3.
- 19 *Dundee Courier*, 28 July 1858, p 2; see also among other discussions of the same topic the *Leeds Times*, 3 July 1858, p 8, the *Caledonian Mercury*, 6 July 1858, p 1, the *Liverpool Mercury*, 6 July 1858, p 6, the *Hull Packet*, 11 February 1859, p 6, the *Newcastle Guardian and Tyne Mercury*, 19 February 1859, p 3, and the *Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser*, 22 March 1859, p 3.
- 20 *Morning Post*, 6 December 1858, p 1.
- 21 *Western Daily Press*, 21 July 1859, p 4; see also the *London Daily News*, 21 July 1859, p 2. Aside from such awards, public recognition was fostered and to an extent perpetuated through poems and literary references. See for example: L.N. Todrig (1884) *The Ballad of the Good Ship Sarah Sands*. Buffalo, NY: Carrell & Nisell; R. Kipling 'M'Andrew's Hymn', in *The Seven Seas*, London: Methuen; W.M. Thackeray (1860) 'On ribbons', *Roundabout Papers*, London: OUP, 1909, pp 384-6.

CHAPTER 10

Victoria Cross Warrant of 1858

Prior to General Order No. 700, General Sir Colin Campbell, GOC India, wrote to the Adjutant General at Horse Guards on 29 January 1858, drawing the attention of the General Commanding-in-Chief to the conduct of Major Brett and the officers and men of the 54th Regiment thus:

Brett found himself suddenly and unexpectedly in command ... at a most calamitous moment. His own calm and steady demeanour, backed as it was by the resolute courage and discipline of the officers and men under his command, when the ship *Sarah Sands* ... was in flames, the regular Commanding Officer having left it, and all the crew with the exception of the Captain and officers of the ship having abandoned their duty - was under Providence the means of saving the lives of the whole. I cannot speak too highly of such conduct ... I am not aware that the Statutes of the Victoria Cross admit of the officers and men whom he recommends being honoured with the great distinction of that decoration. I am sure however that no men in conflict with an enemy have ever deserved to be more conspicuously marked out, than those composing the 54th Regt.¹

In response, Sir Charles Yorke, the Military Secretary at Horse Guards, wrote to Sir Henry Storks, Under Secretary of State for War at the War Office, on 6 April 1858. Quoting Campbell's letter, Yorke stated that the General Commanding-in-Chief 'is desirous of drawing the attention of the Secretary of State for War to the admirable conduct of Major Brett and the officers and men of the 54th Regiment'. Admitting that the Statutes of the Victoria Cross did not allow 'of that honour being conferred except for acts of Valor performed in action with the enemy', the Commander-in-Chief entirely concurred with Campbell:

... that it is not possible for men in conflict with an enemy to deserve to be more conspicuously marked out than the officers and men whom Major Brett has recommended for special notice ... His Royal Highness will only add that if Secretary [of State for War, Major] General Peel should consider that Her Majesty could ever be recommended to relax the Statutes of the Victoria Cross in order to confer it upon men who have displayed under circumstances of the greatest danger and some discouragement, every quality most honourable to soldiers, though not in the presence of an enemy, there could be no more fitting occasion than the present to take that course.²

There now arose the question of interpretation of the Victoria Cross Warrant by the War Office civil servants, particularly Edward Pennington. In a letter to Storks on 9 April, Pennington quoted the Sixth Clause of the Warrant, stating: 'it is ordained "that neither rank, nor long service, nor wounds, nor any other circumstance and condition whatsoever, save the merit of conspicuous bravery, shall be held to establish a sufficient claim to the honour", such bravery referring to, [from the preamble to the Warrant], "bravery in action or distinction before an enemy"³ Pennington could have made reference to the Fifth Clause, 'that the Cross shall only be awarded to those officers or men who have served Us in the presence of the enemy, and shall have then performed some signal act of valour, or devotion to their country'.⁴ Pennington continued:

The question here raised is whether it would be expedient to relax the rules so far as to include such cases of courage as those displayed on the occasion of the burning of the *Sarah Sands* transport, or for instance, cases of daring which may occur on the occasion of the accidental blowing up of a powder magazine. Such cases are not of infrequent occurrence, ... although they do not come within the meaning of the Royal Warrant, and, I think, actually did occur in the Crimea, and it was animadverted upon at the time that they could not be rewarded by the bestowal of the Victoria Cross, because they were not deeds of gallantry performed before the enemy.⁵

He went on to suggest that: 'Should it be deemed advisable to entertain the question, the Adjutant General might be asked to frame such rules on the subject as might be embodied in a Royal Warrant.'⁶ There is no mention here by Pennington of the catch-all Twelfth Clause in the existing Warrant, which stated that:

It is ordained that as cases may arise not falling within the rules above specified. ... We will, on the joint submission of Our Secretary of State for War, and of Our Commander-in-Chief of Our Army, ... confer the decoration, but never without conclusive proof of the performance of the act of bravery for which the claim is made.⁷

Clearly designed to allow a degree of discretion in making awards, this clause made no mention of potential acts necessarily being in the presence of the enemy.

Forwarding Pennington's views to the Secretary of State for War Jonathan Peel (1799-1879) the next day, 10 April, Storks added:

This is for your consideration and decision. There is no doubt, that the 'conspicuous bravery' displayed by the officers and men on board the *Sarah Sands* is deserving of the honour proposed to be conferred. Submit to the Queen that the Statutes of the Victoria Cross be amended so as to permit its being awarded for such acts of 'conspicuous bravery' as those under consideration?⁸

Peel approved this on 12 April,⁹ and a draft submission was drawn up by Pennington, without, however, any specific mention of the 54th Regiment or the *Sarah Sands*; reference to them was added by Storks at his own or Peel's instigation, the latter approving the draft on 15 April.¹⁰ The submission to the Queen was drawn up by Pennington and sent to Storks for Peel's signature on 16 April, being thence forwarded to Her Majesty on 20 April,¹¹ with the Horse Guards being informed, through the Military Secretary, on 21 April.¹²

The submission of 20 April quoted the Fifth and Sixth Clauses, then:

... humbly submitted for Your Majesty's consideration whether it would not be desirable to extend the provisions of Your Majesty's Warrant so as to include cases of conspicuous courage and bravery ... under circumstances of extreme danger, such as the occurrence of a fire on board ship, or of the foundering of a vessel at sea, or under any other circumstances in which, through the courage and devotion displayed, life and public property may be saved.¹³

The submission made specific reference to the heroism of the 54th Regiment on board the *Sarah Sands*, 'as deserving of such a mark of Your Majesty's gracious favour as that now proposed', in which representation Major General Peel entirely concurred with the General Commanding-in-Chief.¹⁴

While the formalities of signing the Warrant took their stately course over the next three months, Pennington wrote to Storks on 6 July: 'With reference to the case of the *Sarah Sands* ... it does not appear that any distinct recommendation has been received from the Horse Guards, of the person who would be entitled to the decoration.' Reference was made to General Order No. 700; the 25 soldiers mentioned (with Pennington noting

in the margin that ‘pensions for all these would cost the Country £250 per annum’); and Major Brett, Captain Gillum, Lieutenant and Adjutant Houston and Lieutenant Hughes of the officers. Pennington proposed writing to the Military Secretary requesting to be informed if it was the intention of the General Commanding-in-Chief ‘to make a distinct recommendation in favour of any or all of the Officers and soldiers named in the General Order ... or of any of those Officers who are not distinctly mentioned by name’ provided the Commander-in-Chief was satisfied they had ‘distinguished themselves on the occasion in question in such a manner as to entitle them to this high distinction’.¹⁵

The Warrant was duly signed on 10 August, and Pennington, after drawing Storks attention to the fact the following day, and noting it ‘should be recorded in the Registry of the Victoria Cross, for future guidance’, queried whether:

1. Is it intended to give publicity to it in the *London Gazette*? I should think that it would be scarcely advisable to do so.
2. Is any thing to be done with regard to those who rendered themselves conspicuous in the case of the *Sarah Sands*? It seems now somewhat too late.¹⁶

Now, with the Warrant signed, both the Horse Guards and the War Office appeared to lose interest, the case being held in abeyance for some two years. This was somewhat understandable from the War Office point of view, where the Warrant was not popular amongst the civil servants, as evidenced by Pennington’s remarks.¹⁷ However, shortly before the Warrant was signed, Secretary Peel had stated in the House of Commons, on 30 July, that there were instances of valour not in the presence of the enemy, as for example the case of the men on the *Sarah Sands*, that ought to be rewarded, and that he had received Her Majesty’s sanction to an extension of that order as would include them and those in similar situations.¹⁸ Considering that Peel remained as Secretary of State for War until mid-1859,¹⁹ there was no attempt to implement the terms of the Warrant. Indeed, the Warrant was never published in the *London Gazette*,²⁰ and no copy was forwarded to the General Commanding-in-Chief.²¹

The quest for an award was resumed with the return of Lieutenant Colonel Brett to England from India in July 1860. In a personal interview with the Adjutant General, who complimented the 54th Regiment in relation to the *Sarah Sands* incident, Brett:

... ventured to state, that I had hoped, in consequence of the unparalleled exertions of the regiment...when acts of daring and valour were numerous and conspicuous, a ‘Victoria Cross’ would have been conferred on the regiment and that I had been strengthened in this hope by the observations of General Peel ... in the House of Commons as reported in Times of 31 July 1858.²²

Advised by the Adjutant General to make an application through his Commanding Officer, on behalf of the regiment, Brett requested Lieutenant Colonel Michel on 16 July:

to forward this letter to the Adjutant General, with such remarks as you may think necessary, in order that the correspondence relative to the conduct of the 54th Reg[imen]t, during the burning of the *Sarah Sands*, may be re-perused.²³

Forwarding Brett’s letter to the Adjutant General on 21 July, Lieutenant Colonel Michel re-emphasised the extraordinary conduct of the 54th with regard to the award of the Victoria Cross:

... in accordance with the permission granted by Her Most Gracious Majesty on the application of the late ... Secretary of State for War. Should His Royal Highness be

desirous of further special recommendation, I will communicate with Lieutenant Colonel Brett, and obtain the names of those men, whom he as the officer in command at the time may consider most deserving of such a high mark of Royal Approbation.²⁴

An endorsement on Michel's letter, possibly by the Deputy Assistant Adjutant General, at Horse Guards, stated that: 'A special application must be made on behalf of an individual before the case can be brought before the Board of General Officers.'²⁵ Indeed, DAAG Pearson replied to Michel on 26 July, on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief, stating that it was:

... necessary that a special application be made in behalf of each individual recommended for the 'Victoria Cross', specifying in detail the act of valour in each case, before they can be submitted to the investigation of a Board of General Officers: His Royal Highness will not object to the name of the officer or man of the 54th Regiment who may most have distinguished himself on the occasion of the wreck of the *Sarah Sands* being submitted as above for consideration.²⁶

This was passed by Michel to Brett with a covering letter dated 1 August, to which Brett responded on 6 August that:

I have no selection to make that would be more just or more agreeable to the regiment, than that the recipient should be chosen by the men of the regiment who were on board the *Sarah Sands* and were witnesses of the instances of daring and valour, from among those men named in my report (dated 20 November 1857) and subsequently published in General Orders for their conspicuous gallantry.²⁷

Brett felt it would be difficult in his position to choose an individual and thought the mode of selection he had suggested ('which I believe has been adopted in some instances') might meet with His Royal Highness's approval. Brett noted that his report:

... includes the names of men who were conspicuous in the powder magazine – going below for barrels of ammunition when the heat and smoke was so dense in the magazine as to stifle and render senseless many who attempted [it] – a man who saved the Colours of the Reg[imen]t under similar circumstances – the Sergeant who took the Colours and went over the ship's side and lashed them to a portion of a raft – men who went aloft with wet blankets to extinguish the fire in the main yard and mast – The ship at the time as the Captain reports 'being one body of flame from the stern to the main rigging.'²⁸

Endorsed, 'This letter was replied to stating that the man must be named', Brett's attempt to invoke the Thirteenth Clause of the Warrant (election by the men) appears to have been ignored.

In response to a covering letter dated 2 August, incorporating what appears to be a second copy of the DAAG's letter of 26 July (the receipt of which must have overlapped Brett's reply of 6 August to the first copy), Brett made a specific recommendation to Michel, on 13 August, requesting that it be forwarded to the 'General Commanding-in-Chief for favourable consideration', as follows:

I have the honour to inform you that I recommend No. 3190 Andrew Walsh, Private 54th Regiment, for the decoration of the Victoria Cross. No. 3190 Andrew Walsh, Private 54th Regiment, was most conspicuous for daring and valour during the burning of the Steam Transport *Sarah Sands* at sea on 11 Nov[ember] 1857, in the following instances -

- I. For having, soon after the outbreak of the fire, when volunteers were called for to clear the Powder Magazine - entered the Port Magazine; and with other soldiers of the 54th Regiment, succeeded in clearing it of the greater portion of the powder. He did not quit the Magazine till, from fire and smoke it was impossible to remain, thus rendering incalculable service.
- II. For having, in company with Mr Welch (Chief Officer of the *Sarah Sands*) gone aloft with wet blankets, and succeeded in extinguishing the fire at the maintopsailyard (the yard and mast being on fire) a service of great peril and risk, the ship at the time rolling heavily and being, as stated by Captain Castles [sic] in his report 'one body of flame from the stern to the main rigging'.

And generally - after the imminent danger during the many hours the fire lasted, had been overcome - for good conduct and example during the twelve days (a period of great anxiety and danger) the wreck was at sea before reaching Mauritius.²⁹

This recommendation was forwarded by Michel to the Adjutant General on 16 August,³⁰ and the Horse Guards, obviously favourable to this request for the Victoria Cross, responded on 21 August with a letter from W.F. Forster (Military Secretary) to Sir Edward Lugard, the Under Secretary of State for War. This reiterated the proposed provisions of the new Warrant, transmitted the case of Private Walsh for the award of the Victoria Cross, and requested that in laying the issue before:

Mr Secretary Herbert [Secretary of State for War], you will state that His Royal Highness trusts Mr Herbert will concur with him in considering that the case of this man comes within the requirements of the extended provisions of the Royal Warrant sanctioned by Her Majesty ... and that therefore Her Majesty may be advised to confer the Victoria Cross upon Andrew Walsh.³¹

In response, Pennington wrote to Lugard on 23 August stating that the:

Warrant has no retrospective effect, and as it had no existence at the time the occurrence took place, and persons who distinguished themselves in the manner indicated were not at that time eligible for the distinction, it was not considered desirable to move further in the matter.³²

Pennington proposed forwarding a copy of the Warrant to the Military Secretary for the Commander-in-Chief, calling attention to the facts stated and to the terms of the Warrant, namely that: 'We are desirous of rewarding [individual] instances [of conspicuous courage and bravery] which may be displayed etc, not, which have been already displayed'. Pennington suggested adding, that the Secretary of State for War Sidney Herbert would defer any decision until receiving the further views of the Commander-in-Chief on the subject.³³ The letter was endorsed by Lugard on 25 August, 'Do, as you propose',³⁴ and a letter, along the lines suggested by Pennington, was sent to the Military Secretary, for the C-in-C on 29 August.³⁵

On 4 September Horse Guards replied that the C-in-C's opinion was that as Private Walsh had displayed conspicuous bravery and as this was the occasion that gave rise to the revised Warrant, the case was exceptional and the Warrant should be retrospective.³⁶ This unequivocal support met with silence and it was not until 9 February 1861 that a ruling on the case was forthcoming in a letter from Lugard to the Military Secretary. The Secretary of State requested that the Commander-in-Chief be informed the provisions of the Warrant did not admit of retrospective action. There was:

... no Instrument in existence under the provisions of which Her Majesty could be advised to confer this honor upon the soldier in question ... [and] that it would not be desirable, at this distance of time, to advise Her Majesty to extend retrospectively, as proposed in your letter, the provisions of the Warrant in question, for the purpose of conferring the Victoria Cross upon Private Walsh.³⁷

Additionally, the C-in-C was to be notified that Sidney Herbert had: 'received with sincere gratification, the favourable testimony which has been borne to the conspicuous courage and bravery displayed by Private Walsh on this trying occasion', regretting that the Warrant 'will not admit of his being recommended for a decoration which he has so well earned'.³⁸

Lieutenant Colonel Brett, though he had transferred to the 61st Regiment on 27 September 1861, was loathe to let the issue drop, and two years later, on 2 September 1863, he wrote to the former GOC at Mauritius, Lieutenant General Henry W. Breton, enclosing copies 'of correspondence relative to the "Victoria Cross" - a decoration I endeavoured to obtain for my old Regiment', his renewed efforts having been encouraged by the Secretary of State for War's remarks in the House of Commons. The lack of success in obtaining the decoration for the 54th had always been a source of frustration to Brett, and he now sought support from Breton, who he felt would 'make every consideration for my general endeavour and anxiety to secure a decoration for a Reg[imen]t in which I served - and shared the dangers - for nearly twenty years'.³⁹

In forwarding Brett's letter to the Adjutant General, on 1 October, together with copies of correspondence between Brett and Michel, it appeared to Breton that Brett had received no reply, except verbally from Michel, to the effect that the latter believed the application had been approved by the Board of General Officers and passed to the Secretary of State for War. Although Breton's impression was that the Victoria Cross could only be awarded 'for gallant conduct in actual presence of an enemy', he was clear that there could:

...be no question of the high moral courage displayed by the officers and men of the 54th Reg[imen]t generally during the sixteen hours of suspense they had to endure or of the gallantry of those individuals recommended;

he added that Brett himself seemed also deserving of recognition, though 'he, very properly, omits to mention his own name'.⁴⁰

The response, on 8 October, expressed the regret of His Royal Highness:

...that whilst the meritorious conduct of Private Andrew Walsh of the 54th Regiment ... is fully acknowledged, the Secretary of State for War having ruled that the Royal Warrant of 10 August 1858 cannot be made retrospective, His Royal Highness is unable to entertain the recommendation for the Victoria Cross made in favour of the deserving soldier in question.⁴¹

It is worth noting here, that though Private Andrew Walsh was shown on his discharge papers as being imprisoned for misconduct, from 11 to 27 January 1858, when aboard the *Clarendon* en route from Mauritius (Walsh's release date coinciding with that vessel's arrival at Calcutta on 27 January), this never arises in any correspondence concerning the refusal to grant Private Walsh the award of the Victoria Cross.⁴²

The final efforts to secure a Victoria Cross specifically in connection with the events on the *Sarah Sands* came about on 20 September 1870. The Administrator of Bermuda, Thomas Gore Browne, recommended Brett - who was stationed on the island with the

61st Regiment, of which he was then its Colonel – for the Victoria Cross for ‘gallant conduct’ during the fire.⁴³ The papers connected with this unsuccessful application have not survived in the archives. Presumably it was turned down on the same grounds as the earlier submissions had been. It is nevertheless interesting for the further glimpse it gives of Brett’s character.

* * * * *

Pennington’s advice was indicative of the unpopularity of the revised Warrant among the civil servants in the War Office and this appears to have been a prominent factor in the refusal to grant the Victoria Cross to Private Walsh. On the revised Warrant being signed, Pennington had advised against publishing it in the *London Gazette* and argued that it was too late to recognise those who had distinguished themselves on the *Sarah Sands*. Even though Peel’s remarks in the House of Commons specifically mentioned the men on board the *Sarah Sands* in relation to a proposed extension of the Warrant, it is somewhat curious that he failed to see the case through between the revised Warrant being signed in August 1858 and June 1859, when he ceased to be Secretary of State for War. Of course, there had been no distinct recommendation received at the time, as Pennington had notified Storke a month before the Warrant was signed, to which Storke had replied that it could ‘stand over’, presumably until the new Warrant was actually signed.⁴⁴

The revised Warrant was essentially a scheme of Peel’s, which his civil servants could not refuse to draw up on his terms. However, by August 1860 when the recommendation was narrowed down to a single name, that of Private Andrew Walsh, Peel and Storke had been replaced by Sidney Herbert and Sir Edward Lugard, as Secretary and Under-Secretary respectively, and Pennington became virtually the only person with knowledge of the subject. Although the Horse Guards might view the recommendation favourably, the interpretation of warrants was not a matter for them, but for the civil servants at the War Office. The *Sarah Sands* amendment to the Victoria Cross Warrant was one that the key civil servants involved had set their minds against.

In support of this conclusion, it is worth briefly reviewing the reaction of the War Office to subsequent attempts to invoke the Warrant of 1858, in which a retrospective award was not at issue:

1. Ensign Joseph Bourke, 1st West India Regiment, on the occasion of a fire at Fort Charlotte in the Bahamas on 10 January 1860, the case being brought forward in 1862. Pennington initially commented, that it ‘would be making the Victoria Cross too cheap to grant it’, and that the claim had not been encouraged by Horse Guards. However, a letter dated 19 July from Horse Guards, submitted a claim and enquired as to whether the case did come within the Warrant of 1858. The reply from Lugard, on 30 July, stated that the case appeared to come within the terms of the Warrant, but that it could not be entertained without the recommendation of the Commanding Officer and a Board of Officers – this largely following the lines of a minute from Pennington, on 25 July, in which he remarks that the Warrant of 1858 is a dead letter. The response from Horse Guards, of 17 March 1863, informed the War Office, that a Board of Officers had found that Bourke’s services did not entitle him to the award under the Warrant of 1858.⁴⁵

2. Private Timothy O’Hea, 1st Rifle Brigade, who had displayed conspicuous conduct when fire broke out in an ammunition car at Danville Station in Canada on 9 June 1866. Pennington’s reaction is noted in a minute of 20 July: ‘His conduct, no doubt, was praiseworthy, under trying circumstances, and worthy of commendation; how far it would justify the bestowal of the Victoria Cross ... is another question. ... The General Commanding does not recommend, or even suggest, that this distinction should be conferred, but simply brings the man’s conduct under the notice of His Royal Highness. It would be contrary to established rule to confer this distinction without such recommendation.’ If the case was submitted ‘within the provisions of the Warrant of 10 August 1858 (which has never been acted upon) it should first be submitted for the careful investigation of a Board of Officers on the spot.’ Pennington also pointed out that the £10 annuity was no mean sum for a private, and that O’Hea’s act was an act of duty, and as such was never held to merit the award of the Victoria Cross. A draft letter was prepared based on this advice, informing the Horse Guards that as the Warrant of 1858 had never been acted upon, to revive it after this interval might constitute an inconvenient precedent, particularly as it had never been published. This letter was not sent however, as the Board of Officers had reported favourably, and – significantly – Peel was now back as Secretary of State for War. After consulting with the C-in-C, Peel saw to it that O’Hea’s recommendation was approved under the terms of the revised Warrant, his Victoria Cross being gazetted on 1 January 1867.⁴⁶
3. Private Berry, 1st Rifle Brigade, for having saved the life of a child on the occasion of a fire at Quebec on 14 October 1866. In March 1867, Lugard wrote to the Commanding Officer, North America, declining to forward a copy of the Warrant of 1858 to him, on the grounds that ‘the Warrant in question has never been printed or published in the *London Gazette*, and that it was not deemed expedient to circulate it.’ A few days later, Lugard informed the Horse Guards that Berry’s conduct, ‘although no doubt very praiseworthy, was scarcely one which should be rewarded by the bestowal of this high distinction.’⁴⁷
4. Assistant Surgeon Campbell Millis Douglas, Privates David Bell, James Cooper, William Griffiths and Thomas Murphy, 2/24th Regiment, for taking a boat through dangerous surf off Little Andaman Island to rescue a shore party under attack from natives on 7 May 1867. Lugard again refused to circulate the text of the Warrant of 1858, when it was requested by the C-in-C, East Indies, in June 1867, a request almost certainly relating to the submission of the Little Andaman recommendations in November of that year. Pennington, in a minute of 9 November to Lugard, assumed this was a recommendation under the Warrant of 1858, as none other seemed applicable, and he did not think that any lives had certainly been saved, and suggested that a

Board of Officers should be set up to investigate. However, Sir William Mansfield, C-in-C, East Indies, believed that it had been established that the lives of the shore party would have been gravely endangered had they not been rescued. The recommendation was supported by the Horse Guards and the War Office (where Sir John Pakington had replaced Peel as Secretary of State for War), the five awards being published in the *London Gazette* on 17 December 1867, although the *Gazette* made no reference to these being awarded under the Warrant of 1858.⁴⁸

On 23 April 1881 a new Warrant was issued governing the award of the Victoria Cross, stipulating that it was for 'conspicuous bravery or devotion to the country in the presence of the enemy', and (although not drawn up with this aim in mind) by implication revoked the Warrant of 1858, making it truly a dead letter.⁴⁹

1 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Letter from General Campbell, C-in-C East Indies, to Adjutant General, Horse Guards, 29 January 1858.

2 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Letter from Sir Charles Yorke, Military Secretary, Horse Guards, to Sir Henry Storks, Under-Secretary of State for War, War Office, 6 April 1858.

3 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Letter from Edward Pennington to Sir Henry Storks, 9 April 1858 (Pennington was subordinate to Storks).

4 Abbott and Tamplin, 1981, *op cit*, p 284.

5 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Pennington to Storks, 9 Apr. 1858, *op cit*.

6 *Ibid*

7 Abbott and Tamplin, 1981, *op cit*, p 285.

8 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Pennington to Storks, 9 April 1858, *op cit*, Addition of 10 April 1858.

9 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Pennington to Storks, 9 April 1858, *op cit*, Addition of 12 April 1858.

10 Draft Submission to the Queen, drawn up by Edward Pennington, approved by Major General Peel, Secretary of State for War, 15 April 1858.

11 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Pennington to Storks, 9 April 1858, *op cit*, Additions of 16 and 20 April 1858.

12 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Letter from Sir Henry Storks to Sir Charles Yorke, 21 April 1858.

13 Submission to the Queen, by Secretary Peel, 20 April 1858.

14 *Ibid*

15 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Letter from Edward Pennington to Sir Henry Storks, 6 July 1858.

16 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Pennington to Storks, 6 July 1858, *op. cit*, Addition of 11 August 1858.

17 M.J. Crook (1975), *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, London: Ogilby Trusts, p 142.

18 *Ibid*, p 139.

19 *Ibid*, p 143.

20 *Ibid*, p 146.

21 TNA ref: WO 98/2, Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Brett to Colonel Michel, 16 July 1860.

22 *Ibid*

23 *Ibid*

24 TNA ref: WO 98/2, Letter from Colonel Michel to Adjutant General, 21 July 1860.

25 *Ibid*

26 TNA ref: WO 98/2, Letter from DAAG, Horse Guards, to Colonel Michel, 26 July 1860.

27 TNA ref: WO 98/2, Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Brett to Colonel Michel, 6 August 1860.

28 *Ibid*

29 TNA ref: WO 98/2, Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Brett to Colonel Michel, 13 August 1860.

30 TNA ref: WO 98/2, Letter from Colonel Michel to Adjutant General, 16 August 1860.

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- 31 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Letter from W.F. Forster, Military Secretary, Horse Guards, to Sir Edward Lugard, Under-Secretary of State for War, War Office, 21 August 1860.
- 32 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Letter from Edward Pennington to Sir Edward Lugard, 23 August 1860.
- 33 *Ibid*
- 34 TNA ref: WO 32/7345, Pennington to Lugard, 23 August 1860, *op cit*, Endorsement of 25 August 1860.
- 35 Crook, 1975, *op cit*, p 141.
- 36 *Ibid*
- 37 TNA ref: WO 98/2, Letter from Sir Edward Lugard to W.F. Forster, 9 February 1861.
- 38 *Ibid*
- 39 TNA ref: WO 98/2, Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Brett to Major General Breton, 2 September 1863.
- 40 TNA ref: WO 98/2, Letter from Lieutenant General Breton to Adjutant General, 1 October 1863.
- 41 TNA ref: WO 98/2, Letter from Horse Guards to Lieutenant General Breton, 8 October 1863.
- 42 See Appendix E.
- 43 TNA ref: CO 37/200/82, folio 253.
- 44 Crook, 1975, *op cit*, p 139.
- 45 *Ibid*, p 143; see also TNA ref: WO 32/7345.
- 46 *Ibid*, p 144; cf. E. Reid (2006), *The Singular Journey of O'Hea's Cross*, Yale, BC: Leamcon Press.
- 47 *Ibid*, pp 145-6.
- 48 *Ibid*
- 49 *Ibid*, p 146.

CHAPTER 11

The Royal Bounty of 1876

As late as 1905, it is evident that an attempt was made to obtain a medal for the men of the 54th Regiment in recognition of their conduct during the fire aboard the *Sarah Sands*. The Colonel of the Dorset Regiment, Major General Matthew William Edward Gossett, (1839-1909), CB, had taken up the case with the War Office that year. In reply, Colonel Sir Edward Willis Duncan Ward (1853-1928) wrote:

With reference to your letter dated the 26th ultimo, bringing to notice the case of the survivors of the 54th Foot, who were on board the SS *Sarah Sands*, when that vessel took fire at sea on 11 November 1857, with a view to the grant of a medal to them for their services on that occasion, I am commanded by the Army Council to inform you that they fully recognise the gallant conduct of these men, but regret that there is no medal which could be awarded to them.

I am to point out, however, that in the year 1876, all the pensioners, then ascertained to be alive, who were mentioned as having distinguished themselves during the suppression of the fire, were granted the additional pension of 6d a day, under Article 1166 of the Royal Warrant.¹

The War Office forwarded this letter on 8 November 1905 to General Gossett, whose renewal of the quest for an award perhaps originated with the death of Captain Castle on 22 December 1904. Gossett on that occasion had written to *The Times* on 24 December, highlighting the conduct of the 54th and made mention of the General Order issued by the Commander-in-Chief.²

The use of annuities and gratuities as rewards for distinguished conduct was topical during the mid to late 19th century. Money – rather than symbolic or honorary rewards – was felt to be more appreciated by the working classes, the idea of medals for all classes being a relatively recent initiative – being initiated principally with the Waterloo Medal in 1815. Gallantry awards for non-commissioned ranks were a still more recent phenomenon, with the first of these – the Victoria Cross, Distinguished Conduct Medal, and Conspicuous Gallantry Medal – being founded during the Crimean War. These had monetary awards associated with them, as had the slightly longer established Army and Naval Long Service and Good Conduct Medals and the Meritorious Service Medals.

The Army Long Service and Good Conduct Medal was awarded – as the name suggests – for a combination of long service and good conduct, though at certain times in its history bravery and distinguished conduct could render candidates eligible when there were shortcomings in either of the two main criteria. The revised regulations signed into effect by Queen Victoria on 14 August 1875 made this clear, stating that:

Non-Commissioned Officers and men who may have distinguished themselves by the display of zeal and brilliant gallantry in Our Service, shall be eligible for these gratuities [up to £5], although their cases do not strictly fulfil the conditions specified in Article 2.³

These terms were repeated in the further revised conditions authorised and published

in May 1878.⁴ These monetary awards were typically issued when the soldier retired and it is in the context of such awards and the wider army pension arrangements that details of the Royal Bounty granted to the men aboard the *Sarah Sands* can be found.

In revised regulations on army pensions for NCOs and men, the Queen approved a series of new and consolidated articles on 6 September 1876. Among these, Article 44 reads:

In cases of gallant conduct, recommended by our Commander-in-Chief, a sum not exceeding 6d a day for European Soldiers and 3d a day for Black Soldiers may be granted, in addition to Pension, as Royal Bounty, by Our Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, with the approval of Our Secretary of State. In cases of extreme suffering from wounds received in action by Black Soldiers of long service, a sum not exceeding 3d a day may in like manner be granted, as Royal Bounty, in addition to pension.⁵

By the time Colonel Sir Edward Ward wrote his letter to Major General Gossett in 1905 this article within the Royal Warrant governing army pay had been renumbered to appear as Article 1166.⁶

The additional pension of 6d a day is confirmed in the contemporary regimental history,⁷ as well as in various sets of discharge papers (within the WO 97 files at The National Archives). No further details of the award or its scope appear to have survived and it is thus uncertain exactly who received the Royal Bounty. Sir Edward Ward's letter states it was granted to those 'who were mentioned as having distinguished themselves', which seems to imply it went to the NCOs and men listed in General Order No. 700 who were still alive in 1876. Of the 25 men listed in the General Order, at least eight had died by 1876, leaving a possible 17 eligible recipients for the Royal Bounty. Sergeant William Murray's name was subsequently added to those mentioned and he brings the list of possible recipients to 18.

The discharge and related papers of some of these men note their receipt of the Royal Bounty. The first person to have apparently received the award was Sergeant William Murray. In 1875 the Duke of Northumberland had drawn his actions to the attention of the Commander-in-Chief at Horse Guards, resulting in his duly receiving the award.⁸ In his book on the *Sarah Sands*, Murray cites the subsequent notification of his Bounty being signed by John Milton, the Officer Commanding the Northumberland Light Infantry Militia, and dated 4 August 1875.⁹ Murray would serve in the Militia until 1877. If this was the first such award – and it pre-dates the year of award as cited in Colonel Ward's letter – then it may be his claim that prompted the Royal Bounty's extension to others who had been aboard the *Sarah Sands*. The discharge papers of William Wiles are endorsed to show that his pension was 'Incd to 1/8d by Roy. Bounty of 6d a day for Gallant Conduct on board *Sarah Sands* Transport', dated 31 October 1876.¹⁰ The discharge papers of Lance Corporal John Stephenson are similarly endorsed, his claim being supported by Lord Harlech, and dated 17 October 1876.¹¹

There is, however, an anomaly with regard to the award of the Royal Bounty, for the papers of several other soldiers, including Drum Major James Wellard, who was discharged in 1865, and Private Timothy Leary, who was discharged in 1870, show them as having also received the Royal Bounty for serving on the *Sarah Sands*.¹² Neither Wellard nor Leary are mentioned in Brett's report (and thereby G.O. No 700), nor are they listed in Moffat's 'official' report, and why they have been awarded the Royal Bounty is open to question. It may be that the conditions of entitlement, as worded in the Royal Warrant mentioned above, are somewhat ambiguous, thus enabling other men of the 54th aboard the *Sarah*

Sands to apply for and be granted the additional pension.

The precedent of these 6d a day monetary awards was cited in 1890 when the final award for services during the fire aboard the *Sarah Sands* was made. That year the Secretary of State for War, Edward Stanhope (1840-93), supported an application for an award from Richard Richmond who was at the time suffering from ‘failing eyesight’ and unable to work. The Financial Secretary to the War Office, William St John Brodrick (1856-1942), wrote that Richmond: ‘at the risk of his life, rushed into the saloon of the vessel which was on fire, and brought out the colours of the 54th Regiment, fainting in the attempt’, and went on to add that Stanhope recommended he be granted £50.¹³ The Treasury duly approved this award. Richard Richmond died in the beginning of 1907, almost 50 years after he had saved the 54th’s colours.

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- 1 Regimental Records: letter from Colonel E.W.D. Ward, War Office, 8 November 1905, to Major General M.W.E. Gossett, reference 68 / Gen.No. 1872 (A.G.2).
 - 2 *The Times*, 24 December 1904.
 - 3 TNA ref: WO 370/11, Royal Warrant, signed by Queen Victoria at Osborne on 14 August 1875. Article 2 stipulated that candidates needed to have had 18 years service with irreproachable character and no court-martial convictions (or those with such convictions have been relieved of the consequences of these).
 - 4 TNA ref: WO 370/11, Revised Pay Warrant, Article 1070.
 - 5 TNA ref: WO 370/11, Royal Warrant signed by the Queen at Balmoral 6 September 1876.
 - 6 This now read: ‘1166 - In cases of gallant conduct, an additional pension, not exceeding 6d a day for Europeans, and 3d a day for non-Europeans referred to in Article 1160, may be allowed if recommended by our Commander-in-Chief, and approved by Our Secretary of State,’ *Royal Warrant for the Pay, Appointment, Promotion, and Non-Effective Pay of the Army 1899*, London: HMSO, 1899.
 - 7 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 74.
 - 8 William Murray to the OC, 2 Bn Dorset Regiment, undated (c.1912), The Keep Military Museum archives.
 - 9 Murray, 1906, *op cit*, p 30; the date of this award is confirmed in the *Morpeth Herald*, 7 August 1875, p 4.
 - 10 TNA ref: WO 97/1475, Discharge Papers, Private William Wiles, 2/24th Regiment, late 54th and 57th Regiments.
 - 11 TNA ref: WO 97, Discharge Papers, Lance Corporal John Stephenson, 54th Regiment.
 - 12 TNA ref: WO 97, Discharge Papers, Drum Major James Wellard, 54th Regiment, and Private Timothy Leary, 54th Regiment.
 - 13 W.St John Brodrick to the Secretary to the Treasury, 1 May 1890, in Army Appropriation Account 1890-91, HMSO, 1891, p 79.

Division II.

Non-Commissioned Officers and Men.

**Section 2.
Pensions
of Com-
batants.**

GOOD-CONDUCT PAY WITH PENSION—continued.

[1119]
When to be
discretionary.

1307. In the case of temporary or conditional pension, the addition of Good-Conduct Pay shall, as a rule, be limited to the temporary period only, but it may also be allowed if the pension be subsequently renewed or made permanent.

V.—ROYAL BOUNTY WITH PENSION.

[1085]
[1086]
[1087]
Royal bounty.

1308. In cases of gallant conduct, recommended by Our Commander-in-Chief, a sum not exceeding 6*d.* a-day for European soldiers, and 3*d.* a-day for black soldiers may be granted, in addition to pension, as Royal Bounty, by Our Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, with the approval of Our Secretary of State. In cases of extreme suffering from wounds received in action by black soldiers of long service, a sum not exceeding 3*d.* a-day may in like manner be granted, as Royal Bounty, in addition to pension.

Pay Warrant: Royal Bounty

CHAPTER 12

The Indian Mutiny

By the time the 54th Regiment reached India, the tide of the Mutiny had already turned. Delhi had been captured in September, and Lucknow, after being reinforced rather than relieved in September, was finally evacuated of its defenders and non-combatants late in November 1857. Much, however, remained to be done - maintaining lines of communication and containing further outbreaks of disaffection, with punitive columns scouring the countryside and converging on rebel strong points, prior to operations being planned for the retaking of Lucknow and the subjugation of Oudh and Rohilkund.

On 28 November 1857 four companies (numbers 1-4) of the 54th Regiment, under Colonel Michel, were despatched to Eastern Bengal, where the 34th Bengal Native Infantry had mutinied at Chittagong and were marching on Sylhet.¹ The detachment landed at Dacca, setting off towards Sylhet in pursuit of the rebels, who, however, were dispersed by the Sylhet Light Infantry before the 54th could overtake them. The 54th companies remained at Sylhet until mid-January 1858, helping to maintain order, before re-joining Headquarters on 29 January. The services they rendered were officially acknowledged in a letter dated 8 June 1858 from the Secretary of the Government of Bengal to Colonel Michel.²

Meanwhile Nos 6, 7 and 8 Companies, under Major Jones, had been sent up-country on 19 January 1858, for duty on the line of communications between Calcutta and the major theatre of operations in Oudh.³ Though the British held the chief towns on the River Ganges (Patna, Benares and Allahabad), the main body of mutineers around Lucknow still remained and there were large groups of rebels roaming Oudh and Behar - consequently, communications were liable to be interrupted and life and property were under constant threat of attack.

From the railway terminus at Rani Gunge, the three companies proceeded by bullock-wagon, No 6 to Deyra Ghaut and Nos 7 and 8 to Sasseram.⁴ No 8 Company were to form part of one column (under Major Jones) of three, directed at the rebel fortress of Rhotas Gurh, south of Sasseram.⁵ The fortress was situated on the summit of a precipitous rock, rising 1,000 feet above the plain, the approach march running through dense and thorny jungle. Over a period of three days, the men showed great tenacity and determination, but were unable to close with the rebels. However, on converging with the other columns near the fortress, they found the rebels had escaped the trap, slipping past them into the jungle below.

Early in March 1858, all three companies were despatched to relieve a British detachment in trouble at Azimgarh, but on reaching Benares (still 50 miles south of their destination) they learnt this had already been accomplished. In April, the detachment, now under Captain O'Brien (for Major Jones had been badly injured in a gun accident at Benares),⁶ marched to relieve Ghazipore (30 miles down the Ganges), which was being threatened by Koer Singh. Reaching Ghazipore after two night marches, they found the rebels had been defeated and were retiring eastwards to cross the Ganges, seeking the safety

of the jungle towards Jagdispore. Sent downstream to cut off their retreat, the steamer they were travelling in ran aground rendering the detachment ineffective for 12 hours, during which time the rebels escaped unmolested.

Landing at Buxar, the three companies remained there until late June, when they were ordered to re-join Headquarters, now at Allahabad. Torrential rains slowed their journey, an elephant battery they were escorting became bogged down, and many baggage camels perished. The men of the 54th were no doubt glad of the bullock-wagons provided from Benares onwards and they reached Allahabad on 2 July 1858.⁷

Headquarters having concentrated at Allahabad by early March 1858, the Light Company and No 5 Company were detailed, under Major Gillum, to join a column commanded by Colonel Whistler for an attack on a rebel fort at Sirhoul, near Soraon, on 21 March 1858.⁸ This proved too strong for the column to overcome. After sharp fighting the attack was abandoned, the force falling back to Soraon. The 54th sustained five casualties out of the 130 men of the Regiment engaged.⁹ These were:

- 3041 Private James Porter: severely wounded, 21 March 1858
(and died of wounds on 27 March 1858)
- 4224 Private James Bundle: disabled by wound, 21 March 1858
- 2983 Private Michael Byrne: severely wounded, 21 March 1858
- 2517 Private Michael Lewis: severely wounded, 21 March 1858
- 3481 Private Edward Slavin: slightly wounded, 21 March 1858

Remaining at Soraon until July, the two companies then joined a column, under Brigadier General Berkeley, in an attack on another nearby rebel fort at Dahein. The fort was difficult to approach, being surrounded by dense jungle and a thick abattis. However an artillery bombardment followed by an infantry assault on 14 July was successful. The 7th Punjab Infantry, supported by 90 men of the 54th Regiment, inflicted approximately 250 casualties on the defenders in the area of the fort, and many more in the pursuit that followed.¹⁰ Losses were small, one man of the 54th being killed, and two dying of sunstroke later in the day. These were:

- 3886 Private Benjamin Butterworth: killed in action, 14 July 1858
- 2867 Private John Baylis: died of sunstroke, 14 July 1858
- 3224 Private George Weeding: died of sunstroke, 14 July 1858

Following up his success, Berkeley moved on against Sirhoul, ordering up the rest of the 54th as reinforcements. The regiment, under Colonel Michel, advanced from Allahabad to Soraon, but found Sirhoul had been evacuated on Berkeley's approach on 17 and 18 July. Some 86 men of the original detachment took part in this operation.¹¹ Returning to Soraon, the 54th remained there, as heavy rains suspended operations.

Over 100 men had been left at Allahabad on the sick list, Headquarters having been ravaged by fever since moving there. Some 120 men had died (54 in May alone), and hardly 600 other ranks were fit for duty, although drafts of 100 men reached India from the Depot companies in England by late July 1858.¹²

August saw the regiment join a column, under Brigadier General Pinckney, which captured Pertabghur, 20 miles north of Soraon. Moving towards Sultanpore, the column made contact with the forces around Lucknow, establishing a line of posts between Allahabad and Lucknow. With General Campbell having taken Lucknow in March, and

General Rose taking Gwalior after his operations in Central India during April and May, the clearance of Oudh could be undertaken. A number of columns would sweep eastern Oudh, between the Ganges and Goomti rivers, driving the rebels across the Goomti, Gogra and Raptée in succession, towards the frontier with Britain's ally, Nepal.

The 54th were assigned to a column concentrated at Beylah, the Grenadier Company and No 8 Company, under Captain Thomson, seeing action in a successful attack on the nearby rebel fort at Deolee in early November.¹³ The main advance began on 9 November 1858, with three columns converging on the rebel stronghold of Amethia, which the mutineers quickly evacuated - probably saving the 54th many casualties, for they had been detailed to assault the strong main gate. With Campbell's advance meeting little serious opposition, the 54th were now left to guard his line of communications. Headquarters were at Sultanpore, with the left wing at Rai Barelli (and later Fyzabad), the regiment remaining in the field until the following October of 1859, as Campbell's columns destroyed forts, dispersed groups of rebels, and hunted down their leaders.

Between October 1859 and January 1860, the 54th were part of a Trans-Gogra Brigade, along the Raptée River, with Headquarters at Utrowlah, under Colonel Herbert, and the left wing at Kurkowree, under Lieutenant Colonel Brett. Their duties included covering the passages of the Raptée, and the interception of fugitive rebels, driven out of the Himalayan foothills by Gurkha forces. Early in January 1860, with the break-up of the Trans-Gogra Brigade and the Mutiny virtually over, the regiment was sent to Cawnpore.

Though not glamorous, protecting lines of communications was essential work, involving strenuous exertions, this being reflected in the regiment's heavy death-rate. Over 200 members of the regiment had died between 1858 and 1859, many others being invalided. Drafts of over 400 men by the end of 1859 helped to replace the losses and enabled the 54th to stay in the field.¹⁴ Arriving too late for the well-known engagements around Delhi and Lucknow, and their duties keeping them out of other major actions, the regiment gained no battle honour (though faring in this respect no worse than several regiments who had seen more action). Only the Light Company and No 5 Company received the initial issue of the Indian Mutiny Medal,¹⁵ until the revised conditions of 1868 resulted in the rest of the 54th qualifying for the award.

After the Mutiny the 54th remained in India, not arriving home in England until April 1866. During its eight years in India, the regiment buried five officers and 376 men to dysentery, cholera, fever, apoplexy and other causes, with a further 350 men being invalided, 154 sent home time-expired or discharged and 262 transferred to other units.¹⁶

1 C.T. Atkinson (1947), *The Dorsetshire Regiment*, vol II, p 157. This work has been drawn upon extensively for the tone and form of this chapter in detailing the activities and movements of the various detachments of the 54th throughout the Mutiny, and due acknowledgement is here made to Atkinson.

2 *Records of the 54th*, 1881, *op cit*, p 75.

3 Atkinson, 1947, *op cit*, p 158.

4 *Ibid*

5 *Ibid*, p 159.

6 *Ibid*

7 *Ibid*, p 160.

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- 8 TNA ref: WO 100/37: 'Roll of Officers and Men of HM's 54th Regiment who have been employed in the suppression of the Mutiny in India, Camp Ballah, 2 October 1858'.
- 9 *Ibid*
- 10 *Ibid*
- 11 *Ibid*
- 12 Atkinson, 1947, *op cit*, p 161.
- 13 *Ibid*
- 14 *Ibid*, pp 162-3.
- 15 *Ibid*, p 163.
- 16 *Ibid*, p 165.

CHAPTER 13

Twilight of the *Sarah Sands*

Following the departure of the 54th Regiment, the *Sarah Sands* appears to have lain at Port Louis, a virtual hulk, until she was purchased by three Liverpool merchants, Edward Bates, Thomas Stenhouse and John Williams, in March 1859.¹ These three retained the title to the *Sarah Sands*, in the same share proportions, for the remainder of the ship's ocean-going life.

After being repaired and made seaworthy, the *Sarah Sands* left Mauritius on 13 October 1859,² under the command of a man who knew her well, Washington Ilsley, arriving home in Liverpool on 3 January 1860.³ Overhauled and outfitted throughout 1860, she was duly registered on 7 December 1860.⁴ Eleven days later the *Sarah Sands* sailed from Liverpool to begin the first of seven round trip voyages to India.

During this voyage an attempt was made to sell the *Sarah Sands*, title being temporarily granted for this purpose to a syndicate of merchants based in Bombay, Singapore and Hong Kong on 18 February that year.⁵ The syndicate, headed by Fulcher and Co, were unable to sell the ship for the minimum asking price of £15,000, at Bombay, Singapore, or any port in China, and following the option expiring after 12 months, ownership reverted to the original shareholders.⁶

Between 1860 and 1868, the ship would make six voyages to Bombay, and one to Madras, under four different captains: John Gillies (three voyages 1860-64), Thomas White (two voyages 1864-66), Alexander McKenzie (one and a half voyages 1866-68) and William Armstrong (half a voyage 1868).⁷ During this period, in 1864, between Captain Gillies and Captain White's commands, the *Sarah Sands* had her engines removed and on 16 August 1864 her registry was changed from steamship to sailing vessel.⁸

During these years, the ship was involved in collisions on two occasions - on 30 January 1862, in Nelson Dock, Liverpool, she broke free from her moorings and damaged the bows of the *Venetian*,⁹ - and in getting under way from Bombay, on 10 June 1868, she collided with the *Sakura*, doing serious damage to that vessel's starboard quarter, the *Sarah Sands* having main and mizen channels carried away.¹⁰

On 12 December 1868 the *Sarah Sands*, under yet another captain, William Robertson, departed Liverpool for Bombay with a cargo of coal, on what was to be her last voyage.¹¹ In darkness, at 4.40am on 17 April 1869, through an error in reckoning, the ship was wrecked on the steep coral reef (at Latitude 10°3'N and Longitude 73°43'E) adjoining the Island of Kalpeni in the Laccadives, some 170 miles off the Malabar Coast of India.¹² Though the ship and its cargo were completely written off, no lives were lost, the commander and crew being taken from Kalpeni to Alleppy in an island boat, then on to Cochin, where the Master Attendant provided them with passage to Bombay on the steamer *Martaban*.¹³

The registration of the *Sarah Sands* was duly cancelled on 24 September 1869,¹⁴ the ship's 23 year career ending, though not unusually so for a sailing vessel, in rather inglorious fashion.

1 TNA ref: BT 108/66 (Transcripts and Transactions). The Certificate of Sale, dated 14 March 1859, granted Bates, Stenhouse and Williams 40, 16 and 8 shares respectively in the ship.

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- 2 *Lloyd's List*, 10 December 1859.
- 3 *Lloyd's List*, 4 January 1860.
- 4 TNA ref: BT 108/66, *op cit*.
- 5 TNA ref: BT 109/50 (Transcripts and Transactions). The syndicate included William Lake Fulcher and William Johns of Bombay, William MacTaggart and James Murray of Singapore, and Robert Jardine, Alex Percival, John Charles Bowing, James McAndrew and Malcolm Anderson Macleod of Hong Kong.
- 6 *Ibid.*; TNA ref: BT 109/64 (Transcripts and Transactions).
- 7 *Lloyd's Lists*, 1860-68.
- 8 TNA ref: BT 108/86 (Transcripts and Transactions).
- 9 *Lloyd's List*, 31 January 1862.
- 10 *Lloyd's List*, 16 July 1868..
- 11 *Lloyd's List*, 14 December 1868; extract from G.O. Marine No 134, 9 June 1869.
- 12 Extract from G.O. Marine No 134, 9 June 1869.
- 13 *Ibid*
- 14 TNA ref: BT 108/86, *op cit*.

EPILOGUE

When the 54th returned to England in 1866, of the 354 non-commissioned officers and men that had sailed for India aboard the *Sarah Sands*, less than one-third remained with the regiment - 98 having died (58 of them by the end of 1858), with 64 being invalided and 71 discharged, plus 12 transferred to other units.¹

Of the officers, Lieutenant Cronyn had committed suicide, shooting himself in the fort at Calcutta in 1862; Lieutenant Schlotel, Lieutenant Galbraith and Brevet Major Gillum had sold their commissions in 1858, 1860 and 1861 respectively, retiring from the Army; Lieutenant and Adjutant Houston was promoted Captain in the 2/4th Regiment in 1858, and died whilst on leave in France in 1860; Assistant Surgeon O'Donovan transferred to the Staff in 1858 and Surgeon Grant transferred to the 84th Regiment in 1859, both retiring in 1879 as Surgeon Major and Surgeon General respectively; Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Brett transferred to the 61st Regiment in 1861, retiring as an Honorary Lieutenant General in 1881; and Quartermaster Hipkin retired in 1863 as an Honorary Captain.²

After the regiment's return to England, Lieutenant Wood transferred to the 64th Regiment, retiring as an Honorary Major in 1877 (and was made Honorary Lieutenant Colonel in 1881); Captain Thomson transferred to the 2/14th Regiment in 1873, retiring as an Honorary Lieutenant General in 1882; while the only officers to remain with the 54th until retirement were Paymaster Daniel, (who had transferred to the Depot Battalion in 1858), retiring as an Honorary Lieutenant Colonel (Paymaster) in 1881, and Lieutenant Hughes, who retired as an Honorary Major General in 1884.³

Lieutenant Colonel Moffat, after being promoted Colonel in 1861, was given command of the 1st West India Regiment at Barbados in 1862, selling his commission four years later in 1866. He died in 1890, having never fully regained his reputation.⁴

Three members of the regiment eventually wrote substantial accounts of the fire aboard the *Sarah Sands*. Lieutenant Frederick Schlotel saw his published in 1870 – a slim, blue, cloth-backed, readable account of 29 pages. Under the by-line of 'A Late 54th Officer' (though he signs the preface 'FS'), and acknowledging the kindness of Lieutenant Colonel Thomson (who was a Captain in the 54th at the time of the fire) in rendering assistance towards the book's completion, Schlotel frustratingly makes no mention of his own part during the fire, and specifically states his intention 'to avoid mentioning anything that would give pain or offence to a single individual'.⁵ Sergeant William Murray's account, written at the instigation of the Duke of Northumberland, was published in 1906 (and at 32 pages on a par with Schlotel's volume). Murray borrows liberally from Schlotel's book, and indeed often plagiarizes his text, interspersing his own knowledge of the events, especially as it concerns the Grenadier Company, along with his own renderings of the dialogue occurring between prominent individuals at critical moments.⁶

The year 1906 also saw the first publication of Private George Diggins' account, published under the blanket series title of 'Survivors Tales of Great Events'. The title page features a head and shoulders portrait of Diggins in old age in the pensioners uniform of the Royal Hospital Chelsea and proudly wearing his Indian Mutiny Medal. The passage of time does not appear to have dulled his memory, and his version does not lack for colour,

though his description of one of the Cape ‘mutineers’ (‘a one-eyed man, called Scottie, the best of the crew’) being still in irons and having to haul himself out of the blazing inferno below decks, is not corroborated by other accounts.⁷

A version by Rudyard Kipling, ‘The Burning of the *Sarah Sands*’, in the 1898 Christmas number of *Black and White*,⁸ brought Captain Castle back into the public eye. Kipling’s words roused Castle to respond – identical letters appearing in the columns of the *Daily Mail* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* – defending at length the composition and conduct of his crew, feeling it was his: ‘duty to draw public attention to several inaccuracies in the story.’⁹ He goes on:

I must, however, take exception to Mr Kipling’s description of the crew ... There were only two or three foreigners on board. The crew was not composed of pierhead jumpers, and were not picked up at the last minute, but were shipped at the shipping office in the East India Road, Poplar; neither were they bad, lazy, or insubordinate. I had no difficulty with them, with one exception, which was while lying in Simon’s Bay ... Mr Kipling accuses the crew of having behaved shamefully in abandoning the vessel. Now, this I also positively deny. Any person with the slightest knowledge of ships’ boats must be aware that they cannot be lowered and handled without men, and therefore I had to send men to take charge of them to prevent them being damaged or lost, and as there were seven boats it necessarily took several of the seamen from the ship. The only persons of the crew that left the ship without orders, as far as I am aware, were three firemen. These men I prosecuted on my arrival at the Mauritius ... Mr Kipling has published what I consider to be grave charges against the sailor portion of the crew, and has entirely ignored the services of the officers of the ship ... I have no wish to underestimate the services rendered by the troops, both officers and men. They worked admirably, and I have no hesitation in saying that had it not been for their services, and the discipline that was kept up by them, the ship could not possibly have been saved, ... but I must at the same time put on record the noble and self-sacrificing aid afforded me by my own officers and the large majority of my crew.¹⁰

Castle had retired from the P & O Company’s service in 1870 – some years earlier he had been instrumental in saving yet another vessel, the *Candia*, that had been caught by a cyclone three days out from Aden while bound for Ceylon, turning back under canvas when it became impossible to maintain steam.¹¹ After leaving P & O the Captain was to remain active for the following thirty years, as an Assessor to the Wreck Court, an Inspector to the Board of Trade for Marine Inquiries (including that into the loss of the *Drummond Castle* in 1896¹²), a Nautical Assessor to HM Court of Appeal, and he was also a member of the Board of Trade Committee on Ship’s Side Lights in 1895, not retiring from the nautical world until he was approaching 80 years of age in 1901.¹³

By June 1911 the Regimental Paymaster informed William Murray that there were 16 survivors of the 368 troops who had been aboard the *Sarah Sands* 54 years before, though he does not note their names.¹⁴ Two years later, in December 1913, one newspaper reported that there were three surviving members of the 54th Regiment who had served aboard the *Sarah Sands*, all in frail health: Sergeant Buckingham, living in Colchester, Private James Stacey, living in Epsom,¹⁵ and Private John Fry, living in Wales.¹⁶ There were in fact at least two further survivors, George Diggins, who was an in-pensioner in the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, who survived until the spring of 1914, and Charles Laffan, who was living in Burnley. He died on 5 February 1921 and was buried in the local cemetery five days later with military honours.¹⁷ Just a few months later James

Buckingham died in Colchester, the last known survivor of those members of the 54th Regiment who had sailed on the *Sarah Sands*.¹⁸

The Colours saved from the blazing saloon aboard the *Sarah Sands* were laid up in Norwich Cathedral on 19 January 1867. Handed over to the Dorset Regiment in 1946, they now reside in Sherborne Abbey as a tangible repository of the regiment's history.

The events aboard the *Sarah Sands* were celebrated by the 54th in November every year. *Sarah Sands* Day, also referred to as the *Sarah Sands* Gallop, typically involved a march and shooting competition, while the Sergeants Mess organised a *Sarah Sands* Ball in the evening from at least 1887. These traditions continued with the regiment's lineal descendants, the Dorset Regiment (as it became in 1881) and the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment (following amalgamation of the two regiments in 1958). In 2007 the regiment experienced a further amalgamation and assumed its current title of the 1st Battalion The Rifles. They still hold the Gallop and Ball, albeit on a somewhat less frequent basis.

The remains of the *Sarah Sands* reputedly lie some five fathoms deep off the entrance to the lagoon of Kalpeni Island.¹⁹ Today, outside of the regimental museum, which is housed in The Keep Military Museum, in Dorchester, the only visible manifestation testifying to the existence of the *Sarah Sands* is the 'Sarah Sands Hotel', in Brunswick, Melbourne, which commemorates the ship's launch date of 1846 on its facade.

1 Extracted from Appendix B.

2 Extracted from Appendix E.

3 *Ibid*

4 *Ibid*

5 Schlotel, 1870, *op cit*.

6 Murray, 1906, *op cit*.

7 Diggins account in Wood, 1974, *op cit*.

8 The account was subsequently republished in Kipling's (1923) *Land and Sea Tales for Scouts and Guides*, London: Methuen, pp 161-172.

9 *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1898.

10 *Ibid*

11 *The Times*, 28 December 1904.

12 *Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal*, No 25, September 1995, p 13.

13 *Shipping World*, 28 December 1904.

14 William Murray to OC, 2nd Bn Dorset Regiment, 18 April 1912, The Keep Military Museum archives.

15 *Western Gazette*, 11 February 1916, p 5.

16 *Western Gazette*, 12 December 1913, p 2.

17 D. Ingham, email to the author, 21 January 2013; *Burnley Express*, 9 February 1921, p 5.

18 James Buckingham's death certificate: Colchester Registrar's District, April-June 1921, vol.4a, p 648.

19 McGivering, 1976, *op cit*, p 12.

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**Charles Laffan, a survivor of the *Sarah Sands*
who lived until 1921**

APPENDIX A

Crew of the *Sarah Sands*

NAME	AGE	RATE	BIRTHPLACE	PREVIOUS SHIP AND PORT OF REGISTRY
Adamson, Charles	39	2nd Engineer	Kincardine	<i>Sarah Sands</i> , of Liverpool
Anderson, Matthew	24	AB	Glasgow	<i>Catherine Glen</i> , of Liverpool
Armon, Thomas	16	Ordinary Seaman	London	<i>Sir George Seymour</i> , of London
Attwood, William C.	25	Pantryman	Dublin	<i>Merchantman</i> , of London
Barwick, Victor	24	AB	Amsterdam	<i>Thetis</i> , of Dundee
Bergin, Daniel	26	Bedroom Stwd	USA	<i>Gloriana</i> , of Newcastle
Bland, William	21	Ordinary Seaman	Bermondsey	<i>Interloper</i> , of London
Boulter, Joseph	16	Boy	Islington	First voyage
Brockleband, Andrew	21	Ordinary Seaman	Whitehaven	<i>Trafalgar</i> , of London
Cairncross, Alexander	27	Baker	Edinburgh	<i>Champion of the Seas</i> , Liverpool
Canvin, George	43	Storekeeper	Poplar	<i>Avon</i> , of London
Castle, John Squier	35	Captain (Cert No 2314)	Folkestone	<i>Australian</i> , of London
Chambers, William	29	Carpenter	Stromness	<i>Chouringhee</i> , of Belfast
Clurgh, William	22	2nd Steward	London	<i>Istamboul</i> , of London
Cowles, William	28	Fireman	Suffolk	<i>Kellingworth</i> , of Sunderland
Cox, Thomas	19	Ordinary Seaman	London	<i>Roxburgh Castle</i> , of London
Crispin, Thomas	40	AB	Devonshire	<i>HMS Monarch</i>
Crumpton, Thomas	24	Boatswain's Mate	Hawkesbury	<i>Powerful</i> , of London
Cunningham, William	37	AB	Glasgow	<i>Jn. Davies</i> , of Liverpool
Easthorpe, J.D.	20	Purser	Scotland	First voyage
Ennis, Walter	40	Fireman	Dublin	<i>Prussian Eagle</i> , of Cork
Fraser, John	37	1st Engineer	Aberdeen	<i>Sarah Sands</i> , of Liverpool
Gaston, James	41	Cook	Sussex	<i>Sydney</i> , of London
Hills, James	27	Fireman	Greenwich	<i>San Diomisco</i> , of London
Hirman, -----	27	Boatswain	Kent	<i>Robert Lowe</i> , of London
Hogberg, S.	29	Ordinary Seaman	Sweden	Swedish vessel
James, George	22	Fireman	Greenwich	<i>Norman</i> , of Southampton
Keef, John	42	Fireman	Cork	<i>Sarah Sands</i> , of Liverpool
Kelly, Thomas	23	3rd Officer	London	<i>Kent</i> , of London
Kirton, Joseph	18	Boy	Portsmouth	First voyage
Lewis, William	26	Fireman	Poplar	<i>James Brown</i> , of Glasgow
Livingston, James	34	Quartermaster	Glasgow	<i>Australian</i> , of London
McAvoy, Jeremiah	27	Fireman	Dublin	<i>Flora</i> , of Waterford
MacDonald, James	28	Fireman	Cork	<i>Victoria</i> , of London
McLorg, Frank	15	Apprentice (Midshipman)	Islington	First voyage
Malcolm, James	31	Boatswain's Mate	Belfast	<i>Radius</i> , of Sunderland

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NAME	AGE	RATE	BIRTHPLACE	PREVIOUS SHIP AND PORT OF REGISTRY
Meehan, William	18	Servant	Spaldwick	<i>Australian</i> , of London
Miller, James	25	AB	Forfar	<i>Marlborough</i> , of Newcastle
Murphy, Bartholomew	26	Fireman	Macroom	<i>Bittern</i> , of Cork
Newman, Thomas	34	AB	Gloucester	<i>John Temperley</i> , of London
Newton, John	30	3rd Engineer	Lancashire	<i>Sydney</i> , of London
Pain, William	20	Ordinary Seaman	Grays	<i>Powerful</i> , of London
Parsons, Alfred	22	AB	Liverpool	<i>Sunderland</i> , of Windsor N.S.
Phillips, Edwin	18	Midshipman	London	<i>Irene</i> , of London
Powell, Joseph	18	Boy	London	<i>Australian</i> , of London
Radford, Edward	42	Quartermaster	London	<i>Sydney</i> , of London
Randall, Robert	22	AB	Stamford	<i>Trafalgar</i> , of London
Redsall, George	18	Ordinary Seaman	Cambridge	<i>O'Glendower</i> , of London
Richmond, Richard	25	Quartermaster	Southampton	<i>Powerful</i> , of London
Roper, Samuel	37	4th Engineer	Paisley	<i>Times</i> , of London
Smart, James Henry	17	Boy	London	<i>Hope</i> , of London
Smith, James	22	AB	Canterbury	<i>William Ash</i> , of London
Smith, Shord (?)	42	AB	New York	<i>Live Yankee</i> , of New York
Stather, William	25	Fireman	Hull	<i>Tonning</i> , of London
Stewart, William	45	Quartermaster	Pimlico	<i>HMS Tickler</i>
Tickell, John Arscott	31	2nd Officer (Cert No 8182)	Cornwall	<i>Sydney</i> , of London
Tomkins, William Henry	24	AB	Bermuda	<i>William Mitcalfe</i> , of Shields
Underwood, John	28	Butcher	Wigan	<i>Champion of the Seas</i> , Liverpool
Waters, George	27	AB	Southampton	<i>John Temperley</i> , of London
Welch, Septimus Robert	29	1st Officer (Cert No 3682)	London	<i>Niagara</i> , of Liverpool
Wilkinan, William	20	Ordinary Seaman	Finland	<i>Faith</i> , of Boston, Mass.
Williams, James	23	Fireman	London	<i>Alma</i> , of Greenock
Wood, George	20	4th Officer	London	<i>Neptune</i> , of Dundee
Woodward, Walter	28	Fireman	London	<i>Prince Arthur</i> , of Glasgow

The above roll is derived from the Agreements and Crew Lists held in The National Archives (TNA ref: BT 98/6742) and the Registers of Certificates of Competency and Service (TNA ref: BT 122). However, the 3rd Officer named in contemporary accounts of this voyage (J.G. Verey) is not listed in the surviving Crew List, Thomas Kelly being named as the 3rd Officer instead. It may be that Kelly was not aboard for the voyage, that he disembarked in South Africa or that he was rated differently. Two further crew members were named among the witnesses procured by Lieutenant Colonel Moffat, these were Hill, Lewis and Verey being listed below as confirmed aboard the *Sarah Sands*.

Hill, William Henry	-	Steward	-	
Lewis, G.H.	-	Seaman	-	
Verey, John Gutch	18	3rd Officer Cet No 23174	London	<i>Agamemnon</i> , of London

APPENDIX B

Officers and Men of the 54th Regiment who sailed on the *Sarah Sands*

This appendix is a comprehensive list, alphabetically arranged, of the officers and men of HM's 54th Regiment of Foot, who embarked on the *Sarah Sands* on 15 August 1857. It has been compiled from the regimental muster rolls now preserved in The National Archives. To this has been added details of every man's medal entitlement, gleaned from the medal rolls in The National Archives and the India Office Library and Records, *Hart's Army Lists*, and soldiers documents in The National Archives.

The names of certain soldiers have been open to some doubt, due to alternative spellings in the various sources. Thus, Neil may appear as Neale or Neile, Champion as Campion, Minehane as Mynehain or Mynchan, Walch as Walsh, Smyth as Smith, and so on. Careful cross-checking of the various sources was thus necessary to ensure the accuracy of the following roll, though clearly some errors may remain. As with names, so too the soldiers' regimental numbers have differed, and again it was necessary to cross-check the sources in order to ascertain the correct numbers. The various ranks listed are those held on 15 August 1857.

With regard to the 'MEDALS KNOWN' column, several things should be noted. This records details of every man's medal entitlement, where this has been possible to check on the extant sources. For some awards not all the medal rolls are available, thus a few men may be entitled to additional awards. Also, it may be that some men gained awards, as yet untraced, for services with other units.

The Indian Mutiny Medal, as will be seen, is the main award, and here two separate issues of this medal have been differentiated. The original issue (authorised by G.O.G.G., 18 August 1858, No 363) and the so-called 1868 issue (authorised by G.O.G.G., 12 August 1868, No 771), which extended the qualifying conditions for awarding the medal. These issues are termed 'Mutiny' and 'Mutiny (68)' respectively in the following roll. (For further details relating to the issue of this medal, and the differences between its various issues, see R.T. Willoughby's 'The Indian Mutiny Medal 1857-59' in *The Journal of the Orders and Medals Research Society*, Summer 1987, Vol 26, (195) pp76-84.

The 'REMARKS' column gives some brief details which may be useful to anybody undertaking biographical or genealogical research into individual soldiers. This has been compiled mainly from the regimental muster rolls and the soldiers documents. In some instances, reference is made to further information given in the form of footnotes at the end of this appendix, for reasons of space it being inconvenient to include this in the main body of the appendix.

Additionally, the 'REMARKS' column has been cross-referenced to Appendix C (those medals which were returned to the Royal Mint); Appendix D (those medals known to exist); Appendix E (biographies of the officers of the 54th, and those men mentioned for distinguished conduct, aboard the *Sarah Sands*); and Appendix F (correlating the original issue of the Mutiny Medal with the involvement in the attacks on Sirhoul and Dahein).

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Abbreviations used in the Roll:

App	Appendix (Apps - Appendices)
Arm Sgt	Armourer Sergeant
Asst Surg	Assistant Surgeon
Col Sgt	Colour Sergeant
Cpl	Corporal
D	Died
DoW	Died of Wounds
Drm Mjr	Drum Major
Ds	Discharged
Hosp Sgt	Hospital Sergeant
Inv	Invalided
IOL&R	India Office Library and Records
KiA	Killed in Action
LSGC	Long Service and Good Conduct Medal
Lt	Lieutenant
Lt Col	Lieutenant Colonel
Maj	Major
MSM	Meritorious Service Medal
ORC	Orderly Room Clerk
PM Sgt	Pay-Master Sergeant
QM	Quarter-Master
QMS	Quarter-Master Sergeant
RHS	Royal Humane Society
RtM	Mutiny Medal Returned to Mint
SF&MRBS	Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners Royal Benevolent Society
Sgt	Sergeant
Sgt Mjr	Sergeant Major
SH	Sent Home
SHD	Sent Home for Discharge
Sl; Sv Wnd	Slightly; Severely Wounded
Tr	Transferred

Appendix B Officers and Men of the 54th Regiment who sailed on the Sarah Sands

NAME	RANK	NO	MEDALS KNOWN	REMARKS
Abbot, James	Private	2521		D 2.12.1858
Alsip, William	Private	3149	Mutiny (68)	Inv 4.2.1863; RtM; App C
Ankle, James	Private	3458	Mutiny (68)	Tr 79th Foot; RtM; App C
Appleyard, William E.	Private	3542		D 17.9.1858; <i>Carlisle Journal</i> , 26.2.1858, p 9
Atkins, Edward	Private	2335	Mutiny	D 16.9.1859; RtM; Apps C and F
Augustus, John	Private	2783	Mutiny (68)	SHD 13.2.1861(time expired); RtM; App C
Bairne, William	Private	3846	Mutiny (68)	Tr 82nd Foot
Baldwin, James	Private	4242	Mutiny (68)	Inv 13.2.1859; Ds 17.5.1861; RtM; App C
Barnwell, George	Private	1222	Mutiny; LSGC	alias Samuel Ludlam; Inv 5.1.1861; Ds 13.8.1862; App F
Barrell, Alfred	Private	4178	Mutiny	D 3.7.1859; RtM; Apps C and F
Barry, Michael	Private	2573	Mutiny; LSGC	Ds 7.4.1868; App F; Note 1
Barton, Joseph	Private	3164	Mutiny	Tr 27th Foot 1.1.1864; App F
Barwick, Richard	QMS	1480		D 21.5.1858
Baxter, Samuel	Sergeant	2713	Mutiny (68)	Inv 31.8.1859; Ds 10.2.1860; RtM; App C
Baylis, John	Private	2867	Mutiny	D 14.7.1858; App F
Bell, Hugh	Private	3380	Mutiny	Ds 30.4.1866; App F
Bell, James	Private	3666	Mutiny	SHD 17.6.1865; Ds 30.10.1865; App F
Benn, John	Private	2868		Inv 6.1.1862; Ds 9.4.1863
Bennett, Thomas	Private	3704	Mutiny	App F
Bentley, Henry	Private	2888	Mutiny (68)	RtM; App C
Blore, Edward	Private	2802		Band; D 2.7.1858
Boggs, John	Corporal	2147	Mutiny	SHD 13.2.1861
Bond, Benjamin	Private	3976	Mutiny (68)	later Sergeant; RtM; App C
Bond, William	Private	4257	Mutiny	D 26.7.1860; RtM; Apps C and F
Bosworth, Joseph	Private	2891		Band; D 17.8.1858
Boughtflower, James	Drummer	4096	Mutiny	Ds 17.9.1867; App F
Bowie, Alexander	Private	4137	Mutiny (68)	Inv 7.11.1864; RtM; App C
Bowins, Robert	Private	3345	Mutiny (68)	
Bowins, Samuel	Corporal	1087	Mutiny (68)	Band; Inv 24.2.1863; Ds 21.7.1863 (as Sgt); App D
Bowins, Thomas	Private	4279	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Ds 16.2.1880; RtM; Apps C and D

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NAME	RANK	NO	MEDALS KNOWN	REMARKS
Boyd, John	Private	3336	Mutiny	Inv 10.2.1864; Ds 29.8.1865; D 4.12.1865; App F
Boyden, George	Private	3223	Mutiny	D 13.8.1861; RtM; Apps C and F
Boyle, Peter	Private	4143		D 30.5.1859
Bradley, John	Private	1977	Mutiny (68)	Inv 4.2.1863; Ds 9.2.1864; RtM; App C
Brander, William	Private	4039		Inv 22.3.1859
Brandon, Thomas	Private	4206	Mutiny	D 26.8.1860; RtM; Apps C and F
Brett, William F.	Major		Mutiny (68); RHS silver	Apps D and E
Brevitt, Mathias	Col Sgt	1814	Mutiny; LSGC	Inv 5.1.1861; Ds 7.2.1863; App F
Brien, Denis	Private	2477	Mutiny	D 18.4.1868; App F
Brittany, Stephen	Private	3433	Mutiny	Ds 17.6.1865; App F
Broughton, Edward	Private	4114	Mutiny	D 23.8.1858; RtM; Apps C and F
Brown, John	Private	4028	Mutiny	Cigar-maker from London; App F
Bryant, William	Private	4219	Mutiny	Ds 30.5.1866; App F
Buckingham, Henry	Private	2937	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Band; later Sgt
Buckingham, James	Private	2958	Mutiny (68)	App E
Bundle, James	Private	4224	Mutiny	Disabled by wound 21.3.1858; SH 10.10.1858; <i>Portsmouth Evening News</i> , 27.12.1904; Apps D and F
Burke, John	Private	2869		D 23.5.1858
Burns, Alexander	Private	3478	Mutiny	Inv 4.2.1863; App F
Burns, James	Private	3184	Mutiny	App F
Butterworth, Benjamin	Private	3886	Mutiny	KiA 14.7.1858; RtM; Apps C and F
Byrne, Michael	Private	2983	Mutiny	Sv Wnd 21.3.1858; Apps E and F
Cairnes, Daniel	Private	3365	Mutiny	Ds 27.10.1865; D 13.6.1867; App F
Callaway, Henry	Drummer	1082		D 4.10.1860
Canavan, Bartholomew	Private	2610		App E
Cannon, Cormick	Private	3195	Mutiny (68)	Inv 13.2.1861; Ds 20.6.1862; RtM; App C
Carding, Thomas	Private	4075	Mutiny; LSGC	App F
Carmichael, James	Private	2315	Mutiny	Apps E and F
Carr, John	Private	3067	Mutiny (68)	
Cattermole, David	Private	2854	Mutiny	Ds 3.9.1866; App F
Chamberlin, Joseph	Private	1153	LSGC	SH 12.11.1858; Ds 13.11.1860; App D

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NAME	RANK	NO	MEDALS KNOWN	REMARKS
Chambers, John	Private	3006		D 18.5.1869
Champion, William	Private	1778	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Inv 13.2.1861; Ds 3.2.1863
Chaplinn, George	Private	3222		D 3.5.1858; buried Allahabad 4.5.1858, surname noted as 'Chaplan'
Chapman, James	Private	3121	Mutiny (68); MSM; LSGC	Ds 15.2.1875 (as Col Sgt); D 6.1.1902; Note 2
Chapman, Mayer	Private	3172	Mutiny (68)	Tr 102nd Foot 9.3.1864
Chell, Thomas	Private	2835	Mutiny (68)	SH 20.4.1861
Chippington, William	Sergeant	2828	Mutiny	Ds 1.7.1861; Sgt, Londonderry Militia, 1.1862; Donegal Militia, 1.1873; D 17.11.1885; Apps D and F
Christopher, William	Private	3598		D 24.10.1860
Clelland, John	Private	3071	Mutiny	D 23.5.1858; App F
Clephane, John	Private	3557	Mutiny (68)	SH 20.4.1865; Ds 5.9.1865; RtM; App C
Cole, William	Private	3083	Mutiny (68)	SH 30.4.1863 (time expired); Ds 21.9.1863; RtM; App C
Connacher, Daniel	Private	3103	Mutiny	SH 11.1.1864 (time expired); Ds 9.5.1864; Apps D and F
Connelly, James	Private	3937	Mutiny	D 11.1.1865 (as Sgt); App F
Connier, Michael	Corporal	2217	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Ds 25.9.1866 (as Sgt); App D
Cooper, Benjamin	Private	3618		D 29.8.1863
Copsey, Thomas	Private	4158	Mutiny; LSGC	later Sgt; a presentation inkwell is in Regimental Museum; <i>Bury & Norwich Post</i> , 22.3.1898, p.5; D 2.1909; App F
Corn, Thomas	Private	3057	Mutiny (68)	Inv 16.1.1862; RtM; App C
Cory, Henry	Private	3252	Mutiny	Ds 7.6.1865; App F
Cox, John	Corporal	2856	Mutiny	Apps D and F
Cranham, Thomas	Private	4231		D 17.9.1860
Creedon, Daniel	Private	3799		D 18.9.1858
Crompton, William	Col Sgt	1406	Mutiny; LSGC	Born Kandy, Ceylon; Ds 7.11.1861; App F
Cronyn, George	Lieutenant		Mutiny	Apps E and F
Crosby, Henry	Private	4167	Mutiny (68)	Ds 1.11.1863; RtM; App C
Crosby, Richard	Drummer	2849		D 10.7.1859
Cuff, Patrick	Private	2061	LSGC	Band; Inv 7.11.1864; Ds 11.9.1866

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NAME	RANK	NO	MEDALS KNOWN	REMARKS
Cuff, William	Private	2694	Mutiny; LSGC	Ds 10.8.1869; App F
Cumming, Thomas	Private	3802		D 21.6.1858
Curran, Peter	Private	3196	Mutiny	SH 12.1.1865; Ds 7.6.1865; App F
Curry, William	Private	2045	Mutiny (68)	SH 10.10.1860; RtM; App C
Curties, John	Private	2771	Mutiny	Ds 21.2.1869; App F
Dale, Walter	Private	4101	Mutiny (68)	
Dalton, Solomon	Private	4236	Mutiny (68); LSGC	
Daniel, Samuel	Pay-Master		Mutiny (68)	RtM; Apps C and E
Darbyshire, James W.	Sergeant	1161	Mutiny (68)	Inv 14.2.1864; Ds 5.7.1864
Dawson, Michael	Private	2982	Mutiny	Ds 12.3.1867; App F
Day, John	Drummer	4042		D 25.3.1861
Delany, Patrick	Private	3595		SH 19.11.1858
Denton, Robert	Private	3037	Mutiny	Apps E and F
Dever, Patrick	Private	2924	Mutiny	Ds 9.8.1862; App F
Diggins, George	Private	2818	Mutiny (68)	Apps D and E
Dodd, George	Private	2963	Mutiny	App E; Note 3
Donley, Joshua	Private	3094		
Doran, James	Private	3003	Mutiny	D 10.5.1867(as Sgt.); RtM; Apps C and F
Doyle, James	Sergeant	3040		App E
Doyle, John	Private	3406		App E
Driscoll, William	Corporal	1411		D 13.5.1858
Duckard, James	Private	3680	Mutiny	RtM; Apps C and F
Dunlop, Robert	Private	3464	Mutiny	App F
Dunn, William	Private	3375	Mutiny	App F
East, Robert	Private	1367	Mutiny; LSGC	Inv 5.1.1861; App F
Elflett, Charles	Private	3771	Mutiny	Tr Dublin District 13.5.1869; Ds 13.7.1869; App F
Entwistle, Samuel	Private	3983	Mutiny	D 2.9.1858; RtM; Apps C and F
Everson, Alfred	Private	2858	Mutiny	D 15.7.1858; App F
Ewington, Daniel	Private	1194	Mutiny; LSGC	D 10.6.1861; App F
Ewington, Daniel	Boy	3		Private 9.3.1858; Ds 29.9.1868 (as Cpl)
Falls, William	Private	3167	Mutiny (68)	Tr 77th Foot
Ferguson, James	Private	2126		D 22.5.1858
Ferris, Alexander	Private	3653	Mutiny; LSGC	Ds 5.1876; Apps D and F

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NAME	RANK	NO	MEDALS KNOWN	REMARKS
Fish, William	Private	2816	Mutiny (68)	SH 11.1.1861 (time expired)
Fitzpatrick, James	Private	3069	Mutiny (68); LSGC	App E
Fleming, James	Private	3382		D 23.4.1858
Folland, Phillip	Private	3574	Mutiny	<i>North Devon Journal</i> , 18.2.1858, p 8; Apps E and F
Foy, Henry	Private	1961	Mutiny (68)	Born Sydney; Band; Inv 5.1.1861; Ds 26.4.1864; App D
Fry, John F.	Private	4285		Band; Tr 79th Foot; <i>Western Gazette</i> , 12.12.1913, p 2
Galbraith, William A.	Lieutenant		Mutiny	Apps E and F
Gallagher, James	Private	3177	Mutiny (68)	App E
Galvin, John	Private	2796	Mutiny (68)	Tr 58th Foot; RtM; App C
Garton, John	Private	3315		D 18.3.1864
Gilles, John	Private	3390	Mutiny (68)	Ds 7.6.1865
Gillum, Prideaux W.	Captain		Mutiny	Apps D, E and F
Glenny, Francis	Private	3050	Mutiny	RtM; Apps C, E and F
Goff, Alfred	Private	3088		D 24.5.1858
Golding, William	Private	4190	Mutiny	later Sgt; D 15.9.1872; App F
Goswell, William	Private	4135		Inv 10.2.1864; Deserted 21.7.1869
Graham, John	Private	2913	Mutiny (68)	Ds 20.10.1862; RtM; App C
Grant, James M.	Surgeon		Mutiny (68)	App E
Green, John	Private	1866	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Inv 4.2.1863; Ds 7.7.1863; RtM; App C
Greenholsh, James	Private	2239	Mutiny	Inv 10.2.1864; Ds 5.7.1864; App F
Griffin, Patrick	Private	3803		Inv 2.5.1859
Guard, Thomas	Private	3866	Mutiny (68)	App D
Hagan, Mathias	Private	3809	Mutiny	App F
Hall, James	Private	2896		D 29.5.1858
Hall, Stewart	Private	2969	Mutiny (68)	App E
Hamilton, William	Private	2294	Mutiny	SHD 11.1.1861; App F
Hammond, Charles	Private	4145	Mutiny (68)	SH 10.10.1858; Ds 14.11.1865
Hannawin, Terence	Private	2936	Mutiny	D 24.5.1858; RtM; Apps C and F
Hannigan, Denis	Private	3063	Mutiny (68)	Inv 10.2.1864; Ds 6.7.1864
Harrington, John	Private	2546	Mutiny	D 10.10.1859; RtM; Apps C and F
Harvey, John	Private	3531	Mutiny	Ds 5.9.1865; App F
Hearon, Hugh	Private	1505		D 7.2.1858

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NAME	RANK	NO	MEDALS KNOWN	REMARKS
Helen, William	Private	2421	Mutiny	Ds 21.4.1861; Mutiny Medal issued 1875
Henry, Robert	Private	3286	Mutiny (68)	Band; Ds 30.5.1866; RtM; App C
Henry, Samuel	Corporal	2756	Mutiny; LSGC	Band; later Col Sgt; Apps D and F
Henry, William J.	Private	2997	Mutiny (68)	Previously 4th Drag GDs; Tr 101st Foot 1.11.1864; RtM; Apps C and D
Hilditch, John	Private	3951		Band; D 13.3.1858
Hill, James	Private	3427		alias James Wilson
Hill, Martin	Private	3095		D 31.3.1858
Hipkin, Thomas	QM		Mutiny (68)	Apps D and E
Holland, Thomas	Private	3919	Mutiny	Apps E and F
Hollister, William	Private	3546	Mutiny (68)	Inv 16.1.1862; Ds 24.7.1866; Note 4
Hopkins, James	Private	3119		App E
Houston, James	Sergeant	79	Mutiny (68)	App E
Houston, Stephen	Private	3578	Mutiny (68)	Tr 37th Foot 31.5.1859; RtM; App C
Houston, Thomas B.	Adjutant			App E
Howard, John	Private	3639	Mutiny (68)	Tr AHC 30.11.1859; RtM; App C
Hubbard, William	Private	3890	Mutiny	D 30.4.1858; RtM; Apps C and F
Hudson, George	Private	2907	Mutiny	D 24.11.1858; RtM; Apps C and F
Hughes, John	Private	1662	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Inv 30.1.1860; Ds 23.12.1862; RtM; Apps C and D
Hughes, Joseph W.	Lieutenant		Mutiny (68)	Apps D and E
Humphreys, Thomas	Private	3305	Mutiny	App F
Humphries, Robert	Private	2807		
Hunter, Thomas	Private	2333	Mutiny (68)	Ds 26.7.1860; RtM; App C
Hynes, Patrick	Private	2775	Mutiny (68)	SHD 2.9.1859; RtM; App C
Ingamills, Charles	Private	2894		SH 12.11.1858; Ds 18.4.1862
Jackson, Henry	Private	3950	Mutiny (68)	Ds 30.5.1866; RtM; App C
James, James	Private	2244	Mutiny (68)	Inv 5.1.1861
Johnston, Joseph	Private	3178		to Cape 1.3.1859; D 26.12.1860
Jones, Frederick	Private	2893	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Band; later Sgt; Note 5
Jones, William	Private	2078	Mutiny (68)	SHD 11.1.1861; RtM; App C
Kearney, John	Private	2188	Mutiny (68)	Band; Ds 18.10.1859; RtM; App C
Keighley, George	Private	1563		D 24.5.1858
Kerrigan, John	Private	3617		Inv 22.1.1862
Killen, Thomas	Private	2308	Mutiny	Ds 7.5.1867; App F

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NAME	RANK	NO	MEDALS KNOWN	REMARKS
King, James	Private	3295		to Cape 1.3.1859; SHD 2.12.1859
Kinsella, William	Private	2994		D 30.5.1858
Laffan, Charles	Private	2723	Mutiny (68); LSGC; MSM	later 51st Regt and 5th Royal Lancashire Militia
Lamb, George	Private	1853	Mutiny	Apps E and F
Lane, Daniel	Private	3623	Mutiny (68)	Inv 7.11.1864; Deserted 3.3.1866; RtM; App C
Laws, Jacob	Private	3220		D 5.2.1858
Leahy, Patrick	Private	2905	Mutiny	Tr 36th Foot 1.5.1864; App F
Leary, Timothy	Private	3801	Mutiny; LSGC	Ds 11.1.1870; App F
Lee, Edward	Private	1328		SH 11.4.1858; D 19.10.1858
Leonard, Edward	Private	3215		Inv 21.5.1859; D 27.7.1859 at sea
Lewis, Michael	Private	2517	Mutiny	Sv Wnd 21.3.1858; SHD 11.1.1861; App F
Long, William	Private	4163	Mutiny (68)	Ds 17.9.1867(as Sgt); App D
Loonan, Michael	Private	2774	Mutiny	Ds 3.5.1870; App F
Lowry, John	Private	3438	Mutiny (68)	
Lynas, James	Private	3337	Mutiny (68)	Deserted 26.4.1867; RtM; App C
Lynch, John	Private	3168	Mutiny	D 9.5.1859; App F
Lynch, Thomas	Private	2077	Mutiny	D 8.5.1858; RtM; Apps C and F
McAndrew, Patrick	Corporal	2213	Mutiny (68)	later Sgt; Inv 19.2.1861; App D
McCabe, Francis	Private	3275	Mutiny	App F
McClarnon, William	Private	1998	Mutiny (68)	Inv 4.2.1863; Ds 22.11.1864
McCullum, John	Private	3710		App E
McEttie, James	PM Sgt	2288		D 25.4.1859
McFaul, William	Sergeant	2693		D 1.9.1858
McGrane, Andrew	Corporal	2392		D 6.7.1868 as QMS
McGrath, Patrick	Private	3058	Mutiny (68)	SHD 11.1.1864; Ds 9.5.1864
McGronan, James	Private	3022	Mutiny	SHD 6.4.1864; Ds 26.8.1864; App F
McKee, Henry	Private	3068	Mutiny	Ds 7.10.1866 (by purchase); App F
McKelvie, Peter	Corporal	3514	Mutiny	D 28.12.1860 (as Sgt); RtM; Apps C and F
McLaughlin, James	Drummer	3113	Mutiny	RtM; App C; Note 6
McQueen, James	Private	2727	Mutiny	D 14.5.1858; RtM; Apps C and F
McShane, Denis	Private	2955	Mutiny	D 11.12.1861; RtM; Apps C and F
Maloney, William	Private	1281	Mutiny (68)	Inv 5.1.1861; Ds 22.11.1864; RtM; App C

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NAME	RANK	NO	MEDALS KNOWN	REMARKS
Manion, James	Hosp Sgt	1212	Mutiny (68)	D 21.4.1864; <i>Newcastle Journal</i> , 9.1.1858, p 6
Manion, Patrick	Sergeant	2607	Mutiny (68)	Tr Indian Army; RtM; App C
Manley, Thomas	Private	3532	Mutiny (68)	Tr 58th Foot 1.11.1864; RtM; App C
Marshall, Richard	Private	3683		D 15.10.1859
Martin, John	Private	1959	Mutiny (68)	Inv 4.2.1863; Ds 24.5.1864; App D
Mason, James	Private	3077		SH 12.11.1858
Mason, William	Drummer	3116	Mutiny (68); LSGC	
Masted, George	Private	4220	Mutiny (68)	Tr 58th Foot; RtM; App C
Matthews, Thomas	Private	2161		D 16.11.1858
Mellett, Peter	Private	3303		SH 10.10.1858
Minehane, Timothy	Private	2459	Mutiny; LSGC	Ds 18.8.1868; Apps D and F
Mitchell, James	Private	1440		Ds 11.11.1862
Moffat, Bowland	Lt Col		RHS Silver	Apps D and E
Mohan, John	Private	2851	Mutiny (68)	SH 11.1.1861 (time expired); RtM; App C
Moore, Robert	Private	1441	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Inv 5.1.1861; Ds 17.2.1862; RtM; App C
Moore, William	Private	3029	Mutiny (68)	RtM; App C; Note 7
Morris, William	Private	4130		D 30.11.1858
Morrison, William	Private	3669	Mutiny	SH 17.6.1865 (time expired); App F
Morrow, James	Private	3092		SH 11.1.1864 (time expired)
Moynihan, Patrick	Private	2484	Mutiny (68); LSGC	RtM; App C; Note 8
Murphy, Thomas	Private	2404	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Inv 7.11.1864; Ds 24.12.1867; RtM; App C
Murray, William	Sergeant	2200	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Apps D and E
Murrell, Benjamin	Private	3219	Mutiny	App F
Murtagh, Patrick	Private	3800	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Ds 11.1.1870; RtM; App C
Murtough, John	Private	21	Mutiny (68)	RtM; App C; Note 9
Naughton, John	Private	2795	Mutiny (68)	RtM; App C
Neary, Michael	Private	3298		D 13.5.1858
Neil, John	Private	3735	Mutiny; LSGC	App F
Nethercote, James	Private	3328	Mutiny	App F
Nethercote, John	Private	3284		D 1.11.1867
Newell, Samuel	Private	2155	Mutiny; LSGC	Ds 27.10.1865; Apps D and F

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NAME	RANK	NO	MEDALS KNOWN	REMARKS
Newport, William	Private	1721	Mutiny (68)	Inv 6.1.1862; Ds 26.5.1863; RtM; App C
Newton, Isaac	Drummer	1089		
Nightingale, George	Private	3940	Mutiny	Ds 30.4.1866; App F
Norman, James	Private	2700		D 16.2.1858
Norret, John	Private	2798	Mutiny (68)	
Nunn, William	Private	2811	Mutiny	Inv 9.7.1861; Ds 31.12.1861; App F
Oates, John	Private	18	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Recruit
Oates, Thomas	Private	1641	LSGC	Inv 24.1.1859; Ds 14.10.1862
O'Donovan, Daniel	Asst Surg			App E
Oliver, Thomas	Private	3682	Mutiny	Ds 26.9.1867; RtM (IOL&R); Apps C and F
Oman, John	Private	2122	Mutiny (68)	Inv 30.2.1860; Ds 1.9.1860
Osborne, Henry	Private	3218	Mutiny	D 8.1.1859; RtM; Apps C and F
Osborne, Thomas	Private	3941	Mutiny	RtM; Apps C and F; Note 10
Ostler, Charles	Private	3536	Mutiny	D 22.8.1860; RtM; Apps C and F
Overton, John	Private	3010		D 16.7.1861
Page, Thomas	Sergeant	2328	Mutiny; LSGC	Apps E and F
Pain, Thomas	Private	4140	Mutiny (68)	
Parish, Ezekiel	Private	4160	Mutiny (68)	Ds 30.5.1866; RtM; App C
Parkins John	Private	3573	Mutiny	Ds 15.7.1865; App F
Parrott, James	Boy	4280	Mutiny (68); LSGC	<i>Leicester Chronicle</i> , 3.7.1880, p 6; App D
Pattle, Charles	Private	4164	Mutiny	D 25.4.1858; App F
Pearce, William	Private	3169	Mutiny	Ds 10.7.1865; App F
Perry, William	Private	4207		D 19.6.1858
Pestel, George	Private	3703	Mutiny; LSGC	Tr 1.11.1866 to ASC; App D and F
Pett, Joseph	Private	3409	Mutiny (68)	Ds 19.5.1865; RtM; App C
Piggie, James	Private	3488	Mutiny (68)	Inv 10.2.1864; RtM; App C
Plummer, Edward	Private	4168	Mutiny (68)	Ds 1.11.1866(as Sgt)
Porter, James	Private	3041	Mutiny	Sv Wnd 21.3.1858; DoW 27.3.1858; RtM; Apps C and F
Purnell, Lewis	Sgt Mjr	1330	Mutiny (68); MSM	App E
Quig, Henry	Private	2953	Mutiny (68)	Inv 31.8.1859; RtM; App C
Quinn, Charles	Private	3165	Mutiny (68)	Ds 12.7.1864
Rafferty, James	Private	3523		D 24.5.1858

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NAME	RANK	NO	MEDALS KNOWN	REMARKS
Ramshaw, John	Private	3733	Mutiny	Apps D and F
Ray, Alfred	Private	3732	Mutiny (68)	Ds 12.6.1866; RtM; App C
Ray, Charles	Private	4289		D 19.2.1858
Reed, James	Private	2734		SH 19.11.1858; Died at sea on passage home
Reid, William	Private	4077		Note 11
Reilly, James	Drummer	2192	Mutiny	Inv 6.1.1862; Ds 10.6.1867; RtM; Apps C and F
Roberts, Charles	Corporal	2211	Mutiny	D 15.11.1862(as Col Sgt); Apps D and F
Robinson, Frederick	Dmr.	2949	Mutiny (68); LSGC	
Robinson, George	Private	2390	Mutiny	Band; Inv 2.5.1859; Ds 26.7.1865
Robinson, Henry	Sergeant	1149	Mutiny	Apps E and F
Robinson, Stephen	Drummer	3112	Mutiny	D 11.11.1859; RtM; Apps C and F
Rollin, John	Private	3239	Mutiny	Ds 2.8.1864; App F
Rooney, Timothy	Private	2932	Mutiny (68)	D 9.1911; <i>The Register</i> (Adelaide), 9.9.1911, p 15
Rose, Robert	Private	2865		D 29.10.1858
Rushbrook, Edward	Private	4082	Mutiny (68); LSGC	App D
Russell, Robert J.	Dmr.	2755	Mutiny (68)	Ds 1.10.1874; App D
Sandell, Samuel	Private	2881	Mutiny	Ds 20.10.1862; App F
Scofel, John	Private	3021	Mutiny; LSGC	App F
Schlotel, Frederick	Lieutenant		Mutiny	Apps E and F
Scott, George	Private	3662		D 22.7.1858
Searles, Walter	Sergeant	2989	Mutiny	Tr Unattached List 10.3.1865; App F
Seirs, William	Private	3719		D 7.4.1858
Sellers, John	Corporal	2027	Mutiny (68)	Note 12
Sellis, Robert	Private	3776	Mutiny	Ds 30.4.1866; App F
Shierson, John	Corporal	2993	Mutiny	Ds 19.3.1861(as Sgt); App F
Singer, William	Corporal	2047	Mutiny (68); LSGC	RtM; Apps C and E
Skeith, James	Private	2961	Mutiny; LSGC	App F
Slavin, Edward	Private	3481	Mutiny	Sl Wnd 21.3.1858; Ds 5.9.1865; App F
Smith, Christopher	Private	3314	Mutiny	D 22.6.1858; RtM; Apps C and F
Smith, James	Private	3121		SH 6.4.1864 (time expired)

Appendix B Officers and Men of the 54th Regiment who sailed on the Sarah Sands

NAME	RANK	NO	MEDALS KNOWN	REMARKS
Smith, John	Private	4204		D 15.6.1861
Smith, John	Private	3582	Mutiny (68); LSGC	later Sgt Mjr; App D
Smith, John	Private	3765		D 1.5.1865
Smith, Thomas	Private	3569		D 6.3.1858
Smith, Thomas	Private	3287	Mutiny	Inv 22.1.1862; App F
Smith, William H.	Private	4123	Mutiny (68)	Ds 19.4.1865; RtM; App C
Smyth, Michael	Private	2927	Mutiny (68)	RtM; App C; Note 13
Snedell, Charles	Private	3257	Mutiny; LSGC	later Col Sgt; <i>Western Gazette</i> , 24.2.1939, p 3; App F
Solomon, William	Private	4284		D 5.2.1868
Spear, George	Private	2938	Mutiny	Ds 3.6.1863; App F
Spence, Joseph	Private	3742	Mutiny	Tr Royal Artillery 21.10.1860; App F
Spencer, Henry	Private	3296		SH 19.11.1858; Ds 28.4.1859
Sperring, Benjamin	Private	3308	Mutiny	Ds 7.6.1865; App F
Stacey, James	Private	4195	Mutiny	Inv 7.11.1864; <i>Western Gazette</i> , 12.12.1913 p 2; App F
Stanley, Thomas	Private	3561	Mutiny	Ds 23.9.1863; App F
Stanton, William	Private	3629	Mutiny	App F
Stebbing, Ezekiel	Private	3228	Mutiny; LSGC	later Sgt; Ds 2.3.1875; App D and F
Steel, Henry	Private	4061		D 20.9.1858
Stenson, Gilbert	Private	1	Mutiny (68)	Inv 19.12.1858; Ds 3.8.1869; RtM; App C; Note 14
Stenson, John	Private	2677	Mutiny (68)	Inv 5.1.1861; RtM; App C
Stephenson, Charles	Private	3741	Mutiny	Ds 31.10.1865; App F
Stephenson, John	Private	2132	Mutiny	Apps E and F
Stonebridge, William	Private	4117		D 24.4.1858
Sullivan, John	Private	3317	Mutiny (68)	Band; Tr 55th Foot 27.3.1868; RtM; App C
Taylor, Robert	Corporal	2839		Ds 5.5.1862
Thomas, William	Private	3874	Mutiny; LSGC	App F
Thompson, Thomas	Private	2529	Mutiny	SH 17.6.1865; App F
Thompson, Thomas	Private	3778	Mutiny	Ds 30.10.1865; App F
Thomson, James S.	Captain		Mutiny (68)	App E
Thorpe, John	Private	2093		D 31.10.1864
Todd, Francis	Private	3023	Mutiny	D 11.10.1860; App F
Turner, George	Private	1235	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Band; Inv 5.1.1861; Ds 29.4.1862; App D

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NAME	RANK	NO	MEDALS KNOWN	REMARKS
Turnley, William E.	ORC	2146	Mutiny (68)	Commissioned Quartermaster 16.1.1863; App D
Tyler, John	Private	4056		SH 10.10.1858; Ds 29.12.1863
Tyrer, William	Corporal	1473	Mutiny; LSGC	Inv 6.1.1862; Ds 3.2.1863 (as Sgt); later Cavan Militia; App F; Note 16
Tyson, John	Private	3109	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Band; Tr Kneller Hall 20.2.1869
Tyson, Robert	Private	2840	Mutiny (68); MSM; Empress of India Medal	Band; later QMS; D 13.11.1911; Note 15
Vallaly, Patrick	Private	3475		D 14.6.1858
Vance, John	Col Sgt	1890	Mutiny (68)	Inv 21.5.1859; Ds 18.8.1863
Walsh, Andrew	Private	3190	Mutiny	Apps E and F
Wales, Edward	Private	3170	Mutiny	D 30.10.1870; App F
Wales, John	Private	3171	Mutiny	Ds 9.5.1864; App F
Walker, George	Private	2215		Band
Warner, William	Private	2910		App E
Wasey, Abraham	Private	2752	Mutiny; LSGC	Inv 10.2.1864; Apps D and F
Watson, Robert	Private	3841		alias Robert Ayre; D 23.5.1858
Watson, William	Arm Sgt	2690		D 24.5.1858
Weatherhead, John	Private	3779	Mutiny	Ds 30.5.1866; App F
Weeding, George	Private	3224	Mutiny	D 14.7.1858; RtM; Apps C and F
Wellard, James	Drm Mjr	1485	Mutiny (68); LSGC	Ds 27.10.1865; <i>Middlesex Chronicle</i> , 20.3.1897, p 3
Westby, John	Private	3783		App E
Wheeler, Henry	Sergeant	1415		D 13.6.1858
White, George	Private	1729	Mutiny	Inv 6.1.1862; Ds 23.6.1863 (as Sgt); App F
Wiles, William	Private	2257	Mutiny; SF&MRBS Silver Medal	Ds 3.3.69; Apps E and F
Williams, Giles	Private	3261	Mutiny	D 24.3.1860; RtM; Apps C and F
Wood, John A.	Lieutenant		Mutiny (68)	Apps D and E
Woolway, Richard	Private	2939	Mutiny	D 3.8.1861; App F
Wynne, Hugh	Private	3262	Mutiny	App F
Young, William	Private	3850	Mutiny	D 12.8.1858; App F

1 Michael Barry - two of this name on the muster roll; both gained the Mutiny Medal; Barry(2) being the 1868 issue.

Appendix B Officers and Men of the 54th Regiment who sailed on the Sarah Sands

- 2 James Chapman - LSGC Medal awarded 9.10.1872 with gratuity of £5; MSM awarded 19.10.1900 with annuity of £10.
- 3 George Dodd - two of this name on the muster roll; both gained the Mutiny Medal; Dodd(2) being the 1868 issue.
- 4 William Hollister - Punjab Medal, clasps 'CHILIANWALA' and 'GOOJERAT'; with the 24th Foot.
- 5 Frederick Jones - Possible recipient of MSM awarded 19.3.1909, with annuity of £10, to a Sergeant F. Jones; D 27.5.1911.
- 6 James McLaughlin - Inv 19.2.1861; Deserted, falsely enlisting in Royal Marines, whence discovered and convicted of desertion 18.11.1861; D 24.8.1863.
- 7 William Moore - A labourer from Londonderry; Inv 10.2.1864; Ds 12.7.1864; two of this name on muster roll.
- 8 Patrick Moynihan - Sick on board *Sarah Sands*, consequently left at the Cape in South Africa 20.10.1857; Ds 3.3.1868.
- 9 John Murtough - Crimea Medal, clasp 'SEBASTOPOL'; with 55th Foot (No.3617 - Sv Wnd 8.9.1855 during the final attack on the Redan); Tr 54th Foot 31.7.1857; Inv 10.2.1864; Ds 12.7.1864.
- 10 Thomas Osborne - Sick on board *Sarah Sands*, consequently left at the Cape in South Africa 20.10.1857; Deserted 3.10.1861.
- 11 William Reid - Cabul Medal with 9th Foot; Sutlej Medal for Moodkee, clasps 'FEROZESHUHUR' and 'SOBRAON'; with 9th Foot (No.1497 - Wnd 21.12.1845 at Ferozeshuhur); Punjab Medal, clasps 'CHILIANWALA' and 'GOOJERAT'; with 24th Foot; LSGC Medal; Inv 5.1.1861; Ds 12.11.1861.
- 12 John Sellers - Sick on board *Sarah Sands*, consequently left at the Cape in South Africa 20.10.1857; Ds 1.9.1863.
- 13 Michael Smyth - Deserted 15.3.1870, caught and Ds 31.11.1870 as medically unfit.
- 14 Gilbert Stenson - Crimea Medal, clasp 'SEBASTOPOL'; and Turkish Crimea Medal with 9th Foot (No.3483 - Sv Wnd 18.8.1855 before Sebastopol); Inv 19.11.1858; Ds 3.8.1869.
- 15 Robert Tyson - MSM awarded 8.11.1901 with annuity of £10; Empress of India Medal in commemoration of proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India on 1 January 1877 - apart from high-ranking civil and military recipients, the medal was awarded in silver to a selected soldier from each British and Indian regiment serving in India at the time.
- 16 The *Cavan Weekly News* of 9 June 1876:
'DRUMMOND INSTITUTION. At a meeting of the governors of the Drummond Institution for the orphan daughters of soldiers, held on Tuesday, at the Lower Castle-yard, the governors admitted conditionally Harriet, daughter of the late Sergeant William TYRER, 54th Foot, and Cavan Militia. This man served 21 years, and was with the 54th Regiment in 1857, in the ship *Sarah Sands*, when she was burned at sea, and the lives of all saved by the gallantry of himself and his comrades.'

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The Sarah Sands Hotel, Brunswick, Victoria, c.1900

APPENDIX C

Indian Mutiny Medals returned to the Royal Mint

The following is a list of the recipients of the Indian Mutiny Medal who had their medals returned to the Royal Mint as they could not be located, having been discharged or transferred from the Regiment, or having died with the next of kin being unknown. Generally, this medal was only issued to survivors if claimed by them, and to casualties if claimed by next of kin. Reference to the 'remarks' column of Appendix B will generally show the likely cause for the return of the medal. Some of the undermentioned medals may have subsequently been issued to the recipients at a later date and have gone unrecorded on the roll. The roll of medals returned by the 54th Regiment to the Mint is filed in The National Archives under reference WO 100/107.

NUMBER	RANK	NAME	MEDAL ISSUE
3149	Private	Alsip, William	1868 issue
3458	Private	Ankle, James	1868 issue
2335	Private	Atkins, Edward	Original issue
2783	Private	Augustus, John	1868 issue
4242	Private	Baldwin, James	1868 issue
4178	Private	Barrell, Alfred	Original issue
2713	Sergeant	Baxter, Samuel	1868 issue
2888	Private	Bentley, Henry	1868 issue
3976	Private	Bond, Benjamin	1868 issue
4257	Private	Bond, William	Original issue
4137	Private	Bowie, Alexander	1868 issue
4279	Private	Bowins, Thomas	1868 issue
3223	Private	Boyden, George	Original issue
1977	Private	Bradley, John	1868 issue
4206	Private	Brandon, Thomas	Original issue
4114	Private	Broughton, Edward	Original issue
3886	Private	Butterworth, Benjamin	Original issue
3195	Private	Cannon, Cormick	1868 issue
3557	Private	Clephane, John	1868 issue ¹
3083	Private	Cole, William	1868 issue
3057	Private	Corn, Thomas	1868 issue
4167	Private	Crosby, Henry	1868 issue

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NUMBER	RANK	NAME	MEDAL ISSUE
2045	Private	Curry, William	1868 issue
	Pay-Master	Daniel, Samuel	1868 issue
3003	Private	Doran, James	Original issue
3680	Private	Duckard, James	Original issue
3983	Private	Entwistle, Samuel	Original issue
2796	Private	Galvin, John	1868 issue
3050	Private	Glenny, Francis	Original issue
2913	Private	Graham, John	1868 issue
1866	Private	Green, John	1868 issue
2936	Private	Hannawin, Terence	Original issue
2546	Private	Harrington, John	Original issue
3286	Private	Henry, Robert	1868 issue ²
2997	Private	Henry, William J.	1868 issue ³
3578	Private	Houston, Stephen	1868 issue
3639	Private	Howard, John	1868 issue
3890	Private	Hubbard, William	Original issue
2907	Private	Hudson, George	Original issue
1662	Private	Hughes, John	1868 issue
2333	Private	Hunter, Thomas	1868 issue
2775	Private	Hynes, Patrick	1868 issue
3950	Private	Jackson, Henry	1868 issue
2078	Private	Jones, William	1868 issue
2188	Private	Kearney, John	1868 issue
3623	Private	Lane, Daniel	1868 issue
3337	Private	Lynas, James	1868 issue
2077	Private	Lynch, Thomas	Original issue
1281	Private	Maloney, William	1868 issue
2607	Sergeant	Manion, Patrick	1868 issue
3532	Private	Manley, Thomas	1868 issue
4220	Private	Masted, George	1868 issue
2851	Private	Mohan, John	1868 issue
1441	Private	Moore, Robert	1868 issue
3029	Private	Moore, William	1868 issue
2484	Private	Moynihan, Patrick	1868 issue
2404	Private	Murphy, Thomas	1868 issue
21	Private	Murtaugh, John	1868 issue
3800	Private	Murtaugh, Patrick	1868 issue

Appendix C Indian Mutiny Medals Returned to the Royal Mint

NUMBER	RANK	NAME	MEDAL ISSUE
3514	Corporal	McKelvie, Peter	Original issue
3113	Drummer	McLaughlin, James	Original issue
2727	Private	McQueen, James	Original issue
2955	Private	McShane, Denis	Original issue
2795	Private	Naughton, John	1868 issue
1721	Private	Newport, William	1868 issue
3218	Private	Osborne, Henry	Original issue
3941	Private	Osborne, Thomas	Original issue
3536	Private	Ostler, Charles	Original issue
4160	Private	Parish, Ezekiel	1868 issue
3409	Private	Pett, Joseph	1868 issue
3488	Private	Piggie, James	1868 issue
3041	Private	Porter, James	Original issue
2953	Private	Quig, Henry	1868 issue
3732	Private	Ray, Alfred	1868 issue
2192	Drummer	Reilly, James	Original issue
3112	Drummer	Robinson, Stephen	Original issue
2047	Corporal	Singer, William	1868 issue
3314	Private	Smith, Christopher	Original issue
4123	Private	Smith, William H.	1868 issue
2927	Private	Smyth, Michael	1868 issue
1	Private	Stenson, Gilbert	1868 issue
2677	Private	Stenson, John	1868 issue
3317	Private	Sullivan, John	1868 issue
3224	Private	Weeding, George	Original issue
3261	Private	Williams, Giles	Original issue

According to the India Office Library and Records, reference L/MIL/5/38, the following man's medal was also returned to the Mint:

3682	Private	Oliver, Thomas	Original issue
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- 1 John Clephane's medal was subsequently issued to him and is noted incorrectly on the medal roll as a duplicate issue.
- 2 Robert Henry's medal was eventually issued on 30 October 1893.
- 3 William Henry's medal appears to have been issued for it is known to be in The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester (see Appendix D).

Number.	CLAIMANT.		SUBJECT.		ACCIDENT.			Exertions of the Claimant.	State of the body.
	Name, Address and Occupation.	Name, Address and Occupation.	Name, Address and Occupation.	Age.	Time and place.	Particulars.			
16104	Wm. J. Moffat 17. 60th St. N.Y.C. 54. Reg.	John J. Castle 11. 4th St. N.Y.C. 54. Reg.	General Court 13. 4th 11. 4th St. N.Y.C. 1857 The cargo of the ship caught fire at 11. 4th St. N.Y.C. 54. Reg.	54.	General Court 13. 4th 11. 4th St. N.Y.C. 1857 The cargo of the ship caught fire at 11. 4th St. N.Y.C. 54. Reg.	Particulars.	For that time, convergent magnetic operations in that relation by the united and accurate arrangement of single life was that.		
Where removed to.	MEDICAL MAN.		PARTICULARS OF TREATMENT.		WITNESS TO THE ACCIDENT.		REWARDS.		Remarks.
	Name and Address.	Name and Address.	Particulars of Treatment.	Particulars of Treatment.	Name and Address.	Name and Address.	Amount.	Date when Paid.	
			Received 27 Feb. 58 J. Castle, Lake Com. Sarah Sands.		Successful Unsuccessful			1858.	
								13 hours	Wm. J. Moffat
								19	at Lake Com.
									at Lake Com.
									at Lake Com.

Royal Humane Society Case Book entry for the silver medals awarded to Captain John Castle and Lieutenant Colonel B. Moffat

APPENDIX D

Medals Known to Exist

List of medals known to exist to men of the 54th Regiment who served aboard the *Sarah Sands* on 11-12 November 1857:

- Bowins, 1087 Corporal Samuel: Indian Mutiny Medal
(Spink's *Medal Circular*, October 1995, lot 62, GVF, £90).
- Bowins, 4279 Private Thomas: Long Service and Good Conduct Medal
(Christie's, 24 April 1992, lot 153, EF, £176; Brian Clark Medals, October 1992, list 176, lot 319, EF, £220).
- Brett, Major William F.: Indian Mutiny Medal and Royal Humane Society Silver Medal
(The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Bundle, 4224 Private James: Indian Mutiny Medal
(UK private collection, 1990).
- Chamberlin, 1153 Private Joseph: Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (VR)
(London Stamp Exchange list, spring 1982; Dix, Noonan and Webb, 17 September 1999, lot 222, GVF, £130; Dix Noonan Webb, 2 April 2003, lot 575, £380).
- Chippington, 2828 Sergeant William: Indian Mutiny Medal
(Nimrod Dix and Co, Spring 1986; Dix Noonan Webb, 23 September 2005, lot 84, NVF, £580; Historik Orders, Scarsdale, New York, May 2006, GVF, \$1650; Dix Noonan Webb, 25 September 2008, lot 1136, £920).
- Connacher, 3103 Private Daniel: Indian Mutiny Medal with clasps 'LUCKNOW' and 'RELIEF OF LUCKNOW' – medal named to CONACHAR - not entitled to clasps (The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Connier, 2217 Corporal Michael: Indian Mutiny Medal and Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, both medals named as SERGEANT (The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Cox, 2856 Corporal John: Indian Mutiny Medal
(Dixon's *Gazette*, 65, Spring 2011, lot 479, almost mint, £1100).
- Cronyn, Lieutenant George: Indian Mutiny Medal
(Medal known in private UK collection, 2013).
- Diggins, 2818 Private George: Indian Mutiny Medal
(Stolen from Royal Hospital Chelsea Museum, July 1978).
- Ferris, 3653 Private Alexander: Indian Mutiny Medal, named ALEXR. FERRIS, 54th REGT
(Australian private collection, 1983; Dix Noonan Webb, 12 May 1993, lot 24, £340; Spink's *Medal Circular*, September 1996, lot 928, NVF, £500; Jim Bullock Militaria, January 2011, £1,325; Dix Noonan Webb, 25 March 2013, lot 118, £550).
- Foy, 1961 Private Henry: Indian Mutiny Medal
(UK private collection).

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- Gillum, Captain P.W.: Indian Mutiny Medal, named as BREVET MAJOR
(Australian private collection, 1983; Spink's 27 April 2000, lot 318, NEF; now in The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Golding, 4190 Private William: Indian Mutiny Medal
(Spink, 28 April 2005, lot 204; Elite Collections, June 2007, lot 4398, VF £790).
- Grant, Surgeon James M.: Indian Mutiny Medal
(Dix Noonan Webb, 17 September 2004, lot 711, NEF, £850)
- Guard, 3866 Private Thomas: Indian Mutiny Medal
(The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Harvey, 3531 Private John: Indian Mutiny Medal
(Private UK collection, 2013).
- Henry, 2756 Corporal Samuel: Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, named as COL. SERGEANT (The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Henry, 2997 Private William J.: Indian Mutiny Medal
(The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Hipkin, Quarter-Master Thomas: Indian Mutiny Medal
(The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Hughes, 1662 Private John: Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (VR)
(Brian Clark's list, March 1988).
- Hughes, Lieutenant J.W.: Indian Mutiny Medal, with silver ribbon buckle
(Still in family possession, 1983).
- Long, 4163 Private William: Indian Mutiny Medal
(The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- McAndrew, 2213 Corporal Patrick: Indian Mutiny Medal, rank officially corrected on medal (Jack Wadey collection; Dix Noonan Webb, 27 September 1994, lot 193, VF, £350; Spink, 23 July 2009, lot 214, VF, £360).
- Martin, 1959 Private John: Indian Mutiny Medal
(The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Minehane, 2459 Private Timothy: Indian Mutiny Medal, named TIMY. MYNEHAN, 54th REGT. (Dix Noonan Webb, 24 June 2009, lot 82, £470; First Light Militaria, Dorset, May 2014, £850) and Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Moffat, Lieutenant Colonel Bowland: Royal Humane Society Silver Medal
(The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Murray, 2200 Sergeant William: Long Service and Good Conduct Medal
(The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Newell, 2155 Private Samuel: Indian Mutiny Medal
(The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Parrott, 4280 Boy James: Indian Mutiny Medal
(Spink, 30 November 1989, lot 113 and again 18 March 1997, lot 315).
- Pestel, 3703 Private George: Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, named as 1642 PRIVATE ARMY SERVICE CORPS (Bostock Militaria, list 167, January 1999, item 3796,

- £150) and his Indian Mutiny Medal, named GEO. PESTAL, 54th REGT. (Spink, 27 April 1999, lot 420, NVF, £403 incl premium).
- Purnell, 1330 Sergeant Major Lewis: Indian Mutiny Medal and Meritorious Service Medal (Family possession, 1972).
- Ramshaw, 3733 Private John: Indian Mutiny Medal with clasp 'DELHI', not entitled to clasp (The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Roberts, 2211 Corporal Charles: Indian Mutiny Medal, named SERJT CHAS ROBERTS, 54th REGT (Sotheby's, 5 March 1987, lot 343; Dix Noonan Webb, 9 December 1999, lot 71, VF, £500; Bonhams, 23 April 2014, lot 11, GVF, £480 incl premium).
- Rushbrook, 4082 Private Edward: Indian Mutiny Medal (The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Russell, 2755 Drummer. Robert J.: Indian Mutiny Medal (UK private collection, 1990).
- Searles, 2989 Sergeant Walter: Indian Mutiny Medal (Noble Numismatics, 24 July 2008, lot 4095, VF, AU\$900).
- Smith, 3582 Private John: Indian Mutiny Medal and Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, both medals named as SERGEANT MAJOR (The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Stebbing, 3228 Private Ezekiel: Indian Mutiny Medal, 'contemporary re-engraved in style of 1879-80 issued medals' 3228 CORPL. E STEBBINGS 54th FOOT, and Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, named 3228 SERJT. E. STEBBINGS 54th FOOT (Dixon's *Gazette*, Summer 2006, list 46, lot 1995, GVF £385)
- Turner, 1235 Private George: Indian Mutiny Medal and Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Turnley, 2146 Orderly Room Clerk William E.: Indian Mutiny Medal, named as CAPTAIN AND QMR (The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Wasey, 3752 Private Abraham: Indian Mutiny Medal and Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).
- Wood, Lieutenant J.A.: Indian Mutiny Medal (Colonel J.G. Adamson collection, sold Glendining's 16 February 1927, lot 98; The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester).



George Diggins

APPENDIX E

Biographical Notes

This is a biographical roll, in alphabetical order, containing details of all the 54th Regiment officers on board the *Sarah Sands*, and of those non-commissioned officers and men who played a particularly noteworthy part in the events on board.

Major William Freeland Brett

William Brett was born at Mount Bures, Colchester, Essex, on 17 October 1821. He entered the Army on 1 April 1842 by purchasing an Ensign's commission in the 54th Regiment. His promotion to Lieutenant, on 6 December 1844, and to Captain, on 25 June 1851, were gained without purchase. Just before leaving for India in the *Sarah Sands*, he purchased his Majority, which was dated 14 August 1857. Brett played a major part in suppressing the fire, having command of the troops while Lieutenant Colonel Moffat was in the lifeboat. For his part, Brett was mentioned in General Orders and promoted Brevet Lieutenant Colonel from 11 November 1857. He also received the silver medal of the Royal Humane Society. During the Indian Mutiny, Brett commanded a flying column on the Nepal Frontier, for which he received the special acknowledgement of the Governor General for his energy and zeal. He also had command of the left wing of the 54th from 24 November 1858 until 28 January 1860. Brett received the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue) for his services during the campaign. On 27 September 1861, Brett transferred to the 61st Regiment. He was promoted Colonel, on 6 May 1865, and commanded the regiment. While stationed in Bermuda, Brett was recommended by the island's Administrator in September 1870 for the VC for his role aboard the *Sarah Sands*, while on 1 December that same year he married Mary Harvey (1835-99). Brett went on half-pay on 6 October 1875. However, he returned to full-pay, on 26 January 1876, as CO of the brigade depot at Burnley. He was made Major General, on 1 October 1877, on unattached pay of one pound five shillings per day (this promotion dating from 1 March 1870). Brett finally retired on half-pay, on 1 July 1881, as an Honorary Lieutenant General. William Brett died at Colchester on 10 November 1884. See also the *York Herald*, 17 November 1884, p 3 and *The Times*, 13 November 1884, p 7.

2958 Private James Buckingham

James Buckingham was born in the parish of Trinity, near Colchester, Essex, in about 1833. He worked as a labourer and gardener before enlisting in the 54th Regiment at Colchester on 24 May 1852. He received a bounty of £3 10s, on receipt of which, however, Buckingham promptly absconded. He was detained by the civil power on 30 May, being imprisoned in Colchester until 12 June, when he was handed over to the regiment. Buckingham was promoted to Corporal on 27 March 1854 and proceeded with the 54th to Gibraltar. Whilst stationed there, Buckingham was reduced to Private by a regimental court martial on 29 June 1856. He was again tried by regimental court martial on 23 May 1857, for being absent without leave from 14 to 19 May. Sentenced to 60 days imprisonment, including the four days spent in the cells awaiting trial, Buckingham was duly released on 17 July 1857. Buckingham was one of those men who distinguished themselves on the *Sarah Sands*

and was subsequently mentioned in General Orders. He served with the regiment during the Indian Mutiny, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue). The Indian climate affected Buckingham, being invalided home on 5 January 1861 to serve with the regimental depot. On 18 March 1862, he was re-engaged for a period of 11 years further service with the colours. He was promoted to Corporal on 19 August 1863. Tried by regimental court martial on 25 April 1865, Buckingham was reduced to Private and imprisoned until 22 May. Shortly after being released he broke out of camp, upon his return being imprisoned by the Commanding Officer from 8 to 14 June. After this, Buckingham's conduct improved, being promoted to Corporal, on 3 December 1866, and to Sergeant, on 2 July 1868. On 29 September 1873, Buckingham was discharged on completion of 21 years service. He had been 71 times noted in the defaulters book, but despite this his conduct was noted as 'good' and he had one good conduct badge. On discharge, he was described as being aged 40 years 4 months, with a fresh complexion, grey eyes and brown hair, and being about 5 feet 7 inches tall. He gave his intended place of residence as Colchester. He was noted in December 1913 as one of the last three survivors of the 54th Regiment who had served aboard the *Sarah Sands* (*Western Gazette*, 12 December 1913, p 2). James Buckingham died in Colchester in 1921, the last known survivor of the soldiers who sailed in the *Sarah Sands*.

2983 Private Michael Byrne

Michael Byrne came from Castleknock, Co Dublin and was born around December 1834. He worked as a labourer before enlisting in the 54th Regiment at Dublin on 18 September 1852, for a bounty of £3 10s, serving with the 54th in Canada and Gibraltar. Byrne was mentioned in General Orders for distinguished service during the fire on the *Sarah Sands*. During the Indian Mutiny he was engaged in the attack on the fort at Sirhoul on 21 March 1858, being severely wounded in the left shoulder by a musket ball. Due to this wound, he was invalided back to England on 10 October 1858, where he served with the regimental depot. On 4 April 1860, Byrne was tried by regimental court martial for breaking out of camp and, when apprehended, for escaping from his escort. Going absent without leave came to be a habit with Byrne after this. Shortly after being released from imprisonment on 16 May, he again went missing, being duly imprisoned on 22-23 May. On release, he again went missing, resulting in imprisonment from 7-9 July. The following year, 1861, Byrne was imprisoned from 29 July to 7 August, again for absence without leave. Four years later, in 1865, he again went missing, and was imprisoned from 5-9 March. On release, a repeat performance resulted in imprisonment on 22-23 April. After this, Byrne's conduct improved. He was discharged at Fleetwood on 6 February 1875, after 22 years service with the colours. Byrne was listed 28 times in the defaulters book, but on discharge he had three good conduct badges to go along with his Indian Mutiny Medal. He is described as being aged 40 years 2 months, with a fresh complexion, grey eyes and hair, and being 5 feet 8½ inches tall. He gave his intended place of residence as Manchester.

2610 Private Bartholomew Canavan

Bartholomew Canavan was born in Galway in about 1829. He worked as a labourer before attesting for the 54th Regiment at Galway on 1 March 1847. His height on enlistment was given as 5 feet 8 inches and he received a bounty of £3 10s. Canavan joined the 54th on 31 March 1847, seeing service with the regiment in Canada and Gibraltar. On the *Sarah Sands*, he rendered distinguished service during the fire, being mentioned in General Orders. Unfortunately, he died at sea aboard the *Clarendon* on 9 January 1858. Canavan left no will, but was due £2 1s 11d in back-pay etc. His next of kin was given as his uncle,

Lawrence Canavan of Pardon Place, Galway.

2315 Private James Carmichael

James Carmichael was born in Dublin in about 1828. He worked as a labourer before enlisting in the 54th Regiment, aged 17, on 4 December 1845, for a bounty of £3 10s. Carmichael saw service with the regiment in Canada and Gibraltar, and was one of the men mentioned in General Orders for distinguished conduct aboard the *Sarah Sands*. He received the Indian Mutiny Medal for his service with the 54th during that campaign. The Indian climate, however, affected Carmichael, and he was invalided back to England on 4 February 1863. He was discharged at Colchester, on 9 June 1864, presumably on medical grounds. He was given 4s 3d passage money to get him to Dublin, and an allowance of £1 for necessities on the journey.

Lieutenant George Cronyn

George Cronyn was born in Waterford on 22 October 1835. He was commissioned Ensign, by purchase, in the 54th Regiment on 2 February 1855. His promotion to Lieutenant, also by purchase, was on 5 June 1857. When the remaining powder exploded on the *Sarah Sands*, Cronyn was thrown down a hatchway by the blast and injured. He served with the regiment during the Indian Mutiny, from February 1858 to January 1859, including both attacks on the fort at Sirhoul and against the post at Dahein, subsequently receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal. George Cronyn committed suicide, shooting himself in the fort at Calcutta on 2 January 1862.

Pay-Master Samuel Daniel

Samuel Daniel was born in Ceylon on 13 November 1810. He first entered the army on 30 December 1831 when he was commissioned Ensign, by purchase, in the 3rd Foot. Promoted Lieutenant, by purchase, on 26 July 1833, by 1841 he was employed on recruiting service. He retired by sale of his commission that year. On 25 August 1855 he was appointed Pay-Master of the Essex Rifles Militia. On 30 January 1857 he was commissioned Pay-Master in the 54th Regiment. Daniel was possibly the oldest man of the regiment aboard the *Sarah Sands*, being two years older than Lieutenant Colonel Moffat. He was mentioned in Moffat's 'official report' of 4 April 1858, along with Quartermaster Hipkin, as having 'by their noble example inspired the men with confidence and energy'. Daniel served with the 54th during the Indian Mutiny until 1 October 1858, when he transferred to the 10th Depot Battalion at Colchester. On 30 January 1862, he was made Honorary Captain (Pay-Master). In 1870, Daniel went on half-pay for 12 months. He was promoted Major (Pay-Master) on 17 June 1875, and retired on half-pay as Honorary Lieutenant Colonel on 15 August 1881. Daniel was entitled to the Indian Mutiny Medal, but it would appear that he never received this. Samuel Daniel died at Lee, London, on 15 February 1895.

3037 Private Robert Denton

Robert Denton was born around December 1828 at St Mary's, Norfolk. He was employed as a labourer prior to enlisting in the 54th Regiment at Colchester on 13 January 1853. His height on enlistment was given as 5 feet 8¼ inches and he received a bounty of £3 10s. Denton was mentioned in General Orders for distinguished conduct during the fire aboard the *Sarah Sands*. He served with the regiment during the Indian Mutiny, receiving the medal for that campaign. His conduct in the army was good and he held two good conduct badges with the associated increase in pay. Denton completed his term of service on 11 January 1864, being

sent home for discharge. On arrival in England, he was discharged at Colchester on 9 May 1864, receiving an allowance of £1 to cover his expenses for 20 days.

2818 Private George Diggins

George Diggins (noted as 'Duggens' in his discharge papers) was born in about 1833 in Langham, near Colchester. He was a labourer before enlisting in the 54th Regiment at Colchester on 3 November 1850, for a bounty of £3 10s. He served with the regiment in Canada and Gibraltar. On the voyage to India, Diggins described himself as batman to Assistant Surgeon O'Donovan. Diggins served with the regiment in India, being in receipt of the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue). His first period of engagement having ended, Diggins went before a regimental board at Cawnpore on 10 October 1861, requested and was granted his discharge, giving his intended place of residence as Colchester. His discharge papers note he was aboard the *Sarah Sands* when the fire occurred. He later became a pensioner in the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, and it was here that Diggins, in 1906, wrote his account of the events aboard the *Sarah Sands*. George Diggins died in the spring of 1914.

2963 Private George Dodd

George Dodd was born in about 1831 in Breckna near Portarlington. He was employed as a labourer before joining the 54th Regiment, aged 21, at Mountmellick on 7 August 1852, receiving a bounty of £3 10s. His height was noted as 5 feet 9¾ inches. Dodd served with the regiment in Canada and Gibraltar. On 9 April 1856 he was tried by court martial for 'offering violence to Sgt Bloomfield of the 54th [and] with having wilfully damaged his musket and bayonet on 4 April.' Found guilty, Dodd was sentenced to 168 days imprisonment with hard labour. Aboard the *Sarah Sands* however, his distinguished conduct during the fire led to his mention in General Orders. Dodd served with the 54th during the campaign in Oudh, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal. On 14 August 1858, he appeared before a regimental board for discharge on medical grounds. Passed for discharge, he was invalided out on 9 January 1859 via Calcutta, and finally discharged in England on 19 June 1860, his conduct being described as 'bad'.

3040 Sergeant James Doyle

James Doyle was born in about 1833. He enlisted in the 54th Regiment, aged 20, at Downpatrick on 15 January 1853, receiving a bounty of £3 10s. He was described as then being 5 feet 11½ inches tall. Doyle was promoted Corporal on 11 February 1854, and to Sergeant on 19 April 1855. He was mentioned in General Orders for distinguished service during the fire on the *Sarah Sands*. Though he served with the regiment during the Indian Mutiny, according to the rolls he did not receive the medal for that campaign. On 1 September 1859, he was tried by a regimental court martial and reduced to Private. However, on 1 April 1862 he was again promoted Corporal, and on 23 July 1863 regained the rank of Sergeant. Doyle transferred to the 58th Regiment (No 1277) on 1 January 1865. He was reduced to Private by a regimental court martial on 12 October 1867. Doyle received promotion to Corporal for the third time on 28 January 1869, shortly before he died on 26 March 1869. He was in possession of three good conduct badges. James Doyle was the elder brother of No 3406 Private John Doyle (see below).

3406 Private John Doyle

John Doyle was born in Bryansford in about 1834. Prior to enlisting in the 54th Regiment, he worked as a labourer. He attested at Glasgow, aged 20, on 20 November 1854, receiving a bounty of £5 17s 6d. Doyle's height was noted at the time as 5 feet

9½ inches. Aboard the *Sarah Sands*, Doyle was one of the men who distinguished themselves during the fire, being mentioned in General Orders. The Indian climate, however, proved to be too much for John Doyle, who died at Allahabad on 8 May 1858. He left no will and was owed 11s 8½d in back-pay - this probably passing to his brother, No 3040 Sergeant James Doyle (see above).

3069 Private James Fitzpatrick

James Fitzpatrick was born in Co Down in about 1834. He worked as a groom before enlisting in the 54th Regiment, aged 18, at Downpatrick on 9 February 1853, receiving a bounty of £3 10s. His height was then noted as 5 feet 8¼ inches. Fitzpatrick was mentioned in General Orders for distinguished conduct during the fire aboard the *Sarah Sands*. He served with the regiment in India, gaining the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue). He was awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal on 26 July 1871, transferring on 31 July to the 2/9th Regiment (No 2303). Fitzpatrick was discharged at Great Yarmouth on 28 January 1874, and was in possession of four good conduct badges. He was described as having a fresh complexion, grey eyes and brown hair, and gave his future address as Farnham, Surrey. The 1881 Census notes him living there in a cottage, again working as a groom, with his wife Harriet (35) and three children: George (8), Henry (5) and Samuel (1). James Fitzpatrick died in Farnham in 1889.

3574 Private Phillip Folland

Phillip Folland was born in Norfolk in about 1837. He enlisted in the 54th Regiment, aged 17, at Barnstaple on 6 February 1855, receiving a bounty of £7. His height was then noted as 5 feet 4 inches. Folland was mentioned in General Orders for distinguished service during the fire on the *Sarah Sands*. He received the Indian Mutiny Medal for his service with the regiment during that campaign. Folland purchased his discharge, for £18, at Fort William on 19 April 1865. His account of the fire appeared in the *North Devon Journal*, Thursday 18 February 1858, p 8.

Lieutenant William Arthur Galbraith

William Galbraith was born in Dublin on 25 August 1835. He was commissioned Ensign, by purchase, on 10 February 1854, acquiring promotion to Lieutenant, again by purchase, on 2 February 1855. He sailed with the 54th on the *Sarah Sands* and served with the regiment during the campaign in India, including the attacks on the forts at Sirhoul and Dahein, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal. Galbraith left the Army, after a short but eventful career, by selling his commission on 10 March 1860. Returning to Dublin, Galbraith worked as a commercial clerk. On 28 December 1867 he married Alice Hemenstall in St Peter's parish church, Dublin.

3177 Private James Gallagher

James Gallagher was born in Londonderry in about 1836. He worked as a labourer before enlisting in the 54th Regiment at Londonderry on 3 February 1854, for a bounty of £4. Gallagher distinguished himself during the fire aboard the *Sarah Sands*, being mentioned in General Orders. He went on to serve with the regiment during the campaign in India, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue). On 29 August 1863, he finished his agreed service, but was re-engaged to complete 21 years service. On 9 January 1867, Gallagher was sentenced to four weeks imprisonment by a court martial on a charge of drunkenness. Gallagher was passed for discharge, on 7 October 1874, by a regimental board at Jullundur, being sent home and discharged at Netley on 9 March 1875. He was mentioned 16 times in

the defaulters book, and was in possession of three good conduct badges. He was described as having a fresh complexion, grey eyes and light brown hair, with a height of 5 feet 10 inches, and gave his intended place of residence as Belfast.

Captain Prideaux William Gillum

Prideaux Gillum was born on 6 July 1823 at Middleton Hall in Essex, although he lived at Belford Hall, Belford, Northumberland. He was commissioned into the Army on 28 October 1843, when he was made Ensign by purchase, with further promotions by purchase to Lieutenant, on 31 December 1847, and to Captain, on 4 August 1854. Gillum greatly distinguished himself aboard the *Sarah Sands*, being mentioned for his services in General Orders and promoted Brevet Major from 11 November 1857. He served in India from February 1858 to January 1859, commanding the detachment of two companies of the 54th during the unsuccessful attack at Sirhoul on 21 March 1858, and was present at the capture of the forts at Sirhoul and Dahein in July 1858. For his services, Gillum received the Indian Mutiny Medal. Back in England, Gillum was presented with an inscribed sword by his friends at Belford Hall on 11 November 1859, bearing the following text: 'Presented to Brevet Major P.W. Gillum, HM's 54th Regiment, by his friends in Belford, for his gallant conduct on board the troop ship *Sarah Sands* when on fire in the Indian Ocean, Nov 11th 1857' (*Newcastle Journal*, Saturday 26 November 1859, p 8). On 13 December 1861, Gillum sold his commission and retired from the Army. Emigrating to Canada, Gillum died in Belleville, Hastings, Ontario on 5 January 1890.

3050 Private Francis Glenny

Francis Glenny was born in about 1835 in the north of Ireland. He enlisted in the 54th Regiment, aged 17, on 22 January 1853 in the Nerrif (?) District, receiving a bounty of £3 10s. His height was then noted as 5 feet 5½ inches. Aboard the *Sarah Sands*, Glenny distinguished himself during the fire, for which he was mentioned in General Orders. He went on to serve with the regiment during the Indian Mutiny. Francis Glenny died of sickness on 6 January 1872 at Jullundur. Though he qualified for the Indian Mutiny Medal, this was apparently returned to the Mint on his death.

Surgeon James McGrigor Grant

James Grant was born in Sierra Leone on 31 May 1819. He qualified as a doctor at St Andrews in 1840 with an MD, and on 6 November that year was commissioned Assistant Surgeon on the medical staff of the Army. He was engaged, in June 1842, in forcing the harbour at Port Natal against the insurgent Boers. On 29 November 1850, Grant was promoted Surgeon 2nd Class, and on 12 August 1853 was posted to the 54th Regiment with the rank of Surgeon. When the fire broke out aboard the *Sarah Sands*, Grant deserted his post and sought safety in the lifeboats; his desertion, however, apparently went unnoticed by the authorities and he suffered no reprimand. Grant served with the regiment in India, subsequently receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue). He transferred to the 84th Regiment on 15 April 1859, a move which may have been influenced by his position with the 54th after his conduct aboard the *Sarah Sands*. Despite this, Grant was promoted Surgeon Major on 6 November 1860; was posted to the Staff on 20 September 1864; and was promoted Deputy Surgeon General, and Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals in the Army Medical Department (with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel), on 23 October 1867, being then stationed at the Cape of Good Hope. His final promotion was to Surgeon General on 28 June 1876. He retired on half-pay on 30 May 1879, after almost 40 years

service. James Grant died at Cheltenham on 3 October 1891. See also the *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 10 October 1891, p 5.

2969 Private Stewart Hall

Stewart Hall was born in about 1834 in the parish of Donagh, Co Monaghan. He was a labourer before enlisting in the 54th Regiment on 1 September 1852, for a bounty of £3 10s. Hall served with the regiment during their stay in Gibraltar, from late 1854 to mid 1856. He was mentioned in General Orders, for his distinguished conduct during the fire on the *Sarah Sands*. His brother, Private James Hall, was also in the regiment and was also on board the ship. After serving during the campaign in India, Hall received the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue). On 28 August 1862, at Roorkee, he was re-engaged for a further period of 11 years service. Shortly thereafter, Hall transferred to the 104th Regiment (No 3067), on 31 October 1862; then volunteered to the 36th Regiment (No 1932), on 25 July 1871; before transferring back to the 54th Regiment (then engaged on a further tour of Indian service), on 31 July 1875. Hall was discharged on 15 July 1879, at Calcutta, after 26 years service. He appeared seven times in the defaulters book, held four good conduct badges and an education certificate, and was recommended for the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. India evidently agreed with Hall, for he served there continuously for 21 years, giving his intended place of residence as Calcutta.

Quarter-Master Thomas Hipkin

Thomas Hipkin was born on 12 April 1813 at Burnham Thorpe, Norfolk. He enlisted in the Grenadier Guards (No 2543) on 12 March 1832, along with his brother, John. Serving with the 23rd Company, Hipkin was promoted to Corporal, on 26 March 1834, and to Sergeant, on 15 July 1839. He transferred to the 54th Regiment, on 30 November 1840, being immediately made Sergeant Major, which rank he held for 11 years. Commissioned Ensign on 1 August 1851, Hipkin was one of the few Victorian 'other ranks' to gain a commission. While serving with the 54th in Canada, he married Sarah Eden in Quebec on 18 June 1852, and was made Quartermaster on 6 July 1852. His first child was born on 22 June 1857, at Farnborough, and named Wilson John George. He was possibly the longest continuously serving soldier aboard the *Sarah Sands*, having served three months longer than Lieutenant Colonel Moffat. Hipkin was mentioned by Moffat, in his 'official report' of 4 April 1858, along with Pay-Master Daniel, as having 'by their noble example inspired the men with confidence and energy'. He served during the campaign in India, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue). According to his records, Hipkin had two further children, Emily Maria and Kathleen Jane, both born at Cawnpore, on 25 January 1859 and 1 March 1861 respectively. Hipkin was promoted Honorary Captain on 16 January 1863, retiring on half-pay three months later, on 16 April 1863. Thomas Hipkin died, in Canada, on 10 April 1889.

3919 Private Thomas Holland

Thomas Holland was born in about 1836 in the north of Ireland. He enlisted in the 54th Regiment, aged 19, on 24 July 1855 at London, receiving a bounty of £8. His height was then noted as 5 feet 5¼ inches. That year, Holland went absent without leave on two occasions, on 24 August and again on 11 September. On the *Sarah Sands*, he distinguished himself during the fire, being mentioned in General Orders. Serving with the regiment in India, he received the Indian Mutiny Medal. Thomas Holland died in India on 19 October 1859.

3119 Private James Hopkins

James Hopkins was born in Ballybay, Co Offaly, in about 1834. He worked locally as a

labourer before enlisting in the 86th Regiment at Dublin, on 25 September 1852, travelling from Dublin to the regimental depot of the 86th, at Chatham, for training. Hopkins transferred to the depot battalion of the 54th Regiment, then stationed at Londonderry, on 31 July 1853, serving with the regiment while it was stationed in Gibraltar. His two brothers, Privates John and Martin Hopkins, were also in the 54th Regiment. His distinguished conduct during the fire on the ship led to his mention in General Orders. James Hopkins died at Allahabad on 15 May 1858, leaving no will, but was due 15s 8d in back-pay. His name did not appear on the Indian Mutiny Medal roll.

79 Sergeant (Instructor of Musketry) James Houston

James Houston was born in Dalmellington, near Ayr, in about April 1835. He was employed as a clerk before enlisting in the Corps of Musketry at Hythe, Kent, on 1 July 1856. Houston was temporarily attached to the 54th Regiment in 1857 as Sergeant Instructor of Musketry, and went with the regiment to India. Aboard the *Sarah Sands* he distinguished himself during the fire, being mentioned in General Orders. Houston served during the campaign in India, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue). He transferred fully to the 54th, on 31 August 1860, as a 2nd Class Sergeant Instructor of Musketry. He was imprisoned on 11 May 1861 to await trial for 'improper conduct'. His court martial, on 15 May, found him guilty, reduced him to the rank of Private and he was imprisoned until 10 July. On 1 June 1865 Houston was promoted Corporal and Pay-Master Sergeant; on 2 July he re-engaged for a further 11 years service, being promoted full Sergeant on 3 July. Court-martialled on 22 May 1866, for 'disgraceful conduct', Houston was again reduced to Private, being imprisoned until 19 August. Soon after release he was promoted Pay-Master Sergeant but on 5 November 1868 he was again reduced to Private for drunkenness. He was promoted Sergeant Pay-Master Clerk on 1 April 1869, and to Colour Sergeant and Pay-Master Clerk on 6 April 1872. Houston was discharged on 6 February 1877, almost completing 21 years service. He was in possession of two good conduct badges (his conduct being described as 'very good'), and he appeared just three times in the defaulters book (for his three courts martial offences). His final description noted he had a fresh complexion and blue eyes, with a height of 5 feet 5 inches, and he gave his intended place of residence as 32 South Cumberland Street, Glasgow.

Lieutenant and Adjutant Thomas Blackiston Houston

Thomas Houston was born at Orangefield, Co Down, on 12 November 1832. He was commissioned Ensign, by purchase, on 3 January 1851 in the 67th Regiment, transferring on 14 February to the 54th Regiment. Promoted to Lieutenant, by purchase, on 18 August 1854, he was made Adjutant on 22 July 1856. Houston was mentioned in General Orders for distinguished conduct during the fire aboard the *Sarah Sands*, being promoted Captain, on 30 March 1858, in the 2/4th Regiment. He does not appear to have been awarded the Indian Mutiny Medal. Thomas Houston died while on leave at Nice on 16 February 1860.

Lieutenant Joseph William Hughes

Joseph Hughes was born on 8 March 1837, at Middleton Hall, Wooler, Northumberland. The second son of George Hughes, JP, and his wife Margaret (née Dunn), he went to Hythe School, where he gained a first class extra certificate. Hughes purchased his commission as an Ensign in the 54th Regiment on 1 December 1854, being promoted Lieutenant on 26 September 1856. He greatly distinguished himself during the fire on the *Sarah Sands*,

leading to his mention in General Orders. He served in the campaign in India, being awarded the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue). Hughes was appointed Adjutant on 21 June 1858; was station staff officer at Sultanpore from 15 November 1858 until 1 November 1859, and later at Roorkee from 27 December 1861 until 20 April 1862. He purchased his promotion to Captain on 19 December 1862, and was made Brevet Major, on 20 April 1867, a somewhat belated reward for his gallantry on the *Sarah Sands*. Hughes acted as Staff Officer to Colonel H. Ponsonby, CO of Belfast District, during the Fenian disturbances in 1869. For a short time in 1875 he acted as ADC to Major General Sir Henry Percival De Bathe. Hughes was made Brevet Lieutenant Colonel on 22 May 1876, at which time he was commanding the Darjeeling Convalescent Depot. On 14 November 1877 he received his promotion to Major. Hughes married Frances Cox, daughter of William Henry Cox of 38 Brunswick Square, Brighton, on 2 January 1879 at Hove, Sussex. Promoted Lieutenant Colonel on 1 July 1881, later that year – on 14 November – he was made Brevet Colonel, commanding the 2nd Battalion, Dorset Regiment from 19 November. Hughes retired due to illness on 31 December 1884, on full-pay, as an Honorary Major General. According to Sergeant William Murray's account, Hughes received a distinguished service pension in 1899. Joseph Hughes died at Brighton on 10 February 1908, after a distinguished career in the Army. A brass memorial tablet was erected by his brother in Ilderton Church, near Wooler. Some relics of Hughes, including one of his uniforms, are preserved in The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester, and the family also hold several items that belonged to him. See also the *London Standard*, Tuesday 26 July 1898, p 5.

1853 Private George Lamb

George Lamb was born in Dublin in around the middle of 1825. He worked as a bricklayer before enlisting in the 54th Regiment, at Dublin, on 9 April 1842, receiving a bounty of £3 17s 6d. His height on enlistment was given as 5 feet 5½ inches. Lamb was mentioned in General Orders for his distinguished conduct during the fire aboard the *Sarah Sands*. He served with the regiment during the campaign in India, including the attacks on the forts at Sirhoul and Dahein, and subsequently received the Indian Mutiny Medal. Lamb was sent home for discharge, on 12 December 1859, probably on medical grounds, being finally discharged, at Colchester, on 21 April 1860.

3710 Lance Corporal John McCullum

John McCullum was born at Ordchator in about 1833. He worked as a joiner before enlisting in the Northumberland Militia (No 1404), at Newcastle, on 10 March 1855, receiving a bounty of 10s. His height on enlistment was given as 5 feet 10½ inches. Hoping for service in the Crimea, McCullum transferred to the 54th Regiment on 17 April 1855, receiving a bounty of £9 - he was one of 137 men transferring from the Northumberland Militia around this time. McCullum joined the regiment at Gibraltar on 8 November 1855, being retained there along with the rest of the 54th. He greatly distinguished himself aboard the *Sarah Sands* during the fire, being mentioned in General Orders. Though he served with the regiment in India, it appears that McCullum did not receive the Indian Mutiny Medal. John McCullum died at Cawnpore on 27 January 1861, being in receipt of good conduct pay at the time of his death.

Lieutenant Colonel Bowland Moffat

Bowland Moffat was born in Wimbledon, Surrey, on 8 February 1813, the son of William Moffat and his wife Jane (née Wheatley). He was baptised there on 9 April that year. He

was commissioned Ensign, by purchase, in the 54th Regiment on 22 June 1832. Moffat was promoted Lieutenant, by purchase, on 7 August 1835, and Captain, by purchase, on 27 August 1841. During this period he married Frances Maria Garrard (1818-91) on 27 August 1836 in Ootacamund, Madras, and they went on to have five children: Frances ('Fanny') Jane (1837-1906), Emily Augusta (1839-1917), Bowland Garrard (1842-1924), Reginald William (1845-1845), and Eustace William Douglas (1845-92). He was promoted to Major on 4 March 1853, and to Lieutenant Colonel, on 5 September 1856. It would appear that Moffat was not a very popular officer within the Regiment, his actions on the *Sarah Sands* being rarely given the benefit of the doubt. Though the Royal Humane Society initially voted him their Silver Medal and a testimonial for his gallant conduct, the authorities at the War Office rather precipitously concluded that he had abandoned his post. Moffat was removed from his command on 15 June 1858, returning to England and being placed on half-pay on 7 December 1858. Later, his case was viewed with a little more sympathy, Moffat being promoted Colonel, unattached, on 1 May 1861, and he was then appointed CO of the 1st West India Regiment on 4 March 1862, the regiment being then stationed in Barbados. Before joining, he had a spell on leave, departing from Southampton on 17 July and arriving in Barbados on 2 August. Moffat commanded the Regiment until 1866, during which period he was involved in a local controversy following the turning down of his appeal for additional set-apart pews for his officers in Christ Church Cathedral, Nassau, and in 1865 had to supply 200 men from his regiment to assist in the bloody suppression of the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica. Moffat retired by sale of his commission, leaving Barbados for England on 19 September 1866. Bowland Moffat died in December 1890 in East Preston, Sussex, having never fully regained his public reputation. See also K. Startup 'Guardians of our own honour: Confederate sympathies and the pew controversy in Christ Church Cathedral', *Journal of the Bahamas Historical Society*, October 2008, volume 30, p 15.

2200 Sergeant William Murray

William Murray was born in about 1828, in the parish of St James's in Dublin. He worked as a labourer before enlisting in the 54th Regiment, at Mullingar, on 15 August 1845, for a bounty of £4. Murray was promoted to Corporal in April 1854, and to Sergeant in October 1855. Aboard the *Sarah Sands* he was conspicuous in his exertions during the fire, claiming to be the subject of a special report by Major Brett. He served with the regiment in India, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue). Murray was promoted to Colour Sergeant on 1 June 1862, however, the conditions in India affected him and he was invalided home on 4 February 1863. He went absent without leave on 9-10 October 1867, was tried by court martial, and reduced to the rank of Private. Shortly afterwards, on 22 October, he was discharged to pension. He had received the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, with a gratuity of £10, sometime prior to his court martial (which appears to have allowed him to retain this award). Murray gave his intended place of residence as Athlone, however, he did not return to civilian life. He served on the permanent staff of the 7th Battalion of the Kings Royal Rifles Militia for three years, after which he transferred to the 3rd Battalion of the Northumberland Light Infantry Militia. Murray served with this unit for 16 years, as Colour Sergeant on the permanent staff, as Sergeant Instructor of Musketry and as a Sergeant Major. He received the Royal Bounty for his conduct aboard the *Sarah Sands*. Murray finally retired on 13 June 1887, after 42 years service, settling in the village of Alnwick, Northumberland. On retirement, the Colonel, Earl Percy, and a number of officers

of the 3rd Bn Northumberland Light Infantry Militia, presented him with a cheque for 20 guineas. At the suggestion of the Duke of Northumberland, Murray wrote his account of the events on the *Sarah Sands*, along with the details of his service in the militia, which was published in 1906. William Murray died on 30 October 1912. See also: *Alnwick Mercury*, Saturday 2 November 1912, p 8 for his obituary and a photograph.

Assistant Surgeon Daniel O'Donovan

Daniel O'Donovan was born at Shanagolden, Co Limerick, on 20 March 1828. He qualified as MD at Glasgow in 1852, entering the Army as Assistant Surgeon on 14 July 1854. He was posted to the 54th Regiment on 24 July 1857, and had medical charge of the men on board the *Sarah Sands* during the fire, after his superior had taken to the lifeboats. O'Donovan served with the regiment in India until 10 December 1858, when he was posted to the staff of the Medical Department and stationed in the West Indies. He does not appear to have received the Indian Mutiny Medal. In April and May of 1861, he served with a force against the hostile natives of Yucatan. On 6 August 1867 O'Donovan was promoted Surgeon on the staff and stationed in China. He went on half-pay on 10 November 1869, but returned to full-pay on 6 December 1873 as Surgeon Major in the Army Medical Department, before finally retiring on half-pay on 21 October 1879. Daniel O'Donovan died in Dublin on 13 March 1888.

2328 Sergeant Thomas Page

Thomas Page was born in the parish of Hemphilt, near Bedford, about June 1827. He was employed as a servant prior to enlisting in the 54th Regiment in London on 10 December 1845, receiving a bounty of £3 10s, and joining the Depot at Fermoy on 26 December. Page was promoted Corporal on 21 May 1853, and Sergeant on 16 February 1854. He served with the regiment in Gibraltar. Page was mentioned in General Orders for distinguished conduct during the fire on the *Sarah Sands*. For his service with the 54th in India Page received the Indian Mutiny Medal. He was discharged on 7 August 1866, having been found medically unfit for further service. His conduct was described as 'very good', and he had been awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal with a gratuity of £15. Page gave his intended place of residence as St Albans.

1330 Sergeant Major Lewis Purnell

Lewis Purnell was born in about December 1823, in the parish of Midsomer Norton, near Shepton Mallet. He worked as a labourer before enlisting in the 54th Regiment at Bristol on 13 July 1840. Purnell consistently rose through the ranks: to Corporal on 1 December 1843, to Sergeant on 23 August 1845, to Colour Sergeant on 17 November 1848, and finally to Sergeant Major on 7 January 1853. He rendered gallant and distinguished service during the fire aboard the *Sarah Sands*, his hearing being partially damaged by the explosion in the magazine. Purnell was invalided home from India on 21 May 1859, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal. For his services Purnell was promoted to Ensign on 21 September 1860 – due to his deafness, however, he was obliged to decline the post (which was cancelled by authority dated Horse Guards, 23 October 1860). As an alternative, Purnell was granted the Meritorious Service Medal with an annuity of £20 – submission dated 6 November 1860 – 'as reward for meritorious service, more particularly in Canada during the years 1851-1852-1853 and 1854, and at the Wreck of the *Sarah Sands* on passage to India in November 1857'. This was one of those rare instances of the MSM being awarded for gallantry. Purnell was discharged at his own request on 26 September 1865 with full pension. After his discharge he joined the permanent staff of the 3rd Militia Battalion of the North Lancashire Regiment,

with whom he served until 25 July 1882 when he finally retired, giving as his intended place of residence Reigate, Surrey. He subsequently settled in St Thomas's Road, Preston. Lewis Purnell died on 18 October 1900 and was buried in Preston Cemetery. See also *The Preston Lad*, January 1901, p 7.

1149 Sergeant Henry Robinson

Henry Robinson was presumably born during the mid-to-late 1820s, possibly in Ireland, enlisting in the 54th Regiment at Birr, by special authority as a Boy, on 29 August 1839, joining the regiment at Chatham on 2 October. Robinson was promoted to Private on 29 July 1842 and to Corporal on 1 July 1847, while with the depot at Kinsale. He joined the service companies of the regiment while it was stationed in Canada, being promoted Sergeant on 23 December 1851. He was one of the longest serving soldiers in the 54th at the time of the *Sarah Sands* incident, being mentioned in General Orders for his distinguished conduct during the fire. Robinson was possibly the 'Sergeant H Robson' mentioned in Sergeant William Murray's account, who broke three ribs falling through the hole that had been cut in the upper deck in order to fight the fire from below, and so prevent it spreading to the bunkers. He served with the 54th during the campaign in India, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal, and being promoted to Colour Sergeant on 10 September 1858. Henry Robinson died in India on 10 July 1859.

Lieutenant Frederick Schlotel

Frederick Schlotel was born in Brixton, in London, on 12 June 1834, his family being originally of Dutch descent. He was commissioned Ensign, by purchase, in the 81st Regiment on 18 April 1854. Promoted Lieutenant, by purchase, on 6 January 1857, Schlotel was transferred on 10 May that year to the 54th Regiment. He sailed with the regiment aboard the *Sarah Sands*, and saw service during the campaign in India, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal. On 29 April 1858 Schlotel joined the London Stock Exchange. In 1870 he wrote his *Narrative of the Burning of the 'Sarah Sands' Screw Steam Ship*, published that year by Bemrose and Sons. Eschewing publicity, Schlotel omitted his name from the title page, noting instead that it was written 'by A Late 54th Officer' and merely initialling the preface 'FS'. The account itself does not mention him, and is somewhat selective about events, clearly following his self-imposed guidelines as set out in the preface: 'to avoid mentioning anything that would give pain or offence to a single individual'. In later life, Frederick Schlotel retired to Eastbourne, where he died on 24 December 1902, leaving a widow but no surviving issue.

2047 Corporal William Singer

William Singer was born about 1826, in the parish of Broomshaw, near Calne, Wiltshire. He enlisted in the 54th Regiment, at Swindon, on 17 October 1843, receiving a bounty of £3 5s. He was promoted to Corporal on 13 December 1854. Aboard the *Sarah Sands* Singer was one of the few casualties, being thrown down a hatchway by the explosion in the magazine. He served with the regiment in India, qualifying for the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue), which appears to have been returned to the Mint. On 6 March 1859 Singer was promoted to Sergeant. He was invalided home on 7 November 1864, being discharged at Colchester on 26 August 1865 with pension on completion of service. Prior to his discharge, Singer had been awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal with a gratuity of £5, and also held two good conduct badges. He gave his intended place of residence as Spirthill, near Calne. By 1871 he was living in The Marsh, Calne, with his wife Sarah Brittain (40) and a 12-year-old niece Ann Hadrell. Ten years later he was working as a tailor and he and his wife

then had two children, Emily Ann (6) and Louisa Jane (4). By 1891 Singer was described as a 57-year-old pensioner and he and his wife then had six children Emily Annie (17), Alfred (11), Nora Amelia (8), Elizabeth, Maria (6) and Lilian Mary (4) residing at home. William Singer appears to have died in Calne in 1895.

2132 Lance Corporal John Stephenson

John Stephenson was born in the parish of Cloone, near Mohill, Co Leitrim, in about January 1827. He attested for the 54th Regiment at Mullingar on 30 November 1844, receiving a bounty of £4. He was mentioned in General Orders for his distinguished conduct during the fire on the *Sarah Sands*. Stephenson served with the regiment during the campaign in India, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal. On 9 November 1864 he gained promotion to Corporal. Stephenson was discharged, on 17 April 1866, having been found unfit for further service. His conduct was described as 'very good' and he was in possession of four good conduct badges. He gave his intended place of residence as Newtown Forbes, Co Longford. On 17 October 1876, due to the intervention of Lord Harlech, Stephenson was granted the extra 6d per day Royal Bounty, in addition to his pension, for his services on the *Sarah Sands*.

Captain James Sinclair Thomson

James Thomson was born on 3 July 1824 in Belfast. On 25 November 1842 he was commissioned Ensign, by purchase. 1846 saw Thomson made Adjutant on 24 May and promoted Lieutenant on 13 June. While serving with the regiment in Canada, he married Roberta Spencer Boxer in Quebec, on 29 March 1852, purchasing his Captain's commission on 9 July that year. He was with the 54th aboard the *Sarah Sands*, and during the campaign in India, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue). Thomson was promoted to Major on 21 September 1860, to Lieutenant Colonel on 27 July 1866, and to Colonel on 27 July 1871. He transferred to the 2/14th Regiment on 30 April 1873. A very brief period on half-pay occurred in 1878, from 20 March to 3 April, before Thomson returned to service, this time with the Brigade Depot at Derby. He was promoted Major General on 4 April 1882, shortly after which, on 2 December 1882, he went on the retired list as an Honorary Lieutenant General. James Thomson died at Mackworth, Derby, on 20 January 1893.

3190 Private Andrew Walsh

Andrew Walsh was born in 1837 in Sligo, where he worked for some time as a labourer. In 1855, when he was aged 17, Walsh enlisted in the 54th Regiment at Londonderry, for a bounty of a few pounds. Walsh played a distinguished part in the events aboard the *Sarah Sands*, being mentioned in General Orders and subsequently recommended for the Victoria Cross. This seems to have given rise to some feelings among others involved: in a private notebook (in The Keep Military Museum archives) Sergeant Murray commented that Walsh: 'was only saving his own life'. He was imprisoned for misconduct between 11 and 27 January 1858, when aboard the *Clarendon* on route from Mauritius to Calcutta. Walsh served with the regiment in India, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal. He was sent home, time expired, for discharge on 17 June 1865, being finally discharged at Colchester on 30 October 1865. Walsh gave his intended place of residence as Londonderry, and was given an allowance of 5s plus passage money of £1 12s 2d to get home.

2910 Private William Warner

William Warner was born in Ingoldmells, enlisting in the 54th Regiment on 23 April 1852, at Boston, for a bounty of £4. He was granted a furlough between 17 January and 9 March

in 1854, and later served with the regiment in Gibraltar. On the *Sarah Sands* Warner's distinguished conduct led to his mention in General Orders - unfortunately, his surname was incorrectly transcribed from the original report, being spelt as Warren, this error remaining unnoticed until the present. Warner served with the 54th in India, but none of the rolls credit him with receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal. On 24 May 1862, he was sent home, time expired, being discharged at Colchester on 20 October 1862.

3783 Lance Corporal John Westby

John Westby was born in about 1829 in Ormskirk. He enlisted in the 54th Regiment, aged 26, on 17 May 1855 at Lynn, receiving a bounty of £7. He was described as being 5 feet 7 inches tall. Westby was mentioned in General Orders for his distinguished conduct during the fire on the *Sarah Sands*. He would appear to have served with the regiment in India, but the rolls do not credit him with the Indian Mutiny Medal. John Westby died at Allahabad on 7 May 1869, at which point he was entitled to one year's compensation for clothing and was due £2 9s 3d due in back-pay.

2257 Private William Wiles

William Wiles was born in the parish of Harleston, in Norfolk, in about January 1828. He worked as a labourer prior to enlisting in the 54th Regiment, aged 17, on 30 October 1845 at Queen's Square, London. Wiles played an extremely gallant part aboard the *Sarah Sands*, helping to save the Regimental Colours and, simultaneously, the life of Ship's Quartermaster Richard Richmond. He was subsequently mentioned in General Orders, and received the Silver Medal of the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariner's Royal Benevolent Society. Wiles served with the regiment in India, receiving the Indian Mutiny Medal. On 29 August 1860 he was sent home and joined the depot. Wiles transferred to the 57th Regiment, then at Colchester, on 19 August 1863. He transferred again, this time to the 2/24th Regiment (No 1790) on 30 April 1866. Wiles was discharged, with pension, at Sheffield on 3 March 1869. He had been 11 times in the defaulters book, possessed five good conduct badges, and gave his intended place of residence as Sheffield. On 31 October 1876, Wiles pension was increased by 6d due to the Royal Bounty, for his services on the *Sarah Sands*.

Lieutenant John Ayton Wood

John Wood was born on 27 February 1825 at Kirk Newton. He was commissioned Ensign on 11 May 1855, having volunteered from the Northumberland Light Infantry Militia, presumably hoping for service in the Crimea. Wood purchased his Lieutenant's commission on 14 August 1857, just prior to sailing on the *Sarah Sands*. Serving with the 54th in India, he received the Indian Mutiny Medal (1868 issue). On 14 February 1860 Wood transferred to the depot in England. He was promoted Captain on 27 July 1866, transferring to the 64th Regiment on 2 October that year. Wood retired on pension as an Honorary Major on 31 October 1877, being later made Honorary Lieutenant Colonel on 1 July 1881. John Wood died, at Tughall, Northumberland, on 15 November 1887.

APPENDIX F

Original Indian Mutiny Roll for the 54th Regiment

This roll details those men of the Light Company and No 5 Company of the 54th Regiment, who took part in the actions of Sirhoul and Dahein, these companies being the only recipients of the original issue of the Indian Mutiny Medal.

1st - attack on the rebel fort at Sirhoul - 21 March 1858.

2nd - attack and capture of the rebel fort at Dahein - 14 July 1858.

3rd - attack and capture of the rebel fort at Sirhoul - 17-18 July 1858.

RANK	NAME	1st ATTACK	2nd ATTACK	3rd ATTACK
Brevet Major	P.W. Gillum	X	X	X
Captain	E.T. Shiffner ¹	X	X	X
Lieutenant	W.A. Galbraith	X	X	X
Lieutenant	V.T. Baly ²	-	X	X
Lieutenant	F. Schlotel	X	-	-
Lieutenant	G. Cronyn	X	X	X
Assistant Surgeon	W.A. Armstrong ³	X	-	-
Colour Sergeant	Mathias Brevitt	-	X	X
Colour Sergeant	William Crompton	X	X	X
Sergeant	William Chippington	X	X	X
Sergeant	Thomas Page	X	-	-
Sergeant	Charles Roberts	X	X	X
Sergeant	Henry Robinson	-	X	X
Sergeant	Walter Searles	X	X	X
Corporal	John Cox	X	X	X
Corporal	Patrick McCumisky ⁴	X	X	X
Corporal	Samuel Henry	X	X	X
Corporal	Peter McKelvie	X	X	X
Corporal	John Shierson	X	X	X
Corporal	William Tyrer	X	-	-
Drummer	Joseph [James] Boughtflower	X	-	-
Drummer	James Reilly	X	X	X
Drummer	Stephen Robinson	X	-	-
Private	Edward Atkins	X	-	-

The Burning of the Sarah Sands

RANK	NAME	1st ATTACK	2nd ATTACK	3rd ATTACK
Private	Alfred Barrell	-	-	X
Private	Joseph Barton	X	-	-
Private	Thomas [John] Baylis	X	X	-
Private	George Barnwell	X	X	-
Private	Michael Barry	X	-	-
Private	James Bell	X	X	X
Private	Hugh Bell	-	X	X
Private	Thomas Bennett	X	-	-
Private	William Bond	X	X	X
Private	James [John] Boyd	X	X	X
Private	George Boyden	X	X	X
Private	Thomas Brandon	X	X	X
Private	Stephen Brittany	-	X	X
Private	Denis Brien	X	-	X
Private	Edward Broughton	X	X	-
Private	John Brown	X	X	X
Private	William Bryant	X	X	X
Private	James Bundle	X	-	-
Private	James Burns	X	X	X
Private	Alexander Burns	X	-	X
Private	Benjamin Butterworth	X	X	-
Private	Michael Byrne	X	-	-
Private	Daniel Cairnes	X	X	X
Private	Thomas Carding	X	X	X
Private	James Carmichael	-	X	-
Private	David Cattermole	X	-	-
Private	John Clelland	X	-	-
Private	Daniel Conacher	X	-	-
Private	James Connelly	X	-	-
Private	Thomas Copsey	X	X	X
Private	Henry Cory	X	X	X
Private	Peter Curran	X	-	-
Private	William Cuff	X	X	X
Private	James [John] Curties	X	-	-
Private	Michael Dawson	X	X	X
Private	Robert Denton	X	-	-

Appendix F Original Indian Mutiny Medal Roll for the 54th Regiment

RANK	NAME	1st ATTACK	2nd ATTACK	3rd ATTACK
Private	Patrick Dever	-	X	X
Private	Joseph [John] Donnelly ⁵	X	X	X
Private	James Doran	X	X	X
Private	William Dunn	X	-	-
Private	James Duckard	-	X	X
Private	Robert Dunlop	X	X	X
Private	Robert East	X	X	X
Private	Samuel Entwistle	-	X	X
Private	Charles Elflett	X	-	X
Private	Alfred Everson	X	X	-
Private	Daniel Ewington	X	-	-
Private	Alexander Ferris	X	X	X
Private	Phillip Folland	X	X	X
Private	Francis Glenny	X	X	X
Private	William Golding	X	-	-
Private	James Greenholsh	X	X	-
Private	Mathew [Mathias] Hagan	X	X	X
Private	William Hamilton	X	X	X
Private	Terence Hanawin	X	-	-
Private	John Harrington	X	-	-
Private	John Harvey	X	-	X
Private	Thomas Holland	X	X	X
Private	William Hubbard	X	-	-
Private	George Hudson	X	-	X
Private	Thomas Humphries	X	-	X
Private	Thomas Killen	X	-	-
Private	George Lamb	X	X	X
Private	Patrick Leahy	X	X	X
Private	Timothy Leary	X	X	X
Private	Michael Lewis	X	-	-
Private	Michael Loonan	X	-	-
Private	Thomas Lynch	X	-	-
Private	John Lynch	X	-	-
Private	Francis McCabe	X	X	X
Private	James McGronan	X	X	X
Private	Henry McKee	-	X	X

The Burning of the Sarah Sands

RANK	NAME	1st ATTACK	2nd ATTACK	3rd ATTACK
Private	James McQueen	X	-	-
Private	Denis McShane	-	X	X
Private	Benjamin Murrell	X	-	-
Private	William Morrison	X	X	X
Private	Timothy Meynehan	X	X	X
Private	John Neill	X	-	X
Private	James Nethercote	X	X	X
Private	Samuel Newell	X	X	X
Private	George Nightingale	-	X	-
Private	William Nunn	X	-	-
Private	John O'Connor ⁶	X	-	-
Private	Henry Osborne	-	X	-
Private	Thomas Osborne	-	X	X
Private	Thomas Oliver	X	X	X
Private	Charles Ostler	-	X	X
Private	John Parkins	X	-	-
Private	Charles Pattle	X	-	-
Private	William Pearce	X	X	X
Private	George Pestal	X	-	-
Private	James Porter	X	-	-
Private	John Ramshaw	X	X	-
Private	John Rollin	X	-	-
Private	Samuel Sandell	X	-	-
Private	Robert Sellis	X	X	X
Private	Edward Slavin	X	X	X
Private	John Scofel	X	-	-
Private	James Skeith	X	-	X
Private (3287)	Thomas Smith	X	X	X
Private	Christopher Smith	X	-	-
Private	Charles Snedell	X	X	X
Private	George Spear	X	X	-
Private	Benjamin Sperring	X	X	X
Private	John [Joseph] Spence	X	X	X
Private	James Stacey	X	-	X
Private	Thomas Stanley	X	-	-
Private	William Stanton	X	X	X

Appendix F Original Indian Mutiny Medal Roll for the 54th Regiment

RANK	NAME	1st ATTACK	2nd ATTACK	3rd ATTACK
Private	Ezekiel Stebbings	X	X	X
Private	John Stephenson	X	X	X
Private	Charles Stephenson	X	X	X
Private	William Thomas	X	-	-
Private (2529)	Thomas Thompson	X	X	X
Private (3778)	Thomas Thompson	X	X	X
Private	Francis Todd	X	X	-
Private	Edward Wales	X	X	X
Private	John Wales	X	X	X
Private	Andrew Walsh	X	X	X
Private	Abraham Wasey	X	X	X
Private	George Weeding	X	X	-
Private	John Weatherhead	X	X	-
Private	Giles Williams	X	X	X
Private	George White	X	-	X
Private	William Wiles	X	X	-
Private	Richard Woolway	X	X	-
Private	Hugh Wynne	X	X	X
Private	William Young	X	-	-

-
- 1 Sailed aboard the *Lady Jocelyn*.
 - 2 Sailed aboard the *Lady Jocelyn*.
 - 3 Sailed aboard the *City of Manchester*.
 - 4 Sailed aboard the *Lady Jocelyn*.
 - 5 Sailed aboard the *Lady Jocelyn*.
 - 6 Sailed aboard the *City of Manchester*.



A 54th Regiment soldier preparing to face the smoke and flames

APPENDIX G

Resumé of the 54th Regiment's History¹

Though Britain and France were nominally at peace in the early 1750s, they were involved in extensive 'unofficial' warfare in North America and India. In 1755, the British government took precautionary measures, 15 regiments being ordered to raise second battalions, with 10 new regiments being formed in 1756, among them the 54th Foot, whose 'Letters of Service' had been issued in December 1755.

Raised by Lieutenant Colonel John Campbell at Salisbury early in 1756, their facings were initially 'popinjay' green (later altered to plain green), and among the initial 750 men were 50 Highlanders plus a seasoning of veterans from other regiments (notably the 11th and 36th Regiments). Ordered to Gibraltar within four months, this did not suit the 'pressed' men amongst the recruits, the 54th departing for its first service abroad disarmed and under guard. A month after arrival, the regiment saw sea-service, but little action, with Admiral Byng's squadron - the 54th remaining at Gibraltar until 1763, when the end of the Seven Years War saw them transferred to Ireland.

In 1776, over a year after the American Revolution began, the 54th were sent to North America, a rough two-month passage. In June they formed part of Commodore Parker's attempt on Charleston, being repelled by the guns of Fort Sullivan. They landed at New York in August, being stationed at Staten Island, the British Army under General Howe clearing the rebels from New York State, with General Cornwallis pursuing them south through New Jersey. The 54th, however, were sent north to occupy Rhode Island early in 1777, remaining there for two years - (thus missing the major engagements at Brandywine, Germantown and Monmouth in 1777-78) - but were probably involved in repelling General Sullivan's attempt to take Newport in 1778. With the evacuation of Rhode Island, the regiment returned to New York in the autumn of 1779, and were to lose 30 men from typhus the following summer.

The 54th were to see action in Connecticut - at the taking of Fort Griswold, storming the ditch and clambering over the palisade on each others backs, 45 minutes fierce action costing them 15 killed and 78 wounded - and subsequently at the fall and burning of New London in 1781, earning the regiment the sobriquet 'The Flamers'. This was the 54th's last action of the war, the Light Company having been captured with General Cornwallis at Yorktown in October 1781. The remainder of the regiment was stationed at New York until November 1783, when it was finally evacuated by the British, the 54th going to Nova Scotia, spending an uneventful eight years in the Maritime Provinces, before returning home in 1791.

Sent as reinforcements for six months in 1793 to Guernsey, the regiment was then sent and withdrawn from the Continent four times between 1793-95, at one stage being cooped up in transports for four months, a miserable series of campaigns of suffering and loss to no purpose, the 54th returning home in May 1795.

The French were encouraging dissidents in every British held island, and the regiment was next sent to St Vincent in the West Indies, suffering from two hard fought engagements

and the effects of the climate, the survivors being drafted to the 63rd Regiment, while the officers and NCOs returned home to raise a new regiment - to a greater or lesser degree, this happened to almost every regiment that served in the West Indies in the eighteenth century.

They served in Ireland in 1798, though they were not engaged in the misery and cruelty marking the 'troubles'. Landing barely 150 strong, they left two years later with over 1200 men, being split into two battalions - Ireland providing both regular employment, and a high proportion of the rank and file, for the British Army.

Involved in the ill-conceived attempts to take the Spanish arsenals at Ferrol and Cadiz in 1800, the 54th then joined General Sir Ralph Abercromby's expedition to Egypt against Napoleon's 'Army of the Orient', which has been cut-off there since Nelson's victory of the Nile in 1798. On 8 March 1801 the 1st Battalion and 200 of the 2nd Battalion were among Abercromby's landing force of 17,000 men at Aboukir Bay, the British being established by the end of that evening at a cost of 750 casualties (of which the 54th's were light - five killed and 19 wounded). After Abercromby was mortally wounded by the French counter-attack, General Hutchinson marched on Cairo, while Major General Coote kept those in Alexandria bottled up. With reinforcements, Coote launched an assault, the 54th's objective being Fort Marabout, guarding the old harbour and the key to Alexandria. The regiment, dragging up two batteries of guns, under covering fire of the Light Company's sharpshooters, silenced the fort, the Commandant surrendering before the final assault. 'The Marabout Gun', a souvenir of the capture, was to accompany the regiment everywhere for the next 40 years until, in 1841, it was felt an infantry regiment should not transport a gun at public expense, and also infringe the prerogative of the Royal Artillery. In consequence, the gun went to Woolwich and the 54th was awarded the unique Battle Honour 'Marabout', the Sphinx badge for service in Egypt bearing this inscription, carried by no other regiment and worn on the cap badge for many years.

Two months after peace was concluded, in October 1801, the 54th was sent to Gibraltar, where the 2nd Battalion was disbanded. The tightening of discipline and the closure of notorious grog shops by the Governor, Prince Edward, Duke of Kent (fourth son of George III), provoked a mutiny on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day of 1802. The 54th (which was 90% Irish at the time) refused to join two regiments that rose, dispersing them with one sharp volley. Their steady discipline and good conduct were attributed to Colonel Ross, who was promoted, ironically earning the regiment a silver punch-bowl from the Duke of Kent for safeguarding his life.

The regiment were to lose 100 men in four months when 'inflammatory fever' swept the garrison in 1804, before returning to England in 1805. However, one transport was captured by a French squadron off Brest. Those men of the 54th taken prisoner were freed when the French frigate they were put aboard had to surrender at the Cape of Good Hope and during the following two years these men served as reinforcements for Commodore Popham's efforts in South America at Monte Video and Buenos Ayres through 1806-7.

The remainder of the regiment went to Jamaica, fighting yellowjack and cheap rum, putting down an insignificant mutiny amongst the 2nd West India Regiment, and assisting the Spanish against the French in Santo Domingo, slowly returning home from 1809, though it was 1813 before the last contingent was back.

Recruiting brought the regiment up to 600 and they then were off to Sweden, in support of Count Bernadotte, mainly involving garrison duty. After Leipzig in October 1813, they were no longer needed and were hence diverted to the Netherlands, forming part of the

occupation forces after Napoleon's abdication. Present at Waterloo, as part of Lieutenant General Colville's 4th Division in reserve at Hal, the 54th had 541 men on strength,² being awarded the Waterloo Medal and sharing in the prize bounty. Four months with the 'army of occupation', then back to England for 'law and order' duty in Liverpool, the next two years were spent at home, apart from one company that garrisoned Heligoland for a time.

At the end of 1818 the regiment went to South Africa, for frontier work on the Cape Colony's eastern border, before moving to India in 1822. Arriving in Madras, they lost 60 men to cholera, spending two years at Bangalore, before being ordered to Arakan on the outbreak of the Burma War in 1824. Advancing upriver, the expedition took several strongly built and held stockades, and the city of Arakan, the well-armed Burmese fighting well. The nature of the country brought the expedition to a standstill late in 1825 - the 54th losing 344 officers and men to the climate and disease, and gaining the battle honour 'Ava' (some 80 men were still living in 1851 to claim their Army of India Medal, clasp 'AVA', a dozen of them also being recipients of the Waterloo Medal).³ The mortality statistics of the 54th in the years after the war are indicative of the time and place - 1828, 37; 1829, 39; 1830, 22; 1831, 28 - plus an average daily sick list of 50 to 100 men. The years 1826 to 1840 proved largely uneventful - (though Lieutenant Colonel Mildmay Fane joined the regiment, being Commanding Officer between 1829 and 1851) - when they were ordered home, 250 men of the 54th volunteering to remain in India, 20 officers and 360 men leaving on the five month voyage to England, arriving in August 1840.

Stationed in Ireland between March 1842 and October 1845, companies were often at outlying posts with rarely more than three being stationed with Headquarters. The country was in the throes of Daniel O'Connell's political campaign for 'Repeal of the Union'. Lieutenant Colonel Fane and the 54th with four guns were involved in efforts to suppress a demonstration at Clontarf in October 1843.

Short spells at Gibraltar - between October 1845 and January 1847 - and Malta - between January 1847 to April 1848 - were followed by a posting to the West Indies, with Headquarters at Antigua, and companies at St Lucia, Dominica and St Kitts. Since the abolition of slavery, there had been sporadic outbursts of disorder among the enfranchised black population, and in 1849 there were disturbances at St Lucia in March, admirably handled by the 54th under Major Moore, and on Dominica in May, where the presence of the regiment proved effective. By the time the 54th left for Canada, in July 1851, four officers and 70 men had died, half of them to an outbreak of yellow fever in the autumn of 1849.

In Canada, surprisingly, the regiment had a higher sick-rate, the monthly average up from 16 to 22; there were a spate of desertions (80 plus over three years), due to the proximity of the United States; and 150 men volunteered to stay in Canada when the 54th departed for England in October 1854. Back home, they were quickly despatched to Gibraltar, to relieve the 89th Regiment (which was under orders for the Crimea), remaining there until June 1856 when they returned to Plymouth. Transferred to Aldershot in May 1857, the outbreak of the Mutiny saw them ordered to India. Two of their transports got there without incident, the third - the *Sarah Sands* - catching fire on 11 November and allowing those aboard to add substantially to the regiment's laurels. A less illustrious time followed, with elements of the 54th involved in several engagements during the Indian Mutiny, and the regiment as a whole going on to serve in the Sub-Continent for nearly nine years, until mid-1866.

After five years in England and Ireland, during which the Colours rescued from the

blazing saloon aboard the *Sarah Sands* were ceremonially laid-up in Norwich Cathedral, the regiment embarked for India once again in 1871, (this time travelling via the Suez Canal, the voyage taking just five weeks). On 1 July 1881, the 39th and 54th Regiments were linked as part of the Childers reforms to become the 1st and 2nd Battalions of The Dorsetshire Regiment respectively. The new regiment had, in addition to the two regular battalions, one Militia and one Volunteer battalion. The new badge incorporated the outstanding honours of the 39th and 54th – 39th (Castle and Key/Montis Insignia Calpe and Primus in Indis) and 54th (Sphinx with Marabout) – along with the disappearance of the old regimental numbers and the introduction of white facings (although the green was restored in 1904). During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the regiment had a brief foray to Burma but saw no action; were summoned to Egypt and Sudan but again were not in action; and a detachment went to Crete in 1898 to deal with refractory brigands.

The Second Anglo-Boer War saw the 2nd Battalion landing at Durban from late December 1899, being sent north to the Tugela River as part of General Warren's 5th Division, seeing action at Spion Kop and Grobelaar's Kloof during January and February of 1900 in General Buller's attempts to relieve Ladysmith. At Alleman's Nek in June, very much of a Dorset's affair, they lost 12 killed and 52 wounded (Colonel Law being awarded the CB), leaving Buller's troops occupying the last portal into the Transvaal. During the guerrilla phase of the war, they were either static, guarding railways or convoying supplies, guns and prisoners, or marching vast distances in efforts to trap concentrations of Boers, as in July and November of 1900 at Gras Kop and Wakkerstroom respectively. In 1901 they formed part of General Lord Kitchener's sweeps through south-east Transvaal and north-east Orange Free State, followed, in the autumn, by garrisoning of the blockhouse lines north of Bloemfontein. A mounted infantry detachment operated during General Botha's invasion of Natal in September 1901, repelling the Boers at Fort Prospect, Captain Rowley (who had distinguished himself at Alleman's Nek) being awarded the DSO. The battalion returned home in October 1902 having gained a CB, four DSOs, 15 DCMs and the battle honours 'Relief of Ladysmith' and 'South Africa', casualties for the duration of the war being 21 killed and 100 wounded, with 63 men dying from disease.

Once again sent to India in 1906, the 2nd Battalion received 700 men from the 1st Battalion departing for England. Reorganisation in 1907 saw the Dorsets composed of the 1st and 2nd Regular Battalions, the 3rd Special Reserve [Militia] Battalion and the 4th Territorial [Volunteer] Battalion. During the First World War, the Dorsets were expanded to 12 battalions, of which six saw active service, including the 2nd Battalion, which left India following the outbreak of war in 1914 to serve in Mesopotamia.

On the approach to Basra in November 1914, the 2nd Battalion sustained 170 casualties at Sahil, leading to the evacuation of that city. By April 1915, they had won eight DCMs at Ahwaz, and another seven at Shaiba, where their charge, costing them 15 officers and 152 men killed or wounded, opened the way to Kut. In September, the Northern Redoubt at Kut was taken at bayonet point, a feat repeated in November at Ctesiphon. The Turkish counter-attack halted General Townshend's advance on Baghdad (4,500 casualties being sustained, of which the Dorsets suffered 243 or almost half their strength), causing a retreat on Kut by December. After being besieged for 145 days, the garrison was forced to surrender in late April 1916, with the failure of the relieving force (including the composite 'Norsets' battalion - drafts of Norfolks and Dorsets) to break through. Of the 350 men of the 2nd Battalion taken captive, and marched a thousand miles to Anatolia over the next

six months, only 70 returned to England (the battalion was to be awarded the battle honour 'Defence of Kut-al-Amara'). The Dorset half of the 'Norsets' became the 2nd (Provisional) Battalion, being involved in campaigns against Baghdad in March 1917 and Damascus in September 1918, returning to England in June 1919.

By October 1919 the 2nd Battalion were once more in India, engaged in 1921-22 in putting down the revolt among the Moplahs, detachments chasing small bands through the forests of Malabar, sweeping the disaffected area and enforcing martial law. Four men of the battalion were awarded the newly instituted Medal of the Order of the British Empire for Gallantry (better known as the 'Empire Gallantry Medal' - of the total of 130 awarded, only 62 were for the Military Division of the award).⁴ As holders became eligible to exchange their medals for the George Cross by the Royal Warrant of 24 September 1940,⁵ these men should be noted:

Sergeant William George Hand, MM

Private Frederick Chant

Private Thomas Miller

Private Frederick Henry Troake⁶

Briefly in Sudan and Egypt in 1923-24, the 2nd Battalion were retained in England between 1924 and 1933 (broken only by a posting to Germany in 1928-29). After a spell in Palestine in 1936-37, the battalion was converted into a 'rifle battalion', with a HQ's company and four rifle companies.

On the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, they were posted to the Franco-Belgian frontier. For his services during the retreat to the Channel in May 1940 and at the Dunkirk perimeter and evacuation, the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Stephenson, was awarded the DSO. April 1942 saw them off to India, for jungle training, skills put to the test at Kohima in April 1944, where the battle raged for three weeks around the District Commissioner's bungalow and tennis court. 'A' Company's position commanded the junction of three vital roads, being the key to Kohima, the battalion losing 473 officers and men. There followed a year of unremitting jungle warfare covering 700 miles - engagements such as Tamu, Ye-U, Ngazun, 'Dirty Pagoda' and Mount Popa - from Imphal in June 1944 to Mandalay by March 1945.

After a post-war refit in India, they formed part of British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan in 1946-47, from whence they went to Malaya for six months, before going home to be stood down on 6 January 1948 (a cadre of the 2nd merging with the 1st in Vienna in 1949 to create a new 1st Battalion).

1 In the compilation of this resume we owe a debt to Hugh Popham's volume *The Dorset Regiment*, (London: Leo Cooper, 1971) to which due acknowledgement is here made, and to a lesser extent C.T. Atkinson's (1947) *The Dorsetshire Regiment*, Oxford: OUP, and the 'The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment (1685-1985) Tercentenary Brochure'.

2 Major L.L. Gordon (1979), *British Battles and Medals*, 5th revised edition, London: Spink, p 53.

3 R.W. Gould and Captain K.J. Douglas-Morris (1974), *The Army of India Medal Roll 1799-1826*, London: J.B. Hayward, pp 43-4.

4 P.E. Abbott and J.M.A. Tamplin (1981), *British Gallantry Awards*, London: Nimrod Dix, p.242.

5 *Ibid*, pp 138-140.

6 Sir Arnold Wilson and Captain J.H.F. McEwen (1939), *Gallantry*, London: OUP, p 283.



Sarah Sands display at the regimental museum, The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester

APPENDIX H

Obituary of John Grantham

Reproduced from the *Minutes of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, 1875, Vol 39, pp 266-8:

Mr John Grantham, the second son of the late Mr John Grantham, who was for several years engaged under the late Mr Rennie in surveying many great works both in England and Ireland, was born at Croydon in 1809. After leaving school, he was engaged with his father in surveying various lines of railway then projected in England, some of which were eventually carried out. He also assisted in the establishment of steam vessels and an improved system of navigation on the canals between Dublin and Limerick, and in the employment of steam on the River Shannon, which system was subsequently taken up by the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company, and continued until the competition of railways diverted the traffic.

Upon leaving Ireland, he, on the introduction of the late Mr Charles Wye Williams, Assoc InstCE, with whom he resided in Liverpool, joined the late firm of Messrs Mather, Dixon & Co, of which he was subsequently manager and partner. In that establishment were constructed large mechanical works, such as marine engines, locomotives, sugar-mills, and nearly every kind of machinery. In the year 1830 he gained the prize offered by the London and North-Western Railway Company for a design for drawing up, by means of stationary engines, the passenger carriages from Lime Street to Edge Hill Station, Liverpool, which engines are still at work for some purposes, though locomotive power has generally superseded them. Mr Grantham was one of the founders of the Polytechnic Society at Liverpool, and continued as Honorary Member till his death.

The firm of Messrs Mather, Dixon & Co having ceased to carry on business, he began practice on his own account, at Liverpool, as a naval architect and consulting engineer, and planned and executed several of the largest iron sailing and steam ships then employed in navigation, such as the *Sarah Sands*, *Pacific*, *Antelope*, *Empress Eugenie*, etc. He was engineer to the Whitehaven Steam Ship Company and other companies, for whom he constructed vessels for Australia and Egypt. He took out several patents for screw propellers, which were then being introduced, and invented a system of sheathing iron-built ships with copper, which was afterwards employed by the government, but without recognition or compensation. He held for some years the appointment of Surveyor of Passenger Steam Ships at Liverpool, under the Admiralty, and subsequently under the Board of Trade.

In 1859 he left Liverpool for London, and was largely engaged in arbitrations and consultations in cases connected with insurance and casualties of the mercantile marine, and relating to the construction of vessels. He designed a fleet of steam colliers, which ply between London and the north of England. In connection with his brother, he – in 1860 – became Engineer of the Northern Railway of Buenos Ayres; and – in 1863 – planned and executed the first tramway in Copenhagen, which is now working with success.

The latter part of his life was much occupied in the invention and perfection of a steam tramway car, which has been successfully tried, and for which he held a patent; but, as the law of this country prohibits the use of steam-carriages on public roads, except under such restrictions as to render their general employment impracticable, it has only hitherto been worked experimentally. In foreign countries, however, where no such impediments obtain, a field appears to exist for the employment of this machine, which is noiseless, and does not differ in general construction from the ordinary tramway car, while it can be worked at

one-half the cost of horse-power.

Mr Grantham contributed many works to engineering literature - notably a book on Iron Shipbuilding, illustrated with a copious atlas of drawings. This is a standard work on the subject, and is constantly referred to by Judges and Counsel when engaged in trials relating to iron ships, and by others for practical purposes connected with their construction. He also contributed papers to several scientific societies. To the Institution of Civil Engineers he presented communications 'On the Stationary Engines at the New Tunnel on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway', at Edge Hill; an 'Account of some Experiments on a Vessel called the Liverpool Screw', which he constructed; a 'Description of the Vanguard Iron Steam Vessel, after being ashore on the rocks in the Cove of Cork'; 'Description of the *Sarah Sands*, and other Steam Vessels, fitted with Direct-acting Engines and Screw-propellers, without Intermediate Gearing'; and 'Ocean Steam Navigation, with a View to its further Development'; which last embraced the most important features of an extended view of steam communication by sea, comparing the working of several vessels as to speed, expenditure of fuel per indicated horse-power, and discussing the bearing of the opening of the Suez Canal on ocean steam navigation. For this paper he received a Telford Premium of Books.

Mr Grantham was one of the founders of the Institution of Naval Architects in January 1860; he was placed on the Council and remained there until his death. He communicated several papers to the Institution and took an active part in its management and proceedings.

Mr Grantham was elected an Associate of the Institution of Civil Engineers on 11 February 1840, and was transferred to the class of Member on 29 November 1864. He latterly resided at Croydon, where he died on 10 July 1874, at the age of sixty-five, deeply regretted by a large circle of friends, and universally respected for his exertions in support of the charitable and educational institutions of his native town.

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NARRATIVE
OF THE
BURNING OF THE "SARAH SANDS"
SCREW STEAM SHIP,
WITH THE HEAD QUARTERS OF H. M. 54TH REGIMENT
ON BOARD.

BY
A LATE 54TH OFFICER.

" Beseech you, sir, be merry ; you have cause,
So have we all, of joy ; for our escape
Is much beyond our loss ; our hint of woe
Is common ; every day some sailor's wife,
The masters of some merchant, and the merchant,
Have just our theme of woe ; but for the miracle—
I mean our preservation—few in millions
Can speak like us ; then wisely, good sir, weigh
Our sorrow with our comfort."—*Shaks. Tempest.*

LONDON :
BEMROSE AND SONS, 21, PATERNOSTER ROW ; AND DERBY.

1870.

Title page of Frederick Schlotel's account of the fire aboard the *Sarah Sands*

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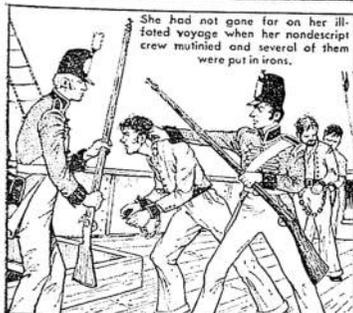
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Todd, F. Private 67
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Troake, F.H. Private 151
Turnley, W.E. Orderly Room Clerk 68
Verey, J.G. 3rd Officer 23, 33-4, 57, 58, 102
Victoria, Queen 87
Walsh, A. Private 41, 65, 80-3, 139
Walton, C. 14, 18
Walton, W. 14
Ward, E.W.D. Colonel Sir 87, 88
Warner, W. Private 139
Warren, General 150
Warren, W. Private 65, 67
Weeding, G. Private 92
Welch, S.R. 1st Officer 23, 29, 34, 38, 41, 47, 58,
62, 72, 81
Wellard, J. Drum Major 25, 88
Westby, J. Lance Corporal 65, 67, 140
Wetherall, G, Adj General Sir 62, 66
Whistler, Colonel 92
White, T. 95
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Williams, J. 95
Wood, G. 4th Officer 23, 34, 47, 58
Wood, J.A. Lieutenant 21, 97, 140
Woodward, W. Fireman 41
Yorke, C. Sir 77

SPECIAL FEATURE: The troopship Sarah Sands set sail for India—and nobody knew the ordeal that was in store for her, her passengers and crew!

FIRE AT SEA!

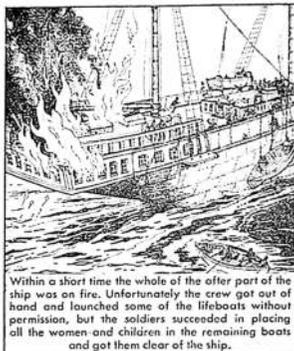
In late 1857 the Government transport, Sarah Sands, set sail for India with 368 officers and men of the 54th Foot. There were also some women and children aboard bringing the total number of people to 500.



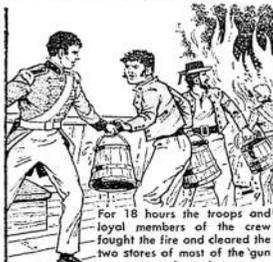
She had not gone far on her ill-fated voyage when her nondescript crew mutinied and several of them were put in irons.



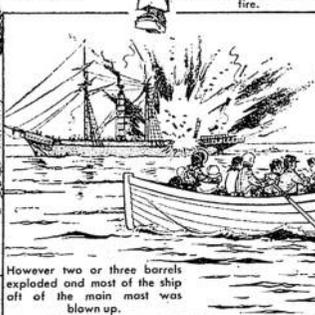
On the 11th November, a few days after leaving Cape Town, one of the soldiers reported a fire.



Within a short time the whole of the after part of the ship was on fire. Unfortunately the crew got out of hand and launched some of the lifeboats without permission, but the soldiers succeeded in placing all the women and children in the remaining boats and got them clear of the ship.



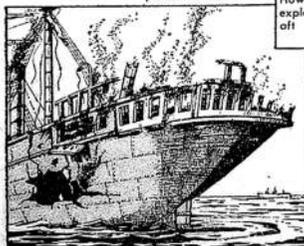
For 18 hours the troops and loyal members of the crew fought the fire and cleared the two stores of most of the gun powder casks.



However two or three barrels exploded and most of the ship aft of the main mast was blown up.



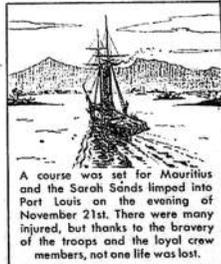
The regimental colours which were kept in the ship's saloon were saved by the bravery of a few volunteers who reached them only after many repeated attempts.



The explosion was really a blessing in disguise. Although it blew a hole in the ship's port quarter, it also blew away the burning woodwork of the stern cabins and shortly afterwards the fire was under control and later extinguished.

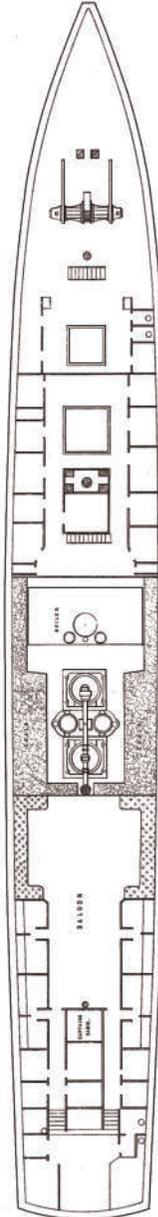


The crew from the boats were taken back on board again and tents and canopies were rigged up on deck to give shelter from the tropical sun. Many people were burned and the uniforms of the soldiers were badly scorched and tattered.

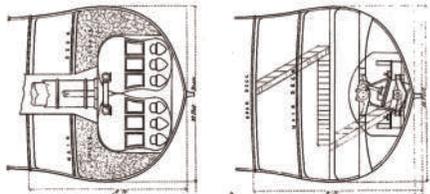


A course was set for Mauritius and the Sarah Sands limped into Port Louis on the evening of November 21st. There were many injured, but thanks to the bravery of the troops and the loyal crew members, not one life was lost.

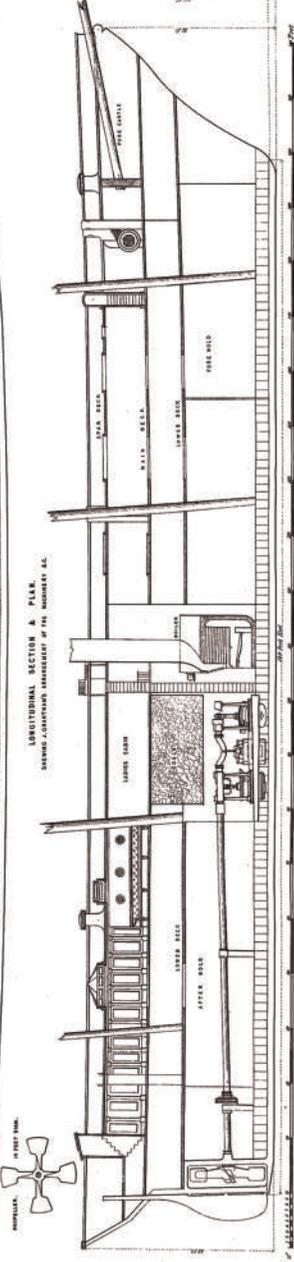
AUXILIARY SCREW STEAMER.
 THE "SARAH SANDS".



TRANSVERSE SECTION.
 PLATE XL.



LONGITUDINAL SECTION & PLAN.
 SHOWING COMPLETE ARRANGEMENT OF THE MACHINERY &c.



Original plans for the *Sarah Sands* (*ICE Proceedings* 1847)

NOTES

Roger Willoughby and **Alan Coles** both joined the Orders and Medals Research Society in the 1970s and have collected, researched and written on a wide range of medal related and historical themes since that time. Roger is also a member of the Life Saving Awards Research Society, a founder member of the Medal Society of Ireland, and the Honorary Advisor to the Royal Humane Society.

