

Five forgotten Crimean War Medals

By Peter Conole

Over the years research carried out in Western Australia on pensioner guards has revealed the presence of many Crimean War veterans in Western Australia. All those who were actively involved in the campaigns and survived received assorted medals, with clasps for particular operations. The medals are well known to EPG Special Interest Group people. There were some notable additions cases, such as Victoria Cross winners – a couple moved to WA at various times after the war.

Missing from the equation are those who received one of five additional medals which were awarded to British soldiers by foreign Governments. The Turkish Crimean Medal is not one of them and is too well known to require comment and attention – it often appears in Broomhall's book on the veterans, beginning with John Ahern of the 68th Regiment (1).

The first of these obscure 'extras' was the Turkish General Service Medal, awarded to 48 officers and men of the Royal Engineers and the Royal Navy who were engaged around the mouths of the Danube River in July-August, 1854.

The second was a Turkish Medal for the Defence of Silistria in 1854: it was awarded to seven or eight officers who were on detached service there with the Turks.

The third was the Turkish Medal for the Defence of Kars (1855), awarded to just three officers and a colour sergeant. One officer (Lieutenant C.C.Teesdale) also received the VC after all was over and another was raised to the nobility as a baronet, which is not surprising given their incredible heroism in the desperate, extremely gory fighting around Kars(2).

The fourth and most commonly awarded of them was the French Military Medal for the Crimea, which was given to hundreds of British non-commissioned officers and privates. The criterion was that acts of 'valour

and discipline' performed by the recipients had to involve the French in some way. For example, Michael Monaghan won his for a gallant attempt to save the life of a French officer under the walls of Sebastopol (3).

The fifth and last was the Sardinian War Medal for the Crimea, struck in Turin but engraved by a British sub-contractor. The decoration was for selected men of all ranks in the army, the navy and the Royal Marines, starting with General George Brown. However, officers predominate in the listings (4).

Identifying personnel who received one of these additional decorations for Crimean War service and then found their way to WA looms as an enticing project.

Notes:

(1)Broomhall, F.H. *The Veterans* (Hesperian Press, WA, 1989), B4

(2)Gordon, L.L. *British Medals and Battles* (Spink and Son, London, 1979), p385; Figs, O. *Crimea: the Last Crusade* (Allen Lane, London, 2010), pp398-399. Regrettably, Gordon does not supply a complete list of recipients for these three medals

(3)Gordon, pp386-388; on Michael Monaghan, see Conole, P. And Oldman, D. 'Kindly Discretion', *Between the Lines*, Vol.18, no.3 (March, 2013), pp5-6. The attached fine photograph of this medal is courtesy D.Oldman

(4)Gordon, pp389-392

