

Preface

Seven years ago, I had never heard of the Crimean War. I took one history class in college, found it terribly boring and was rewarded with a near failing grade. This is not particularly the resume of someone who would one day find himself writing a reference book about the Light Brigade. In college, I majored in English literature and Tennyson's Charge of the Light Brigade was one of my favorite poems---but it wasn't until decades later, reading Michael Crichton's historical novel, The Great Train Robbery, that I learned that the poem was inspired by an actual event. Quite by accident, in the local bookstore, I found a book on the sale rack entitled The Reason Why by Cecil Woodham-Smith, which told the tragic story of the Charge of the Light Brigade. In looking at Woodham-Smith's bibliography, I thought that the subject must have been pretty well exhausted and that there was nothing more to learn about the Charge---but I resolved to see if I could find anything more about it. At a local library I found Selby's The Thin Red Line and Baring-Pemberton's Battles of the Crimean War, and soon discovered there was much more fascinating information about the Charge than I had imagined. Searching on the internet I found an organization called The Crimean War Research Society, and immediately joined.

Like most people who gain an interest in the Crimean War, my first interest was in the Light Brigade. I bought all the Special Publications related to it . . . and soon had a few questions. I was trying to find out how many men actually rode in the Charge, but I kept coming across different numbers in different accounts; I thought it would be a simple matter of finding the authoritative source. I began corresponding with Andrew Sewell who had written many authoritative pieces on the Light Brigade; while discussing his opinion on how many men charged, I discovered that he had forgotten one or two in his calculations, and he concurred with this observation. This was exciting! He was the respected historian and I was the newcomer, and yet I was able to notice a slight inconsistency and could actually make a valid correction in accepted history. At Ken Horton's suggestion I bought a copy of Lummis and Wynn's Honour the Light Brigade. Because the organizational structure of the book made it sometimes difficult to find a name, I put all 2000 plus names into a spreadsheet so the names could be sorted alphabetically. On a visit to London, I met Andrew Sewell in person and he gave me a copy of his "Lummis and Wynn: Some Revisions and Addenda", pointing out that he had listed some six hundred names in this document which had not been listed in Lummis and Wynn. I added these names to my spreadsheet and shared it with interested parties as the most complete list of members of the Light Brigade.

A couple of years later, Mike Hargreave-Mawson sent me an e-mail to point out that according to the 'official returns', 3287 men served with the Light Brigade in the Crimea . . . so my all inclusive list was 600-700 names shy of being complete. I asked where I could get this information and he replied from the pay lists and muster rolls at the PRO (Public Records Office, now known as the National Archives). I asked how I could get a copy and what it would cost, and he volunteered to go to the PRO to get the photocopies if I was serious about taking on the laborious task of poring over them and estimated the cost at around \$500. I insisted on paying him for his efforts and in due course received roughly 2000 pages (4000 sheets) of documents standing over two feet high; it took me a month just to sort them. After working with the documents and adding to the spreadsheet for over a year, my wife Linda and I decided to make another trip to England (with the mandatory trip to the PRO). Mike met us there and we spent the day getting photocopies of pre and post war documents I discovered would be useful in adding more information about individuals in the Light Brigade; in fact, we worked so well as a team that the staff in the reproduction room came and explained that I would have to wait for some of my copies because we were monopolizing their service and they had to be fair to others; I apologized explaining that I had come thousands of miles to do the research and only had one day to do it; they relented, but I voluntarily requested subsequent copied material be cached for reproduction the following day and sent by mail.

In the interim, I have bought every book I could find on the Light Brigade, requested photocopies of books and articles that are out of print, and searched the internet for additional material. In the process of internet searches and posting of information, I have met several descendants of Light Brigade members who have shared the fruits of their researches with me. I have chosen to include this information as being as reliable as any history text, and when information has not been published, I have cited the name of the person providing it. I have made every effort to footnote each entry as carefully as possible so that readers will be able to verify or challenge the accuracy of my efforts. When I have come across conflicting information, I have tried to include both "facts" with source citations so that maybe future researchers will be able to resolve the conflict. When I have discovered an obvious error, I have also included it with the notation that it is in error and a citation as to the source; in this way I hope to deflect criticism and to assist researchers who come across this material and think they have found a source I may not have considered or even known about.

In the course of the last seven years, I have been to the Crimea to see the battlefields and learned the inestimable value of 'walking the ground' as an aid in understanding written histories. In reading the many histories of the Crimean War, I have discovered that the legendary courage displayed by the Light Brigade was not an aberration, but rather the norm for the Army of the East. I have wept as I read of the hardships the men endured and of a level of nobility in the common soldier which seems to be part of a bygone era. In rare accounts we read of ignoble acts which remind us that they were not all noble, and not all brave, but they all put their lives on the line believing they were doing it for the good of mankind and a noble cause. And so I present to you my tribute to the men of the Light Brigade---to commemorate the services---good, bad, or indifferent, the sacrifices---great or small---of the men of the five original regiments of the Light Brigade from 1854 to 1856.

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