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^a English Army List and Commission Registers

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THE BRITISH MARSHALATE, 1805-1855.

By CHARLES DALTON, Esq.,

Editor of "English Army List and Commission Registers, 1661-1714."

THE coveted *bâton* was bestowed nineteen times within the space of fifty years. The fortunate recipients included four princes of the blood royal of England; two foreign princes who were closely allied to the British Crown by marriage; one European sovereign who had been the ally of Great Britain in two sanguinary campaigns; two commanders-in-chief of the British forces on the Continent; one general who had been governor-general of India; three generals who had held the high post of commander-in-chief in India; one general who had commanded the British and Hanoverian cavalry in one of the decisive battles of Europe; two generals who had reached the patriarchal age of ninety when appointed field-m Marshals; and three who were aged respectively eighty-three, eighty-one, and seventy-eight years when similarly honoured.

When it is remembered that the marshalate was introduced into the British Army by George II.¹ no one can feel surprised at five of this monarch's grandsons receiving the *bâton*, for they all had served with credit in the field, and had performed their military duties to the best of their several abilities.

On 5th September, 1805, Edward, Duke of Kent was appointed a field-marshal. In 1794 this prince (then Prince Edward) had served with distinction at the taking of the French West India Islands, and on several occasions his life was exposed to the most imminent peril. It is recorded that when Prince Edward was ordered to storm Morné, Tartis-son, and Fort Royal, Martinique, on 17th March, 1794, he placed himself at the head of his brigade of grenadiers and addressed them as follows: "Grenadiers! this is St. Patrick's Day; the English will do their duty in compliment to the Irish, and the Irish in compliment to the Saint! Forward, grenadiers!" After holding the command of all the British forces in North America, H.R.H. was appointed Governor of Gibraltar in 1802. The splendid victory obtained by Wellington (then a marquis) over the French Army at Vittoria, in 1813, resulted in the overthrow of Joseph Bonaparte's power in Spain, and the capture of the enemy's baggage and money chests, the last of which were said to have contained five millions and a half of dollars. "Be this as it may," says a military writer, "the soldiers and camp followers took care that the exact amount

¹ See article on "The British Marshalate prior to 1800," by same writer, in the *United Service Magazine*, April, 1896, p. 18.

should never be fairly ascertained ; and when the chests were conveyed to headquarters they were found empty." Among the captured spoils was the *bâton* of the French marshal Jourdan. This trophy was sent to the Prince Regent of England, who wrote a gratifying letter to Lord Wellington, dated from Carlton House, 3rd July, 1813, which contained this passage :—"You have sent me, among the trophies of your unrivalled fame, the staff of a French marshal, and I send you in return that of England." Wellington had previously been appointed marshal-general of the Portuguese Army. This Army had been licked into shape, and taught how to fight, by Sir Wm. Carr Beresford, who was given the rank of marshal in Portugal by the King of that country. Marshal Beresford won a viscount's coronet for his dearly-bought victory over the French at Albuera. Lord Londonderry has left on record how Beresford exposed himself, during the before-named battle, "with a degree of intrepidity which could hardly fail of spreading an example of heroism around, repeatedly dragging the Spanish officers from their ranks, compelling them to lead their men forward and show them the way."¹ But Jack Spaniard was not a man to be seized upon and brutally forced to fight against his will ; he preferred to live to fight another day.

The Duke of Wellington is the only instance of a field-marshal of Great Britain being appointed a field-marshal in the Russian Army. Curious to say, Wellington found himself a Russian marshal in common with the famous Michael Bogdanovitch Barclay de Tolly, who commanded one of the three divisions of the Russian Army that effectually checkmated Napoleon in 1812. De Tolly, who had been ennobled for his eminent services, belonged to a family of ancient Scottish lineage which had settled at Riga in the eighteenth century. After his death, the following humorous anecdote appeared in an Edinburgh newspaper :—

"THE LATE RUSSIAN FIELD-MARSHAL BARCLAY DE TOLLI.

"This distinguished warrior, who was of Scottish descent, was no less an ornament to military than civil life. The arduous duties of the soldier never made him forget the milder, but no less imperious, obligations of the man and the Christian. Soon after the memorable campaign of 1812, when the Russian troops were pursuing the flying enemy, the field-marshal, standing one fine morning, earlier than usual, at the window, enjoying a delicious prospect in the city of D——, he overheard the following short dialogue between the sentinel at his door beneath, and a poor discharged invalid soldier :—

"Invalid : Good morrow, comrade. Is his Excellency stirring yet, think you ?

"Sentinel : I hardly think he is ; but what's your business with him ?

"Invalid : I would make bold to hand him this petition.

"Sentinel : Don't you know that we've strict orders not to let anyone in with petitions ?

¹ "Narrative of the Peninsular War," by Lieut.-General the Marquis of Londonderry, G.C.B., etc.

"Invalid : I am sure his Excellency would assist me, being personally known to him since the battle on the Beresina. Do let me in ; see how the French rascals maimed me—I'm a cripple for life.

"Sentinel : Well, go in ; I'll pretend I didn't see you.

"Thus saying, the brave sentinel, wiping a tear out of the corner of his eye, walked up and down on his post, and the invalid hobbled in at the open gate as fast as he could. But how to get an interview with the field-marshal ? This puzzled the poor fellow not a little. He had passed the foreposts, it was true, but was still very far from the headquarters. In this dilemma he was half alarmed and half rejoiced to hear the marshal in a thundering voice call out to his orderly to bring up that invalid and the sentinel at his gate. In an instant both stood before the noble warrior—the one confident of relief, the other no less sure of punishment. 'What does this mean,' cried the marshal, addressing the invalid, 'don't you know you have no right to intrude in this manner ?' The invalid only answered by casting a pitiful look at his disfigured body, which look seemed to say 'I think I have right enough.' 'And you,' said his Excellency, thundering at the sentinel, 'how dare you act in disobedience of orders ?' Erect as a poplar stood the Grenadier, without answering a word. The field-marshal now rung, and his secretary appeared. 'Here,' cried his Excellency, 'give each of these twenty-five in my presence.' The secretary stared, and at last ventured to stammer out the words, 'shall I call the corporal ?' 'No,' resumed the marshal, 'do it yourself.' Disobedience being a word almost unknown in the military language of Russia, the astonished secretary began to look round for some weapon or instrument wherewith to inflict the punishment ; but seeing nothing, he ventured to ask, 'With what ?' 'With what ? Why with your hands,' replied the marshal. 'I thought you knew Barclay better—give each of them twenty-five roubles, the sentinel for his humanity ; the invalid for his bravery and sufferings."

Retracing our steps to the year 1813, we find that on 26th November, Ernest, Duke of Cumberland (afterwards King of Hanover) and Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge were appointed field-m Marshals. The former had begun his military career in the Hanoverian cavalry and saw much active service in Holland, where he commanded a cavalry brigade. In an encounter with the French, near Tournay, in the campaign of 1794, he was severely wounded in the arm and lost his left eye. He shared in the sortie from Nimeguen and subsequently commanded the rear guard of the British Army in the retreat through Holland. Towards the close of the great war, Cumberland was attached to the Prussian Army and was present at the battle of Leipsic. On another occasion he witnessed the death of General Moreau—Napoleon's *bête-noire*. For many years Cumberland held the colonelcy of the Blues. The Duke of Cambridge was appointed an ensign in the British Army at the age of sixteen. Thirteen years later (1803) he was sent at the head of 8,000 Germans and 6,000 English to defend the Electoral Dominions of his father. He then held the rank of lieut.-general in the British Army. On arriving at Hanover he found that the interest of his family was at an end and nothing would suit the

people but a commander of pure Hanoverian blood. This desirable leader was found in the person of Count Walmoden, and the Duke of Cambridge returned to England. Soon after this event Walmoden was forced to capitulate to the French. After the expulsion of the enemy from Hanover the Duke of Cambridge returned thither as viceroy, and remained till 1837, when his brother Ernest succeeded to that kingdom as eldest male representative of the House of Guelph.

On the 24th May, 1816, William, Duke of Gloucester, and Leopold, Duke of Saxe-Coburg, were appointed field-m Marshals. The former had received a commission as captain in the 3rd Foot Guards in 1789 with the rank of colonel in the Army. He saw active service in Flanders under the Duke of York and in 1806 was appointed colonel of the 3rd Foot Guards, which post he retained until his death in 1834. The Duke of Saxe-Coburg received his *baton* as husband of Princess Charlotte of Wales. This prince had a splendid record of war service. Entering the Russian Army in 1803 he rose to be a major-general of cavalry in that Service. For a short time he was attached to the Prussian Army. He fought at Lutzen and Bautzen and in the last hard-fought battle he covered the retreat with the cavalry under his command. At Leipsic he played a conspicuous part and in the campaign of 1814 against Napoleon again distinguished himself. The Emperor of Russia bestowed the Cross of St. George on the Duke of Saxe-Coburg. On 2nd May, 1816, he was appointed a full general in the British Army and given the colonelcy of the 5th Dragoon Guards, which he retained until 1831, when he ascended the throne of Belgium as Leopold I.

At the coronation of George IV. (19th July, 1821) the two senior generals of the British Army were raised to the marshalate, viz., Charles, Marquis of Drogheda, K.P., and William, Earl Harcourt, K.C.B. Lord Drogheda was the oldest old gentleman in the Army and had attained the patriarchal age of ninety-one. He was the sole surviving officer who had fought at Culloden, in which sanguinary engagement he is said to have carried a pair of colours.¹ His baptism of fire was certainly a rough experience of war for a lad barely sixteen. Whether he had a surfeit of slaughter on Culloden Moor, or whether his parents wished him to follow a less dangerous career, does not appear, but the military profession knew young Moore no more until 18th November, 1755, when he was appointed lieutenant-colonel of the 1st Regiment of Horse in Ireland (now 4th Dragoon Guards), and on 7th December, 1759, lieutenant-colonel commanding 19th Light Dragoons. He saw no more war service, but won a marquis's coronet as a political campaigner. At the time of his death (22nd December, 1822) he was colonel of the 18th Dragoons. Earl Harcourt began his eventful career as an ensign in the 1st Foot Guards in August, 1759, and was appointed captain in the 16th Light Dragoons in October of the same year. He served as A.D.C.

¹ "Military Calendar," Vol. I., p. 280 (1820 edition). The memoir of Lord Drogheda in the "Dictionary of National Biography" makes no mention of Drogheda having served at Culloden, 16th April, 1746, but the "Military Calendar" is a better authority.

to the Earl of Albemarle at the taking of Havanna. In 1776 he proceeded to America as lieutenant-colonel of the 16th Light Dragoons, and had the good fortune, when scouting near the Delaware with 30 dragoons, to surprise and capture in his camp the American general, Charles Lee, who was accounted Washington's ablest officer. For this service Harcourt received the thanks of Parliament, was made A.D.C. to George III. and soon after succeeded General Burgoyne as colonel of the 16th Light Dragoons, which subsequently was known as "Harcourt's Black Horse." He commanded the British forces during their retreat through Holland in the winter of 1794-5.

Following the example of his brother, William IV. appointed the two senior generals of the Army to the marshalate at his coronation. Sir Alfred Clarke, G.C.B., and the Right Hon. Sir Samuel Hulse, K.C.B., were the fortunate veterans. Sir A. Clarke joined the Army as an ensign in the 50th Foot in 1759, and served under Lord Granby in Germany during the latter part of the Seven Years' War. After serving fifteen years on the staff in Canada, without returning to England during this long spell of employment, Clarke served as commander of the land forces at the capture of the Cape of Good Hope in 1795, and was commander-in-chief in India from May, 1798, to July, 1801. At his death he held the colonelcy of the Royal Fusiliers. Sir Samuel Hulse was born in 1747, and received an ensigncy in the 1st Foot Guards in 1761. He served under General (afterwards Lord) Lake in Holland, and was present at the brilliant affair of Lincelles. Having been appointed by George III. to the Prince of Wales's suite, Hulse's active military career terminated. He acted as treasurer and receiver-general to the Prince for many years, and on George IV.'s accession was appointed Treasurer of the Household. At the time of his death (1st January, 1837) Hulse was Governor of Chelsea Hospital.

On 8th February, 1840, the Prince Consort was appointed a field-marshal of Great Britain. He was not a soldier, but he materially raised the tone of the Army by being mainly instrumental in obtaining an amendment of the Articles of War, which had for its object the abolition of duelling. In 1850 the Duke of Wellington, who fully recognised the Prince Consort's wonderful power of organisation, mastery of details, and administrative abilities, personally pressed Albert Edward to accept the office of commander-in-chief. The Prince's good judgment prevented him acceding to the request, and at the Duke of Wellington's death, Viscount Hardinge was entrusted, by the Prince's advice, with the command of the Army.

On the 28th July, 1815, a *baton* was bestowed on William II., King of the Netherlands, as a politic measure. This sovereign fought on our side in the Peninsula and at Waterloo (as hereditary Prince of Orange), and was severely wounded on the 18th June, 1815, after behaving most gallantly. He had held the rank of general in the British Army since 1814.

On the 9th November, 1846, the three senior generals of the Army were promoted to be field-m Marshals, viz., Sir George Nugent, Bt., K.C.B., Thomas Grosvenor, and the Marquis of Anglesey, K.G., G.C.B., Master-

General of the Ordnance. Sir George Nugent was born in 1757, and received his education at Charterhouse and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. Joined the 39th Foot as ensign in 1773. Served subsequently during the American war. Exchanged to the Coldstream Guards in 1790 from the 4th Dragoon Guards. Accompanied the Guards to Holland in 1793, and served at the siege of Valenciennes, the affair of Lincelles, and at Dunkirk, etc. Returning to England he raised the 85th Regiment of Foot, and was appointed colonel. Accompanied his corps to Walcheren with the temporary rank of brigadier-general. Was major-general of the northern district during the whole of the Irish rebellion. From 1801-6 was commander-in-chief in Jamaica, and from March, 1811, to October, 1813, was commander-in-chief in India. He died 11th March, 1849, aged 92. Thomas Grosvenor began his career as an ensign in the 3rd Foot Guards at the age of fifteen and saw a good deal of service with his corps in Holland. Was appointed to the command of the troops that were directed to obtain a landing on the Spanish coast in the attempt upon Cadiz. This expedition, however, was relinquished on account of the dreadful fever then raging in the town of Cadiz. General Grosvenor commanded the pickets and outposts at the siege of Copenhagen, in 1805, on the day of the sortie when the Danes were repulsed in their attempt on the besieging batteries. Served at the siege of Flushing, and was next in command to Sir Eyre Coote. The thanks of Parliament were voted to General Grosvenor on the successful termination of the siege of Copenhagen; as a member of the House of Commons he was present on the occasion and made a brief and modest reply. At the time of his death (20th January, 1851) he was colonel of the 65th Foot. The Marquis of Anglesey was styled the Prince Murat of the British Army. He was *par excellence* a cavalry leader, but was pre-eminently fitted to hold the highest post in any Army. He was equally at home in handling an infantry regiment on the field of battle, in leading a brilliant cavalry charge, or in covering the retreat of an army. He raised and commanded the 80th Foot during the Duke of York's first campaign in Holland. In 1795 Lord Paget, as he then was, obtained the lieutenant-colonelcy of the 7th Hussars and again distinguished himself in the fruitless and unfortunate campaign in Holland. But the Peninsula afforded a better field for his genius, and the brilliant cavalry affairs at Sahagun and Benevente testified to Paget's great military ability. In 1812 Lord Paget succeeded his father as Earl of Uxbridge. Of the important part played by Lord Uxbridge at Quatre Bras and Waterloo, it is unnecessary to speak; it is enough to say the success of the British cavalry on the memorable 18th June was in a large measure attributable to Uxbridge's brilliant leadership and example. He was a man of few words, and it is recorded that when he was shot in his right leg at the close of the great battle, he happened to be riding alongside the great Duke. "I'm hit, by G——!" exclaimed Uxbridge. "Are you, by G——?" exclaimed Wellington. This, we are told, is the only conversation that passed between the two great leaders at Waterloo.¹ The loss

¹ *Cornhill Magazine*, December, 1897.

of his leg to one of the best riders of his day must have been a serious drawback in after-life to the Marquis of Anglesey (so created 23rd June, 1815). But the defeat of Napoleon's renowned cavalry at Waterloo more than recompensed the marquis for the loss of a limb. In 1827 Lord Anglesey succeeded the Duke of Wellington as Master-General of the Ordnance. The speech he made at the dinner given to his lordship by the officers of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, on 11th June, 1827, shows his fitness for the post he had then entered on:—

“The gracious favour of his Majesty has selected me to fill the office of Master-General, a post the most enviable, or, if not the most enviable, as much so as the utmost ambition of a soldier can aspire to. The renown which the British Artillery has so nobly acquired throughout Europe, I may say throughout the world, its skill, its science, its gallantry, its order, its discipline, have been quoted, have been talked of, have been the theme and the admiration of every Army and every Court in Europe. I see around me many gallant friends, with whom it was my good fortune to serve in my early military career. I well remember what confidence I felt when on the march I heard the trundling of the cannon wheels. I then served in the infantry—the basis of every arm, the most perfect of all, because it is in itself capable of defence. How much, then, must these impressions have been increased when afterwards serving in the cavalry, I became more conversant with the value of artillery. The cavalry is of itself a feeble arm, comparatively a feeble arm, but with its natural ally, the artillery, it is capable of any achievement.”¹

Seventy years ago the majority of British generals were firm believers in the “cold steel” theory, and artillery had not attained the importance in the British Army which this all-powerful branch of the Service then occupied in foreign Armies. Lord Anglesey's two terms of office as Master-General were highly beneficial to the Royal Artillery.

After the defeat of the Russians at Inkerman, General Lord Raglan, commander-in-chief of the allied forces in the Crimea, was appointed a British field-marshal, and his commission dated from the memorable 5th November, 1854. His early services in the Peninsula and at Waterloo (where he lost his right arm) are too well known to recapitulate, and the same may be said of his command in the Crimea.² He is the sole instance of a British field-marshal who died while commanding an army in the field.

On 2nd October, 1855, Viscount Combermere, G.G.B., etc., the Earl of Strafford, G.C.B., etc., and Viscount Hardinge, G.C.B., etc., were appointed field-m Marshals. Lord Combermere had passed most of his eventful service in the cavalry, and during the latter part of the Peninsular War had commanded the allied cavalry. As Colonel Stapleton Cotton, of the 25th Light Dragoons (then known as Gwyn's Hussars), he had served at the siege of Seringapatam, where he formed a friendship with Colonel Arthur Wellesley, then commanding the reserves in General

¹ *Naval and Military Magazine* (1827), Vol. II., p. 312.

² An interesting memoir of Lord Raglan appeared in this JOURNAL, July, 1896.

(afterwards Lord) Harris's Army. These two young commanding officers, who were both destined to achieve peerages and the highest military rank, were very different in character and held opposite views to each other on many subjects of the day. Lord Combermere (so created in 1814 for his services in the Peninsula) was very fond of the panoply of war. His uniform and horse trappings are said to have been worth a ransom of 500 guineas. In his soldiering days he was familiarly known as the "Lion d'Or." The late Major-General William Sullivan (Colonel of the 58th Foot) used to tell how when he was on duty at the Horse Guards, in the latter days of the Duke of Wellington's life, Lord Combermere called and wished to see the Duke.

Sullivan went to the commander-in-chief's office and gave the message. The Duke said in a very high and irritable voice: "What can that d——d old coxcomb want with me?" It so happened that Lord Combermere, feeling sure of a welcome from his old companion-in-arms, had not waited to be announced, but had followed Sullivan into the Duke's office and so heard his Grace's emphatic remark. Sullivan discreetly retired and left the two great men to fight it out. For his services in taking the strong Indian fortress of Bhurtpore, in 1827, Lord Combermere was created a viscount. His rule in India, as commander-in-chief was signalised by his abolishing the system of flogging in the Indian Army.¹ At the wedding of the Prince of Wales there was no more conspicuous figure than that of Viscount Combermere, with his many decorations, then aged ninety. As colonel of the 1st Life Guards he was gold stick in brigade waiting.

Sir John Byng, K.C.B. (created Earl of Strafford), twice received the thanks of Parliament for his services in the Peninsula and at Waterloo. The Crown also gave him an augmentation to his arms for conspicuous gallantry at Mouguerre, near Bayonne, 13th December, 1813. He was colonel of the Coldstream Guards.

Of the celebrated Lord Hardinge it may be said that when he was appointed commander-in-chief, on the death of the Duke of Wellington, it was universally felt that the Duke's mantle had fallen on the right shoulders. For his glorious campaign against the Sikhs, during his administration as governor-general of India, the East India Company bestowed upon Lord Hardinge a pension of £5,000 per annum. He died in 1856—just forty-one years after the battle of Ligny, at the close of which sanguinary engagement young Sir Henry Hardinge (as he then was) "lay all night in a wretched hut with his amputated left hand lying by his side."

¹ *Naval and Military Magazine* (1828), Vol. III., Appx. p. clxvi