THE GOLD COLLARS, MEDALS AND CROSSES GRANTED TO BRITISH OFFICERS BY THE CROWN OF PORTUGAL IN THE PENINSULAR WAR.

By Charles Winter.

In the order of the day, March 28th, 1820, an official announcement was made to the Portuguese Army that, by a decree of June 28th, 1816, His Majesty, King John VI, had created collars, medals, and crosses to reward the services of officers who had fought in the Peninsular War.

The following is a translation of the decree:

I, having taken into my Royal consideration the remarkable service that the Generals, Commanders of Regiments and other officers have rendered me in the chief battles which were fought, and the sieges which were carried on in the kingdom of Portugal, Spain, and France by the Portuguese troops and those of the Allies against the French, chiefly on account of the influence that such battles and sieges had on the result of the war, which restored my kingdom of Portugal and that of Spain to their ancient liberty, and contributed so much to the general peace of Europe: I, wanting to perpetuate the memory and names of the above-mentioned Generals and officers, distinguishing each of them in accordance with the number of actions in which they took part and in which they have deserved special references for their gallantry, have deigned to grant to the Generals who assisted in ten or more of the chief actions, a collar formed of tablets bearing the Portuguese arms of My
United Kingdom, with the names of each of the memorable battles and sieges of the above-mentioned war engraved on them: this collar will be bestowed only on those generals who had the rank of Field Marshal, and who took part in the battles for which it is granted. To those who have only taken part in less than ten battles a Medal will be bestowed with my Royal Effigy, surrounded by as many olive leaves as the number of the battles and sieges in which the general or officer to whom it is granted may have taken part, the names of the actions being engraved on the leaves:

Finally, to those who have only taken part in one or two of those battles and sieges I will give a medal, with one or two olive leaves crossed, on which the names of the actions will be engraved, all of which will be more minutely shown by the sketches and instructions which will be published together with this decree, and will be signed by the Marquis of Aguiar, of My Council of State, the Minister, temporarily representing the Board of Foreign affairs and that of War.

Given at our Palace of Rio de Janeiro on the 28th of June, 1816, with the signature of His Majesty. Let this be accomplished and registered. At the Palace of Rio de Janeiro the 1st of July, 1816. With the signature of His Excellency the Marquis of Aguiar.

INSTRUCTIONS
relating to the Decree of the 28th of June, 1816.

ARTICLE I.—Chief battles fought and sieges carried on in the Peninsula and France in which the Portuguese troops took part—

1st, Vimiero; 2nd, Corunna; 3rd, Talavera; 4th, Busaco; 5th, Fuentes d’ Onoro; 6th, Albuhera; 7th, Siege of Ciudad Rodrigo; 8th, Siege of Badajoz; 9th, Salamanca; 10th, Vittoria; 11th, Pyrenees;
Conditions for Distinctions.

12th, Siege of St. Sebastian; 13th, Nivelle; 14th, Nive; 15th, Orthes; 16th, Toulouse.

ARTICLE II.—Conditions required of the generals and officers to entitle them to the distinctions created by the above Decree.

First.
The distinctions or medals will only be bestowed on fighting officers.

Second.
Only the battles and sieges above mentioned can be presented as a claim for collars or medals. No other fights or services can be advanced for the distinctions afforded by this Decree.

Third.
The distinctions will be granted to the commander of a regiment of cavalry or infantry, or of a battalion of cascadores, or of a brigade of artillery, who may have been with his troops at one of the actions above specified, the whole or the greater part of the troops having effectively fought there, in accordance with the nature of the arm to which the troops belonged.

Fourth.
Every officer who has commanded such a force as is mentioned above, at some of the sixteen battles and sieges already referred to, having legally got the command, on account of the death of his superior or of his having received severe wounds, will have a right to the distinction which belongs to him according to his new rank, if his troops have fought under him, without prejudice to the rights of the commander who retired on account of his wounds.
The generals who may have commanded any division or brigades, which for the most part have been employed and have fought in the above-mentioned actions, as it is stated, will have also a right to the distinctions granted for each of them.

Sixth.

The superior officers who shall have, during the battle, commanded at headquarters or shall have done so temporarily, will also have the right to the distinction given for the above-mentioned battles or sieges.

Seventh.

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

Eighth.

The officers of the adjutant-general and quartermaster-general's departments, who shall have exercised the function of chiefs of departments in any division shall have the right to the distinction if they have the rank of majors.

Ninth.

The marshal commander in chief of the army will inform His Majesty as soon as possible, through the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and for War, about the names and rank of the persons to whom, in accordance with the above instructions, are granted the distinctions with which His Majesty has deigned to honour the officers who may be found comprehended in these paragraphs, stating also the battles and sieges for which each of them has merited them.
Conditions for Distinctions.

Tenth.

If any officer to whom the distinction is granted shall afterwards think himself prejudiced, either by not having been rewarded or by having been omitted from any of the actions in which he has taken part, and will send his claim to His Majesty in accordance with the established rules, his petition will first be brought to the notice of the Marshal, who will afterwards bring it to His Majesty’s notice.

First.

The generals to whom His Majesty will grant the collar will wear it upon their breasts, hanging from their shoulders.

Second.

The officers on whom the medal will be bestowed will wear it hanging from a ribbon attached to the jacket, on the right side of their breasts.

Regulations ruling the grant of the crosses to the army that effectively served against the enemy in the long Peninsular War in the campaigns of 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812, 1813 and 1814.

First.

All officers, of whatever grade they may be, who were present and effectively served with their regiments, or on the staff, in the operations against the enemy for four or more of the six campaigns, namely:—

1st campaign, 1809. 4th campaign, 1812.
2nd campaign, 1810. 5th campaign, 1813.
3rd campaign, 1811. 6th campaign, 1814.
The Peninsular War.

will have, in accordance with the rules here established, a cross of gold, shaped as it is shown by the sketch No. 1, which will be worn on the left side of the breast hanging from a ribbon bearing the national colour.

Second.

All the officers who, in the same way as is above stated, shall have served in two or three of the above campaigns, will receive a cross of silver, shaped as is shown by the sketch No. 2, which will be worn as that of gold.

Third.

A cross of silver, shaped as is shown by the model No. 3, will be bestowed on the non-commissioned officers and soldiers who shall have served in two or more campaigns at the following rate:—

- 200 for every regiment of infantry.
- 120 for every battalion of caçades.
- 25 for every squadron of cavalry.
- 30 for every brigade of artillery.
- 25 for every company of engineering workmen.

The regiments that were in garrison at any of the chief fortresses, or at those of second order, which were threatened by the enemy for six months—the least time for which a campaign lasts—will be considered as having served in that campaign in which the enemy was, provided the fortress were not taken.

The officers of the militia, who shall have served in two or more of those campaigns, will also get the above distinction. 100 crosses will be bestowed in every regiment for non-commissioned officers and soldiers.

Fourth.

No officer will have a right to the cross for any campaign if in his regiment or elsewhere his conduct has been bad
Conditions for Distinctions.

when the army was before the enemy, unless he has been absolved from such a shame by a court-martial.

Fifth.

Non-commissioned officers and soldiers who have a right to the cross will be chosen first rather amongst those more conspicuous for their intelligence and gallantry; then amongst those who prove more diligent, honest and careful in their service.

These crosses, after the deaths of the officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers on whom they were bestowed, will belong to their families as a remembrance of the good and valuable services for which they were granted; but they cannot be worn but by the persons on whom they were bestowed.

General-Adjutant, Mozinto.

It will have been noticed in reading this Decree that only those officers who held the rank of Field-Marshal, and had been present at ten or more of the chief engagements, were entitled to the collar. It is on record in the Portuguese archives that only two officers received this great reward, namely, Field-Marshal General the Duke of Vittoria, Lord Wellington, for thirteen battles and sieges, inscribed VIMIERO, TALAVERA, BUSACO, FUENTES D’ ONOR, CIUDAD RODRIGO, BADAJOZ, SALAMANCA, VITTORIA, PYRENEES NIVELLE, NIVE, ORTHES, TOULOUSE; and Field-Marshal General Marquis of Compo Major, Lord Beresford, also for twelve engagements — CORUNNA, BUSACO, ALBUHERA, CIUDAD RODRIGO, BADAJOZ, SALAMANCA, VITTORIA, PYRENEES, NIVELLE, NIVE, ORTHES, TOULOUSE.

I am informed by a Portuguese friend that considerable research has been made by more than one historian to trace the designer or maker of these two collars. Unfortunately the order granting them gives no sketches, although such are supplied in the case of the medals.
Did Wellington or Beresford ever receive these collars? On enquiring recently at Apsley House I was informed that no collar exists that was presented by Portugal, except that of the Order of the Tower and Sword. I find no mention of these collars made by either Sir Nicholas Carlisle, Burke, or Tancred; neither does a collar figure in the book *The Orders of Knighthood, Batons and Medals conferred upon His Grace the Duke of Wellington*, although this work is fully illustrated, and was compiled by one of the Duke’s aides-de-camp and assistant military secretaries. Mayo, in his *Medals and Decorations of the British Army and Navy*, gives particulars of two collars as follows:

**Duke of Wellington.**

**Gold Collar and Cross.**

The collar is composed of alternate gold lions and oval tablets showing the Union badge in enamel, bordered by a wreath of oak leaves. Across each tablet, on the horizontal bar of the Union, is the name of a battle or siege, the tablet bearing “Waterloo” being at the bottom. Below the “Waterloo” tablet hangs a royal crown to which is suspended a gold cross, generally similar in design to the Gold Cross (Peninsula) but much larger, and having a figure of Victory on one side, and a lion on the other. The collar is held together by two chains of long links attached above and below to the lions and tablets. The lions and tablets are each about two inches in length. The names on the tablets are as follows:— (right)—CIUDAD RODRIGO, BADAJOZ, SALAMANCA, VITTORIA, TOULOUSE, PYRENEES, NIVELLE, ORTHES, NIVE, WATERLOO.

The cross is Maltese, two and a half inches across, with ornamental borders; on one side is a figure of Victory, and on the other a lion. On the four limbs of the cross, on the side bearing the figure of Victory, are the names of the following actions:—
ROLEIA and VIMIERA, TALAVERA, BUSACO, FUENTES D’ ONOR.

These, together with those named on the collar, are the actions at which the Duke was present.

On the edges of the two sides and bottom of the cross is the inscription, “Field-Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington.”

The collar is amongst the Wellington heirlooms preserved at Apsley House. The following is the entry in the Heirloom Catalogue regarding it:

“Massy gold and enameled Triumphant collar, composed of alternate Lions and Medallions (each of the latter having the name of a battle inscribed on it), with badge or cross appended to it. Presented to His Grace by His Majesty King George the 4th. when Prince Regent, shortly after the Battle of Waterloo.”

Sir Albert W. Woods, Garter King of Arms, had in his possession a memorandum relative to the collar drawn up by Sir George Nayler, Garter, for Sir William Knighton, Baronet, Keeper of the Privy Purse to George IV. The memorandum is undated, but it was evidently not written until after the death of the Duke of York (5th January, 1827). It states that in the year 1814, in obedience to the commands of His Majesty, then Prince Regent, drawings were prepared under Sir George’s direction, of a collar intended to be presented to the Duke of Wellington, in commemoration of the glorious victories personally achieved by His Grace in the Peninsula; and His Majesty having been pleased to approve of a collar composed of lions of England and the Union badge of the United Kingdom (which badge had been before granted by His Majesty as an augmentation to the Duke’s arms), having in the centre of the cross of St. George the names of ten of those battles inscribed, as worn by His Grace on gold clasps, the collar
was duly made. To the collar was afterwards added, in pursuance of His Majesty’s pleasure, a cross pendent, inscribed with the names of the other four battles on the military gold cross worn by His Grace, having in the centre, on one side, a figure of Victory, and on the other side a British lion. In the present memorandum, Sir George Nayler submits the collar and cross to the King, with a humble request for His Majesty’s gracious commands in regard to them.

There is thus no doubt that the idea of the collar originated before the battle of Waterloo, though for some reason it did not take effect until more than ten years after that battle.

The collar should therefore have been described as having been presented to the Duke of Wellington by George IV., and not by the Prince Regent as stated. But the information derived from Sir G. Nayler’s memorandum was not at the author’s disposal before the Plate was printed.

Sir Albert Woods possesses also a detailed coloured drawing of the collar and cross, together with a rough pen-and-ink sketch of them made by Sir G. Nayler, showing that in all probability he was the designer of the whole decoration.

It is understood that the collar was made for the King by Messrs. Rundell and Bridge, of London.

**MARSHAL VISCOUNT BERESFORD.**

**COLLAR AND CROSS.**

This collar is composed of alternate lions and oval tablets bearing the Union badge bordered with laurel; in the centre, a crown; pendent from this is a cross similar to the Peninsular gold cross. The collar is held together by two chains of long links running above and below, and attached to the lions and tablets. The lions and tablets
are about two inches in length. The lions are similar to the royal crest of England.

This collar is shown on a bust of Viscount Beresford which was exhibited at the Royal Military Exhibition at Chelsea in 1890. What is the history of the collar we have not hitherto been able to discover, nor have we been able to learn whether it is now in existence.

From the above description it will be seen that this collar bears a general resemblance to that given to the Duke of Wellington by George IV.

A portrait of Beresford, here illustrated, was painted by Sir William Beechey, R.A., and afterwards engraved by Charles Turner,
which depicts him wearing the collar. Is it possible that these two collars, of which so little is known, were those granted by Portugal? In the absence of more definite proof I suggest that most probably they were. My reason for this assumption is that both collars are the same in design, except for two or three minor points, namely, the Waterloo medallion on the Wellington collar in place of a crown on Beresford’s, for the latter was not present at the final overthrow of Napoleon. The crosses may or may not be exactly the same, as Beechey, in the above-mentioned portrait of Beresford, has shown a lion, as on the reverse of the Wellington, but it is quite evident from the Nayler memorandum that some alteration to the design of the cross was made after Waterloo.

It must be remembered that the officers who were granted the medals and crosses by the Portuguese Court had to pay for them out of their own purses, which accounts for most of the badges to British officers being of English design and make. I venture to think that this is also the reason why the collars were made in London and paid for, as would appear from Mayo, out of the Privy Purse. There is a note in the diary of Major-General Sir Alexander Dickson that at the King’s levée on March 21st, 1821, Colonel Harvey¹ wore his “cross, being of gold, VI in the centre, which he had had made at his own expense.” The names of the battles and sieges on the Wellington collar are those recorded in the archives at Lisbon, but I have no means of comparing the list with those on Beresford’s, as only four links are shown in the picture.

No other British or Portuguese officer than Wellington and Beresford holding the rank of field-marshal was present in the Peninsular War, yet both these officers possess collars for actions recorded in the decree. If these are not the Portuguese collars it is strange that a second reward should have been presented by the English Court for the same events, because both officers were already in possession of the Peninsular gold cross with a number of bars. I am told that the Great Duke never wore this collar, which would hardly have been the case if George IV had presented it, for the

FIG. 3.—OFFICER’S MEDAL.

FIG. 4.—MEDAL FOR TWO ACTIONS.

FIG. 5.—MEDAL FOR EIGHT ACTIONS.

PENINSULAR DECORATIONS.
Duke must have appeared many times in the immediate presence of his Sovereign at court functions, and Peninsular and Waterloo dinners. It seems incredible that such a high mark of distinction should have been shelved, however much the Duke was averse to personal adornment. Whatever may be said against this suggestion the facts remain:

That Portugal granted collars to Wellington and Beresford for services in the Peninsular War.

That these two officers alone possessed special collars for services in the Peninsula, and both were similar in design.

That neither officer possessed the Portuguese commander’s cross.

Having brought this question to notice, I hope that further research will be made to elucidate the history of these unique and interesting awards.

The second decoration in the decree was granted only to commanding officers, and juniors who held a command during an action in which the senior officer had been killed or wounded. So confused are the descriptions of these medals given by some of the earlier writers on military decorations that collectors must have searched in vain for specimens. I have therefore had diagrams prepared showing some of the various shapes in which the commanders’ medals were made, and these will convey a correct idea of the various models.

One hundred and sixty-one gold and enamelled medals were granted to Portuguese and British officers. The specimen for one action illustrated as Fig. 3 is the medal worn by Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. Crookshank, who commanded the 12th Caçadore at the battle of Salamanca. Both sides of the medal are alike. In the centre is a green enamelled laurel leaf, inscribed SALAMANCA, within a wreath enamelled blue; it was worn with a pale blue and white
ribbon and gold buckle. Twenty-six British officers’ names are recorded in the grant for this medal, viz.:

- 4 for Busaco
- 2 for Fuentes d’ Onor
- 1 for Albuhera
- 1 for Badajoz
- 4 for Salamanca
- 2 for Vittoria
- 5 for Pyrenees
- 2 for Nive
- 2 for Orthes
- 3 for Toulouse

The medal for two actions, shown in Fig. 4, is that of Lieutenant-Colonel John McDonald, of the 92nd Highlanders, who commanded a Portuguese Brigade. It is an English hand-made medal, consisting of a gold disc with a rim soldered upon it, and two enamelled leaves inscribed VITORIA, PYRENEOS, on the obverse; the reverse is plain. This medal is not according to the sketches in the Portuguese archives, which are similar to that for one action, namely, a pierced centre, but with two leaves, instead of one, and both sides alike. Fifteen British officers were granted this decoration.

The medal for three to ten actions is more in the form of a star, and consisted of three or more white enamelled forked limbs joined together by an olive wreath. On each of the limbs is a green enamelled leaf inscribed with the name of a battle or siege. In the centre a bust of King John VI in gold on a blue enamelled ground within a gold circle. Reverse, limbs as on the obverse, in the centre the initials of the owner.

The beautiful and very rare specimen for eight actions, illustrated as Fig. 5, was granted to Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Robert Arbuthnot, K.C.B., Military Secretary to Lord Beresford, who was also granted the cross for six campaigns. Medals of this class were granted to British officers as follows:

- 15 for 3 actions
- 13 for 4 actions
- 4 for 5 actions
- 4 for 6 actions
- None for 7 actions
- 2 for 8 actions
- 2 for 9 actions
- 2 for 10 actions

Taking these figures to be correct, the total number of commanders’ medals issued to English officers was only eighty-three
of a grand total of one hundred and sixty-one granted to Portuguese and British.

It will have been noticed that those for more than four actions are exceedingly rare, and the largest number is for ten; but the celebrated Sir Denis Pack had a commander’s medal for eleven actions, which agrees with his Peninsular gold cross and bars, but his name does not appear in the Portuguese list of commanders, yet he commanded a brigade of Portuguese at the battle of Busaco,
and was entitled to the campaign cross for four years, which was not amongst his decorations when catalogued some few years ago.

My Portuguese friend told me that a good deal of abuse crept in with regard to the number of actions recorded on the medals, chiefly through officers providing their own badges. This led to legal proceedings being taken against those Portuguese who had included actions not in the grant, or who possessed a commander’s medal but had never held a command. I know of one example of an English officer falling into this error. Richard Brunton, who never held a command, but was entitled to the campaign cross for three years, apparently had a commander’s medal made for eight actions, which included three names not in the grant; also his campaign cross is for four years’ service instead of three. Both these decorations are made to wear round the neck, whereas they were ordered to be worn on the breast. Brunton did not obtain his company until 1813; he was promoted to major in 1826, and lieutenant-colonel in 1830, which is a proof that he did not command at the actions enumerated on the medal.

The campaign crosses were issued in silver for one to three years, and in gold for four to six years’ war service.

Those made in Portugal are quite distinct from the English make: the former are more ornate, whilst the latter are after the style and finish of the British Peninsular cross.

The Portuguese design, illustrated as Fig. 7, is a Maltese cross with horizontal lines on the limbs within an ornamental border, with enamelled laurels in the angles; and in the centre of the obverse are the United Arms of Portugal and Brazil within a blue enamel band inscribed, GUERRA PENINSULAR. In the centre of the reverse is a figure, which indicates the number of campaigns, within a laurel wreath. The cross was worn with a purple-blue ribbon edged rose-pink.

The English pattern, illustrated as Fig. 6, is a Maltese cross with a border formed of laurels running between an outer and inner burnished line, and in the centre Roman numerals within a laurel wreath. Reverse, GUERRA PENINSULAR in three lines,
FIG. 6.—ENGLISH-MADE CROSS.        FIG. 7.—THE PORTUGUESE DESIGN.

PENINSULAR DECORATIONS.
Lieut. Col. James Johnston of the 99th Regiment. This gallant officer died at Mount Lodge Portobello on Tuesday last. He obtained the war medal with 9 clasps for the battles of Vincennes, Salamanca, Badajoz, Salamanca, Vitoria, Pyrenees, Nivelle, and Albuera. He had conferred on him, the Portuguese order of the Tower and Sword, and the Commander medal of Portugal for Vitoria, Pyrenees, and Nivelle. Scotman

17th Nov 1861

A NOTE, DATED 1861, SHOWING THAT THE SO-CALLED COMMANDER’S CROSS WAS KNOWN AS THE COMMANDER’S MEDAL.
Portuguese and English Work.

and suspender as on the English Peninsular cross, with ribbon and gold buckle.

The total number of campaign crosses granted was 1745, and of these 1535 were to Portuguese and 210 to British officers. None of the latters’ names are recorded for less than two campaigns, of which there were seventy-five, the list being:

75 for 2 campaigns.  
61 for 3 campaigns. 
42 for 4 campaigns.

26 for 5 campaigns.

No doubt some of the English officers obtained their crosses from Portugal. The specimen illustrated as Fig. 7 is of Portuguese workmanship and correct, according to official sketches. It was granted to Captain, afterwards Major, Thomas Smith of the Ninety-seventh Foot, and the edge is inscribed in Portuguese. This officer served in the Peninsula from July, 1808, to the end of the war, including the battles of Roleia, Vimiera, Busaco, and Fuentes d’Onor, the Siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, the second Siege and Storming of Badajoz, April 6th, 1812, and the battles of Salamanca and Vittoria, in which last-named action he was wounded in the left thigh. The English specimen, which is illustrated as Fig. 6, is for six campaigns, and is one of the rarest of military medals, for originally there were but six examples granted. It was awarded to General Sir John McDonald of the Ninety-second Highlanders, who has been already mentioned, and it is one of a group of the five decorations of that officer now in the possession of the officers’ mess of the regiment.

The cross was made by John Smith and Son of Sheffield, and is hall-marked with the date letter of 1828, fourteen years after the conclusion of the war for which it was granted. This has no Portuguese arms or laurels in the angles, whilst the Brunton cross has both, and the latter I think is also of English manufacture. A closer study of the collars, medals, and crosses granted by the Portuguese Crown to British officers for services in the Peninsular War will well repay the connoisseur for any trouble it may involve.