

A CANADIAN-BORN
 NEGRO WHO WON
 THE V.C.; AND
 TWO VIEWS OF
 HIS HOME AT
 HANTSPORT, N.S.

*The Canadian Magazine of Politics, Science, Art and Culture,
 vol. XVII (May, 1901 to October, 1901, Inclusive*

WILLIAM HALL V.C.

National Significance

William Hall of Avonport, Nova Scotia was the first black to receive a Victoria Cross. His is the only Victoria Cross ever awarded to a Canadian with a blue ribbon, denoting the naval award of the medal (up to 1918 ribbon colours were blue for navy and red for army), and the only pre-Confederation VC awarded to a native of Atlantic Canada.

Victoria Cross

The Victoria Cross is a simple bronze cross bearing the words “For Valour”. It one of the world’s rarest awards for gallantry. Since it was instituted by Queen Victoria in 1856, the Victoria Cross has been awarded only 1,355 times to 1,351 men (three individuals earned it twice and it was also conferred upon the American Unknown Warrior). Around 300 of these were awarded to those who fought in the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. On 98 occasions it has been awarded to men closely associated with Canada, as well as to several others with some link to the country.

Simplicity is a hallmark of the Victoria Cross. The medal is a cross pattée (though heraldry experts have never agreed on this designation for its shape and the Royal Warrant that established it describes it as a Maltese Cross, which clearly it is not). It is 35 millimetres square, made of bronze. In the centre of the obverse, in relief, is the royal crest of a crown surmounted by a lion, above a scroll bearing the description “For Valour”. A wide “V” descends from the centre of the suspender bar “which is emblazoned with the symbol of victory, a laurel sprig” supporting a plain round link to the medal itself. The reverse of the medal is plain and has an indented circle in its centre, inscribed with the date or dates of the act that earned the VC. The name of the recipient is engraved on the back of the bar. The Victoria Cross hangs from a ribbon which is slightly wider than the medal, at 39 millimetres. Until 1 April 1918 and the establishment of the Royal Air Force, the ribbon was blue for the navy and red for the army. The ribbon since then has been only crimson. Originally, all VC winners, except for commissioned officers, received a pension of £10.

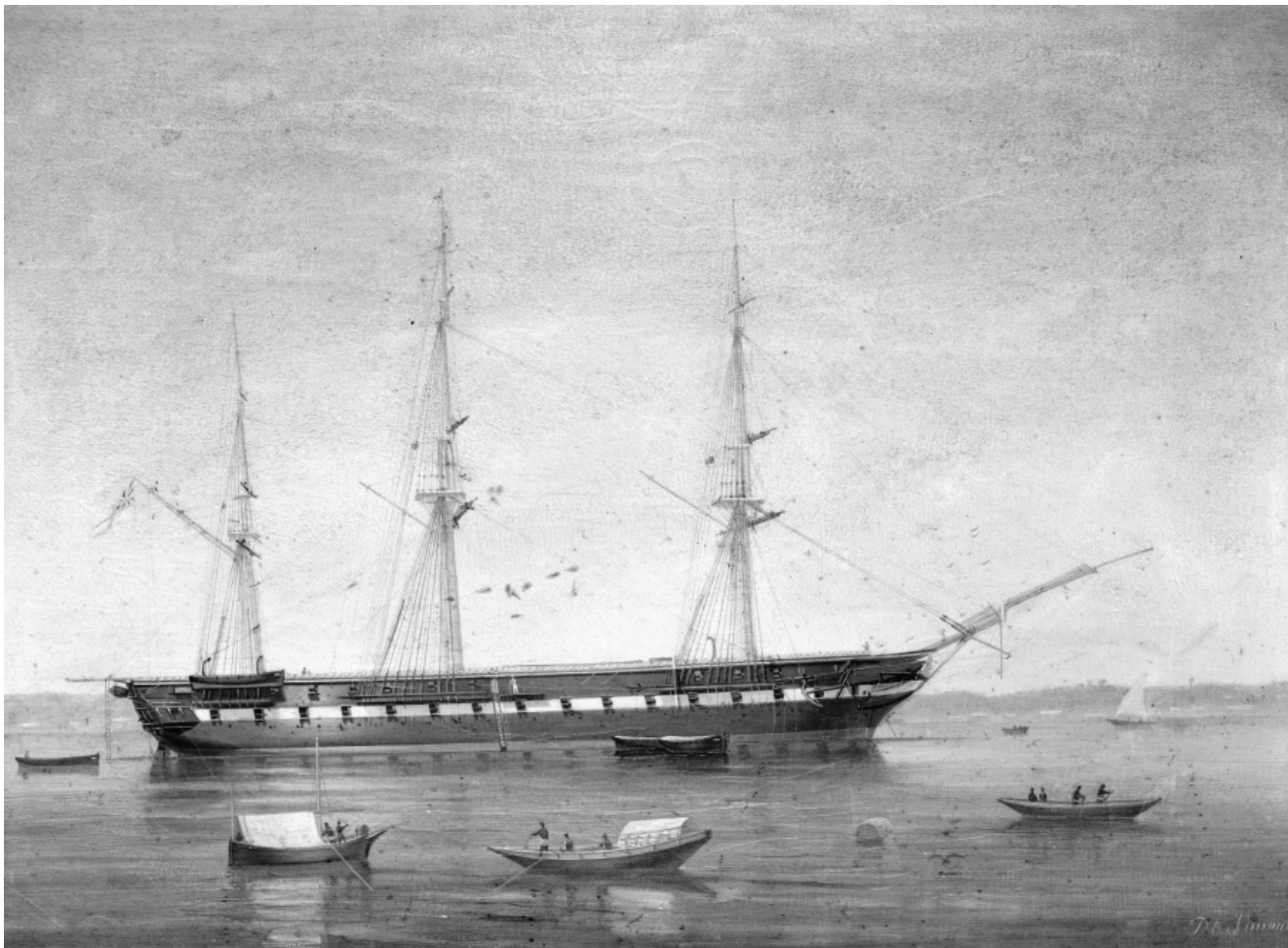
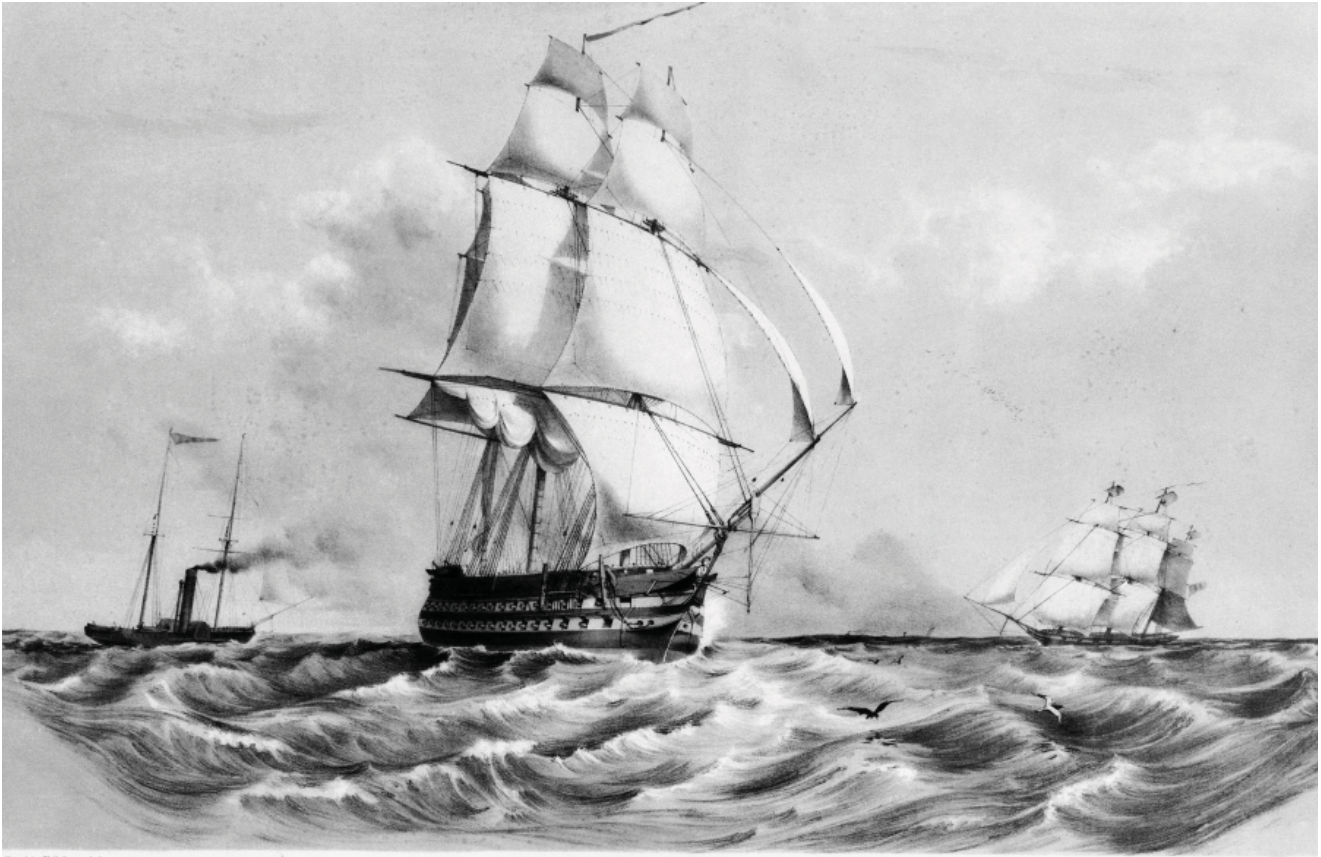


William Hall's VC
© Nova Scotia Museum

Life of William Hall to Joining *HMS Shannon*

William Hall was the son of Jacob and Lucinda Hall, both former slaves who had come to Nova Scotia as the result of the War of 1812. They had entered British lines on board the *HMS Havanah* at different times during the war, but both were discharged from *HMS Celyon* in Halifax on 13 May 1815. William Hall was born in Summerville (some sources say Horton Bluff), Hants County Nova Scotia on 25 April 1827 (not 1829 as in some sources) and was baptised William Nelson Hall, but he always used William Hall. His formal education remains obscure; it is possible that he attended the African school in Halifax during his early youth at which navigation was taught. At around 17 years of age, Hall went to sea a merchant seaman. He then enlisted in the United States Navy under the name of William Harvey. In 1849 he took his discharge from the American Navy and served for some time on trading vessels out of the port of Boston until he joined the Royal Navy in 1852.

For his first two years in the Royal Navy he served on *HMS Rodney*. After the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 in which Britain, France and Turkey joined together to defeat a Russian invasion of Turkey, Hall and other members of crew were formed into a Naval Brigade for action onshore. The term “Naval Brigade” had for many years been used as an armed naval force, of varying size, from ships to work either separately or in conjunction with the Army. The naval brigade formed from the *Rodney's* crew fought from both the trenches and the gun batteries, with about 3,000 seamen and marines. Hall served in the Naval Brigade and fought at the battles of Inkerman and Sebastopol, for which he received clasps to his Crimea War medal for those battles, and he also received the Turkish Medal. He continued to serve on the *Rodney* until his discharge 29 January 1856. Two days later he was entered as crew on *HMS Victory*, but from which he deserted on 12 March. For many months Hall's activities are unknown until 29 October 1856, when he is shown to have entered on the books of *HMS Shannon*.



Two of the ships in which William Hall served: HMS Rodney (top) and HMS Shannon (bottom) off Calcutta.
© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England

Shannon Arrives at Calcutta

On 13 September 1856, Captain William Peel had commissioned *HMS Shannon*, a screw steam frigate of 51 guns, 600 horse power and 2,667 tons; “the finest Frigate afloat” her ship’s company said. The first of a new and very powerful class, she was designed to obtain great speed under sail or steam, and to carry very heavy guns. On the forecastle she mounted one 95-cwt. 68 pounder gun, on the upper deck twenty 56-cwt. 32 pounders and on the main deck thirty 65-cwt. 8-inch guns. She could steam 12 knots. Her complement totalled 510 officers, men and boys. Captain Peel was a famous character of the time. He was the third son of Sir Robert Peel, a former prime minister. At age 12 he joined the navy in 1836, serving in the Mediterranean and China. When he was made post captain he was only 25 years old and the youngest holding that rank in Royal Navy. In the Crimean War he had won a V.C.



A Scene in the First Voyage of the Shannon under Captain William Peel V.C. The picture, which depicts the rescue of a man overboard, commemorates the new Clifford's Boat Launching Gear. This enabled a boat to be quickly and easily launched from a vessel under full sail. The original caption states that "Hall, the black seaman standing up, won the Victoria Cross for bravery." The picture was dedicated to the officers and men of HMS Shannon in memory of Captain Peel. He was commander of the Shannon Naval Brigade in India and died there. The artist was Edward Hayes who was an accomplished marine painter and exhibited at the Royal Academy where he was a regular contributor for forty-nine years. The painting is in the collections of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England. The Black Cultural Centre, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia has a copy of a print made from the painting of which the above is a photograph.

After commissioning and being outfitted, the *Shannon* was ordered to sail in March 1857 to China where the Chinese had seized a British ship and imprisoned the crew. Forces were being assembled to undertake punitive action against the Chinese. In early June the *Shannon* reached Singapore, where the crew learned of troubles in India, and she and a sister ship, the *Pearl*, were ordered to proceed to Calcutta, where they arrived on August 6th.

Origins of the Indian Mutiny

By mid-19th century the East India Company, which had established itself as a major trading concern during the preceding two centuries, had evolved from a commercial organization to an agency for civil and military administration of much of the Indian sub continent. Although the East India Company brought to Indian society such benefits as peace, rule of law, political stability and greatly improved communications, its administration inevitably introduced alien laws and customs that were much resented by Muslims and Hindus alike. Victorian zeal to gain converts to



Christianity and “to civilize” the native population was giving rise to simmering discontent, especially within the East India Company’s Bengal Army. What was to cause further trouble was East India Company’s decision in February 1856 to annex kingdom of Oudh (today Uttar Pradesh), albeit it was being badly governed and rife with corruption. Oudh stretched across a large area of northern India containing a predominately Hindu population, ruled by the last independent Muslim dynasty in India. The annexation played a crucial role in the disaffection of the Bengal Army. The Company maintained three native armies, totalling 311,000 Sepoys and partially British officered, of which the Bengal Army (120,000) was the largest and mostly recruited from Oudh. Its capital, the fortified city of Lucknow, became the focus of the rebellion.

The most immediate provocation for mutiny was the introduction of greased cartridges for use with the newly introduced Enfield musket that had a rifled barrel. The ammunition supplied consisted of cardboard cartridges, which contained grease at their lower end. The soldier either tore, or more commonly bit, off a twist of paper that held the contents of powder and ball inside. After powder was poured down the barrel, the cartridge was then rammed home, the process facilitated by the grease smeared on the paper. The ammunition was manufactured near Calcutta. The British authorities grossly mishandled the introduction of the new cartridges and the Sepoys, probably rightly, came to believe the grease was mixture of cow and pig fat—and therefore an abomination both to Muslims, who regarded the pig as unclean, and Hindus, who venerated the cow. Many Sepoys believed the cartridges were to be means to force them to convert to Christianity.

Signs of disaffection began in January 1857 and there was a major disturbance at Lucknow in April. British authorities did not see these as incidents for occasioning any response other than by having local commanders deal with them. However, at a garrison town north of Delhi open rebellion occurred, leading to the mutineers capturing Delhi and an indiscriminate slaughter of Europeans ensued. Nearly all the fighting took place in Oudh. Although suffering severe battle casualties and many also from dysentery, cholera and heat stroke, a combined force of British and Native troops by September recaptured Delhi.



Enfield muzzle loading rifle and greased cartridge

The Devil’s Wind

Meanwhile, at the city of Cawnpore with 60,000 inhabitants, the garrison commander withdrew to a small entrenchment outside the city. It proved a grievous error of judgement, leading to surrender. The mutineers promised the garrison and some 500 civilians safe conduct down the Ganges to Allahabad. After they crowded into boats, mutinous troops fired on them and others waded into the water and killed them with bayonets and swords. A few survivors were imprisoned in a small bungalow. A British relief force from Allahabad managed to fight its way to Cawnpore, but on arrival they found that the 206 civilian survivors had been slaughtered on the night of 15 July and their bodies thrown down a well. News of the Cawnpore massacre not only had a powerful effect on British troops in India, but also on public opinion in Britain (there were telegraphic communications between India and Britain). The demand for retribution would know no bounds; henceforth, quarter would neither be given nor asked for by either side.

At Lucknow, the garrison faced mutineers numbering between 50,000 and 100,000. The city was a jumble of narrow winding streets, with walled gardens criss-crossing everywhere, palaces, temples, mosques and residences extended in a great sprawl, with the River Gúmty to the east and a canal to the south. On the northern end of the city lay the British Residency, surrounded by walls sitting on a plateau. Measures were taken to make the Residency as defensible as possible and there had been stockpiling of provisions and ammunition. By mid-June the Residency was under siege. After Sir Henry Lawrence, Chief Commissioner for Oudh and commander of the garrison, died from an exploding shell, command fell to Lieutenant Colonel John Inglis

(Inglis was the third son of Bishop John Inglis, the third Anglican bishop of Nova Scotia. He became known as the Hero of Lucknow and was promoted major general and made a Knight Commander of the Bath. The Nova Scotia Legislature presented him with a ceremonial sword, which is now in King’s College in Halifax. His full length portrait in military dress, painted by W. Gush, hangs in the Red Chamber of Province House. Halifax named Inglis Street after

him and in 1872 also named a street “Lucknow” in recognition of the siege.)

The siege continued through the summer with numbers diminishing from enemy action and especially from disease. In September a relief force managed to fight its way through to the Residency, but it proved to be only strong enough to reinforce and secure the Residency. Major General Sir James Outram assumed command of the garrison.

Shannon's Brigade and the Relief of Lucknow

In preparation for operations in the Indian heat, the 400 strong Naval Brigade had to be supplied with bedding, boots, haversacks and water bottles. For headdress they wore sennet (straw) hats with a cover hanging down over the back of the neck. Their loose seaman's dress of white trousers and blue jackets was an advantage over the army's tightly fitting uniforms. Another attempt to relieve Lucknow was being organized under command of Sir Colin Campbell, the newly appointed commander-in-chief (some sources mistakenly confuse him with Sir Colin Campbell, governor of Nova Scotia from 1834 to 1841, but who had died in 1847), which the Naval Brigade would now join. River steamers took them up the Ganges to Allahabad. It proved an arduous trip of three weeks and there were nine deaths from cholera and typhoid. By 20 October the full brigade was present at Allahabad, where it was divided into two detachments for a march to Cawnpore where the Lucknow relief force was assembling. William Hall is believed to have been with the second detachment of 170 men. It consisted of a siege train of four 24-pounders (the cannon ball it fired weighed 24 pounds), two 8-inch howitzers (diameter of barrel) and a large amount of ammunition carried in wagons called trumbils.

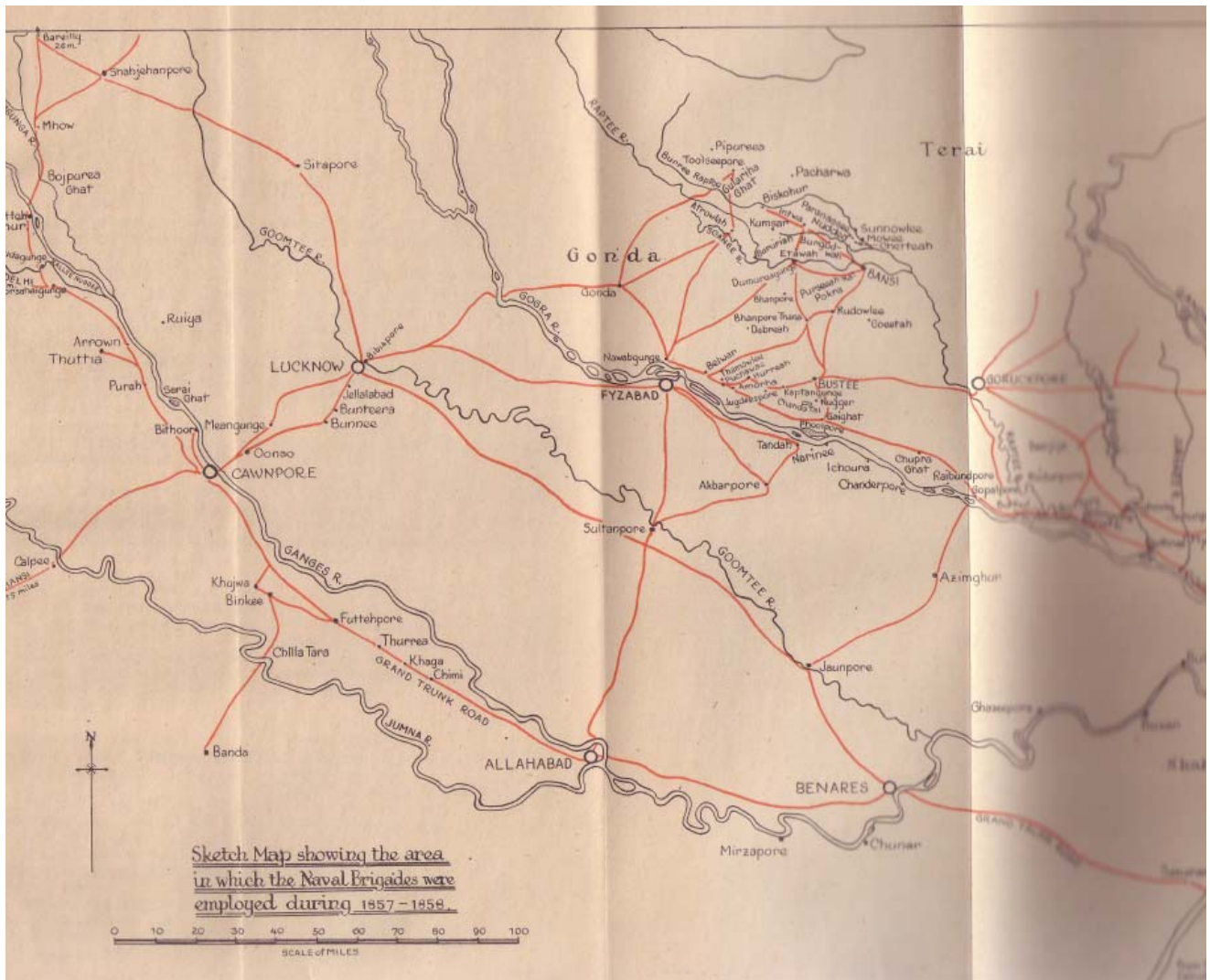
While on the march to Cawnpore, the seamen attempted to capture some ruins occupied by the mutineers surrounded by high stone wall. After considerable loss of life, one crew succeeded in dragging their gun to a commanding position to cover the movement of their comrades. As the mutineers concentrated their fire on this gun, its crew began to fall. William Hall, serving another gun, rushed forward to help. The officer in charge of the gun, Lieutenant Nowell Salmon, cried out, “Ah! Hall! You're a man!” Three other sailors joined Hall and this new crew succeeded in forcing the sepoys back.

No other actions were undertaken by *Shannon's* Brigade before they reached Cawnpore. Years later William Hall remembered visiting the buildings in which had taken place the Cawnpore massacre and seeing “The blood of the helpless women was still on the walls.” The relief force left Cawnpore on 9 November and reached Alumbagh on 12 November, a couple of miles south of Lucknow, which was to serve as a fortified base for the attack on the city. The *Shannon's* Brigade consisted of about 200 seamen and Royal Marines, with six 24-pounders, two 8-inch howitzers (both bullock drawn) and two rocket tubes. In reaching the Residency in September, Outram's force had crossed the canal running south of Lucknow then made a right flank march to where it entered the city at a point where the ground was more open and the city less dense. However, the force still suffered such severe casualties as it fought its way through the streets, before finally reaching the residency, that it could only reinforce the garrison. The mutineers were expecting a similar attempt by Campbell's force of 5,000 men, including *Shannon's* Brigade, and they had blockaded this approach with a force believed to be 60,000 men. Instead, Campbell decided to avoid the built-up sections of the city entirely by making a wider swing to the west. On 14 November his force succeeded in surprising the enemy by this flanking movement and in first driving the rebels from Dilkúsha Park and then capturing the Martinère School.

After bringing up provisions and ammunition on 15 November, the advance continued next day. The line of advance was from the extreme right along the Gúmti (various spellings) River bank for about a mile, and then by a “narrow and tortuous lane” through thickly wooded enclosures and between mud houses to Sikandarbach. Sikandarbach was a heavily defended enclosure built of strong masonry and loopholed on all sides with towers at angles. After the army artillery's 18-pounders, firing at extremely close range, created a breach in the side of the building, the 93rd Highlanders entered and fought their way through successive rooms, killing at least 2,000 rebels at a loss of 22 Highlanders killed and 75 wounded.

William Hall's VC

After passing Skiandarbach, the road led on to the Residency straight across an open plain about 1,200 yards broad. Some 300 yards along this road there was a small village, surrounded by garden enclosures. About 200 yards further on to the right of the road stood the Shah Najaf mosque (the tomb of the first king of Oudh), situated in a garden enclosed by a high loopholed wall. This wall, 20 feet high, was nearly square and very strongly built. Between it and the plain there was a thick fringe of jungle and enclosures with trees and scattered mud cottages, which made it impossible



to get a distinct view of the building until you came close to it. Captain Peel brought up the brigade's six 24-pounders and placed them in an oblique line, within 400 yards of the building, to batter the massive stone walls two yards thick. As Campbell said in a despatch later: "Captain Peel led up his heavy guns with extraordinary gallantry within a few yards of the massive stone wall. The withering fire of the Highlanders effectually covered the Naval Brigade from great loss, but it was an action unexampled in war. Captain Peel behaved very much as he had been laying the *Shannon* alongside an enemy frigate." The bombardment commenced at 4 pm. Men of the 93rd Highlanders were moved into position where they could give covering fire for the crews manning the guns. After three hours of battering, no apparent impression had been made. The enemy's murderous cross fire was also taking its toll. Peel had to withdraw one of the guns and lessen the fire of the others. Then Campbell ordered the 93rd Highlanders to assault the mosque, which would be covered by an artillery battery firing grape shot at close range. On reaching the wall, however, no entrance could be found and there were no scaling ladders and after collecting their wounded, the Highlanders pulled back.

A critical point in the battle had been reached because of approaching darkness. Sir Colin Campbell and Captain Peel consulted and decided as a last resort to send one (some sources say two) of the *Shannon's* 24-pounders close to the wall to make a breach through which the infantry could storm the mosque. The *Shannon's* gun crews and marines dragged the 24 pounder up a narrow lane to where it was within few yards from the wall. When Hall saw that gun was short a crewman, he said to the gun crew's captain, Lieutenant Thomas Young (some sources say it was Peel), "I guess I will go in with you." "You had better not, said the captain "as the chances are you will never come out". "I will take my chances" Hall replied.

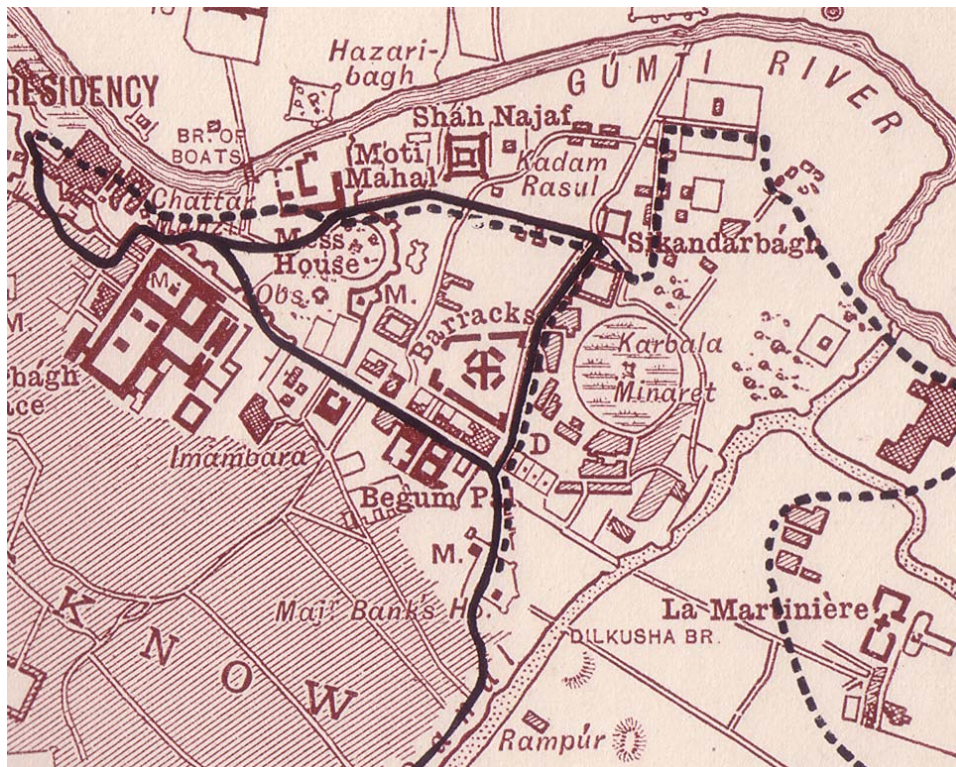
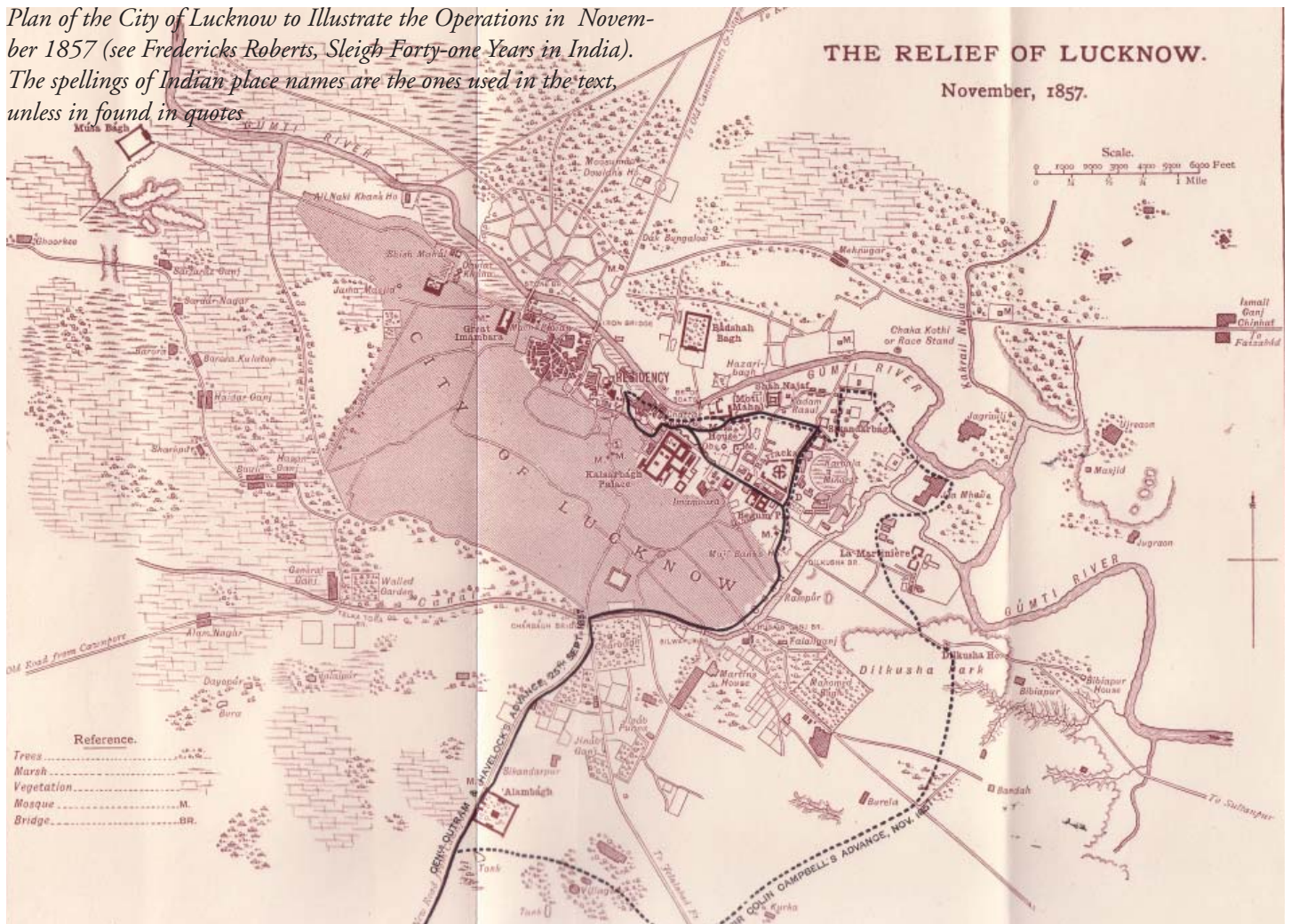
As the gun crew fired, they were engulfed in a cloud of smoke and dust. Hall later said: "After firing each round we ran the gun forward until finally the crew were in danger of being hit by splinters of brick and stone torn from the wall by the round shot." Hall also remembered how Lieutenant Young, in charge of the gun, "moved about with a quiet smile and a word of encouragement, and when the last gunner next to me fell dead" he took his place. The two together sponged, loaded and fired the 24-pounder, sending round after round smashing into the wall. On many occasions they double-shotted the gun to increase its impact. With his tremendous strength, Hall, though only about 5 feet 10 inches tall, could push the heavy gun forward after each recoil, the two men carrying out the drills normally done by a complete crew. Although the masonry fell off in flakes, it came down so as to leave the mass behind perpendicular and inaccessible as ever.

There seemed to be no alternative but to call off the battle. Some rocket frames were brought up, and threw in a volley of fiery projectiles, with such precision, that, just skimming over the top the rampart, they plunged into the interior killing some of the garrison. Under the cover of this, the guns were drawn off. Further attempts to take the building seemed at an end. Then Sergeant John Paton of the 93rd reported he had found an opening. On his own initiative, and quite alone, he had crept round the stronghold to, if possible, discover a means of entry. He had found that shots from the *Shannon's* heavy guns had apparently gone over the front wall and made a breach in the rear defences. Brigadier Adrian Hope gathered some fifty men of the 93rd. Patton cautiously led them through the brushwood to the portion of the wall where he had found the small breach. Hope and his party entered through the breach and to their great astonishment found themselves unopposed. Gaining the gate, they threw it open for their comrades. By then all the garrison had fled, apparently panic struck by the destruction caused by the rockets.

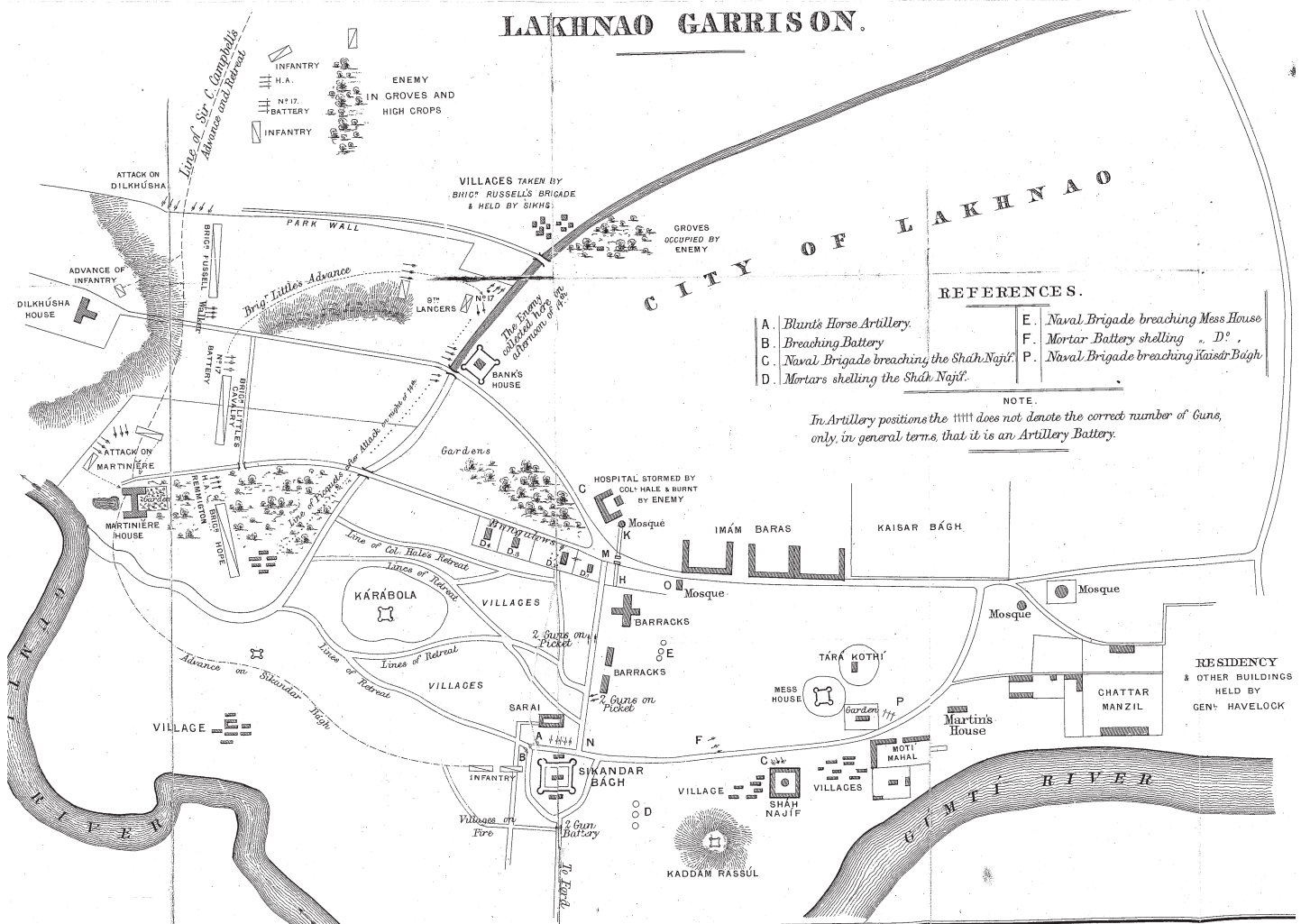
For the assault on Shah Najaf, in addition to the Hall's Victoria Cross, there were four others awarded. At a time when the *Shannon's* gunners were coming under the most intense fire, Captain Peel called for volunteers to climb a tree overlooking the inner fortifications of the mosque, and fire at the enemy. Lieutenant Nowell Salmon promptly answered, and in company with Boatswain John Harrison, shot so well from the advantageous position that the enemy's defence was considerably weakened. Both received the Victoria Cross. Lieutenant Young was awarded a Victoria Cross for his conspicuous courage while serving the naval guns at the attack on Shah Najaf. Sergeant John Patton of the 93rd Highlanders also received a Victoria Cross for his discovery of an opening into the interior of the fortifications.

Next day the Relief Force broke through the remaining defences and opened communications with the besieged garrison. However, the most dangerous and difficult operation lay ahead. Campbell decided that he lacked the forces to take whole city. He ordered an immediate withdrawal taking with them all the women and children, sick and wounded, guns and stores. The withdrawal of women and children began on 19 November and continued throughout the night, finally reaching Dilkúshah. On the following evening all the sick and wounded, who numbered more than a thousand, were moved out, and by midnight on the 22nd all were clear so then the rearguard could abandon the Residency defences. During the three days *Shannon's* brigade kept up a bombardment of various buildings occupied by

Plan of the City of Lucknow to Illustrate the Operations in November 1857 (see Fredericks Roberts, *Sleigh Forty-one Years in India*).
 The spellings of Indian place names are the ones used in the text, unless in found in quotes



Enlargement of above map showing the route of advance passed Skirandarbach and Najah fortified buildings



Sketch of Operations Relief and Withdrawal of Lakhnao Garrison from Colonel G.B. Malleon, History of the Indian Mutiny 1857-1858



Diorama of the the 24 pounder crewed by William Hall and Thomas Young, having apparently made a breach in wall of the Najaf mosque through which troops are rushing. © Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth, England (see below page 17 for further description



Incident at Khudaganj Village, see below page 16 for further description



Sir William Peel Bringing His Guns up in Front of the Dilkooshah, see below page 17 for further description

the mutineers who were completely deceived as to the withdrawal taking place. The march to Cawnpore would not be completed until the 29th of March, during which the sick and wounded, women and children suffered terribly, not only from the heat, dust and thirst, but also from the swarms of flies that followed them.

The Naval Brigade continued to be engaged in operations in the Cawnpore area and participated in the capture of Lucknow city by the largest British force since the Battle of Waterloo. This operation was completed by the end of March 1858. The *Shannon* sailed from Calcutta in September and reached England in late December.

Analysis of Sources and Images

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF THE CAPTURE OF SHAD NAJAF

The chief eyewitness account appeared in the October 1858 issue of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* under the title of "Lord Clyde's Campaign in India: August 1857 to February 1858." Sir Colin Campbell had been raised to the peerage as Baron Clyde. Although the author was anonymous, it was unquestionably written by a staff officer or an aide to Campbell who wrote in great detail of the campaign to defeat the mutiny. His description of the battle for Shad Najaf is the most complete, though he does not mention William Hall's role. Edmund Hope Verney was a young naval officer when he joined the *Shannon* in 1857. During the Naval Brigade's time in India, he wrote numerous letters to his father about the campaign and his involvement. In 1956 Major General G.L. Verney (a great-nephew of Edmund) published *The Devil's Wind: The Story of The Naval Brigade at Lucknow from the Letters of Edmund Hope Verney and Other Papers concerning the Enterprise of the Ship's Company of H.M.S. Shannon in the Campaign in India 1857-58*. Although Verney often quoted from Edmund Verney's letters and from other sources, he relied very much on the *Blackwood's* article (without attribution) for his description of the Shah Najaf battle. On William Hall, he quoted from a letter in which Edmund had written of Hall, "he was a man remarkable for his steady good conduct and his athletic frame; at a foot-race in camp he had distanced by far all competitors, and I have never seen his superior as swimmer or diver." During the *Shannon's* voyage to the Far East, Edmund noted that the ship had been fitted with a new device "Clifford's Lowering Apparatus," and thanks to this, that two of three men who fell overboard were picked up. The third man had struck his head on the fore-chains and was killed. In all likelihood Edmund would have been familiar of the Edwin Hayes' painting illustrating Hall ready to dive in and rescue the two men.

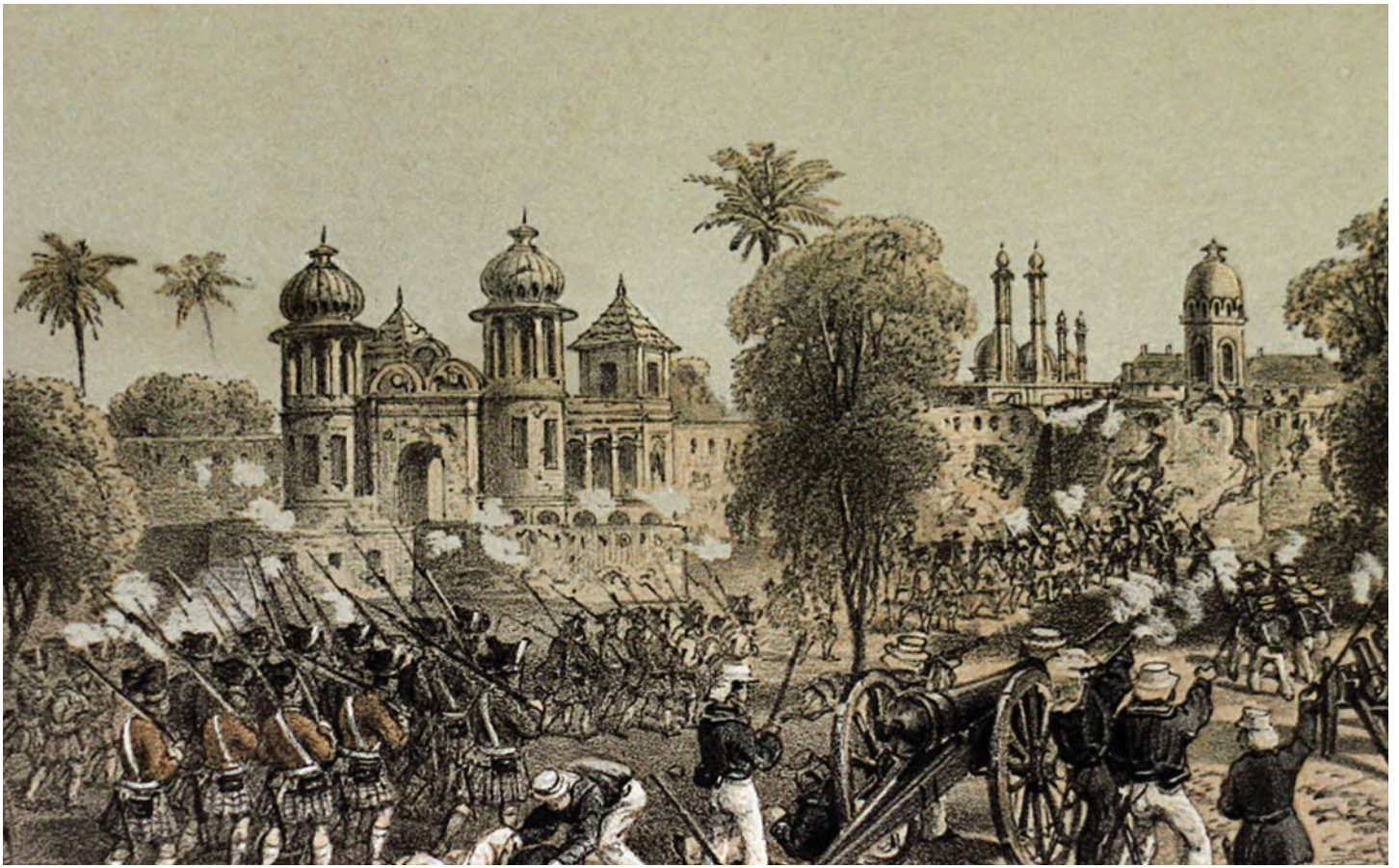
As a subaltern and aide to Sir Colin Campbell, Field Marshal Lord Roberts in his *Forty-One Years in India* (1898) described the battle for Shah Najaf, but does not mention the dragging forward a 24-pounders in a vain attempt to create a breach. A letter written by Nowell Salmon to his mother, dated 26 November 1857, and printed in Commander W.B. Rowbotham's, R.N., *The Naval Brigades in the Indian Mutiny 1857-58* (1947) provides the best account by an eyewitness of Peel's action in collecting all hands to drag one of the 24-pounders to within about ten paces of the wall. In a note on William Hall, V.C. in *Acadiensis* (vol. 8) was included a letter, dated 25 January 1906, from Salmon in which he said that Hall "was one of the crew of a twenty-four pounder siege train gun under Lieutenant Young...the gun in question was run by hand to within a few feet of the wall which was necessary to breach; Hall continued sponging and loading after all the other members of the gun's crew were killed, for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross."

The *London Gazette* of 24 December 1858 carried an official communiqué on the Shah Nujiff Mosque stating that at approximately four o'clock on the 16 November, Sir Colin Campbell, the Commander-in-Chief, gave directions for the attack on the formidable domed mosque. Commanded by Captain Peel, the Naval Brigade, along with the 93rd Highlanders and the Royal Artillery began the preliminary attack of the Shah Nujiff. "Peel's Brigade" with their heavy guns were able to come within several hundred yards of the mosque:

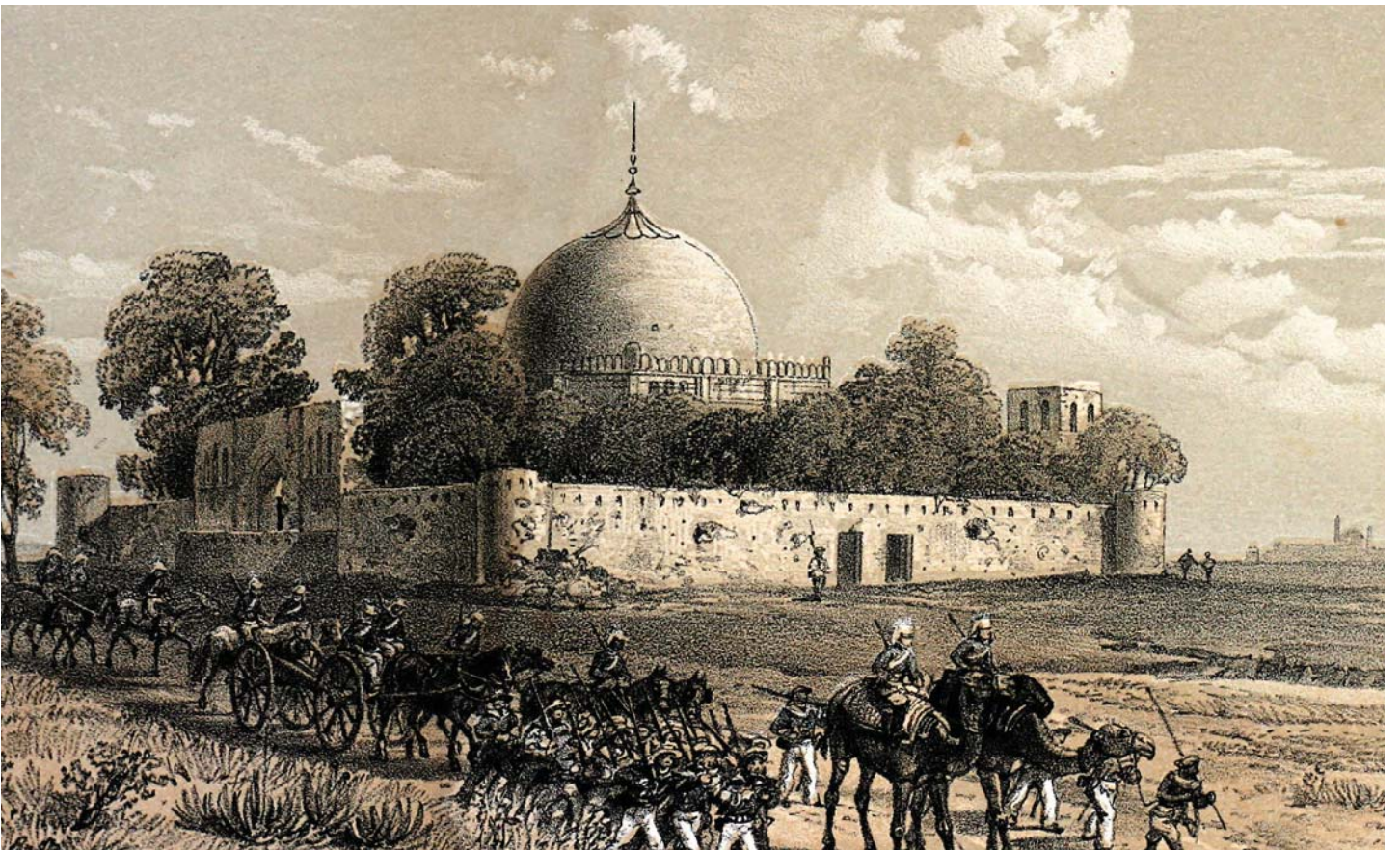
... and although covered by the [93rd] Highlanders, the sailors were exposed to a rattling fire from the mob over the wall. Sir Colin Campbell said that "Capt. Peel behaved very much as if he had been laying the *Shannon* alongside an enemy frigate." Hand grenades fell among these, but Lieut. Young and William Hall, AB., a Negro ran the 24 pounder which the sailors called the Shannon, close to the masonry, and fired round after round point blank at it.

REPORTED REMINISCENCES BY WILLIAM HALL

The earliest recorded interview with Hall occurred in 1897 when he invited a reporter for the *Yarmouth Times*, for a visit, and during which Hall "told as much of the story of his exploit as his fading memory would allow." For the reporter, Hall recalled:



Attack on Sikandarbagh Illustrating the Naval Brigade firing two 24-pounder guns in the foreground and middle ground (see page 17)



Some of the Naval Brigade Passing Shah Najaf after the capture of Lucknow in March 1858. Note shell marks on the walls.(see page 17)

how he and a lieutenant fought their gun after the rest of the crew had been killed beneath a high wall they at length succeeded in breaching. They ran the gun close to the walls. The slant of the loopholes were such that they were safe from the fire of the garrison when within a certain point, but at every shot the gun recoiled and ran back into the fire zone. As often as the gun ran back Hall and his companion would dart out after it amid deadly hail of bullets, roll it back again, load up and bang away at the ever growing breach, until their task was done.

All similar reminiscences record that Hall's gun made the breach, but it is clear from other evidence that this is incorrect.

In 1901 D.V. Warner interviewed Hall for the *Canadian Magazine*. Although Hall told him about the action on the way to Cawnpore and Lieutenant Nowell Salmon's shouted remark "Ah, Hall! You're a man", he refused to talk about how he won the V.C. Hall did thank Warner "for taking note of me."

Before preaching at the Hall's burial, the B.D. Knott made an attempt to obtain information about Hall. In his tribute, printed in the *Halifax Morning Chronicle* of 28 September 1904, he included the following apparent reminiscences by Hall:

"The blood of the helpless women was still upon the walls"

"I guess I will go with you, said Hall"—You better not said the Captain, "it means almost certain death"—"I will take the chances, sir"

In its edition of 24 November 1904 the *Halifax Herald* had a lengthy article on Hall in which it quoted from a sketch written, the paper said, some time ago. Its description of how Hall won his V.C. was as follows:

A detachment of soldiers one hundred strong, drew the gun close to the wall of the fort, and fell back as a covering force. The position was at an angle of the building and that with the nearness of gun, afforded a slight shelter. The gun, double shotted, was discharged, and the recoil sent in back some forty or fifty feet. Again and Again after each discharge, the crew exposed to the full force of the tornado of bullets, shoved the gun forward to its old position, sheltering themselves as best they could behind the wheels and trail of the carriage. Hall served as No. 2 on the crew and bravely sponged and loaded for four or five times (until a sufficient breach was made through which the redcoats [none of British soldiers at the battle wore red coats] entered with a cheer, and the Shah Nujiff [sic] was won and Hall had earned his place in the English Vahalla.

"We would have liked to go in with the soldiers", said the old hero in speaking of it, "but the gun's crew had to stay with the gun. You could pick up lead by the bushel" said he "where the bullets flattened on the gun and carriage".

The *Wolfville Acadian* (the particular issue is apparently not now extant) had a piece entitled "The Thrilling Life Story of William Hall, V.C." It repeated much of what had previously been published, but did add to what had been before appeared:

Sir Colin Campbell and Sir William Peel [his knighthood was gazetted 21 January 1858 and the news reached Calcutta on 2 March] consulted and decided to send one of the Shannon's guns close to the wall and endeavour to make a breach through which they might storm the fort. The approach [was] up the narrow lane of the Shannon's 24-pounders were ordered [sic]. The crew was one man short and Hall, who was captain of another gun, volunteered to take the place. "I guess I will go with you," he said. The captain of the gun advised him not to do so, saying it would almost death. Quick came the reply, "I will take the chance, sir." The gun was placed, a detachment of soldiers covering the gun, the bullets flying like hail. One after another the gun crew were shot down until only two were left and one of these wounded. The wall was not yet down and William Hall and his wounded companion—largely by the gigantic strength of the former—brought back the gun after each recoil and finally the charge that gave an opening through which the British soldiers rushed with a cheer and won the day.

Around 1900, Charles Hensley visited Hall on several occasions. It was during the Boer War and Hall would discuss the differences in fighting prevailing during the Indian Mutiny and the Boer War. While discussing Hall winning the V.C., Hall remarked that “he not done anything more than his duty at the time it was awarded.” Hall went on to say that:

After they had advanced well towards the City of Lucknow, his battery had to be left, as it was too heavy to be of any service at a closer range. So to quote his own words: “I said to my mate Bill Parkman, I am going to shank it in, and see what is going on. Says Bill to me, ‘You had better stay out or you will get into trouble’. However he went in, and was put on a field battery that was storming Shah Nujuf. This was loop-holed by the Indians and was holding the British back, but at length breached, and the troops stormed their way through. Guards were put on the guns to see that they were worked, and at the end of the engagement, Hall and one other were the two left to work the battery. It was for this that he was awarded the Victoria Cross, six [sic] others being awarded at the same time.

In the 1900 edition of *Who's Who* the entry for Hall read:

Hall, William, V.C.; farmer; b. Avonport, Horton, Nova Scotia; unmarried. *Educ.* Avonport. Served as an ordinary seaman with Naval Brigade at Lucknow and Calcutta 1857. *Decorated* for service in the Indian Mutiny, 1857, on recommendation of Capt. Peel of H.M.S. “Shannon.” *Recreation*; shooting crows. Address: Avonport, King's County, Nova Scotia.

Obviously, Hall had a sense of humour.

How much of the above reminiscences can be attributed to Hall and how much to the fertile imagination of the writers is difficult to say, but it does suggest that Hall had spoken fairly often over the years about how he had won the V.C. and these conversations were remembered and a number recorded. Hall also appreciated about being asked to tell the story of how he won his V.C.

PLANS FOR THE RELIEF OF LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 1857

Plans for the Relief of Lucknow that appear in modern histories have mostly relied on a plan that Field Marshal Roberts had prepared for his *Forty-One Years in India*. For his *History of the Indian Mutiny, 1857-1858*, Colonel G.B. Malleon (1879), and who relied greatly on the anonymous author in *Blackwood's Magazine*, had prepared a “Sketch of Operations for Relief and Withdrawal of Lakhnao Garrison.” It was not intended to be an accurate scaled map, but designed to show all the major buildings and the progress of the relieving force, beginning with the successful capture of the Dilkhúna and Martinière Houses, the assaults on Sikamdarbach and Shah Najaf, and the final advance to the Residency. Instead of using a north-south projection as in Roberts' map, Malleon used a south-north projection and so the Gúmti River is at the bottom of the sketch instead in the north. He seems to have done this because Campbell's advance followed closely along the river.

LITHOGRAPHS SHOWING THE NAVAL BRIGADE

Lithographs showing the Naval Brigade come from two sources. Captain Oliver Jones of the Royal Navy obtained permission from the Admiralty to spend a year travelling in India. He arrived at Calcutta in November 1857. While there he kept a journal and wrote numerous letters to friends in England. On his return to England he published in 1859 *Recollections of A Winter Campaign in India: in 1857-58 with drawings on stone from the author's designs* (1859). The lithographs were done by Day and Son, one the largest and most prominent lithographic firms in Britain during the second third of the 19th century, and which was Royal Lithographers to Queen Victoria. Two of the designs by Jones showed the Naval Brigade and which Day and Son turned into lithographs appeared in his *Recollections*. These are:

Incident at Khudaganj Village

During the advance from Cawnpore to Fatehgarh in January 1858, a detachment of two 24-pounders under command of Lieutenant Vaughan went into action against skirmishers using a small gun located behind the corner of a house. The first shot struck the roof of the house, the second the angle of the wall, and the third dismounted the gun

and destroyed the carriage. Captain Peel, who was standing by, said, "Thank you, Mr. Vaughan; perhaps you will be now so good as to blow up the tumbrel [ammunition wagon]." Vaughan fired a fourth shot which passed near it, and a fifth which blew it up and killed several of the enemy (*The Devil's Wind*, p. 110).

Captain William Peel Bringing His Guns up in Front of the Dilkhúshah House

"In the afternoon [1 March 1858] some of the Naval Brigade guns and some heavy siege guns belonging to the Artillery were got into position on the brow of a hill to the right front of the Diklooshah. Peel, was was his custom, leading his guns, and perfectly indifferent to the balls which occasionally struck the ground within a short distance of his feet... Captain Peel also often spent an hour on the top of the Dilkoooshah. News had just arrived of his being made Aide-de-Camp to the Queen, and also K.C.B. [Knight Commander of the Bath]." (*Recollections*, pp. 154-55 & 162)

Attack on Sikandarbagh

Lieutenant Nowell Salmon in a letter to his father of 26 November 1857 wrote: "I took up a position with my two guns close to Secunderbagh (a large building enclosing a large garden, which the Highlanders took before we came up) to silence the fire of a battery and a large house filled with riflemen that commanded the road, and after polishing them off we moved on to join the other guns which were pitching into a place called the Shah Nujeef... (*General Views and Special Points of Interest in City of Lucknow* From Drawings Made on the Spot by Lieutenant Colonel D.S. Dodgson, Plate 11, published by Day & Son, London, 1860).

Some of the Naval Brigade Passing Shah Najaf after the capture of Lucknow in March 1858

Although the mosque appears on a broad empty plain; in fact, it was surrounded by a village and a thick wood, though it is possible that both had been levelled. This lithograph shows damage done by the guns of the Naval Brigade during assault in November 1857. (*General Views and Special Points of Interest in City of Lucknow* From Drawings Made on the Spot by Lieutenant Colonel D.S. Dodgson, Plate 12, published by Day & Son, London, 1860). It is clear from the following description of the mosque and its capture that Dodgson did not witness the attack as he is mistaken in how the mosque was captured:

Is [sic] the tomb of the first King of Oude, Ghuzee-ood-deum Hyder. The enemy made the most of the position here; the enclosure of the Mosque was loopholed with great care, and the entrance to it covered by a regular work in masonry: this position was defended with great resolution against heavy cannonade of three hours; Captain Peel commanding the Naval Brigade, bringing up his heavy guns within a few yards of the building to batter the massive stone walls. The withering fire of the Higlanders effectually covered the Naval Brigade from great loss, but it was an action almost unexampled in war; Captain Peel behaved very much as if he was laying the "Shannon" alongside an enemy frigate. It was then stormed, in the boldest manner, by the 93rd Highlanders, under Brigadier the Hon. Adrian Hope, supported by a battalion of detachments under command of Major Barnston of the 90th Light Foot (this sentence is, of course, mistaken in every particular, see page 9)

DIORAMA IN THE ROYAL NAVAL MUSEUM, PORTSMOUTH, ENGLAND

The Diorama was apparently designed to illustrate as much activity as possible without too much attention to historical accuracy. It shows the single 24 pounder in action, which has blasted a breach opening in wall of the Shah Najaf mosque, with infantry advancing towards it. Behind the 24-pounders, is an ammunition wagon. Another 24-pounder is being hauled by bullocks. In the top left there is elephant that apparently represents a Sepoy force attacking and being opposed by British infantry. The Sepoys are also manning the wall of the mosque and firing on the advancing troops.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF WILLIAM HALL

Three different photographs of Hall survive; two frontal and a profile of him driving his wagon. Both the frontal photographs show him with his medals. The medals do not stand out in the photograph that was taken probably around 1890. The other photograph is the one universally used. It was taken either by D.W. Warren for the *Canadian Magazine* on his visit in 1900 or, more likely, by Charles Hensley of nearby Windsor in November 1900 who provided Warren with it. Hensley had written Hall for some information. On 16 November Hall replied to Hensley as follows:

Mr
Cowanport 16 Nov 1900

C Hensley
Windsor

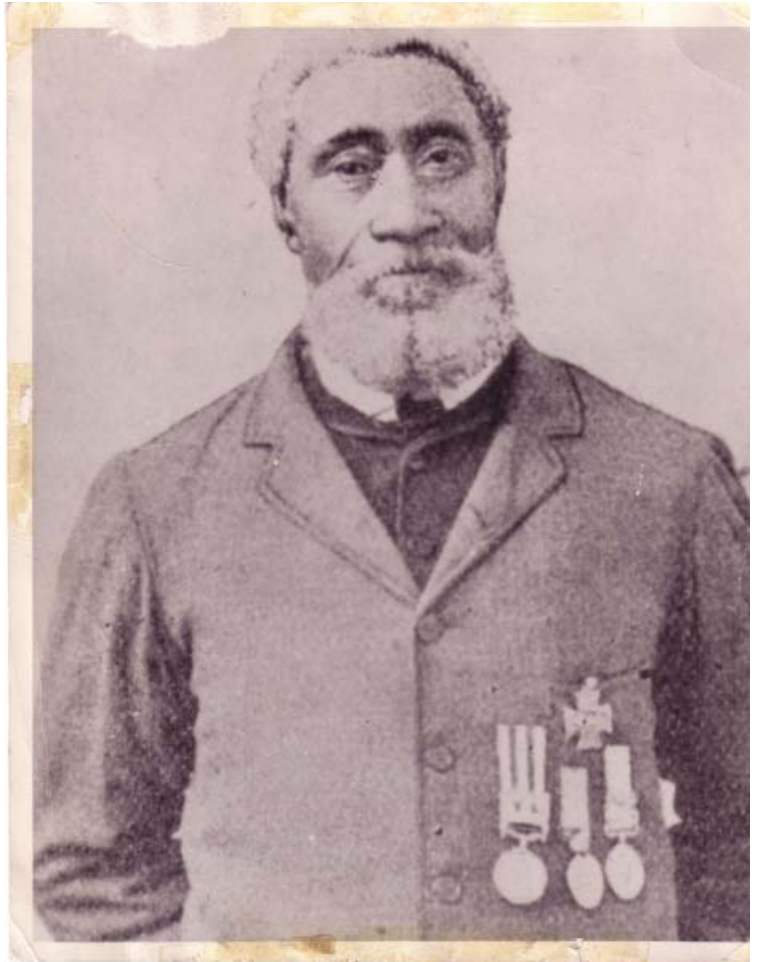
Dear Sir yours of the
14 received with the
your request I cannot yet
remember the date of the
mainth for the papers
was so worn that I
burnt them but the
name of the ship was
Shaman but it was
on or about 1840
at 46 I give her

I received the photo
of my self and house
with thanks hoping you are
well yours truly
William Hall




William Hall, c. 1890 © Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management

Note that Hall's V.C. does not have its blue ribbon attached. The V.C. was apparently attached to his pocket watch or by a wire to his suit coat.



William Hall, 1900 © St. Clair H. Patterson, Hantsport, Nova Scotia

<p style="text-align: center;">WILLIAM HALL</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(ABLE SEAMAN)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NAVAL BRIGADE, ROYAL NAVY</p> <p>DURING Sir Colin Campbell's advance to the final relief of the Lucknow Residency on November 16, 1857, William Hall, "Captain of the Foretop" of H.M.S. <i>Shannon</i>, was with the guns of Peel's Naval Brigade, and was conspicuous for his fearless bravery at the attack on the Shah Nujjiff, one of the stoutest defences of the mutineers around Lucknow. Hall is one of the three men of colour who have been awarded the Victoria Cross. The other two are Samuel Hodge and W. J. Gordon. <i>(Born at Annapolis, NS)</i></p>	
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Philip Wilkins, The History of the Victoria Cross, p. 143



William Hall © Nova Scotia Museum

Top

Born in Perth, Upper Canada, Herbert Reade became an assistant surgeon with the 61st (South Gloucestershire) Regiment in 1850. On September 14, 1857, at the siege of Delhi during the Indian Mutiny, a number of British wounded were threatened by some 300 Sepoys. Reade led a small party of soldiers against the attackers and drove them off. Two days later he was in the forefront of the final assault on Delhi and, for his gallantry on both occasions, was awarded the Victoria Cross. He was the second Canadian to earn a V.C., the first being Alexander Robert Dunn during the Crimean War during the famous or infamous charge of the Light Brigade.

Centre

Surgeon Campbell Mellis Douglas earned his VC on 7 May 1867 on the island of Little Andaman in the Bay of Bengal. He took charge of the rescue of British sailors and army personnel in danger of attack by natives on Little Andaman. He was the fourth Canadian to earn a VC after Dunn, Douglas and Hall.

Bottom: William Hall V.C.

© *Legion Magazine*, March 1, 2004

Yours of the 14th received, with your request. I cannot just remember the date of the month, for the papers were so worn that I burnt them, but the name of ship was Shannon. But it was on or about 1855 or 1856 I joined her. *I received the photo of myself and house* [my italics]. With thanks, hoping you are well.

Yours truly,
William Hall

As the *Canadian Magazine* with Warren's article had pictures of the house as well as of Hall, it is likely that Hensley provided them. Philip A. Wilkins for *The History of the Victoria Cross: Being An Account of the 500 Acts of Bravery for which the Decoration has been awarded and Portraits of 392 Recipients*, published in 1904, also used this photograph of Hall, which he must have obtained from either the *Canadian Magazine* or directly from Hensley.

When D.V. Warner asked to see Hall's V.C., Hall invited him into his house with the words "See it, yes; come right in":

and we walked through the hall into a neatly furnished sitting-room, on the walls of which hung pictures of British war-vessels of fifty years ago. The old sailor stepped to the mantel, and taking down a small carboard spool box, emptied the contents on the table. The blue ribbon from which the Cross was originally suspended is missing, having been "borrowed" by a relic-hunter several years ago; and it is attached by wire to a heavy watch chain, and bears the date "16 Nov. 1857." There were three other commemorative medals in the collection, two of the Crimean war and one of the Indian Mutiny. "It's nothing to have a Cross now; they're as thick as peas," the old man said.

Gazetting William Hall's Victoria Cross

William Peel died of small pox on 27 April 1858. Before he died he had recommended, in front of Sir Colin Campbell, that the Victoria Cross be awarded to Hall and to Lieutenant Thomas Young. However, they were not included in the initial gazetting of those of the Naval Brigade who had been awarded Victoria Crosses. Nonetheless, in the *London Gazette* of 1 February 1859 appeared the citation for Hall and Young, which read:

Lieutenant (now Commander) Young, late Gunnery Officer of Her Majesty's ship "Shannon" and William Hall, "Captain of the Foretop" of that Vessel, were recommended by the late Captain Peel for the Victoria Cross, for their gallant conduct at a 24-pounder Gun, brought up to the angle of the Shah Nijiff, at Lucknow, on the 16th of November, 1857.

Hall also received the Indian Mutiny Medal with clasps for Lucknow and the Relief of Lucknow.

Presenting the Victoria Cross to William Hall

At the time of the assault on Shah Najaf, Hall held the rank of Able Bodied Seaman. Later he was promoted, first to that of Leading Seaman, then to Captain of the Mast and eventually to Captain of the Foretop. After being paid off on 29 December 1858, Hall joined the *HMS Donegal*, 2 August 1859. In Queenstown port (later renamed Cobh), on the south coast of County Cork, Ireland, Rear Admiral Charles Talbot presented Hall with his Victoria Cross on the deck of the *Donegal*. Somehow Talbot believed that Hall was a native of Barbados.

Further Service

After being discharged from the *Donegal* on 10 June 1862 Hall went on to serve a number of ships, including the *Hero* at the time of the Prince of Wales' visit to the British North American colonies in 1860. A midshipman who served aboard the *Hero* remarked that: "We had one Victoria Cross man amongst them [the *Hero* ship's company]; curious to say he was a negro by name of William Hall." Hall's last service in the Royal Navy was aboard the *Royal Adelaide*, from which he was discharged to pension on 4 July 1876 as Petty Officer, First Class.

Return to Horton Bluff

Hall settled on a small farm at Avonport Station, about 100 yards from where he had been born. He had never married and lived with two of his sisters. Other than the occasional visitor like Charles Hensley and D.V. Warren, he lived quietly. However, he went to Halifax to parade along with the Royal British Veterans Association during the Royal

War-Office, February 1, 1859.

THE Queen has been graciously pleased to signify Her intention to confer the Decoration of the Victoria Cross on the undermentioned Officer and Seaman of Her Majesty's Navy, who have been recommended to Her Majesty for that decoration for their gallantry whilst serving in the Naval Brigade in India under the orders of the late Captain William Peel, K.C.B., viz.:—

Corps.	Rank and Name.	Act of Bravery for which recommended.
Naval Brigade...	Lieutenant (now Commander) Thomas James Young William Hall, A.B. Date of Act of Bravery, 16th November, 1857	Lieutenant (now Commander) Young, late Gunnery Officer of Her Majesty's ship "Shannon," and William Hall, "Captain of the Foretop," of that Vessel, were recommended by the late Captain Peel for the Victoria Cross, for their gallant conduct at a 24-Pounder Gun, brought up to the angle of the Shah Nujiff, at Lucknow, on the 16th of November, 1857.

Foreign-Office, January 29, 1859.

The Queen has been pleased to approve of Don Emilio Lynch as Consul at Sydney for the Republic of Chili.

The Queen has also been pleased to approve of Don Antonio Maria de Cea as Vice-Consul at Cardiff for Her Majesty the Queen of Spain.

India Office, January 31, 1859.

The Queen has been graciously pleased to nominate and appoint Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, K.C.B., to be Governor of the Presidency of Madras.

War-Office, Pall-Mall, 1st February, 1859.

Royal Regiment of Artillery, Lieutenant-General Alexander Cavalie Mercer to be Colonel-Commandant, vice General Brough, deceased. Dated 16th January, 1859.

Second Captain William Lambert Yonge, from the Supernumerary List, to be Second Captain, vice Dames, placed upon the Supernumerary List. Dated 7th January, 1859.

Rifle Brigade. The first Christian name of Ensign Smith is *Walter*, not *William*, as stated in the Gazette of the 28th January, 1859.

STAFF.

Brevet-Lieutenant-Colonel E. G. Hallewell, upon half-pay Unattached, to be Deputy-Quarter-master-General to the Forces serving in Malta, vice Pocklington, who resigns that appointment. Dated 1st February, 1859.

Commission signed by the Queen.

Forfar and Kincardine Regiment of Militia Artillery.

John Barclay, Esq., to be Paymaster from 21st December, 1858. Dated 6th January, 1859.

TREASURY WARRANT.

WHEREAS by an Act of Parliament passed in the fourth year of the reign of Her present Majesty, intituled "An Act for the regulation of the duties of postage," certain scales of weight and rates of postage were fixed and made chargeable and payable upon, for, or in respect of, letters transmitted and forwarded by the post, and various regulations were made and powers were given to the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, for the purpose of facilitating the transmission of such letters by the post.

And whereas by another Act of Parliament, passed in the eleventh year of the reign of Her present Majesty, intituled "An Act for giving further facilities for the transmission of letters by post, and for the regulating the duties of postage thereon, and for other purposes relating to the Post-office," further powers were given to the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, for the purposes aforesaid, and it was amongst other things provided, that the Postmaster-General might, with the consent of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, require the postage (British, colonial, or foreign) of any letters sent by the post to be prepaid, either in money or stamps (as he might think fit), on the same being put into the Post-office, and he might also with such consent, abolish or restrict the prepayment in money, of postage on letters sent by the post, either altogether, or on certain letters, and might require the prepayment thereof to be in stamps, and might refuse to receive or send by the post, any letters tendered contrary to any regulations made under that enactment. And further, that it should be lawful for the Postmaster-General, and any officer of the Post-office, to detain any letters which should be posted or sent by the post, contrary to the regulations of the said now reciting Act, or the said hereinbefore recited Act, or contrary to any regulations made under the authority of the said now reciting Act, or the said hereinbefore recited Act, or contrary to the regulations of any Treasury Warrant, which should be issued under or by virtue of the said now reciting Act, or which had been or should be issued under or by virtue of the said hereinbefore recited Act, and to open such letters, and either to return them to the senders thereof, or to forward them to the

57 2



Presentation of Victoria Cross. **L 447**

Amphiva at Guernstown.

29: October 1859.

N^o 442. My Lords,

In compliance with the directions of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, contained in your letter of the 15: Instant, I have the honor to make the following report of the proceedings adopted on the occasion of presenting William Hall A.B. serving on board the Donegal with the Victoria Cross, to commemorate an act of Bravery performed by him at Lucknow.

2. On the 26: Instant the enclosed General Order was read to the Officers and Crews on the Quarter deck

NOV 9 1859 ADMIRALTY
Comdant Amphiva
Presentation Victoria

26 October 1859.

The Right Hon^{ble}

Lord Clarence & Paget

Ch. Secy.

Admiralty.



Rear Admiral Charles Talbot to Lord Clarence & Paget, 29 October 1859, Adm 115709/L447, National Archives of the United Kingdom

of each of the Ships and Vessels in Port.

3. Yesterday afternoon I proceeded in full dress uniform, with my staff, on board the Adricio, and on hoisting my flag in her, the Amphion's manned yards. In proceeding alongside the D'ougal that ship also manned yards. and on going on board I was received by the officers in full dress, and the customary Guard.

4. Upon the officers and crews of Her Majesty's ships being assembled on the quarter deck, William Hall was called forward, when I made a short address, adapted for the occasion, and handed him the London Gazette, notifying that the Victoria Cross had been awarded him; also a copy of the Regulations, by which he would see he was entitled.

15
C. M. J.
ADMIRALTY
No 5
OCT 31
1859
ADMIRALTY
RECEIVED
OCT 31
1859

in consequence, to a pension of £10- per annum; and a copy of my General Order on the subject.

5. The ceremony was concluded by my fastening the decorations to Hall's breast, and the Band of the Hawke, (ordered on board for the purpose) playing "God save the Queen."

6. It may be interesting to observe that the recipient of this honor is a Man of color; a Native of Barbados.



7. In explanation of this duty having been delayed longer than might have been expected, I would beg to observe that upon receipt of their Lordships' instructions I considered it expedient to consult Rear Admiral Elliot under whose command the Fleet was - as to the ceremony it would be desirable to adopt.

8. the more both of opinion
that it would be more gratifying to the
Man's feelings to have the decoration
presented to him on board his own ship,
but that it would be inexpedient for it
to be done while his Captain remained on
board in a precarious state of health.

9. As a delay therefore had to
take place R. Admiral Elliot was anxious
that I should endeavor to obtain a copy
of any previous order that had been
issued on a similar occasion, which
was the reason of my letter to you of the
14th Instant N^o. 424.

Trusting these proceedings
will be in accordance with their
Lordships wishes.

I have the honor to be

My Lord, Your Lordships

very obedient servant

Charles Fortescue

Dear Admiral.



Burial Procession with William Hall's Casket © H. St. Clair Patterson, Hantsport, Nova Scotia



*Review on the Halifax Commons during Visit of the Duke and Duchess of York with Royal Veterans on Parade 17 October 1901
© Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management*

Visit of the Duke and Duchess of York (future King George V) in October 1901. After the Duke had laid the corner stone of the South African War Memorial at Province House, the Royal Couple drove through the streets of Halifax. A Halifax newspaper reported that while passing along Hollis Street, and then along Pleasant Street [today Barrington Street], a very interesting episode occurred on the north side of the only arch erected—a fine conception—the arch being made to represent a portion of Balmoral Castle, the wood being painted to represent a stone structure. Here the Duke inspected the Royal British Veterans, drawn up in a line to do honour to the Prince, who took a deep interest in the men, upon whose breast were displayed a variety of war medals. The parade commander, Colonel Biscoe, especially drew the Duke's attention to Hall who "displayed upon his breast the Victoria Cross," which the newspaper erroneously said Queen Victoria had pinned to Hall's "regimental serge." Another newspaper reported that "Among them was a Victoria Cross man, one of three coloured men to enjoy this distinguished honor. The man was introduced to the Duke and Duchess—Wm. Hall of Avonport, Kings Co., who was Captain of the Foretop in the Royal Navy."

Death, Burial and Re-burial

William Hall died at his home at Horton Bluff on 25 August 1904. At a memorial service, largely attended, conducted by the B.D. Knott, a Baptist student pastor, whose address in a newspaper report was entitled a "Tribute to the Valor and Worth of William Hall, the Nova Scotia Negro who won the V.C. in Crimean War [sic]." Hall was buried in an unmarked grave at Stoney Hill Baptist Church Cemetery, Lockartville. In the early 1930s the Dominion Command of the Canadian Legion set about to locate all unmarked graves of Canadian winners of the Victoria Cross (what follows comes from a paper entitled William Hall V.C. Memorial at Hantsport by St. Clair H. Paterson of Hantsport). An article "Canada's Third V.C." by John Hundevad appeared in *The Legionary* of May 1933 generated further interest in locating Hall's grave. In 1937 some interested individuals, led by Alistair MacKinnon, the Provincial Secretary of the Legion, and J. Edward Borden, the undertaker who had buried Hall in 1904, found the location of the unmarked grave in the Stoney Hill Cemetery. Plans were put in place to have Hall's remains disinterred and reburied in a proper manner with a suitable memorial erected in his honour. Thought was given to moving his remains to Halifax or Windsor, but in 1939 it was decided, according to an article that appeared in the *Hants Journal* of 9 August 1939, that Hantsport would be the resting place of William Hall V.C. Nova Scotia's first winner of the Victoria Cross in:

a Hallowed spot on the property of the Hantsport Baptist Church, this site will be given in trust for the erection of a War Memorial has been made available for the purpose by the Trustees of the Hantsport Church. It faces the approach from Windsor, and is an excellent site. The Town Council of Hantsport has assured the Windsor Branch of the Canadian Legion that it will be cared for in perpetuity.

It was not until after the Second World War that such a plan was acted upon. In 1945 a quiet reburial took place in the Churchyard of the Hantsport Baptist Church, with Edward Borden and local Legion members in attendance. On 9 November 1947, the memorial in honour of William Hall V.C. was unveiled. The service was conducted by the Hantsport Lucknow Branch of the Canadian Legion, assisted by the William Hall V.C. Branch of Halifax, made up of Black Veterans and founded in 1946. Twenty-four other Legion branches were also in attendance. The unveiling ceremony included participation of members of the Hall family. Also participating were Rear Admiral C.R.H. Taylor, C.B.E., Atlantic Command of the Royal Canadian Navy, a naval guard of honour, and the Royal Canadian Naval Band from Halifax. On 9 July 1967, a new plaque was fastened to the top of base and a William Hall V.C. Memorial Service and Unveiling Ceremony held. The inscription reads: "This cenotaph Marks the Last Resting Place of William Hall V.C." There was a march past and Lieutenant Governor H.P. Mackeen took the salute. A religious service followed in the United Baptist Church. The last public recognition at Hantsport was held on the last Sunday of 1985, marking the 128th Anniversary of William Hall's act of courage. The members of Hantsport Lucknow Branch each year on Remembrance Day place a wreath on Hall's cenotaph site.

William Hall was also remembered when in 1975 the new gymnasium at Canadian Forces Base Cornwallis was named the William E. [sic] Hall Gymnasium (Canadian naval authorities believed that Hall's middle name was Edward for an unknown reason). On 31 August 1977 a memorial parade and inter-denominational memorial church service was held in Halifax. It involved both the William Hall Legion Branch and the Lucknow Legion Branch. A wreath laying service was held at the cenotaph on the Grand Parade. Hall's medals were on display at the Cenotaph and attended

by Guard of Honour. After the parade at a luncheon Admiral Hugh Pullen provided a brief history of the Victoria Cross and other medals of Hall. Admiral Pullen had been involved in having the Victoria Cross returned to Nova Scotia.

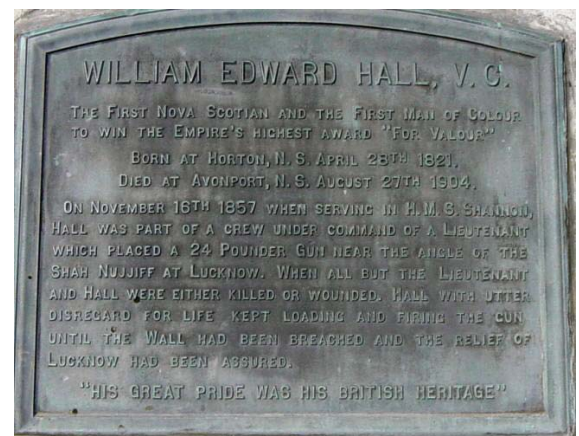
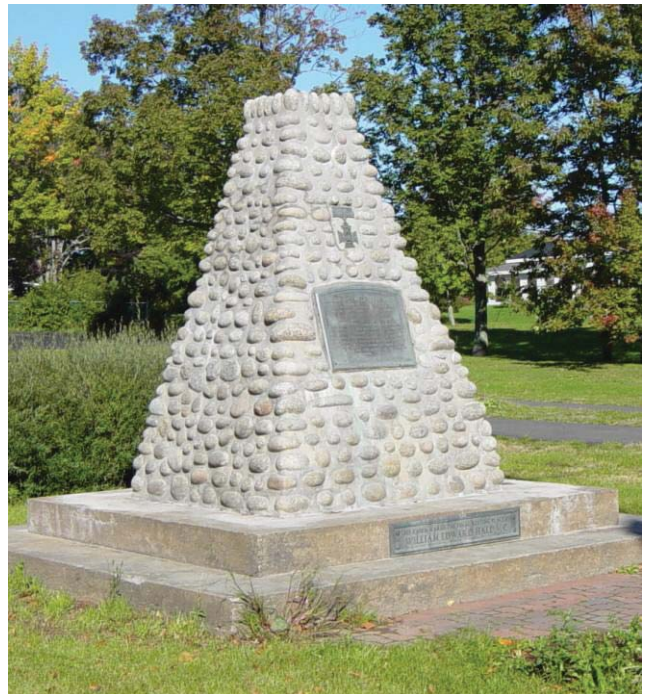
Other ways that Hall has been commemorated are the DaCosta-Hall Educational Programme for black students in Montreal; the William Hall Block in Halifax's Windsor Park, a naval establishment; a plaque on the Cornwallis Street United Baptist Church in Halifax; and the Hantsport Sea Cadet Corps is named after him. When in past years the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo staged the highly popular naval gun run, it was called the William Hall Gun Run and the trophy awarded to winning teams the William Hall VC Trophy.

William Hall's Victoria Cross Comes Home

Before his burial Hall's medals were removed from his suit. In November 1904, Henry Chipman had printed a letter in the Halifax *Herald* on the need to sell Hall's V.C. and other medals as a means of supporting Hall's sisters and a niece. At Hall's death a widowed sister, Mrs. Rachel Hall Robinson who was partly blind, and another sister, Mary, bedridden from rheumatism were left with a debt of \$500 on their home. Mary died shortly after her brother. Mrs. Robinson placed the V.C. and medals in Dr. Henry Chipman's hands to be sold. In his letter to the editor of the Halifax *Herald*, Chipman also described the medals as follows:

The V.C. is dated 16 Nov. 1857: one medal is inscribed Crimea, dated 1854 and has a clasp and two bars with the inscriptions: "Inkerman," "Sebastopol; another medal Crimea, dated 1854; a third, India 1857-1858, and around the circumstance William Hall, leading seaman, Shannon, with clasp and two bars engraved "Lucknow," "Relief of Lucknow".

Chipman also wrote Governor General Lord Minto, enclosing a sketch of Hall's life, asking for advice on their sale. Minto's secretary replied that the decorations should be purchased by the Nova Scotia Historical Society, failing that the best person to be consulted would be Lord Cheymore in London. The medals were sold and in 1925 they turned up in the Wardroom of the Royal Naval Barracks, Portsmouth, England. The medals were lent for display in the Atlantic Provinces Pavilion at Expo 67 in Montreal. The Nova Scotia government was interested in purchasing Hall's Victoria Cross. After learning that John Sullivan's Victoria Cross, who had served in the Royal Navy, was available for purchase, the government obtained this medal. In December 1967, it presented Sullivan's Victoria Cross to the Wardroom of the Royal Naval Barracks in exchange for Hall's cross. Today Hall's Victoria Cross and his other medals are held at the Nova Scotia Museum in Halifax.



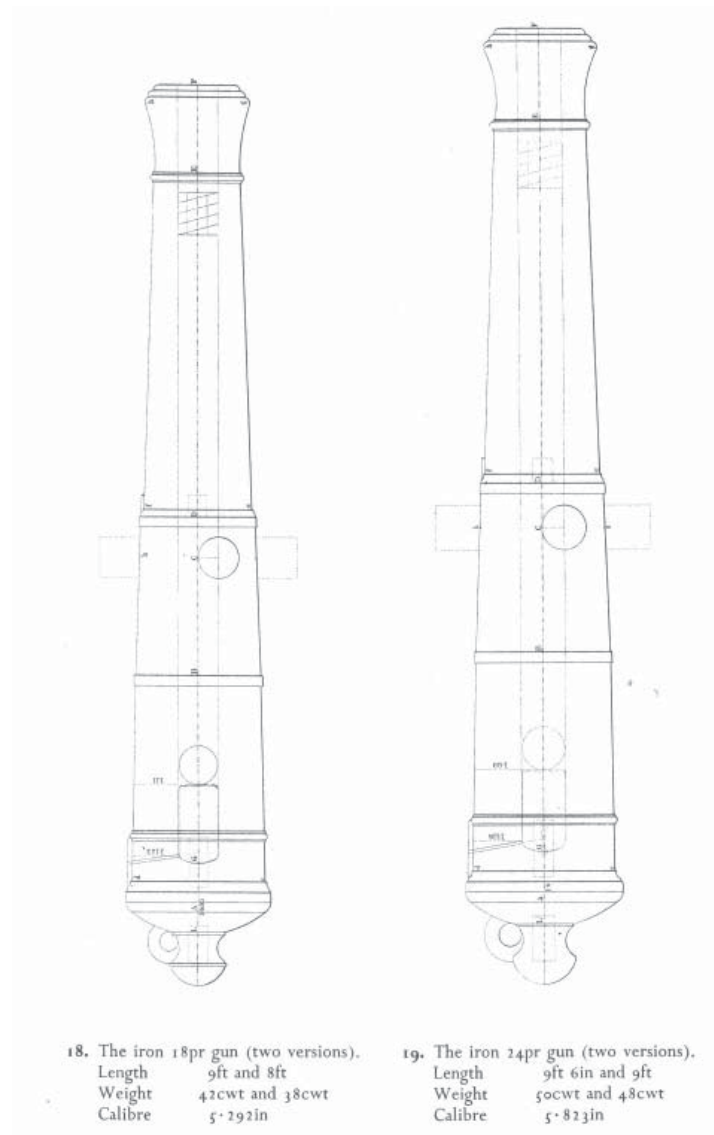
Naval Brigade Dress

Headgear for ordinary seamen was usually sennet (straw) hats with a neck-cloth. Officers wore sun helmets with a white cover and neck-cloth. Sailors wore short blue jackets with white trousers. Officers wore single-breasted frock coats, gilt buttons and gold lace on sleeves and white trousers.

24-Pounder Guns

The 24-pounder was in continuous service from 1700 to 1860. There were several versions. Those of the Naval Brigade weighed 50 hundredweight (5600 pounds). The carriages for it had double bracket trails and were of simple and strong construction, and were mounted on a pair of 5 foot wheels. The gun limber consisted of a pair of wheels and an axle tree. For hauling the guns the Naval Brigade mostly employed bullocks though it seems that horses were used if they were available.

24-pounders were especially valued as the most effective means of breaching the walls of fortresses. Although most of their war service was with the British Army siege trains, one of their distinguished exploits, however, occurred in their use by the Naval Brigade during the Indian Mutiny, which was equipped with six of them, especially because the Army artillery had nothing larger than 18-pounders.



Comparison of the 24-pounder and 18-pounder

William Hall's Medals for the Crimea War and the Indian Mutiny. For Hall's V.C., see page 2



The Turkish Crimea Medal is a military decoration issued by Sultan Abdulmecid I of the Ottoman Empire to British, French or Sardinian personnel involved in the Crimean War. The obverse shows the Ottoman Sultan's tughra with the Muslim calendar year of 1271. The reverse depicts a cannon with four flags to its rear. The ribbon was crimson with green edges



The Crimea Medal is notable for ornate clasps, being in the form of an oak leaf with an acorn at each extremity, a style never used again on a British medal. The suspension is an ornate floriated swivelling suspender, again unique to the Crimea Medal. Five bars were authorized. The maximum awarded to one man was four. William Hall's medal has two—Sébastopol and Lucknow



Indian Mutiny Medal with clasps for Relief of Lucknow (November 1857) and Lucknow (November 1857-March 1858)
The obverse depicts Queen Victoria with the inscription "Victoria Regina". The reverse shows Britannia with a wreath in her out stretched hand while defending herself with a Union Flag covered shield on her left hand. Behind there is a lion underneath the word India

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THE WILLIAM HALL, V.C. EXHIBITS AT THE BLACK CULTURAL CENTRE



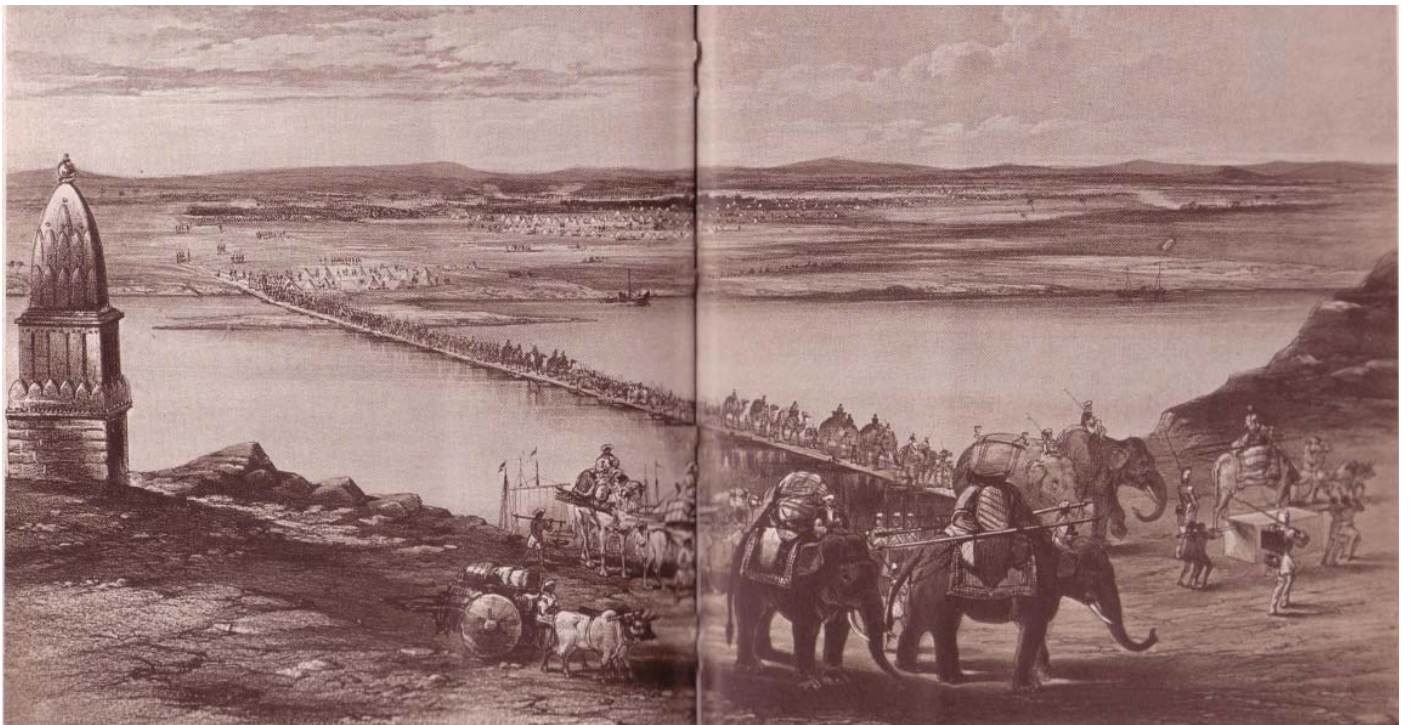


The bust of William Hall is by John Martin. All the medals displayed are replicas. Hall's medals are held by the Nova Scotia Museum





A View of the Shah Najaf Mosque, c. end of 19th century or later



A View of the troops, sick and wounded, women and children, and camp followers arriving at Cawnpore after the withdrawal from Lucknow in November 1857



This stamp of "Billy" Bishop, V.C. is the only Canadian stamp found commemorating a Canadian Victoria Cross winner.



For the centenary of the Indian Mutiny the Government of India issued a series of stamps under the title of the First War of Independence, two of which are shown here. Indian nationalists have long argued that sepoy revolt was at least in part motivated by Indian nationalism. Their case is made difficult, however, because the mutiny of the sepoys was confined mostly to Bengal Army who received little support outside of the old kingdom of Oudh.

