

# GUNNER GEORGE PORTER, R.M.A.: SLEDDING TOWARD DESTINY

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Gunner George Porter's life forever changed when he embarked on H.M.S. *Alert* on April 16, 1875, soon to be destined for the Frozen Zone. By the last days of May, the *Alert*, accompanied by H.M.S. *Discovery*, left familiar shores under the command of Captain George S. Nares (*Alert*). The expedition explored northwest Greenland and northern Ellesmere Island in the high Arctic (Figure 1), and was equipped for a wide range of scientific studies.

without leave to "Losing Rammer overboard through carelessness when at Gun drill" - the latter cost him 10s 5d, the price of a rammer!



Figure 2: Arctic Medal 1875-76 to Gunner George Porter, R.M.A., H.M.S. *Alert* (courtesy DNW).

George Porter was one of only seven R.M.A. men on this historic voyage, and in fact, he was one of a mere 15 R.M.A. men entitled to either Arctic Medal for all the 19th century British Arctic expeditions (Figure 2). They were trained to handle canisters of gunpowder and blast frozen obstructions, along with crafting ice docks for the ships' winter quarters - berths for the wooden walls of England. Porter was also a member of a giant ice saw crew, which laboriously moved jigsaw pieces around ice floe puzzles (Figure 3).

The artillerymen of a quarter-century before searched in vain for Sir John Franklin's lost expedition, and a rare glimpse into their training and equipment found its way onto the pages of *The Illustrated London News* in 1852:

Mr. Hay, lecturer on chemistry at Portsmouth Dockyard, has instructed, at Woolwich, the four bombardiers of the Royal Marine Artillery attached to the Expedition [under Sir Edward Belcher, CB, RN], in the mode of adjusting the plates, covering and attaching the copper wires, and manipulating the sulphuric acid used in galvanic batteries; it being intended to take to the Arctic Regions a number of tubes charged with 20 lb. of gunpowder each, to be used in bursting the ice, in order to force a passage up Wellington Channel with the steamers of the Expedition.



Figure 1: Ellesmere Island (high Arctic).

Nine years previous, 18-year-old Porter joined the Royal Marine Artillery at Birmingham, fresh from civilian life as a varnisher. Hailing from Coleshill, Warwick, the blue-eyed lad stayed clear of trouble for the first few years and earned his first Good Conduct Badge in October 1869. But between December 1869 and May 1874, he was eight times entered in the Defaulters' Book, having his Badge deprived, and then restored. Porter's youthful exuberance led him astray and his offences varied from being absent



*Figure 3: Cutting out of winter quarters with the ice saw (The Illustrated London News, May 29, 1875).*

The cases will be discharged from a galvanic battery, the parties operating being at a safe distance on board the vessels, as long coils of wire will be supplied, covered with *gutta percha* [a natural form of rubber]. Mr. Hay, after instructing the Bombardiers, gave lectures on the galvanic battery, and the uses to which it may be applied, in the presence of the whole of the officers of the Expedition.

Another commonality Porter and his fellow marines shared with their Franklin Search brothers was duty as servants to naval officers on the *Alert* and *Discovery* (Porter's master being Lieutenant Pelham Aldrich). The marine caused his naval superior much amusement, as Aldrich wrote in his journal on August 8:

My Servant "Porter" is a character. He has just been telling me of a dinner he has had of the heart of a Walrus, which he captured this morning. I expressed a hope he would not be ill after it . . . "That is if it is good to eat" says he, alluding to a remark he had made about its being better than some sheep's liver we had the other morning! . . . and then he finished up with "I eat a tidy lot of it Sir" . . . "this 'Eart was ate too Sir". . . I am to have some this morning though somewhat doubtful in the subject it is nevertheless a good thing to find out what we can actually devour with infinity in case of future requirements . . .

Aldrich also knew there were difficult times ahead on the sledding trails, as did Captain Nares, who sledged during the Franklin Search: snowblindness from the glare of the sun reflecting off the ice and snow, frostbite blistering the skin, extreme thirst caused by inhaling cold, dry air and exhaling moisture.

By August 25, the ships reached Discovery Harbor, on the northern side of Lady Franklin Bay, Ellesmere Island, the site chosen for *Discovery's* winter quarters. The *Alert* continued up Robeson Channel, reaching Floeberg Beach at 82° 82' N - the highest latitude reached by any ship up to that time--and established winter quarters on September 1. Autumn sled parties established depots northward at Cape Joseph Henry, for extended journeys the following spring.

The New Year started off right for Porter, as he added a second Good Conduct Badge to his service record on January 1, 1876, but it was hardly a portent of things to come for the artilleryman.

In the spring, three major sledding parties (two from *Alert* and one from *Discovery*) set out to explore toward the North Pole and along the north coasts of Ellesmere Island and Greenland. During the 1850s, one Arctic



**Figure 4: The Northern Sled Party (The Illustrated London News, Nov. 4, 1876).**

officer wrote that sledge traveling was far more dreadful than going into battle, declaring that he had never seen such labor, and such misery after. No amount of money is an equivalent . . . Men require much more heart and stamina to undertake an extended traveling party than to go into action. The travelers have their enemy chilling them to the very heart, and paralyzing their very limbs; the others the very contrary.

On April 3, Lieutenant Aldrich's Western Sled Party and Commander Albert H. Markham's Northern Sled Party (Figure 4) left the ship, along with supporting sleds. Markham's party was composed of H.M. Sleds *Marco Polo* (with a boat) and *Victoria* (with a boat). The object of his journey was to attain the highest northern latitude possible, and to determine to possibility of a more fully equipped party reaching the North Pole.

The scene was poignantly described by Markham:

At eleven o'clock, everything being in readiness for a start, all hands assembled on the floe, and prayers were read by [Reverend] Pullen. The hymn, "[Praise] God, from whom all blessings flow," was then sung, after which the order was given to "fall in," and amidst the hearty cheers of those few who were left behind, the sledging parties moved off. The captain and officers accompanied us for a short distance, when, wishing us God-speed, they turned to go back. This was a signal for three cheers from the travellers, after which they

settled down to their work, and the march was steadily commenced.

After leaving the *Alert*, Markham described the traveling as "by no means good, snow deep, and the sledges dragging very heavily." The temperature was 33° below zero, "rendering the task of writing up our journals when we halted extremely unpleasant and painful." The second day, the temperature plummeted to 45° below zero.

April 10 - After marching nine to ten hours every day, Markham wrote, "We experienced heavy work in cutting a road [with pick axe and shovel] through the line of shore hummocks that gird the coast, and did not succeed in reaching the depot [at Cape Joseph Henry] until eleven o'clock." Here the Northern Sled Party re-provisioned for 63 days. The next morning was thick and foggy, to which was added a heavy snowfall. The supporting sledges returned to the ship, and the two extended parties pressed onward: the Northern Sled Party leaving terra firma and pushing straight out onto the rugged polar pack, while the Western Sled Party continued exploration of Ellesmere's coast to the westward. Markham's sleds *Marco Polo*, *Victoria* and *Support* weighed a total of 6,079 lbs. - 15 men were dragging a staggering 405 lbs. per man - which offers some appreciation of the effort it took to get through the snow and over hummocks of ice as high as 30 feet or more.

By April 14, one of the men complained of “pain in his ankle and knee, both of which exhibited slight symptoms of puffiness”. Two days later, he was unable to walk and was obliged to be put on a sled, adding to the burden of his mates. The temperature was 30° below zero, and “all unanimously came to the conclusion that it was the most wretched and miserable Easter Sunday that any one of us has ever passed.” Doubtless this was especially true for George Porter, who began complaining of stiff knees, which were treated by rubbing them with turpentine liniment.

The next day,

“George Porter (Gunner, R.M.A.), one of the “Victoria’s” crew, was rendered *hors de combat*, his knees being very much swelled, and is suffering a good deal of pain.” Unable to walk any further, after lunch, Porter is carried on the sledge. The following morning,

The travelling has been rough and heavy. The “Victoria” capsized, but was quickly righted without damage to either sledge or boat, and without even giving the invalid, who was securely wrapped up inside the boat, a shaking.”

April 19 - Markham decided to abandon the 20-foot iceboat, as the smaller boat will suffice, if needed, for ferrying men and equipment from one floe to another. The men also appear much distressed at the conclusion of a day’s work. Yesterday, after toiling for 10 marching hours, we only advanced 1 mile, and this with no road-making. Lightening our load by 800 lbs. will enable me to husband their strength a little.”

It is painful to witness the efforts of the poor fellows, whilst they are dragging, endeavouring to shield their faces from the cold, all scarified and scabby, lips sore and tips of the fingers senseless from frost-bite - yet they are all cheerful and happy enough.

Beyond, “The hummocks appeared interminable.”...a labyrinth of piled-up masses of ice. The sea of hummocks included one that measured, from base to summit, just over 43 feet in height.

By the end of the month, more men were sick and Markham lamented, “Our invalids exhibit no signs of improvement . . . Men thoroughly fatigued. They would frequently drop off to sleep when halted only for a few minutes.” “Heavy hummocks, deep snow, and thick weather render our progress slow.” The *Victoria*, with her boat and Porter inside, capsized again, but fortunately he is uninjured from the mishap.

The first day of May brought a grim realization: “Porter’s

symptoms appear to be scorbutic, his teeth are loose and gums sore, and his legs covered with a rash and discoloured in patches about the knee.” The next day, Markham wrote, “The invalids are not improving, and we are inclined to believe that they are all attacked with scurvy . . . Porter complains of great weakness, giddiness, and sickness of the stomach . . . Our strength is rapidly decreasing.”

Out of 15 men, a third of Markham’s force were invalids, and more of the men began complaining of stiffness and pain in their legs - scurvy was slowly destroying the Northern Sledge Party.

The interiors of our tents of an evening have more the appearance of hospitals than the habitations of strong workingmen. In addition to the “cripples”, four men belonging to the “Marco Polo” are suffering from snow blindness.

Amazingly, in spite of the sled party’s pitiful condition, scientific work was carried out on May 11. After burrowing 64 inches through the ice for three hours, a hundred fathom line is cast down into the water, to a depth of 72 fathoms. A specimen of bottom sediment is collected and carefully preserved in a bottle for conveyance to the *Alert*.

At noon on May 12,

we obtained a good altitude, and proclaimed our latitude to be 83° 20’ 26” N., exactly 399 1/2 miles from the North Pole. On this being duly announced three cheers were given with one more for Captain Nares, then the whole party, in the exuberance of their spirits at having reached their turning point, sang the “Union Jack of Old England,” the “Grand Palæocrystic Sledging Chorus” winding up like loyal subjects with “God Save the Queen.” . . . A magnum of whisky that had been sent by the Dean of Dundee for the express purpose of being consumed in the highest northern latitude, was produced, and a glass of grog served out to all.

“All seemed happy, cheerful, and contented, “but the men were now in a race for their lives. Cracks appeared in the ice, floes began to shift and the traveling was very rough. “All of the party are more or less suffering from stiffness and aching bones.”

One day toward the end of the month, the party was held captive 10 hours by bad weather:

To pack the sledges and place the invalids on them

without their being almost buried in the blinding snowdrift was quite out of the question, and even if there was a chance of advancing it was impossible to see a sledge's length ahead. This delay causes us great anxiety, as every day, every hour, is of importance to us, as we know not when we may, one and all, be attacked and rendered useless for further work.

The other boat was abandoned, and along with it, the greater part of the ammunition, several spirit cans and 170 lbs. of pemmican, in an effort to move faster, but "we had 1,800 lbs. on the large sled, whilst the two others were loaded to about 800 lbs. each." The party encountered patches of dangerous young ice, only three to four inches thick, along with strong gales, thick fog, falling snow and dense drifts.

By the second day of June,

Five men are carried on the sledges, and four can just manage to crawl after. Our routine is first to advance the heavy sledge, which is dragged by the whole available party, namely eight; then return and bring up the other two sledges, single banked, four dragging each.

The invalids steadily worsened and Porter could eat scarcely anything, and appears to be getting weaker, though up to the present time he has been able to help himself better than the others who have to be carried, and his pulse is still strong; today [June 5] he complains of not being able to lie on his left side, as it affects the action of the heart.

Two days later,

All hands appear very stiff and in pain . . . We are pulling 220 lbs. per man, and, as the snow is very deep, we find it hard work. Porter is very low, and is undoubtedly in a very precarious state, having been attacked last night by several very violent fits of coughing and retching, which strained him severely.

Markham and his men were quickly running out of time. At the rate they were traveling, it would take another three weeks to reach the *Alert*---only thirty miles distant. Our only chance of saving life is by receiving succour as soon as possible." Markham had a long consultation with Lieutenant Alfred Parr and he volunteered to make the attempt to bring help. Parr left on the morning of the seventh, "and anxiously was his retreating form watched until it was gradually lost to sight amidst the interminable hummocks.

June 8, 1876:

Poor Porter is no more! After halting last night he was placed as usual in his tent, where I visited him before

supper. He said, in answer to my inquiry, that he was easy and comfortable, and appeared to be more cheerful and talkative. Before I had quite finished my supper, I was called in haste to his tent, where I found him suffering from a spasmodic attack of some nature, and quite unconscious: this was about 8 o'clock (A.M.).

He was revived by having his nostrils bathed with spirit of ammonia, and then a little rum, slightly diluted with water, was given him, when he regained consciousness. His breathing was short and torturous; he complained very much of difficulty in breathing, and appeared to be sinking fast. Two hours after he had a similar attack and was again brought round by the same means; but he seemed to be much exhausted, although between the two attacks he had enjoyed a short doze.

After this he sank rapidly, and expired, with my finger on his pulse, at 10 minutes past 12 (noon). He was sensible to within a few minutes of his death, and his end was calm and quiet. This is a sad calamity, although we were not totally unprepared for it, and I fear the depressing morale effect that this lamentable event will have on those who are very sick, and who consider themselves to be in nearly as precarious a condition.

The body was removed from the tent, and placed on an empty sledge. Called the cooks at 4.30 P.M., and, having read prayers in both tents, selected a spot for the grave in a deep snow-drift, not many yards from the camp. Here the grave was prepared by digging down through six feet of hard frozen snow until the surface of the floe was reached, and then two feet further down into the solid ice [82° 41'N]. The corpse, which had swelled up considerably and was terribly disfigured after dissolution took place, was sewn up in a sleeping bag, and laid on a sledge.

With the ensign half-mast, and the Union Jack as a pall, the funeral procession, attended by all but the four very bad cases, started at 9, and the burial-service being read, the remains were consigned to their last icy resting-place in this world (Figure 5). Improvising a rude cross, formed with a boat's oar and a spare sledge-batten, it was placed at the head of the grave, with the following inscription: "Beneath this cross lie buried the remains of Geo. Porter, R.M.A., who died on June 8th, 1876. Thy will be done."

Of all the melancholy and mournful duties I have ever been called to perform, this has been the saddest. A death in a small party like ours, and under the present circumstances, is a most distressing event, and is keenly felt by all. During the service all were more or less affected, and many to tears.

The next day brought an unusual sight - a rainbow. The party started at 9 p.m. with all eyes eagerly directed to



**Figure 5: George Porter's funeral on the ice, 82° 41' N (The Illustrated London News, Nov. 11, 1876).**

the southward, the quarter from which were anxiously expecting succour. We had advanced the heavy sledge one stage, and had just returned to drag up the two smaller ones, when something moving between the hummocks was espied, which from its rapid motion was soon made out to be the dog-sledge. Hoisted colours. The men appeared quite carried away by their feelings, and it was with difficulty they could muster up a cheer as [Lieutenant] May and [Surgeon] Moss arrived and shook us heartily by the hands.

The 15 men in the Northern Sled Party were absent from the ship for 72 days, with only Markham and three others were capable of walking, the rest had to be carried by sledge back to the *Alert*. Wrote Surgeon Moss, "It was difficult to recognize any of the men, their faces were so swollen and peeled, and their voices so changed."

Aldrich's Western Sled Party and sleds from the *Discovery* faced similar agonies. During the expedition four men lost their lives to disease and the elements, and scurvy was eating away at many of their shipmates. Though he was expected to stay in the Arctic until 1877, Captain Nares realized his people could not survive another winter, so they prepared to head for home - and left behind four souls as mute testimony to man's failed effort to rule this quadrant of the globe.

One of those remaining was dog driver and interpreter Niels Christian Petersen, whose punch lettered metal grave marker included George Porter's memorial (Figure 6):

George Porter  
Gunner RMA  
Aged 27  
Of HM Sledge Victoria  
Who Laid Down His Life in the Service of His Country  
8 June 1876  
And was Buried on the Floe in Latitude 82.41  
Thou Shall wash me and I shall be Whiter than Snow.

Another tangible memorial to the artilleryman's service in the white desert was created when the name Porter Bay was applied to an arm of the sea on Ellesmere's northern coast.

### **Creation of the Arctic Medal 1875-76**

*Alert* and *Discovery* reached Portsmouth on November 2, 1876, and amid all the public celebration, official thoughts soon turned to medallic matters. An opportunity now presents itself for the Author to clarify and supplement a 1994 article presented in the *OMRS Journal* that in part dealt with the creation of the Arctic Medal 1875-76.



**Figure 6: Dog driver and interpreter Niels C. Petersen's headstone with Porter's at the bottom (courtesy Scott Polar Research Institute).**

Buried among copious notes related to polar expeditions in Admiralty records (ADM 12/986 5775) is the following notation written on November 14, 1875: "Medal for Arctic Service - Minute of 1st Lord. Acquaint Master of the Mint that the Queen desires a Medal should be given - Deputy Master of the Mint [Hon. C.W. Fremantle] to communicate with their Lordships."

Well known medalist Charles Leonard Wyon was charged with the reverse design of this, the second Arctic Medal issued by the British government in the 19th century. To find his subject, Wyon either turned to photographs taken during the expedition or the same were suggested to him. These were shot by Engineer George White (*Alert*) and Assistant Paymaster Thomas Mitchell (*Discovery*), and afterward the London Stereographic Company issued a series of 100 images.

On November 25, Wyon wrote to Fremantle: "I send a sketch for the Arctic medal. Will you be so kind as to return it to me if it is approved? I must also beg for the photograph again, that I may make the model as exact as possible." (Mint 16/76) This must be a very early and rare example of a medal's design being credited, in part, to a machine!

Wyon's decision to represent the Arctic through the camera's eye may not have been entirely a personal choice. With bureaucratic wheels set in motion, there may have been a time factor at work. In fact, the earliest noted delivery of an Arctic Medal was April 20, 1877---fewer than six months after the Mint was first made aware of the Queen's desire for a medal.

The first Arctic Medal was octagonal, but the second issue reverted to the traditional circular shape. This gives the feel of a telescopic view of *Alert* in the vast polar landscape, punctuated by broken ice, with heavy clouds above. Notably, the scene is *devoid* of human life, further adding to the reality of isolation and starkness in an ocean of chaotic ice and snow.

There were only 167 medals known to have been issued: 155 original issues, plus 12 duplicates. Of that total, 89 are extant (to include one original issue and duplicate to the same recipient)---a 53% survival rate thus far.

Curiously, according to collector David J. Scheeres' observations over the years, there were at least *four* differing reverse dies, with changes relating to the sizes and positioning of the clouds. It has been *suggested* by former Master of the Royal Mint Joe Cussen that the changes centered around the milled rim (which provides a nautical accent reminiscent of a roped border effect).

The Mint may have encountered a lot of problems with the dies because the milling caused the edge to keep breaking. This feature was only applied to one other medal, the short-lived Naval Engineers' Good Conduct Medal (1842-46) and was never used again.

A 1996 letter to the Author from Scheeres provides additional information from the Curator of the Royal Mint:

The Curator of the mint informed me that they also have examples in their collection which have correct naming in a variety of styles which have both beaded [*ie:* milled] and unbeaded edges, but of greater interest to you is the fact that there are various dies variations, one of which has the standard reverse, but without clouds (*ie:* a clear sky and horizon). They also have a die variation in

which the engraver's initials are missing from the nape of the Queen's neck.

Turning to naming, the 1988 and 2006 editions of *British Battles & Medals* are somewhat vague on this point, so clarification here is well placed. The medals were engraved medium serifed capitals - identical to the Ashantee 1873-74 to the Navy - and blacked-in (though over time this may have come away). I have inspected about a dozen second Arctic medals through the years and this naming style is consistent for all three ships (*Alert*, *Discovery* and the steam yacht *Pandora*). One falsely engraved example to a genuine recipient (T.H. Simpson, AB, H.M.S. *Alert*) features taller and thinner letters that are not blacked-in; it also lacks the milled rim.

In the end, one wonders what Engineer George White felt when he saw his work translated from a glass negative to silver relief? Indeed, how did Mary Ann Porter feel in those dwindling days of September 1877, when she gazed upon the engraved edge of her son's only medallic entitlement?

### Royal Marine Artillery Arctic Medal 1818-1855 Roll

1) BAINBIRDGE, Thomas - Bombardier 3rd Class/*Resolute* (1852-54)

Sent to *Tribune* April 20, 1857. *Resolute*'s Muster List shows the above rank, but noted as Corporal on the Medal Roll (without noting R.M. or R.M.A.), so was evidently promoted upon his return home.

2) DAVIES, John - Bombardier/*Resolute* (1850-51)

Sent to Gosport Headquarters June 3, 1857. Known (The Royal Marines Museum).

Medal named: **SERGEANT J. DAVIS, RM, HMS RESOLUTE**. It is known that Davies was later promoted to sergeant, and since there are no other marine Arctic recipients with the first initial 'J' and the surname Davis/Davies, the museum's medal must have been issued to this man. He was also awarded the Crimea Medal with clasp **SEBASTOPOL**, Baltic Medal and Turkish Crimea Medal.

3) EDEY, George - Bombardier/*Assistance* (1852-54)

Sent to Gosport Headquarters June 5, 1857.

Bombardier to October 21, 1852, then demoted Gunner to June 30, 1853. Later he was 'Specially reinstated on the recommendation of Lieut Osborn for subsequent good conduct and exertions in Travelling operations'.

4) ELLIOTT, John - Bombardier 1st Class/*Assistance* (1850-51)

Sent June 5, 1857. As 'Elliot' on Medal Roll.

5) HENSON, Philip - Bombardier/*North Star* (1852-54)

Sent to Gosport Headquarters June 3, 1857. Known (private collection).

Bombardier 3rd Class to October 11, 1852, then Bombardier (unclassified). Engraved in small sans serif capitals: **P. BENSON R.M.A. H.M.S. NORTH STAR**. Note the differing first letter of the surname, which appears as 'Henson' on the Muster List and Medal Roll.

6) MORGAN, Thomas - Corporal 3rd Class/*Assistance* (1850-51)

Sent to Gosport Headquarters June 3, 1857.

Appointed for duty on *Intrepid* (tender to *Assistance*).

7) MUNDEN, Gwilym T. - Bombardier (unclassified)/*Assistance* (1852-54)

Sent May 12, 1857.

Discharged October 17, 1854, as Bombardier, but shown as Corporal, R.M.A. on the Arctic Roll. Interestingly, Corporal 1st Class Nicholas Middleton, R.M., is listed directly after Munden on the Medal Roll, but he is incorrectly shown as Corporal R.M.A. It would appear to have been a mix-up while compiling the Roll.

8) ROSS, David - Bombardier/*Resolute* (1852-54)

Sent to Gosport Headquarters June 3, 1857.

*Resolute*'s Muster List shows he was discharged October 17, 1854, as Bombardier, but he is incorrectly shown as Corporal, R.M., on the Medal Roll.

Note: There is a Henry Briant, Musician, on the Muster Lists for the *Assistance* and *Resolute* (1852-54). Most interestingly, Briant appears on the Muster of the *Assistance* "for service of galvanic apparatus". As the bombardiers trained on galvanic batteries in relation to tubes of gunpowder, it is possible Briant was directly connected with ice blasting. He may have also been involved in the operation of the electric telegraph set up by Lieutenant R.V. Hamilton (*Resolute*), which ran between the *Resolute* and *Intrepid*. Briant's medal is listed under the *Resolute* and was sent December 27, 1858.

### Royal Marine Artillery Arctic Medal 1875-76 Roll

1) HILL, Elias - Gunner/*Alert*

Sent May 18, 1877. Known.

Group with Ashabtee Medal 1873-74/no clasp (**GUNNER, R.M.A./DRUID**) and small hallmarked gold sewing medal **PRESENTED TO MR. E. HILL BY THE LADIES OF THE RED CROSS SEWING CLASS THE PARISH CHURCH, LUTON, 1914-19**. Hayward's *Gazette*, June 1976; *Glendining's*, July 1978 (lot 137).

2) OAKLEY, Thomas - Gunner/*Alert*

Sent May 24, 1877. Known (Royal Naval Museum).

Shown as 'Oakeley' in both of Poulson's books, but as 'Oakley' on medal, Medal Roll, official despatches, and in Nares' and Markham's books. Also, Poulson and Myres lists him as a bombardier, as does the Medal Roll, but GUNR. is engraved on the medal (according to information provided by the Royal

Naval Museum). It is possible Oakley was promoted during the expedition or after his return home.

3) PORTER, George - Gunner/*Alert*

Sent to mother Mary Ann, Sept. 24, 1877. Known.

Engraved: **G. PORTER. GNR. R.M.A. H.M.S. "ALERT"**. Hayward's *Gazette*, No. 7, June 1876; Midland Medals, December 1876; March Medals, November 1886; Dr. H.J.G. Dartnall Collection; Glenn M. Stein Collection; DNW, June 25-26, 2008.

Of the four casualties during the Arctic 1875-76 Expedition (Hand, Paul, Petersen and Porter), only the last two are believed to be privately held. Hand was in the Eaton Collection in 1880, at Glendining's, July 18, 1930, and has been at the National Maritime Museum since at least 1950; Paul is in The British Museum's Department of Coins and Medals, London.

4) CROPP, John - Gunner & Bombardier/*Discovery*

Sent May 19, 1877. Known (The Royal Marines Museum).

Cropp was advanced from Gunner to Bombardier on March 21, 1876. In the Payne Collection (1918) and Bombardier noted on edge; Glendining's, July 31, 1918, with South Africa Medal 1877-79 [medal and clasp **1879** verified in Douglas-Morris' book; **BOMBARDIER, R.M.A./BOADICEA**]. The Arctic Medal is in The Royal Marines Museum, but in a 1995 letter from this institution to the Author, there is no reference to it being paired with the South Africa Medal; though Poulson and Myres indicates the Arctic Medal is known to exist and notes the South Africa Medal entitlement, it does not state the medals extant as a pair.

5) DOBING, Wilson - Gunner/*Alert*

Sent May 18, 1877 (*duplicate* sent March 5, 1883). Known. Hamilton, Autumn 1977; Sotheby, September 27, 1978 (**GNR. W. DOBING, R.M.A., H.M.S. "DISCOVERY" 1875-76**) - *possibly* the duplicate, as this is the only instance the author knows of where the dates are included in the naming; Spink, March 1986. Given the time period of the duplicate issue, it likely was engraved in the sloping serifed capitals found on the 1882 issue of the Egypt Medal.

6) RAYNER, Elijah - Gunner/*Discovery & Alert*

Sent May 18, 1877. Known (The Royal Marines Museum). Rayner was lent from *Discovery to Alert*, Aug. 26, 1875-June 1, 1876. Glendining's, May 22, 1908; July 27, 1928, and June 12, 1929.

7) WELLINGTON, William Charles - Sergeant/*Discovery*

Sent May 17, 1877. Known. Sold as part of a "group" by Toad Hall in September 1990: Arctic Medal 1875-76, 1914-1915 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal and Naval Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (Edward II); Sotheby's, July 26, 1996 (illustrated). Afterward, it was discovered that the lot was really a father and son group. The son's medals were split from the Arctic Medal and sold circa summer 2005. The Arctic Medal was sold at Morton and Eden, December 15, 2006 (illustrated). Wellington received the Egypt Medal 1882 with no clasp. Rank unknown/*Monarch* and Khedive's Star, 1882, which are in the possession of the family.

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