

New Zealand veteran of the first Maori war, who belaboured him over the head with the flat of his sword for firing on and killing presumed non-combatants and apparently wounded; but they were in reality armed, and had done considerable execution among the British from the rear. Nemesis, however, in the shape of a shot from one of these "wounded" almost immediately afterwards overtook the too humane captain. After the battle, in which the British lost 2,400 men, the colonel, on receiving the Khalsa Standard, offered to make Hilditch a sergeant, but was promptly told by him that so long as he could keep stripes off his back he didn't want any on his arm. Ultimately, however, he was prevailed upon or saw fit to accept the promotion he so well merited, and also had the proud satisfaction of knowing that the captured colours had been placed by the Marquis of Anglesea (he who lost an arm at Waterloo) in the Lichfield Cathedral, there materially to testify then, now, and in the future to British prowess in the field. Of the others mentioned, Sir Robert Dick was killed at the head of the 80th while leading a charge in the battle, Ensign de Quincey survived the campaign, and also served through the New Zealand Wars, and after a lapse of forty-two years met Colour-Sergeant Hilditch in Auckland. On returning home from India ten years after he wrote to his old colonel, who, as a lieutenant in the 80th, had been in Auckland in 1849, and whose company in that year had built the barracks at Fort Britomart, and from him received the following answer:—

11, St. James's Terrace,
Regent Park, 17th October, 1856.

To Sergeant Hilditch,

Your letter I received yesterday, and after many enquiries this morning I at length found out the proper person to apply to for information regarding the Royal Warrant granting the medal for distinguished conduct in the field. Mr Drake, of the Commander-in-Chief's Office, Horseguards, entrusted with the details of the distribution of these honours, informs me that they are not to be bestowed retrospective of the date of the Warrant. I had a long conversation

with him on the subject of your gallant conduct at the Battle of Sobraon, and of your capture of one of the Sikh Standards, subsequently placed by the late Marquis of Anglesea in Lichfield Cathedral.

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I have for a considerable time past refrained from making any application to the authorities at the Horseguards in favour of those who formerly served under me with honoured credit. Failure has too frequently followed my endeavouring, to cause me to wish to repeat the experiment, but in your case I felt that I had no other alternative, and I cannot but regret that your services will not (by the provision of the warrant) entitle you to similar distinction with those who have claims for more recent exploits. The Waterloo Medal, you will recollect, was given in a manner quite similar, passing over the whole of the army who had fought the Battles of the Peninsular in favour of the youngest child.

Believe me,

Your well wisher and friend,

T. BUNBURY,

late Lieut.-Colonel of the 80th Regiment.

The colonel's letter, as is apparent, records the failure of the application, but eventually Sergeant Hilditch's case appeared strong enough to justify the authorities in awarding him the medal "for conspicuous gallantry," which, besides being a higher distinction, carries with it an annuity of £15, and is second only to the Victoria Cross, for which, by the way, he was recommended, and which he would have received but that his action was prospective of the date of the cross's institution.

Some little time after returning from India, Colour-Sergeant Hilditch, with the temporary rank of Sergeant-Major, was placed on the recruiting staff in his native town, there to entice and allure to the ranks of his regiment the later-born generation of his fellow citizens, and by the evidence of his own rank, assure them of the advantages which merit and good behaviour insured to the soldiers of the Queen, though the alluring and enticing on his side were somewhat counterbalanced on the other, and the experiences he gained were as many and varied, as were the tricks and dodges played on him by worthies desirous of obtaining the Queen's shilling