

## WATERLOO, WELLINGTON & THE CRIMEA

or the life and times of Lord FitzRoy Somerset, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Raglan, illustrated by ten objects



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On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May Christie's King Street will hold a very special sale of items removed from Cefntilla Court, the ancestral home of the Barons Raglan. The military service of many members of the Somerset family is celebrated in the auction with the most emotive and spectacular pieces being connected with Lord FitzRoy James Henry Somerset, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Raglan. Lord Raglan served his country for around half a century and was a very well respected soldier noted for his considerable diplomatic skill. He fought his way through the Peninsular War and was gravely wounded at Waterloo, along the way becoming the right hand man of Arthur Wellesley, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Wellington, and marrying his niece, Lady Emily Wellesley-Pole. The Crimea was his first large field command, and one in which he oversaw noted allied victories including Alma and Inkerman, he and his staff very much leading from the front at the former establishing a position inside the Russian skirmish line on Telegraph Hill.

He was unfairly blamed by the government of the day for the supply disaster that had blighted the winter campaign of 1854, his protestations about the unsuitability of the Crimean environment for a winter war having fallen on deaf ears. His soldiers held him in high esteem, one artilleryman wrote after Raglan's death in June 1855 *'He was a good man to his soldiers in everything ... Sevastopol would have been taken long ago if justice had only been done to him.'* Cefntilla Court was purchased through donation by friends and supporters to the Raglan Memorial Fund, an inscription above the front door paying fitting tribute to this great soldier:

*This house with 238 acres of land was purchased by 1623 of the friends, admirers and comrades of the late Field Marshal Lord Raglan GCB and presented by them to his son and his heirs...as a lasting memorial of affectionate regard and respect.*

A majority of the items discussed below were loaned to the Royal United Service Institute by George FitzRoy Henry Somerset, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Raglan, in 1895 and remained on display at Whitehall until they were removed in 1952 by his son FitzRoy, 4<sup>th</sup> Baron Raglan.

1. A GEORGE III SEVEN-DRAW GILT-BRASS AND IVORY POCKET FIELD GLASS TELESCOPE BY BERGE, LONDON, CIRCA 1802-1810



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This small personal object was carried by FitzRoy Somerset throughout the Peninsular War and at Waterloo. Somerset served on Wellington's staff throughout both campaigns and was to lose his right arm at Waterloo after being shot by a French marksman from the roof of La Haye Sainte.

*'You are aware how useful he has always been to me, and how much I shall feel the want of his assistance, and what a regard and affection I feel for him, and you will readily believe how much concerned I am... I hope he will soon be able to join me again'* - The Duke of Wellington to the Duke of Beaufort after Lord FitzRoy Somerset's operation to remove his arm.

## 2. AN IMPORTANT SPANISH DIAMOND-SET GOLD-HILTED PRESENTATION SWORD



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This magnificent sword was presented by the City of Vitoria to General Don Alava in recognition of his having secured the city in the aftermath of the great battle of the 21 June 1813, a day which had witnessed a collapse of discipline as Joseph Bonaparte's baggage train was looted by the victorious allied army. Alava led a long and distinguished career serving his country as soldier, politician and diplomat. He is believed to hold the distinction of being the only person to have been present at both Trafalgar and Waterloo, serving aboard the Prince of Asturias fighting against the British at the former, and during the latter serving on Wellington's staff. Alava took up arms against the French following Joseph Bonaparte's installation on the throne of Spain in 1808, and became the Spanish military liaison to Wellington's staff in 1811. He became close friends with both Wellington and FitzRoy Somerset and it is speculated that this sword was given to Somerset at the 1836 Waterloo Banquet.

### 3. THE COCKADE WORN BY MARSHAL BLÜCHER AT WATERLOO



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Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher commanded the Prussian Army of the Lower Rhine and despite having suffered a serious defeat at Ligny on the 16<sup>th</sup> June the wounded aged Field Marshal led two corps of his army into battle at Waterloo, his timely intervention turning the tables in Wellington's favour.

*'It has been a damned serious business... Blücher and I have lost 30,000 men. It has been a damned nice thing — the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life.'* – Arthur Wellesley, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Wellington.

### 4. A RARE GENERAL OR STAFF OFFICER'S SWORD OF 10<sup>th</sup> (PRINCE OF WALES' OWN) LIGHT DRAGOONS 1807 REGIMENTAL PATTERN



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This sword almost certainly belonged to General Lord Edward Somerset, the future 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Raglan's elder brother, who commanded the Household Cavalry Brigade at Waterloo. This brigade was formed of squadrons drawn from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Life Guards, the Royal Horse Guards and the 1<sup>st</sup> (King's) Dragoon Guards mustering a total of 1349 sabres on the morning of 18<sup>th</sup> June 1815. They were to take part in a number of prominent but costly actions throughout the afternoon and evening of the battle.

5. THE PRINCIPLE ELEMENTS OF LORD FITZROY SOMERSET'S DRESS UNIFORM AS MASTER-GENERAL OF THE ORDNANCE



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Raglan was appointed as Master-General of the Ordnance in 1852 and was the last to hold this illustrious position until 1904. His great mentor Wellington had held the position between 1819 and 1827.

6. THE EXCEPTIONAL GROUP OF HONORARY AWARDS, DISTINCTIONS AND MEDALS TO FIELD MARSHAL LORD FITZROY SOMCERSET, 1<sup>st</sup> BARON RAGLAN



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Having served as ADC to Wellington and having commanded the British Army in the Crimea Raglan became a highly decorated officer, the group includes his Field Marshal's Baton, the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, the Army Gold Cross (for Fuentes de Onor, Badajoz, Salamanca and Vittoria (*sic*) with clasps for Toulouse, Orthes, Nive, Nivelle and Pyrenees), the Small Army Gold Cross, the Military General Service Medal (with clasps for Roleia, Vimiera, Talavera, Busaco and Ciudad Rodrigo (where his friend General Don Alava commanded)), his Waterloo Medal and Crimea Medal (with four clasps for Alma, Balaklava, Inkermann and Sebastopol), and several foreign awards from Turkey, Russia (circa 1815), Portugal and Austria.

7. THE MAJOR ELEMENT OF THE BRIDLE FROM THE CHARGER RIDDEN BY CAPT. L.E. NOLAN,  
15<sup>th</sup> HUSSARS, AT BALAKLAVA ON 25 OCTOBER 1854



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This humble assembly of leather and brass is perhaps the most emotive item in the collection and is the most wonderful tangible link to what is arguably the most infamous of British military blunders. Captain Nolan, acknowledged as one of the best horsemen in the British Army at the time, was attached to Raglan's staff as a 'galloper'. Lord Raglan, under the impression that the Russians were trying to remove captured British cannon from a line of redoubts on the Causeway Heights that formed one flank of the North Valley, despatched Nolan with orders for the cavalry to advance to disrupt the Russian's plans. There is little doubt that Nolan failed to make the intended target clear to Lord Lucan, commander of the Cavalry Division, but his motives behind joining the charge have been controversial since that fateful morning. Traditionally it was believed he was either trying to prove himself in battle or turn the Light Brigade towards the Causeway Heights rather than continuing along the floor of the North Valley. A more recent notion is that Nolan was attempting to speed up the charge, the idea being that if moving fast enough the Light Brigade could beat the Russian reload. He had taught this theory as a cavalry school instructor and having seen Cardigan move off at a parade ground trot, therefore allowing the Russian gunners to zero in on the Brigade, he was trying to avert disaster. Nolan took his reasoning to the grave as he was one of the first to die, being hit by shrapnel fired from Russian guns positioned on the Fedioukine Heights, the opposite flank of the valley to the Causeway Heights, his body remaining erect in the saddle for some time.

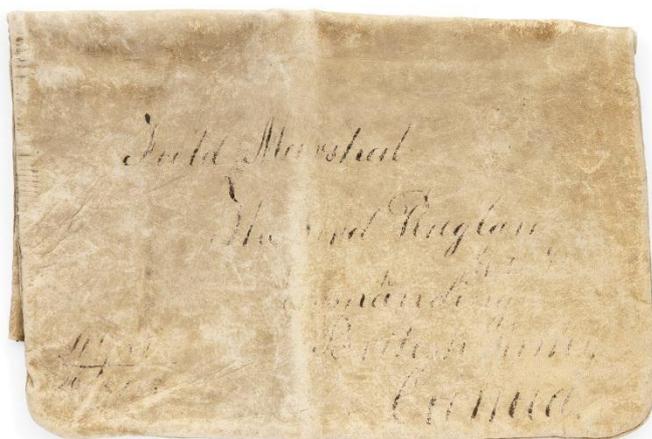
8. AN IMPERIAL RUSSIAN BUGLE TAKEN DURING THE SIEGE OF SEVASTOPOL BY DRUMMER BOY MCGILL OF THE 77TH (EAST MIDDLESEX) REGIMENT



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The *Official Catalogue of the Royal United Service Museum, Whitehall*, describes the following concerning this bugle: "Russian Bugle taken during the Siege of Sevastopol by Drummer Boy McGill, 77th Regiment. On the night of the attack on 19th April, 1855, a Russian Bugler was in the act of sounding, when McGill, a boy of 15, who was acting as Orderly Bugler to Colonel Egerton, commanding the Regiment, rushed forward into the enemy's Rifle pits, seized his antagonist and after a severe struggle, threw him, kept him down until he surrendered, when the lad took his bugle as a trophy, and returned to his C.O.'s side until the Colonel fell. The Boy had on previous occasions distinguished himself, and on this occasion severely wounded a Russian soldier who tried to prevent the capture. He presented the Bugle to Lieut.-General Sir George Brown, who gave it to The Honourable Charlotte Somerset. The Boy was mentioned in despatches and received English and Turkish Medals, and the French Medal for Valour."

9. A VICTORIAN LEATHER DESPATCH BAG



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Addressed to 'Field Marshal / The Lord Raglan / G.C.B. / Commanding / British Army / Crimea' and dated to May 1855, this would in likelihood have contained some of the last correspondence received by Raglan before his death on 28 June 1855. It was probably used to send personal correspondence and effects back to England following his death.

10. A RUSSIAN BRONZE ¼ POOD PATTERN 1805 (FIELD ARTILLERY) LICORN CANNON CAPTURED AT SEVASTOPOL



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This impressive and rare cannon, cast at Bryansk in 1829, was one of two Russian trophy cannon presented to family of the late Field Marshal Lord Raglan. Following the fall of Sevastopol approximately 3000 captured artillery pieces were sent back to Great Britain, some finding their way into the possession of notable families or museums, whilst the majority were given to towns and cities throughout the Empire to display as trophies. The Licorn was a type of Russian howitzer with a conical breech, a design which saved considerable weight over conventional cannons of a similar calibre. Its unique design allowed it to be fired horizontally or in an elevated position, in effect replacing conventional howitzers and in part replacing mortars.

*'It was impossible not to love him, I did...he was a very good man'* - Florence Nightingale

Full details on this historic sale can be found at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)

Howard Dixon

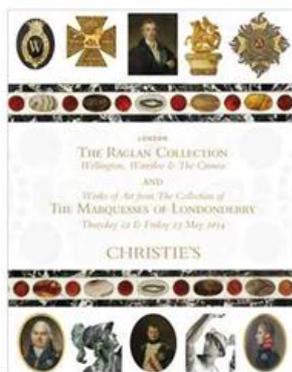
*Specialist Head*

*Antique Arms, Armour & Collectors Firearms Dept.*

*Christie's South Kensington*

[hdixon@christies.com](mailto:hdixon@christies.com)

+44 (0) 20 7752 3119



The Raglan Collection, Wellington, Waterloo and The Crimea & Works of Art from the Collection of the Marquesses of Londonderry.

The viewing dates 17<sup>th</sup> May – 21<sup>st</sup> May.

Sale date:

Raglan 22<sup>nd</sup> May (1.30 pm start)

Londonderry 23<sup>rd</sup> May (10.30 am start)