

At the Seige of Sebastopol

Interesting Reminiscences of a Participant, copied from the Florida Herald, Jacksonville, Florida, U.S.A.

It may be interesting to many of our readers to hear that there is now living and doing business in our city an old veteran of the famous Crimean War. He is none other than that clever painter and accomplished musician, Mr. Harry Jones, of the firm of Jones and Verrel, who is known and liked by everybody in Jacksonville.

A few days ago a Herald reporter stepped into Mr. Jones' shop and in the course of conversation learned that Mr. Jones was an active participant in the memorable seige of Sebastopol. He also exhibited to the reporter a silver medal presented to him by Queen Victoria in commendation of his services in that stirring contest. At the reporter's earnest request Mr. Jones consented to tell the history of his connection and participation in that war:

"Well," said he, "I ran away from a boarding-school in London, at the age of eleven years, and entered the English navy on board of her Majesty's ship, the sloop of war 'Diamond' 22 guns (Captain Hamilton commanding), as second class boy, or rather a 'powder monkey.' The boys' duties were to pass the charges for the guns from the magazine in wooden pails with brass hoops, called monkeys, hence the name applied to the boys. My station was at No. 6 gun. After arriving at Balaklava in the Crimea, half of us, that is, the crew, were sent to man a battery in the trenches, the 22 gun battery (being called after the number of guns in the sloop of war.) We were so close to Sebastopol that we could easily throw a ball into the town. The firing from the Redan and Malakoff (Russian batteries) was sometimes very hot and severe. One morning at eight o'clock a shell came into our battery from the Redan, killing seven poor fellows alongside of me. I escaped with a severe wound in the arm from a fragment of the shell, leaving a mark that I shall always carry. We got so used to hearing the guns that we could tell by the whistling of the balls the make of the cannons; one in particular, the Lancaster gun, from the peculiar whistle of the ball after leaving the gun, and this was more noticeable at night.

Those of us who were wounded were sent to Balaklava,

our ships being there. A week before Sebastopol, the Redan and Malakoff batteries were taken, the sloop of war was ordered to cruise between Eupatoria and Balaklava, Sebastopol being between the two places, and having to pass Forts Constantine and St. Nicholas, we never let a chance pass without throwing a shell or two into them. The night that Sebastopol was taken is one I shall never forget, we were stationed in front of the Forts at the entrance to Sebastopol, throwing shells, etc. The scene from where we were was a grand one, being the combined effort of the English, French and Turks against the Redan and Malakoff. The flashes from the guns and the occasional explosion of a magazine, with our own vessel from her sides throwing balls and shell, made an impression on my mind that I shall never forget. At three in the morning an explosion occurred in one of the forts that was terrific. Perhaps Rev. Dr. Paine remembers this. It fairly made our vessel tremble. The capture was made between 4 and 6 o'clock, and I was in the city along with the batteries at 7 a. m. Time will not allow me to go into detail of the dreadful sight that met our eyes with other incidents while there. It was fearful and almost indescribable.

After arriving in England and fitting out, we were sent to China and laid below Canton for eight months, about sixteen miles from the city. The Chinese used all their ingenuity in trying to destroy our vessels, such as sending down fire ships on us with the current, etc. We finally made a descent on the city and captured it and the Governor Yeh, who was sent to Calcutta a prisoner.

Your space and time will not permit me giving you a full account of the passage home from Hong Kong with invalids and wounded. We started through the fleet of men-of-war for home, the bands on the frigates playing "Home, Sweet Home." Three nights after we collided with a large Dutch ship from Hamburg and lost forty-five men, besides losing our spars, masts and rigging (I will state here that we had 500 souls aboard our vessel-invalids, wounded and the ship's crew). We rigged jury masts and drifted before the monsoon for a long time. After a while the Asiatic cholera broke out on board which was worse than facing a battery. We had funerals about every two hours, and my being in the boat that towed the boat with the bodies, I can say I helped put away many a poor fellow that was well and hearty an hour before. I have seen them die in

twenty minutes after the first symptoms. They are taking their last sleep in the pretty cemetery at Singapore, far from their home. After refitting we sailed for England and arrived at Southampton safely where the sick went to the hospital and the crew discharged.

I will come to an end by mentioning that after some time ashore, I was sent in a man-of-war to New Zealand, and was at the taking of Taranaki, from the Maoris or natives."

After concluding his graphic and interesting narrative, Mr. Jones showed the reporter three medals presented to him by the British Government commemorative of his gallant services in the three wars in which he participated.

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