

## Comments regarding the awarding of Badges of Valour by the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund (1803 – 1809).

The Lloyd's Patriotic Fund still operates today by providing financial assistance to the casualties of Britain's armed forces and where necessary their dependents. The Fund was created in 1803 at the commencement of the Napoleonic Wars and for the next five years presented swords and silver vases of superlative design to men who carried out acts of valour in defending the realm.

The Appendix charts the presentations of swords and vases through to 1809 when the practice was officially discontinued, however letters from powerful and compelling interest did cause a few more swords to be presented, but no more vases. In the Appendix is also noted the actions that qualified for the Naval General Service clasp in 1848. The reason why an award forty years later is of importance is because the Admiralty had decided that the criteria for issuing a clasp was that the action had to have been of such importance that the promotion of an officer took place so, de facto, the clasp actions are all important and no doubt displayed acts of valour. But many of these actions were not recognised by Lloyd's with the award of a badge of valour.

When one considers that the committee at the Patriotic Fund comprised men who were largely driven by the commercial interests of the London insurance market, some answers do come forward. As an example, consider the Capture of the Cape of Good Hope. This action didn't warrant a clasp to the Military General Service medal in 1848 because it didn't represent a major land battle during which the British were victorious. However, securing the Cape represented significant benefits for Lloyd's. If one considers that insuring the fleets of the East India Company was a major area of risk for Lloyd's, then by the capture of the Cape and securing a safe haven for all eastward bound shipping, this risk was significantly reduced.

Or to put it another way, during war maritime insurance rates escalate. If important events reduce the risk to shipping, then the insurer, Lloyd's, stands to make very significant profits. With this in mind, the whole concept of the Patriotic Fund may be considered as a self serving effort by Lloyd's underwriters. Although there is no doubt an element of truth in this statement, they could have done nothing and the British naval and military efforts during the Napoleonic Wars would have continued anyway, and Lloyd's would have been richer still. The fact is that the Patriotic Fund was not only financially supported by the underwriters, but the whole concept of a fund to award the brave and care for the wounded and dependents of those killed in action, took on a national interest with private individuals, churches, whole villages and towns and cities up and down the land making financial contributions to the Fund to support their charitable effort. The Patriotic Fund became a national institution to provide the relief that government didn't provide.

Looking at actions at sea, the most obvious incident which benefited Lloyd's greatly was Dance's Action in 1804 wherein a fleet of East Indiamen made an aggressive stand against a French fleet. The choice that Dance was faced with was turn and run wherein each and every ship of his fleet would have been easily captured resulting in tremendous loss to Lloyd's, or face the French and hope they mistook his ships for British men-of-war. The ruse worked and Lloyd's evaded financial disaster. Every

captain was given a sword of honour although no captain displayed an act of individual heroism as compared with the captain of (say) a British frigate who fought his enemy to a standstill.

Leslie Southwick, in his fine research, has tried to answer the question as to what agenda did the Patriotic Fund follow when honouring naval captains. He couldn't find a consistent methodology just as I can't find one. However, he does note that an action that took place in home waters which allowed its being gazetted shortly after the event, thus creating hot news; that Lloyd's often took advantage of the timely press accounts to make an award and share in the glow of victory, however small.

When looking at the Appendix and comparing the actions honoured with an award from Lloyd's and those that received the NGS clasp, one can see that in 1803 and 1804, Lloyd's really pushed the boat out and made a number of awards to relatively insignificant actions, e.g. that would not qualify for the NGS clasp.

In 1805, there were three important fleet actions namely, Calder's, Trafalgar and Strachan's. Calder's action in July was clearly blackballed because it resulted in the court martial of Calder for lack of zeal, which was not proved. Bad press meant Lloyd's followed public opinion, even though those who understood the situation facing Britain with Napoleon preparing for invasion, would have recognised the strategic importance of Calder having scuppered Napoleon's plans by denying access to the Channel by his combined squadron of French and Spanish ships.

This was followed by Trafalgar in October 1805 and then Strachan's action a month later which between them effectively destroyed the big fleet capabilities of both France and Spain and established Britain as the world's major sea power, heaven sent to the underwriters at Lloyd's and to the British Nation as a whole.

In February 1806, Sir John Duckworth defeated the remaining French squadron in the West Indies, and again gained tremendous commercial advantage for Lloyd's by effectively removing the last of Britain's sea born enemies from the Caribbean. The attached extract from Lloyd's illustrates the extent of the Fund's generosity.

The other side, and perhaps the true side of the Patriotic Fund, is the support of the wounded and dependents of those killed in action. With the series of three major fleet actions occurring over a period of only five months, the resources of Lloyd's were truly strained. The award of a sword or a vase to the value of £100 was nothing compared with tens of thousands of pounds shared by every Jack Tar who was wounded. The bequests to dependents regularly meant a gift of an annuity £20 to £50 to the widow and upon her death to the surviving children of the man, both naval and military, who fell in action.

The Battle of Talavera in 1809 produced a list of casualties that Lloyd's struggled to meet. As Leslie Southwick notes: 'Following the Battle of Talavera (27 -28 July 1809)...the Committee Managing the Patriotic Fund resolved first on the 18th of August and again in greater detail at a General Meeting of the Merchants, Bankers, Underwriters, and other subscribers to the Patriotic Fund, held on 24 August 1809, that as the military operations of the Peninsula have been extended and as much has been drawn from the Fund following the naval actions of 1805 and 1806, the Fund

was hitherto to be open only 'to the relief of widows, orphans, and relatives who depend for their support on those who fall in the cause of their country; to the relief of those whose wounds are attended with loss of limbs or disability from future service; to the annual allowance made towards the aged and infirm British prisoners of war, and to the support of the schools and hospitals established at different Depots in France.' As well as being implied in the above resolution, it was also decided at this meeting of 24 August 1809 that the giving of honourable awards to worthy recipients was to be discontinued.'

I think that there was another reason which was making the distribution of honourable awards less attractive to Lloyd's. Again from Leslie Southwick: 'The Committee Managing the Patriotic Fund often gave the recipient (unless he was a naval officer above the rank of Captain) the opportunity of either accepting a vase, or a sword, or the same value in money. .... Furthermore, although the records of proceedings show that some officers were recommended for a vase (or a sword), corroborative evidence suggests that they did not receive them. The important and previously unpublished account list of payments made to Rundell, Bridge & Rundell (the official suppliers of plate to the Patriotic Fund), is the main source of evidence confirming whether he chose a 'pecuniary' award instead. Whilst most recipients did accept the more permanent memento in the spirit in which it was intended, this documentary evidence suggests that, where a recipient's name is not listed, then the officer chose otherwise.'

Amongst the 83 men awarded vases and plate, it appears that fourteen of them chose the cash instead, about 17% of those so honoured. We have the same occurrence with the distribution of swords, wherein 180 were awarded and sixteen appear to have either taken the cash value for themselves or used the cash as a distribution amongst the ship's company, just under 10% of the total awards. One can only imagine this as an ongoing headache for the committee of the Patriotic Fund. It may well have happened that swords were awarded, and made by Teed with suitable presentation inscriptions, only for the intended recipient to announce, 'Oh no, please send the money instead.'

When one looks at the Patriotic Fund accounts for 1805, one may see the true worth of what was actually, a public fund. £105,000 was voted for the relief of 2,140 officers, seamen and marines wounded or disabled and 570 widows, orphans, parents and other relatives of those killed in His Majesty's service. The administration for such an endeavour must have been immense as well as the obvious expense. That the Fund continues today is just testimony to its worth and continued good works over the past two centuries.

References: *Third Report of the Committee for the Managing the Patriotic Fund*, pub Lloyd's Coffee Shop, London, 20<sup>th</sup> July 1803 (sic) 1806.

*Patriotic Fund Swords* by Leslie Southwick, pub The Arms and Armour Society, Vol XII Number 4 and 5, September 1987, March 1988.

*The Silver Vases awarded by the Patriotic Fund* by Leslie Southwick, pub The Silver Society Journal, Winter 1990.

*The Naval General Service Medal Roll (1793 – 1840)* by Capt. K. Douglas-Morris, pub privately, London, 1982.

Sim Comfort, 1 January 2011

## Post 1803 RN Actions.

Action	NGS	Sword	Vase	Comment
27 June 1803 / Boats / Venteux	X	X		
14 Jul 1803 / Phoebe		X		
12-17 Aug 1803 / Niger		X		
17 Aug 1803 / Ville de Paris		X		
18 Aug 1803 / Desiree		X		
9 Sept 1803 / HMS Sheerness		X		A Silver Call
9 Oct 1803 / Atalante		X		
14 Oct 1803 / Racoon		X		
26 Oct 1803 / Osprey		X		
31 Oct 1803 / HMAC Admiral Mitchell		X		
4 Nov 1803 / Boats / Voltigeuse	X			
5 Nov 1803 / Blanche		X		
16 / 17 Nov 1803 / Blenheim / Drake		X		
26 Nov 1803 / Centaur		X		
4 Feb 1804 / Boats / Curieux	X	X	X	£30 Vase
5 Feb 1804 / L'Eclair		X		
9 Feb 1804 / Centaur		X		
15 Feb 1804 / Dance's Action		X	X	Capt. Timmins, Indiaman Royal George received both a vase and a £50 sword. Commodore Dance also received both a sword and vase.
19 Feb 1804 / Drake		X		
7 Mar 1804 / Inconstant		X		
13 Mar 1804 / Emerald		X		
23 Mar 1804 / Antelope / Osprey / Magicienne		X		
27 Mar 1804 / Hippomenes		X		
31 March 1804 / Scorpion / Beaver	X	X		
1 May 1804 / Thisbe		X		
10 Jul 1804 / Narcissus / Sea Horse / Maidstone.		X		
31 Jul 1804 / Tartar		X		
18 Sept 1804 / Centurion	X	X		
22 Jan 1805 / Rattler		X		
3-4 Feb 1805 / Arrow / Acheron	X	X	X	Vincent also awarded a £100 sword
14 Feb 1805 / San Fiorenzo	X	X		

16-17 Feb 1805 / Cleopatra		X		
22 Feb 1805 / Defence of Dominica		X		Money offered to three military men to purchase their own silver plate. (Ref Gawler)
5 Apr 1805 / Bacchante		X		
4 Jun 1805 / Boats / Muros Bay	X	X	X	Yeo received both the vase and sword
13 Jun 1805 / Maria // Cambrian		X	X	Pigot received both the vase and sword. (Not noted by Gawler)
10 Aug 1805 / Phoenix	X	X		
13 Aug 1805 / Sloop Swift		X		
21 Oct 1805 / Trafalgar	X	X	X	
4 Nov 1805 / Strachan's	X	X	X	£300 vase to Strachan
Jan 1806 / Cape of Good Hope			X	
6 – 7 Jan 1806 / Franchise		X		
6 Feb 1806 / St. Domingo	X		X	No Swords
13 Mar 1806 / Amazon / London	X			
21 Mar 1806 / Colpoys		X		
26 Mar 1806 / Pique	X			
6 Apr 1806 / Pallas		X		
17 Apr 1806 / Sirius	X		X	
4 May 1806 / Renommee		X		
24 May 1806 / D of M Packet			X	Escaped Fr privateer.
1 Jun 1806 / Jason		X		
3 June 1806 / Pallas			X	
22 Jun 1806 / Minerva		X	X	Captured enemy shipping & Fort
27 Jun 1806 / Buenas Ayres			X	
4 Jul 1806 / Greyhound / Harrier		X		
16 Jul 1806 / Boats / Centaur / Ceasar	X	X		
19 Jul 1806 / Blanche	X		X	
4 July 1806 / Battle of Madia		X	X	
14 Aug 1806 / Phosphorus		X		
23 Aug 1806 / Arethusa / Anson	X	X	X	
25 Sep 1806 / Centaur			X	
12 Oct 1806 / Sheldrake / Constance / Strenuous		X		
24 Oct 1806 / Schooner Pitt		X		
13 Dec 1806 / Sloop Halcyon		X		
1 Jan 1807 / Curacoa	X	X	X	Brisbane received a £200 vase and £100 sword

2 Jan 1807 / Boats / Cerberus / St. Pierre / Martinique	X	X		
3 Jan 1807 / Pickle	X			
21 Jan 1807 / Boats / Galatea / Lynx	X	X		£50 plate award posthumously to Lt. Walker.
3 Feb 1807 / Monte Video		X	X	Gen Auchmuty
14 Feb 1807 / Bacchante		X		
21 Feb 1807 / Mediator		X		
5 May 1807 / Standard		X		
8 May 1807 / Comus		X		
6-7 Aug 1807 / Hydra	X	X		
15 Aug 1807 / Comus	X			
23 Oct 1807 / Louisa	X			
4 Nov 1807 / Carrier	X			
24 Nov 1807 / Ann	X			
13 Feb 1808 / Boats / Canonnier / Tagus	X			
2 Mar 1808 / Sappho	X			
8 Mar 1808 / San Fiorenzo	X	X	X	Vase Posthumously to Hardinge's Uncle.
13 Mar 1808 / Emerald	X	X		
13-14 Mar 1808 / Childers	X	X		
22 Mar 1808 / Stately / Nassau	X			
4 Apr 1808 / Off Rota	X			
24 Apr 1808 / Grasshopper	X		X	
24 Apr 1808 / Rapid	X			
7 May 1808 / Redwing	X			
19 May 1808 / Virginie	X			
31 May 1808 / Redwing	X			
11 Jun 1808 / Euryalus		X		
5/6 Jul 1808 / Seahorse	X		X	
10 Jul 1808 / Boats / It.	X			
11 Aug 1808 / Comet	X			
11 Aug 1808 / Boats / Denmark	X			
26 Aug 1808 / Centaur / Implacable	X			
18 Oct 1808 / Caroline		X		
1 Nov 1808 / Cruizer	X			
10 Nov 1808 / Amethyst	X	X	X	
28 Nov 1808 / Boats / Guadaloupe	X			
13 Dec 1808 / Pearl Rock	X			
1 Jan 1809 / Onyx	X			
14 Jan 1809 / Confiance	X			
Jan / Feb 1809 / Martinique	X			
10 Feb 1809 / Horatio / Superieure	X			
9 Mar 1809 / Argo		X		
1 April 1809 / Mercury		X		
5 Apr 1809 / Amethyst	X			

11/12 Apr 1809 / Basque Roads	X	X		
17 Jun 1809 / Pompee / Castor / Recruit	X			
25 / 27 Jun 1809 / Cyane / Espoir	X			
6 Jul 1809 / Bonne Citoyenne	X			
7 Jul 1809 / Boats / Finland	X			
14 Jul 1809 / Boats / Scout	X			
25 July 1809 / Boats / Fawn / St. Marie Bay	X			
25 Jul 1809 / Boats / Finland	X			
25 Jul 1809 / Boats / Gessendorf	X			
29 Jul 1809 / Boats / Triest	X			
28 Aug 1809 / Boats / Adriatic	X			
11 Sep 1809 / Diana	X			
21 Sep 1809 / Boadicea		X		
1 Nov 1809 / Boats / Rosas	X			
13 Dec 1809 / Boats / Hayes Harbour	X			
18 Dec 1809 / Anse La Barque	X			
3 May 1810 / Spartan	X	X		
9 Jul 1810 / Alceste		X		
23 Aug 1810 / Nereide		X		
13 Dec 1810 / Cambrian		X		
8 Apr 1811 / Otter		X		
10 May 1811 / Battle of Badajoz		X		
16 May 1811 / Battle of Albuera		X		
17 Nov 1811 / Chatham		X		
21 Jul 1812 / Sea Lark		X		
12 Aug 1812 / Minstral		X		

Note: NGS clasp actions denote an action of such importance that an officer was promoted. Sometimes, the promotion was from the lower deck to the quarterdeck.