

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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A group of what appear to be the very earliest war photographs ever made has been brought to light by the Exhibition of Photography: 1839-1937 at The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street. These were taken by the daguerreotype process at the time of the Mexican War in 1847 and show American cavalymen under General John Ellis Wool* and a group of American infantry from a Virginia regiment on the Calle Real, a road through Mexico.

The group, which includes scenes other than those of the Mexican War, comprises twelve daguerreotypes, four of which are very clear; the rest, while not in such a good state of preservation, are easily discernable. The group belongs to Mr. H. Armour Smith, President of the Yonkers Museum of Science and Arts, through whose courtesy these daguerreotypes will be added tomorrow (Wednesday) to the Exhibition of Photography: 1839-1937 at the Museum of Modern Art where they will be on view until the exhibition closes Sunday night, April 18.

When Beaumont Newhall, Director of the Exhibition, began to collect material for it a year ago it was generally believed that Brady's photographs of the Civil War, 1861-1865, were the first war pictures ever made by any photographic process. In his research for the exhibition, however, Mr. Newhall discovered several photographs hitherto unknown to the American public taken during the Crimean War in 1854. The most interesting of these shows the battle ground of Balaklava made famous by Tennyson's Charge of the Light Brigade**. The photograph shows the actual terrain over which the "noble six hundred" rode to their death and to immortality in Tennyson's poem. The discovery of war photographs taken eight years earlier by the daguerreotype process adds a valuable chapter to the early history of photography.

When the Exhibition of Photography: 1839-1937 closes at the Museum of Modern Art, April 18, it will go on tour throughout the country. Included in its itinerary are Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Buffalo; Manchester, New Hampshire; and Andover and Springfield, Massachusetts.

* Major General John Ellis Wool, born February 20, 1784, Newburgh, New York, was next in command under General Zachary Taylor. Major General Wool with General Taylor led troops from San Antonio to Saltillo, Mexico. General Wool disposed the forces for and was in command at the battle of Buena Vista in 1847.

** Into the valley of death rode the six hundred
Stormed at with shot and shell
Boldly they rode and well
Into the jaws of death
Into the mouth of hell.