



WOLSELEY, GARNET JOSEPH WOLSELEY, Viscount (1833-1913), British field marshal, eldest son of Major Garnet Joseph Wolseley of the King's Own Borderers (25th Foot), No Victorian was a greater hero for a longer period than Sir Garnet Wolseley. The leading British general of the second half of the nineteenth century, he personally took part in and significantly influenced every campaign between the Crimea and the Boer War. To Disraeli he was 'Our Only General', while to many soldiers and to the public at large he epitomised the virtues they most admired: exceptional personal bravery and an unshakeable belief in the virtues of the British Empire. The phrase 'All Sir Garnet' was a guarantee that everything was under control. Seen from another angle, Wolseley's career reflects a number of weaknesses. To control a global empire Britain had a powerful navy but only a small army. Its ability to deploy a force of limited size throughout the world, almost always against untrained and under equipped native armies, gave the dangerous and ultimately disastrous illusion that Britain was as formidable by land as it was by sea.

He was born at Golden Bridge, Co. Dublin, on June 4, 1833, and obtained a commission as ensign in the 12th Foot in March 1852. He transferred to the 80th Foot, with which he served in the second Burmese War. Promoted to be lieutenant and invalided home, and he exchanged into the 90th Light Infantry, then in Dublin. He accompanied the regiment to the Crimea, and did duty with the Royal Engineers in the trenches before Sevastopol. After the fall of Sevastopol Wolseley was employed on the quartermaster-general's staff and was one of the last to leave the Crimea in July 1856. After six months' duty with the 90th Foot at Aldershot, he went with it again, in March 1857, to join the expedition to China under Major-General the Hon. T. Ashburnham. Wolseley embarked in command of three companies in the transport "Transit" which was wrecked in the Strait of Banca. The troops were saved, and were taken to Singapore, whence, on account of the Indian Mutiny, they were despatched with all haste to Calcutta. Wolseley served at the relief of Lucknow under Sir Colin Campbell in November, and in the defense of the Alambagh position under Outram, taking part in the actions of Dec. 22, 1857, Jan. 12 and 15, 1858, and the repulse of the grand attack of Feb. 21. In March he served at the final siege and capture of Lucknow: He was then appointed D.A.Q.G. on the staff of Sir Hope Grant's Oudh division, and was engaged in all the operations of the campaign.

In the autumn and winter of 1858 he took part in the Baiswara, trans-Gogra and trans-Rapti campaigns, ending with the complete suppression of the rebellion. Having received his Crimean majority in March 1858, he was in April 1859 promoted to be lieutenant colonel, and received the Mutiny medal and clasp. When Grant was nominated to the command of the British troops in the Anglo-French expedition to China in 1860, Wolseley accompanied him as D.A.Q.G. On his return home he published the "Narrative of the War with China in 1860". In 1867 he was appointed deputy quartermaster-general in Canada. In 1867 his "Soldiers' Pocket Book for Field Service" was published, and has since run through many editions. In 1870 he commanded the Red River expedition to put down a rising under Louis Riel.

Appointed assistant adjutant-general at the war office in 1871 he worked hard in furthering the Cardwell schemes of army reform. From this time till he became commander-in-chief, Wolseley was the prime mover and the deciding influence in practically all the steps taken at the War Office for promoting the efficiency of the army under the altered conditions of the day. In 1873 he commanded the expedition to Ashanti, and, having made all his arrangements at the Gold Coast before the arrival of the white troops in January 1874, was able to complete the campaign in two months, re-embarking them for home before the unhealthy season began. This campaign made his name a household word in England.

He fought the battle of Amoafu on Jan. 31st 1875, and, after five days' fighting, ending with the battle of Ordahsu, entered Kumasi, which he burned. He received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, a grant of £25,000, promotion, and other honours. On his return home he was appointed inspector-general of auxiliary forces, but had

not held the post for a year when he was sent to Natal as Governor and general commanding. In 1878 he went as High-Commissioner to the newly acquired possession of Cyprus, and in 1879 to South Africa to supersede Lord Chelmsford in command of the forces in the Zulu War, and as governor of Natal and the Transvaal and high commissioner of South-east Africa. On his arrival at Durban in July he found that the war in Zululand was practically over, and after effecting a temporary settlement, he went to the Transvaal. Having reorganised the administration there and reduced the powerful chief Sikukuni to submission, he returned home in May 1880 and was appointed quartermaster-general.



In 1882 he was appointed adjutant-general, and in August of that year was given the command of the British forces in Egypt to suppress the rebellion of Arabi Pasha. Having seized the Suez Canal, he disembarked his troops at Ismailia, and after a very short and brilliant campaign completely defeated Arabi Pasha at Tel-el-Kebir, and suppressed the rebellion. He was promoted general for distinguished service in the field, and raised to the peerage as Baron Wolseley of Cairo and Wolseley. In 1884 he was again called away to command the Nile expedition for the relief of General Gordon and the besieged garrison of Khartoum. The expedition arrived too late: Khartoum had fallen, and Gordon was dead; and in the spring of 1885 complications with Russia over the Penjdeh incident occurred, and the withdrawal of the expedition followed. Wolseley was now created a viscount and a knight of St. Patrick. He continued at the War Office as adjutant-general until 1890, when he was given the command in Ireland. He was promoted to be field marshal in 1894, and was nominated colonel of the Royal Horse Guards in 1895, in which year he was appointed commander-in-chief. His powers were, however, limited by a new order in council, and after holding the appointment for over five years, he handed over the office to Earl Roberts in 1901.

Lord Wolseley married Louisa, probably illegitimate daughter of Alexander Erskine Holmes 4 June 1867 Louisa (died 10 April 1920),. He published "The Decline and Fall of Napoleon" (1895), "The Life , of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, to the Accession of Queen Anne" (1894), and "The Story of a Soldier's Life" (1903).

He died at Mentone March 25 1913, the title going by special remainder to his only daughter, Frances. Frances Garnet Wolseley, Viscountess Wolseley, was born 15 September 1872. She died unmarried 24 December 1936, when the Viscounty expired

He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, and an equestrian statue of him on the Horse Guards' Parade, Whitehall, London, was unveiled in 1920.

(Source: Encyclopædia Britannica)