

98

It was obvious that the Europeans had been murdered . On rescue expedition *HMS Sylvia* found it was impossible to land the rescuers on the spot because of the heavy surfing of the sea. But the rescue members were able to spy a coil of rope and a sailor's blue cap. Then *Kwang Tung* sailed in search of the lost sailors of *Assam Valley* but the shower of Onge arrows compelled the British to run back. Under the command of Captain Borrow *IGS Arracan* with few Great Andamanese, two Officers Dunn and Eastwood and a small military force sailed in search operation towards Little Andaman. The expedition team successfully landed on the Onge land and fought severely with their guns against the Onge, who had simple bows and arrows in hands . In this battle about 100 Onges had been killed by the Britishers. This particular expedition is perhaps the only one in British Military history which resulted in five of the participants being awarded the most coveted British military award – the Victoria Cross . The Britishers got never tired in appreciating the valour shown by the British members who fought with the Onges. In addition to the award of the Victoria Cross to Dr. Douglas and four privates, Toke sacunnie was awarded two months' salary and Private Wilson , a Silver Watch and chain . They had no kindness shown towards the Onge belligerents who died in saving their motherland.

The Victoria Cross from the queen was awarded to five of those who participated in the venture. They were Assistant Surgeon Campbell Millis Douglas , Private Thomas Murphy , Private James Cooper , Private David Bell and Private William Griffiths, all belonging to the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion , 24<sup>th</sup> regiment . The date of the "acts of bravery" was given as 7 May 1867. The citation read:

" For the very gallant and daring manner in which , on the 7<sup>th</sup> May , 1867 , they risked their lives in manning the boat , and proceeding through a dangerous surf to the rescue of some of their comrades who formed part of an expedition which had been sent to the island of little Andaman , by order of the Chief Commissioner of British Burmah , with the view of ascertaining the fate of the commander and seven of the crew of the ship *Assam Valley* , who had landed there and were supposed to have been murdered by the natives. "

But the love for the Motherland in Ongeheart did not reduce to any degree. After four years in April 1873, five members of a junk *Qaungoon* had been killed by the Onges who landed on their land. As revenge of it , a British team landed on Little Andaman Island and started burning the Ongehuts .

In this attempt they were attacked by the Onges and in the attack two non-Onges were deeply injured. This was followed by the burning of the remaining Onge huts. Till 1878 the Onge could not be brought under the influence of "British rule" , which was never less than a big achievement for the Onges .

After 1878 with efforts of colonel Cadell , the new chief Commissioner, Portman and other officers , the Onges on several occasions were captured and released with presents . In 1886 the Onge for the first time allowed Portman to land and successfully stay with them.