



SUPPLEMENT

TO

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FRIDAY APRIL 4, 1879.

War Office, April 4, 1879.

**D**ESPATCHES, of which the following are copies, have been received at the War Office from the Lieutenant-General Commanding the Forces in South Africa:—

From Lieutenant-General Lord Chelmsford, K.C.B., to the Adjutant-General to the Forces.

*Pietermaritzburg, Natal,*

SIR,

*February 28, 1879.*

I HAVE the honour to bring under the notice of His Royal Highness the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief the accompanying report received from Colonel Glyn, C.B., commanding No. 3 Column, showing how the Queen's colour of the 1st Battalion 24th Foot, which had been lost on the 22nd January, has since been recovered, and giving an account of the gallant behaviour of Lieutenant and Adjutant Melville and Lieutenant Coghill, of that regiment, until they met their deaths in the endeavour to save this colour from falling into the enemy's hands.

I have, &c.,

**CHELMSFORD,**

Lieutenant-General Commanding.

*Rorke's Drift, Buffalo River,*

SIR,

*February 21, 1879.*

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 22nd January last, when the camp of Isandlwana was attacked by the enemy, the Queen's colour of the 1st Battalion 24th Regiment was in the camp, the head-quarters and five companies of the regiment being there also.

From all the information I have been since able to obtain, it would appear that when the enemy had got into the camp, and when there was no longer any hope left of saving it, the Adjutant of the 1st Battalion 24th Regiment, Lieutenant Teignmouth Melville, departed from the camp on horseback, carrying the colour with him in hope of being able to save it.

The only road to Rorke's Drift being already in possession of the enemy, Lieutenant Melville, and the few others who still remained alive, struck across country for the Buffalo River, which it was necessary to cross to reach a point of safety. In taking this line, the only one possible, ground had to be gone over which from its ruggedness and precipitous nature would under ordinary circumstances, it is reported, be deemed almost utterly impassable for mounted men.

During a distance of about six miles Lieutenant Melville and his companions were closely pursued, or, more properly speaking, accompanied by a large number of the enemy, who from their well-known agility in getting over rough ground, were able to keep up with our people though the latter were mounted, so that the enemy kept up a constant fire on them, and sometimes even got close enough to assegai the men and horses. Lieutenant Melville reached the bank of the Buffalo, and at once plunged in, horse and all; but being encumbered with the colour, which is an awkward thing to carry even on foot, and the river being full and running rapidly, he appears to have got separated from his horse, when he was about half way across. He still, however, held on resolutely to the colour, and was being carried down stream when he was washed against a large rock in the middle of the river. Lieutenant Higginson, of the Natal Native Contingent, who had also lost his horse in the river, was clinging to this rock, and Lieutenant Melville called to him to lay hold of the colour. This Lieutenant Higginson did, but the current was so strong that both officers with the colour were again washed away into still water. In the meantime, Lieutenant Coghill, 1st Battalion 24th Regiment, my orderly officer, who had been left in camp that morning when the main body of the force moved out on account of a severe injury to his knee, which rendered him unable to move without assistance, had also succeeded in gaining the river bank in company with Lieutenant Melville. He too had plunged at once into the river, and his horse had carried him safely across;