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Extracts from the autobiography of Field Marshal Lord Grenfell covering his career in South Africa between 1873 and 1879 were reproduced in *JAZWHS* 23 (2008). Then a captain, Francis Grenfell had been ADC to General Sir Arthur Cunynghame and, following Cunynghame's recall, DAAG to Chelmsford. At the time of Isandlwana, Grenfell was making his way up to the central Column from Pietermaritzburg, his horse breaking down compelling him to stay at Helpmekaar.

Grenfell makes relatively little mention of Isandlwana, his first comment relating to the failure to bury the dead:

It had always appeared to me, and indeed to most other officers present at that period, that an unfortunate mistake was made by Lord Chelmsford in not waiting longer at Isandhlwana to bury the dead. The fact of their dead comrades lying out for three months unburied had, no doubt, great influence in promoting attacks, some of them quite unjustified, which were made upon him after the disaster.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently, Grenfell quotes a letter to his sister dated 24 May 1879, recounting his visit to Isandlwana on the previous day:

We are just beginning our second advance. The Cavalry reached Isandula yesterday, and we shall now go through the form of burying the dead. We have already found the bodies of Melvill and Coghill, and three days ago that of poor Smith, R.A., a great friend of mine. We made a reconnaissance into the country near Rorke's Drift, and found a lot of loot from the camp at Isandula.<sup>2</sup>

In part, as the letter suggests, Grenfell based his memoirs on his diaries and correspondence. A number of Grenfell's diaries survive in the Grenfell Mss in the Middle East Centre at St Antony's College, Oxford, including those for 1877-79. There is no mention of the visit to Isandlwana on 23 May and, indeed, no entries for the period 31 January to 14 February, but the entry for 20 June reads:

Left Rorke's Drift at 8.45; picked up valance & pack horses at Bashee valley. Found Black burying the dead at Sandlwana - identified Dyer - and Wardell. Dartnell & police - RDGs - Natal Carbs - Volunteers - commenced to bury at 8 a.m. I remained till 12 when left with the Lancers (Wood). (Shepstone W -) buried a [unreadable] on way back. Got into Ft. Marshall at ¼ to 5 on to camp by 6 - found a huge grass fire - no news.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Field Marshal Lord Grenfell* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, [1925], p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Middle East Centre (hereafter MEC), St Antony's College, Grenfell Mss GB165-0319, Box 1, Diaries.

There are also typed versions of extracts from the diaries interspersed with extracts from letters and some images of Zulu that were clearly used in the preparation of the memoirs. <sup>4</sup> It is assumed that these typed extracts are identical to those held in the Grenfell Mss in the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, California, which are described as typed transcripts of letters between 1863 and 1897. <sup>5</sup>

Grenfell's correspondence with his grandfather, Pascoe Grenfell, forms part of the Lyttelton Mss in Queen Mary University Library, London. General Sir Neville Lyttelton's daughter, Hilda, married Francis Grenfell's nephew, Arthur Grenfell, in 1908. In a letter of 27 February 1879 Grenfell relates to Pascoe Grenfell the remarks of a soldier who had helped bury Zulu dead at Rorke's Drift: 'Well! Bill. I began as a ... baker - then I became a ... Soldier but I never thought I should end up a ... sexton to a lot of ... Christie Minstrels.' <sup>6</sup>

On 13 May Grenfell also remarks on collecting sums for a fund established by the Natal Bank for the widows and orphans of Isandlwana. On 26 May Grenfell refers to his visit to Isandlwana, noting that Durnford's body had been identified. There is more detail, however, in a letter of 21 June in which Grenfell relates taking out a patrol to Isandlwana on 19 June to locate a more suitable route on which to bring in wagons from the battlefield. He then reports on the burial detail on 20 June. This time he suggests he recognised the bodies of Wardell and Dyson. This therefore contradicts his diary reference to Dyer although it is generally recognised that it was Dyer and not Dyson found with Wardell. Presumably, it was a simple mistake on Grenfell's part to confuse the two. <sup>7</sup>

As with others, Grenfell suggests many bodies were recognisable but:

their skin had dried up like parchment & their hair & beards had grown in a most horrible way even the young soldiers had beards an inch long. I picked up a great many papers & letters - some very touching ones, especially one from poor Melvilles [sic] wife - written before their marriage to tell him what her wedding dress was like etc. - all the letters we burnt. <sup>8</sup>

The extracts, of course, do not materially alter the story of the burial details and the identification of Dyson is clearly an error since all other accounts contradict this. The reference to letters found on the field being burned is interesting although the preservation of other written material found relating to Chelmsford, Crealock and Durnford is well known. Presumably Grenfell meant only personal correspondence was destroyed.

At the very least, Grenfell's diaries and letter suggest that there is still unused Zulu War material to be found in archives.

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<sup>4</sup> MEC, St Antony's College, Grenfell Mss GB165-0319, Box 30.

<sup>5</sup> Stanford University, Hoover Archives, Grenfell Mss, 2005C21.

<sup>6</sup> Queen Mary University Library (hereafter QMUL), Lyttelton Mss, PP5/GRE/26/2, Grenfell to Pascoe Grenfell, 27 Feb. 1879.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Ian Knight, *Zulu Rising* (London: Macmillan, 2010), p. 414.

<sup>8</sup> QMUL, Lyttelton Mss, PP5/GRE/26/2, Grenfell to Pascoe Grenfell, 21 June 1879.