

The Isandhlwana Guns
Major A S Hill

Source: *The Journal of the Royal Artillery* - Letters to the Editor.
Unabridged.

Perhaps I might be allowed to add a postscript to the stirring article by A J Lucking published in the autumn 1999 edition of the Journal.

In "Extracts from the Quarterly Reports of Proceedings of the Department of the Director of Artillery" for 1880 it is recorded that on 20th September 1879 Major General Clifford in the Cape reported that,

"...two 7-pdr guns, with their carriages and stores, belonging to N/5 Brigade RA, taken by the Zulus at Isandhlwana and recaptured after the battle of Ulundi, are about to be sent to England..."

In November the Director of Artillery (D of A) wrote that he proposed that if these guns were found to be serviceable, they should be re-issued and shortly afterwards called for a report "...on these stores..."

On 14 January 1880 the Superintendent Royal Gun Factory reported that,

"...the guns, Nos 362, 373, Mark IV, are serviceable, with the exception of requiring new sights, bruises in interior removed, and re-browning. Both have had something of the nature of a steel nipple screwed in the vent. The female screws have been prepared with a regular tap..."

D of A ordered that they be repaired and returned to store. On the 23rd the Superintendent Royal Carriage Department (RCD) reported on the carriages,

"... No 24. Trail eye worn about half through friction with limber hook; it is also well worn on the top side, and the handspike ring and plate damaged, the carriage having been drawn upside down over rough ground. No 28. The axle tree arms are each bent in two directions beyond the set of arms... The metal bracket for wad-hook worm is broken off..."

D of A subsequently directed that,

"... the carriages be repaired, and utilized for future issues, and new limbers manufactured if required..."

In December while commenting on a 7-pdr Kaffraria equipment, Superintendent RCD recalled the bent axletree arms found earlier on No 28 wrote that,

"...he can only account for this on the supposition that they had been subjected to extremely severe usage. If such contingencies are to be provided for, the arms must be made very much stronger and heavier..."

One must hope that the Superintendent was not inferring that the Royal Regiment was in the habit of losing their guns on a regular basis.