

The strange story of Lieutenant C. Jenkins
4th Battalion Natal Native Contingent.

By Dr Adrian Greaves

War Office memorandum.

I am glad to learn that the Government has granted an increase of the pension allowed to ex-Lieut. Charles Jenkins, a native of Ventnor, of the Cape Mounted Rifles, the additional grant having been awarded for “distinguished conduct in the field” during the Zulu War of 1879. Lieut. Jenkins daringly made the charge single-handed with revolver and sword upon a number of Zulus who were defending their own kraal, but who were forced by him to retreat, seven of the enemy being left dead. To his surprise, none of the men followed his lead into the kraal, but the men afterwards behaved splendidly in following up the retreat of the Zulus.

It was owing to the actions of Lieut. Jenkins that an army of Zulus, who were coming over the hill of Inyazana (Nyezane River) to reinforce their own men in action with the English column in the bush, were successfully put to flight. General Hart personally complimented Lieut. Jenkins on the field of battle, and said it had not been for his brave conduct the English column would have been annihilated. Lord Chelmsford afterwards recommended the soldier for promotion from Sergeant to Lieutenant.

Ex-Lieut. Jenkins wears three medals. One was awarded for services in the Navy during the Russian War, 1854-5, another for services during the Zulu War, with bar, 1877-8-9; and the third is a Cape general Service medal, with bar, for the Basuto War. The rev. R.W. Colquhoun heard of these facts, and immediately communicated with the War Office authorities and pointed out to them the brave services rendered to his country by this old soldier, and by said services, should be recognised by his countrymen. As a result of the thoughtful action of the Vicar of Ventnor, an additional pension has been granted to ex-Lieut. Jenkins.

The unusual medals of Lieut. C. Jenkins.

1st medal engraved; ‘Baltic’ C. Jenkins Boy 2nd C. H.M.S. *Ajax*

2nd medal, South Africa Campaign Medal; clasp 1877-8-9, engraved Lieut. C. Jenkins 4th Battn. N.N.C.

3rd medal Cape of Good Hope General Service Medal 1880-1897, clasp Basutoland. engraved Pte C. Jenkins C.M. Rif. (Cape Mounted Rifles Ed.)

Apart from his bravery, the promotion is unusual, as is the increased pension award. It appears that Lieut. Jenkins later served as a private soldier in the Basuto campaign.