

Letter from Katie Stossel.

Co- author *Sister Janet Nurse and heroine of the Anglo- Zulu War.*

Dear Dr. Greaves,

I am currently putting the final touches to a sequel to my *Sister Janet* book and I wonder if you are in a position to answer a question?

You wrote in your *Rorke's Drift* that 'an examination of the original *Chard Report* reveals that it is superb with regard to both its physical condition and content. It was written within two days of the battle under extremely severe weather conditions, with no shelter from the steady torrential wind and rain and with the survivors expecting a renewed Zulu attack at any moment. The only two buildings had been razed to the ground by fire and with all their stores destroyed there was no writing paper left. Had Clery or anyone else had paper, they would logically have made it available for much more important documents such as Daily Orders and records of events and incidents. Even the original message sent to Colonel Glyn with the names of the six praise-worthy soldiers was written by Bromhead on an unofficial piece of paper'.

Could you advise.... two further problems need addressing;

firstly, understanding how Chard managed to remember all the details of the 130 soldiers present during the battle, bearing in mind he arrived at the Mission just an hour before the Zulus attacked, and

secondly, how could he remember the overlapping sequence of events occurring, and of its participants' names and units, in complete darkness (except for the flickering light thrown up from burning thatch), and so accurately. Chard had not previously been noted for any skill at report writing, neither was he noted for it subsequently. Presuming that, on this date, this quiet and reserved junior officer rose to the occasion and within hours of the trauma of being attacked for several hours by four thousand Zulus, and with numerous casualties, not only prepared, but wrote this remarkable report.

This then poses yet two further fundamental questions;

1. even if Chard had liaised with others after the event, (and no one else mentions this having occurred), why would he have bothered to write this report in the first place, and in such detail, and,
2. given the appalling circumstances, how could he have done so?

Editor;

This letter goes to the nub of the mystery surrounding the writing of the Chard Report and while I can't answer the questions, I have made available my own papers and research to Katie and I wish her well in coming up with her own answers.

Details of her book will be circulated to members when we know the date of publication.