
The Anglo-Zulu War was a brief conflict that enhanced few reputations but damaged many. Colonels Evelyn Wood and Redvers Buller emerged with credit while others like Lord Chelmsford and Colonel Hugh Rowland lost their former standing through their questionable competence and actions.

Other participants were badly affected by what they experienced, both physically and mentally. In an age when mental trauma was misunderstood, there was little sympathy or understanding for those who broke under the strain of witnessing the savagery of fighting Zulus. In an institution like the Army, it was expected that emotions should be kept on a tight rein, especially amongst the senior officers; the “stiff-upper lip” syndrome prevailed. It is well documented that Chelmsford underwent a period of severe depression in the aftermath of Isandlwana. Colonel Hassard, Officer Commanding Royal Engineers, had such a severe nervous breakdown that he was replaced. Colonel Pearson, the defender of Eshowe, was invalided home suffering from mental and physical exhaustion. Of all the senior officers who suffered in such a way, none felt greater anguish than the commanding officer of the 1st 24th Regiment, Colonel Richard Thomas Glyn.

Born 23rd December 1831 in Meerut, India, he was the only son of R.C. Glyn, an officer in the Honourable East India Company. On his return to England, a conventional country upbringing produced an expert horseman and a fanatical huntsman. Despite his short stature (he was just 5ft 2in) Glyn was physically strong and keen to pursue a military career. When he was 19, his father purchased him a commission into the 82nd (Prince of Wales Volunteers) Regiment, later the 2nd South Lancashires.

After several years of duty in Ireland, Glyn and his regiment were sent to the Crimea and arrived on 2nd September 1855, just six days before the fall of Sebastopol, thus missing any fighting and becoming part of the Army of Occupation until 1856. It was in this year that he married Anne Clements, the daughter of the former Colonel of the Royal Canadian Rifles. Their honeymoon period was cut short when Glyn’s regiment was rushed to India to become part of Sir Colin Campbell’s force that relieved the besieged force at Lucknow in mid-November 1857. Just a few days later, the 82nd received a drubbing at Cawnpore from rebel forces and sustained many casualties. Glyn was then promoted to captain and soon gained much experience in the hard and brutal suppression of the Mutiny.

Like many officers, Glyn found post-Mutiny India an agreeable place to serve, particularly enjoying the opportunities to indulge his passion for hunting. Anne joined him and they set about producing a family, the result of which was four daughters. He advanced up the promotion ladder by purchasing his majority in 1861. In 1867 he purchased the Lieutenant-Colonelcy of the 1st 24th Regiment, then stationed at Malta. In 1872 the regiment was transferred to Gibraltar, where Glyn was promoted to full Colonel. Even here, he was able to hunt into Spain (see photo taken at Gibraltar) which was about the only excitement to be had in this peaceful outpost. (1).

After three pleasant but uneventful years, the regiment was relieved to have a change of posting. At the end of November, the Glyn and most of the 1st 24th embarked on Her Majesty’s Troopship *Simoon* and, thirty-five sailing days later, the ship dropped anchor in Table Bay, Cape Town. Glyn’s appearance at this time could be described as “bristling” with his full wax-tipped moustache and short aggressive looking stature; he looked as if he was on the point of exploding with rage. This appearance, however, belied his true personality. He had a steady and unflappable temperament, though somewhat unimaginative and lethargic. He was fortunate to command some very able officers, including Henry Pulleine who could be relied upon to expertly administer the regiment’s day to day running.

By 1876, Southern Africa was a cauldron of small states and territories, of which the Cape Colony was the richest and largest. To the north lay the diamond-rich territory of Griqualand West which was in a state of ferment and on the verge of rebellion. The Cape Government ordered Colonel Glyn to take his regiment and restore the appointed civil authorities. The march to Kimberley was long and arduous, crossing mountains and the dreary dry Great Karoo plain. Keeping up a steady pace through the heat of the African days, the 1st 24th took two months to cover the seven hundred miles. When they arrived, they found that their presence alone was enough to stifle the rebellion and there was little more to do than march all the way back to the Cape. One positive aspect of the long march was that the regiment was now physically hardened and ready for the tough campaign that was looming to the north-east.

In the meantime, there was more than enough time for recreation in the form of hunting. As the fox does not exist in southern Africa, the nearest equivalent quarry was the black-backed Cape Jackal. Colonel Glyn, as Master of the Hunt, kept a full pack of hounds and three hunters. He appointed his three Irish subalterns, Daly, Hodson and Coghill, as Whips. His officers viewed Glyn with affection and Coghill wrote,

The Colonel is good a little man as ever breathed has what amounts to monomania, ‘unting’ being ‘is ‘obby’.

They exercised the pack three times a week and sometimes went hunting for up to ten days at a time. Besides hunting, Glyn and his officers organised small game and partridge shoots.

While it was undeniably true that Glyn enjoyed his hunting, it was common knowledge that he craved male companionship as an escape from his all-female household. His wife, Anne, had become that most formidable of women, 'The Colonel's Wife', and she gave her easy-going husband little peace.

The Glyns regarded the regimental officers as part of their own family. Neville Coghill was a particular favourite and it is not inconceivable that he was looked upon as the son Glyn never had. When he had arrived in Cape Town, he had been taken into their home until his own quarters were ready. Full of charm, he not only rode well but he was also a good dancer and particularly popular with the Glyn women. He was even asked by Mrs Glyn to organise a quadrille for a ball given by the Governor-General's wife, Lady Barkly. (2)

The pleasant round of socialising came to an end with problems in the Transkei, east of Cape Colony. Sir Bartle Frere ordered the 1st 24th to this trouble spot and appointed Colonel Glyn as Commander in the Transkei, with the rank of Colonel of the Staff and Brevet Brigadier-General. In a frustrating campaign that involved three columns sweeping the country, the Xhosa foe was seldom persuaded to stand and be shot at. They finally made a determined stand at a stream called Nyumaga, where, on the 14th January, they were routed by Glyn's men. (3) Another fight took place at Centane in February where the Xhosa were again beaten by the superior firepower of the British. By keeping the Xhosas on the move, the British wore down their will to resist. Despite this successful campaign, General Cunynghame was removed from overall command and Lieutenant-General Frederick Augustus Thesiger was appointed in his place. There was little for the new Commander to do except to keep the Xhosa on the move until they submitted in the summer of 1878.

The Regiment had performed well and duly received the thanks of the Governor. Colonel Glyn received high praise from both the Duke of Cambridge and Sir Bartle Frere and, in a more tangible form of gratitude; he was made a Companion of the Bath. Under Glyn's command, the 1st 24th had gained a reputation for good behaviour in the towns where they were stationed. They were also highly experienced at campaigning in South Africa and were already designated to be the army's backbone in the next step in Frere's expansionist plan. The feeling amongst the Governor and the military was that the subjugation of the Xhosa was little more than a prelude to a confrontation with the far more formidable Zulus.

Glyn and his regiment were ordered to Pietermaritzburg in Natal where the Regimental Headquarters were established. Sir Bartle Frere also left Cape Town and took up residence at the nearby Government House where he could more effectively connive with General Thesiger and keep at bay his opponents in the Natal government. (4) As war with the Zulus became inevitable, Coghill asked Glyn to find him a place on his staff as soon as Sir Bartle Frere would release him.

The build up of forces in Natal coincided with the ending of the long drought and the following torrential rains made the assembling and dispersal of the invasion forces along the frontier difficult. It was on the 30th November that Colonel Glyn bade farewell to his wife and daughters and, to the accompaniment of the band, led his Regiment out of Pietermaritzburg towards the desolate post of Helpmakaar. Enduring constant heavy rain and deep mud, the Column took a week to cover the one hundred miles to the Biggarsberg plateau overlooking the Buffalo River valley and the frontier with Zululand.

Colonel Glyn had been given command of Number 3 Column, which became known as the Central Column. (5) Assembling stores and additional manpower, Helpmakaar grew into a sprawling encampment of tents, huts, wagons, livestock and stores. Glyn had a staff that were largely strangers to him and were newcomers to South Africa. His Principal Staff Officer was the contentious and egocentric Major Cornelius Clery, who had originally served in this capacity with Colonel Evelyn Wood's Number 4 Column (the Left Flank or Northern Column). He had been transferred at Lord Chelmsford's request, probably to ensure that the easy-going Glyn kept to his task.

Clery, ever critical of his superiors, described Glyn as "a guileless, unsuspecting man, very upright and scrupulously truthful, yet a slow, not to say lethargic temperament." He undoubtedly was contrasting the relaxed unambitious Glyn with the energetic and talented Wood.

Nonetheless, Glyn was experienced in campaigning and relished the coming invasion. It therefore came as great blow to him when Chelmsford and his staff, instead of establishing an independent force headquarters, attached themselves to Glyn's Column. Chelmsford, ever the considerate gentleman he was, sought to assure Glyn that he would not interfere in the running of the column. In practice this did not work. With two staffs, each jealous of the other and, in Chelmsford's case, high handed and arrogant, there was considerable friction. Clery and Chelmsford's Military Secretary, Lieutenant-Colonel John Crealock both lacked diplomacy but possessed vitriolic tongues which further strained relationships between the two camps. Crealock dismissed Glyn by saying, "*do not expect anything. (of him) He is a purely regimental officer with no ideas beyond it.*" (6)

Glyn and his staff were effectively relegated to mere figureheads. Clery caustically remarked that "Colonel Glyn and his staff were allowed to work the details - posting the guards, etc., and all the interesting work of that kind". This usurping of his command caused Glyn to become disinterested and withdrawn for it was not in his nature to object or challenge any orders. He may well have felt intimidated both by Chelmsford's status and his height. (the tall lanky General towered over his diminutive Column commander). Clery again: "he (Glyn) was scarcely ever seen or heard of, the more so as he got anything but encouragement to interest himself in what was going on".

At the end of December, the 2nd 24th marched into Helpmakaar to join Glyn's 1st 24th, marking the first time that the two battalions served together on campaign.

On the 10th January, the Column descended the twelve miles to Rorke's Drift and went into camp. Glyn was cheered up by the arrival of Coghill, who had ridden from Pietermaritzburg in just three days. He had also brought with him a spare horse for Glyn.

The following day the Central Column crossed the Buffalo River and entered Zululand. If there was any doubt that Chelmsford had assumed command of the Column his letters dispel this fact. In a letter to Frere dated 12th January, he states, "I ordered Colonel Glyn with four Companies 1/24th & 1/3rd Native Contingent to work up under the Kranz in skirmishing order..."

The tone in Chelmsford's dealings with Glyn is one of impatience and some antipathy. Glyn had wanted to fortify both Helpmakaar and Rorke's Drift in accordance with Chelmsford's instructions, but he was overruled. Upon arrival at Isandlwana, Glyn gave instructions for the layout of the camp and, in normal circumstances, would have followed the instructions as laid down in the manual for field operations. He would have had trenches dug or stone walls constructed and a wagon laager formed. As it was, Chelmsford felt that it would take a week to entrench the camp and some of the wagons were scheduled return to Rorke's Drift for further supplies. Chelmsford also considered that the position of the camp possessed such a commanding view into Zululand that the Zulus could not possibly take the British unawares.

There were, however, several officers who voiced their concern over the lack of adequate defences and Glyn agreed and could only shake his head in helplessness. Glyn was also fully aware of the confrontation concerning camp defences that had taken place between his senior major, Maj. Dunbar, and Chelmsford's staff. (See June 1998 Journal.) Glyn had also received reports of Zulus massing in the hills to the north-east and suggested sending patrols to reconnoitre. Chelmsford considered this as 'unnecessary'.

Instead, the General acted upon a report he received from Major Dartnell of the Natal Mounted Police commanding a company of NNC. Dartnell stated that the Zulus were in force to his front in the hills ten miles to the south east and his request was for the support of a couple of companies. Thinking this was the main Zulu force, Chelmsford decided to personally lead four companies of 2nd 24th, most of the mounted men and four out of the six guns to tackle the enemy. In a somewhat belated effort to smooth Glyn's ruffled feathers, Chelmsford offered him the command of the force. Glyn instructed Henry Pulleine that he was now in command of the camp and ordered some adjustments to its defence, fully expecting that the camp would be struck the next day and marched to rejoin the main Column. He also bade farewell to Coghill, who was incapacitated with an injured knee and unable to leave his camp bed. (7)

At four o'clock on the morning of Wednesday 22nd January, Chelmsford led the Column out of Isandlwana and marched towards the south-east to join Major Dartnell. The day before, Dartnell had fought a number of inconclusive skirmishes with the Zulus, who had ominously melted away into the hills. It was then decided to look for a suitable campsite for the Central Column. To this end, Glyn took the infantry and artillery and found a site in the Mangeni Valley. Chelmsford and his staff remained at the site of Dartnell's bivouac having received a report at about 9.30am that the Zulus were advancing on the camp at Isandlwana. Confident that they would be repulsed, he was not particularly perturbed. Again, around midday, when the sound of distant artillery fire could be heard, Chelmsford was not unduly concerned. Even a message requesting his return to Isandlwana was not acted upon with any urgency until three o'clock. Chelmsford then collected the column together but it was not until six thirty that it could set off for Isandlwana.

On the march back, there was confirmation from an eyewitness, Rupert Lonsdale, that a disaster had overtaken the camp. It was with caution and trepidation that Chelmsford and Glyn entered the camp after nightfall. Forbidding the use of lanterns, the men bivouacked, surrounded all about by the mutilated corpses of their friends and comrades. When moonlight permitted, they could make out the horrors that were in store for them when dawn broke. Blood, brains and viscera covered the grass so that those who had lain down to rest were caked with the grisly remains of the slaughter.

In order to spare his men further distress, Chelmsford ordered a return to Natal before dawn. As the dejected column trudged along in stunned silence towards the Buffalo River, they were passed by a Zulu impi coming in the opposite direction from Rorke's Drift. Both sides passed each other without seeking a confrontation, all aggression had been drained from both groups and the British, having spent the day skirmishing, were desperately short of ammunition. The British, expecting to find that Rorke's Drift had been razed to the ground and its occupants slaughtered, found instead that the defenders had put up an effective defence and had inflicted many casualties, which explained the subdued behaviour of the Zulu warriors. Pausing only to congratulate the defenders, Chelmsford and his staff rode off for Pietermaritzburg to report the disaster. Colonel Glyn, in a complete state of shock at the loss of his regiment, was left to clear up the mess and establish a fortified camp on an adjacent hillock. (8)

Fearing that the Zulus would attack at any time, Glyn had a strong perimeter built around the camp and made everyone move inside. No tents were allowed except for the Rorke's Drift survivors who were provided with the only large groundsheet for protection, the remaining garrison was crammed into the small defended area, which was soon churned into a quagmire. Without tents, blankets or change of clothing and cold steady rain falling, the men began to suffer badly. Rotting stores and poor sanitation together with a monotonous diet

contributed to the low morale that afflicted everyone. All medical supplies had been destroyed when the Zulus set fire to the hospital and the camp sick list, which included Lt. Chard, grew steadily.

The grieving Colonel Glyn withdrew into his shell of despondency and took little interest in the misery around him. Without doubt, he was displaying all the symptoms of a breakdown. Not only did he feel bereaved by the loss of his regiment; he also expressed the feeling that he should have been with his men as they fought for their lives, a common enough emotion amongst survivors. Captain Walter Park Jones of the Royal Engineers, however, was not at all sympathetic and expressed what many felt. "*Col. Glyn (our chief) does nothing and is effete*".

It was not until 4th February that a patrol led by Major Wilson Black discovered the bodies of Coghill and Melvill on the Natal bank of the Buffalo River. A further search found the Queen's Colour in the river some half a mile downstream. A cairn of stones was piled on the bodies and the colour was taken back to Rorke's Drift. Glyn was moved to tears when he received the flag and learned of the fate of his favourite young officers.

At the end of February, conditions had become so bad that a new fort was built nearby and named after Lieutenant Melvill. Helpmakaar was also fortified but in both instances, conditions continued to be grim. From the latter site, it was possible, with the aid of a telescope, to observe the battlefield of Isandlwana. The vultures wheeled overhead for weeks and the ground became white with bleaching bones. The first casualties of Isandlwana to be interred were Coghill and Melvill on 14th April in a ceremony attended by Glyn. While the isolated Glyn was suffering both mentally and physically at Rorke's Drift, Lord Chelmsford and his followers were attempting to play down their role in the disaster. In a subtle piece of responsibility shifting, Chelmsford stated that, "Colonel Glyn was solely responsible" and, "that Colonel Glyn fully and explicitly accepted this responsibility cannot, however, affect the ultimate responsibility of the General-in-Command". This attempt to share the blame with Glyn rang hollow, as it was generally known that Glyn had little say in matters. Chelmsford's staff contributed to the growing controversy by saying that it was Glyn's failure to entrench the camp that caused it to be overrun. As he was commander of the Central Column, the blame should be firmly laid at his door.

It was Major Clery who silenced this tactic by producing Chelmsford's note to Glyn stating that the ground was too rocky to dig and, as the camp was soon to be moved, hardly worth fortifying.

Anne Glyn, recovering from the terrible news, was incensed at the attempts to blame her husband and was outspoken in her criticism of Chelmsford. Glyn, himself, seemed too numb to do more than briefly give the facts without comment to the Board of Enquiry. Chelmsford then turned to Colonel Durnford as the conveniently dead scapegoat.

When, eventually, a cavalry burial party went to Isandlwana in May, Glyn accompanied them. He made a rather unusual request that the remains of his regiment should be left to be buried by the regiment. This emotional request was allowed but it was not until the end of June, six months after the event, that the remains of the 1st 24th at Isandlwana were interred under three large cairns.

As the months passed, so reinforcements began to reach South Africa and Chelmsford could put his new invasion plans into effect. Despite his antipathy towards Glyn, Chelmsford appointed him to command the First Infantry Brigade, which comprised of the 2nd 21st, the newly re-constituted 1st 24th, 58th and 94th Regiments. These were all 'green' and untried soldiers. While on the march into Zululand, the nervous night guards of the 58th precipitated a furious firefight with their own men who expended much ammunition but fortunately no loss of life.

Chelmsford wrote to Evelyn Wood from the assembly point at Dundee, "I am forced to make Glyn a Brigadier with Newdigate, as there is absolutely no one who is better!" He went on with a remark that showed that Clery's defence of Glyn still rankled,

The camp here shows that neither he (Glyn) nor Clery have learnt anything from Isandlwana! - The latter is I fear an impostor in the Field - His place is that of Professor at a military school.

After several delays, the Second Invasion got underway on 31st May when Glyn led his brigade across the border. Within a day, Chelmsford was further devastated by the news that Louis Napoleon, the Prince Imperial, had been killed while on a patrol led by Capt. J.B. Carey. A Field Court Martial was convened and Colonel Glyn was appointed President. The court listened to the evidence regarding the culpability of Carey and found him guilty but did not publish its' findings, preferring to refer the matter to Horse Guards. Carey was sent home to face the music.

The advance into Zululand towards the capital of Ulundi continued at a snail's pace. Chelmsford, ever mindful of Isandlwana, had fortified supply depots built along the route. He also was careful to laager and entrench his camp each night. Eventually, they were within sight of Ulundi. Much to the disappointment of the 1st 24th, they were ordered to remain guarding the camp by the White Umfolozi River, while the rest of the brigade advanced on Ulundi. Glyn did take with him eight officers of the old 1st 24th and they were with him in the huge square upon which Cetshwayo's army was finally destroyed.

For the 24th, the war was over and they began the long march back to Pietermaritzburg, where the Glyns were reunited. Then they travelled to the encampment at Pinetown, where Colonel Glyn had the pleasant duty

of presenting the Victoria Cross to Surgeon-Major James Reynolds (Rorke's Drift) and Lieutenant Edward Browne 1st 24th (Hlobane & Kambula).

Finally, the 24th embarked on the troopship *Egypt* and set sail for England on the 27th August. Because of mechanical problems, the journey took four weeks to complete. During that time the redoubtable Anne Glyn used her needlework skills to repair the tattered Queen's Colour. On their arrival at Gosport, the Duke of Cambridge, who expressed his sorrow that so few of the old soldiers of the 24th had returned home, greeted them. In May 1880, Glyn relinquished his command of the 1st 24th and took charge of the Brigade Depot at Brecon. The following year, the regiment was given the new title of 'The South Wales Borderers'.

In 1882 Richard Glyn was promoted to Major General and appointed a KCB. He eventually retired as a Lieutenant General and lived at Mortimer in Berkshire. A sad and stooped little man, Glyn's remaining years were overshadowed by the memory of his lost family on the rocky slopes of Isandlwana. In 1898 he was honoured with the title of Colonel of the South Wales Borders. It was in this capacity that he saw off his old regiment as they went off to South Africa again, this time to fight the Boers. Within a few months of their departure, he died on 22nd November 1900 and was buried in the family grave at Ewell, Surrey.

Acknowledgements.

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The Red Soldier by Frank Emery

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References.

1. The Duke of Wellington brought fox hunting to Spain during the Peninsular War. Gibraltar had its own pack of hounds called the Royal Calpe Hunt.
2. Lieutenant Neville Coghill (1852-1879) joined the 1/24th at Gibraltar in 1871. He was ambitious and actively sought to serve as Aide-de-camp to General Sir Arthur Cunynghame, Commander of British Forces in South Africa. He was later appointed ADC to the Governor, Sir Bartle Frere. It was Glyn's wish that Coghill should succeed Lieutenant Teignmouth Melvill as Adjutant when it appeared that the latter was returning to England. In the event, Melvill stayed and Coghill accompanied Glyn as his Orderly Officer with the Centre Column.
3. Coincidentally this was the twenty-ninth anniversary of the Battle of Chillianwala forever associated with the 24th Regiment.
4. On the death of his father on 5th October 1878, Frederick Thesiger assumed the title of the second Baron Chelmsford.
5. Glyn was at this time the second highest-ranking officer after Chelmsford.
6. Crealock, who painted throughout the campaign, made a couple of caricatures of Glyn, neither very flattering. The best known shows him as a pipe-smoking Father Christmas look-alike.
7. A couple of years earlier Coghill had been stabbed in the leg with an assegai thrown by Daly in a bout of horse-play in the Mess at Cape Town. Although it had healed, it had left a weakness. While on a patrol the previous day, they had stopped at a deserted kraal and, in attempt to catch a chicken for the pot, Coghill had aggravated his old wound which left him *hors de combat*.
8. The 24th had lost 21 officers and 578 other ranks. Amongst those killed were Glyn's hunting companions, Daly, Hodson and Coghill. Anne Glyn particularly mourned the death of Henry Pulleine. Among the few of the 1st 24th to escape were Pte. John Williams, Glyn's groom, and Pte. Thomas Parry, Pulleine's groom, who rode their respective officers' spare horses to safety.