

# Citations for VC's won at Rorkes Drift

The text below, from the London Gazette of 2 May 1879, provides an early published description of these actions for the infantry and engineer recommendations.

## Supplement to the London Gazette

War Office, May 2, 1879.

**The Queen** has been graciously pleased to signify Her intention to confer the decoration of the Victoria Cross on the under mentioned Officers and Soldiers of Her Majesty's Army, whose claims have been submitted for Her Majesty's approval, for their gallant conduct in the defence of Rorke's Drift, on the occasion of the attack by the Zulus, as recorded against their names, viz.:—

| Regiment                    | Names   | Acts of Courage for which recommended  |
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| Royal Engineers             | <b>Lieutenant (now Captain and Brevet Major) J.R.M. Chard</b> | For their gallant conduct at the defence of Rorke's Drift, on the occasion of the attack by the Zulus on the 22nd and 23rd January, 1879.  |
| 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment | <b>Lieutenant (now Captain and Brevet Major) G. Bromhead</b>  | The Lieutenant-General commanding the troops reports that, had it not been for the fine example and excellent behaviour of these two Officers under the most trying circumstances, the defence of Rorke's Drift post would not have been conducted with that intelligence and tenacity which so essentially characterised it.<br>The Lieutenant-General adds, that its success must, in a great degree, be attributable to the two young Officers who exercised the Chief Command on the occasion in question.   |
| 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment | <b>Private John Williams</b>                                  | Private John Williams was posted with Private Joseph Williams, and Private William Horrigan, 1st Battalion 24th Regiment, in a distant room of the hospital, which they held for more than an hour, so long as they had a round of ammunition left: as communication was for the time cut off, the Zulus were enabled to advance and burst open the door ; they dragged out Private Joseph Williams and two of the patients, and assagaied them. Whilst the Zulus were occupied with the slaughter of these men a lull took place, during which Private John Williams, who, with two patients, were the only men now left alive in this ward, succeeded in knocking a hole in the partition, and in taking the two patients into the next ward, where he found Private Hook. |
| 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment | <b>Private Henry Hook</b>                                     | These two men together, one -man working whilst the other fought and held the enemy at bay with his bayonet, broke through three more partitions, and were thus enabled to bring eight patients through a small window into the inner line of defence.   |
| 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment | <b>Private William Jones and Private Robert Jones</b>         | In another ward, facing the hill, Private William Jones and Private Robert Jones defended the post to the last, until six out of the seven patients it contained had been removed. The seventh, Sergeant Maxfield, 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment, was delirious from fever. Although they had previously dressed him, they were unable to induce him to move. When Private Robert Jones returned to endeavour to carry him away, he found him being stabbed by the Zulus as he lay on his bed.   |

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| 2nd<br>Battalion<br>24th<br>Regiment | <b>Corporal William<br/>Allen and Private<br/>Frederick Hitch</b> | It was chiefly due to the courageous conduct of these men that communication with the hospital was kept up at all. Holding together at all costs a most dangerous post, raked in reverse by the enemy's fire from the hill, they were both severely wounded, but their determined conduct enabled the patients to be withdrawn from the hospital, and when incapacitated by their wounds from fighting, they continued, as soon as their wounds had been dressed, to serve out ammunition to their comrades during the night. |
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## MEMORANDUM

Lieutenants Melville and Chard would receive their Victoria Crosses in 1907, after the rule restricting posthumous awards was revoked.

Lieutenant Melville, of the 1st Battalion 24th Foot, on account of the gallant efforts made by him to save the Queen's Colour of his Regiment after the disaster at Isandlwana, and also Lieutenant Coghill, 1st Battalion 24th Foot, on account of his heroic conduct in endeavouring to save his brother officer's life, would have been recommended to Her Majesty for the Victoria Cross had they survived.