



A Handful of Heroes, Rorke's Drift: Facts, Myths and Legends

Katie Stossel

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Thanks to newly discovered letters and documents, A Handful of Heroes updates the history of the defense of Rorke's Drift, which will forever be one of the most celebrated British feats of arms.

Remarkably, after such prolonged historical scrutiny, the author's research proves that there is yet more to discover about this famous incident of the Zulu War 1879 and her superbly researched book reveals a number of myths that have distorted what happened during the gallant defense of the small Mission Station. For example, it transpires that the isolated outpost was already well prepared for an attack by experts in field defense. While this in no way denigrates the heroic efforts of the heavily outnumbered defenders, it does help to explain the successful defense against seemingly overwhelming odds

This fascinating and highly readable account goes on to examine in detail the famous Chard Report which has long been relied on by historians and authors. Doubts emerge as to its accuracy and evidence is provided which suggests the Report's author was coerced by a senior officer in order to protect the latter's reputation. Likewise the letters of August Hammar, a young Swedish visitor to the Mission, put Reverend Otto Witt's false account into perspective.

These and other revelations make A Handful of Heroes a fresh and important addition to the bibliography of this legendary Zulu War engagement.

REVIEWS

If you are interested in a wider look at the story of Rorke's Drift, and finding out more about the Facts, Myths and Legends of this famous event, you will find this an excellent examination to broaden your knowledge.

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