



CLUB LECTURE

The Battle of Isandlwana

Speaker - ROB CASKIE

Wednesday 28th May 2008



The Battle at Isandlwana stunned Victorian Britain.....it was unthinkable that a "native" army armed mainly with shields and stabbing spears could defeat the troops of a western power armed with modern rifles and artillery - let alone wipe it out. Until news of this military disaster reached Britain, the Zulu War was considered as just another colonial bushfire war - the sort that simmered constantly in many regions of the British Empire - however the loss of a complete Battalion of troops transformed the nation's attitude towards the war.

The Zulu War began as an expansionist campaign in early January 1879, when British colonial officials and Lord Chelmsford, the Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, perceived the independent Zulu Kingdom as a threat to the British colony of Natal due to a shared long border along the Tugela River. In December 1878, following the murder of a party of British subjects by a group of Zulus, the British authorities issued an ultimatum to the ruler of the Zulu Kingdom, Cetshwayo, requiring him to surrender the Zulus for trial. As no satisfactory response was forthcoming, Chelmsford planned an attack on Zululand and crossed the Buffalo River at Rorke's Drift on 11th January 1879 with a force of 1,200 men who invaded in three columns. Days into the invasion, it was jeopardised when around 12,000 Zulus virtually annihilated Chelmsford's forces at Isandlwana - a battle regarded as one of the greatest military disasters of British colonial history - with the few survivors struggling back across the river to Natal. In the course of the battle, Lieutenants Melvill and Coghill died attempting to save the Queen's Colours and were subsequently awarded the first posthumous Victoria Crosses.

Rob Caskie worked alongside the late David Rattray, a gifted raconteur-historian who was murdered at his Fugitive's Drift Lodge home in April 2007 and continues to arrange and guide the Lodge's renowned tours of the Zulu War battlefields. Following Rattray's unique narrative style, Rob brings to life the history of the Battle of Isandlwana while putting it in the context of 19th century South Africa's relationship with the British Crown and between the Zulu and the white man.

A second lecture, The Battle for Rorke's Drift - *the epic defence against impossible odds where eleven Victoria Crosses were won* - is planned for next year.

Event Details

Time: 6.30 pm Reception
7.00 pm Lecture followed by the buffet supper at approx 8.15 pm

Cost: Reception & Lecture: Members - £20.00 Guests - £25.00 per person
Buffet Supper with wine: Members - £25.00 Guests - £30.00 per person
Reception/Lecture & Supper Members - £40.00 Guests - £50.00 per person

To Book: Kindly complete the booking form below and return it, together with a cheque in payment, to the Membership Secretary, Frances Watt by 20th May 2008

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To: Miss Frances Watt, The Cavalry and Guards Club, 127 Piccadilly, London W1J 7PX

Club Lecture & Buffet Supper – Wednesday 28th May 2008

From: [PLEASE PRINT]

Tel N°: **Email:**

I would like to attend: The Reception & Lecture with guest(s)
(please ✓ as appropriate) The Reception/ Lecture & Buffet Supper with guest(s)
 Only the Buffet Supper withguest(s)

Enclosed is a cheque (made payable to 'The Cavalry and Guards Club') in the sum of: £.....

Kindly print the names of your guests on the reverse of this slip. Thank you.