

THE FINE AND RARE 1/24TH FOOT ZULU WAR AND BOER WAR DSO GROUP AWARDED TO AN OFFICER WHO AFTER TAKING PART IN THE BATTLE OF QUINTANA IN 1878 WHERE HIS COMPANY BORE A CONSPICUOUS PART, WAS PART OF THE SMALL GARRISON AT HELPMEKAAR THAT LEFT FOR RORKE'S DRIFT ON 22ND JANUARY 1879 ONLY TO TURNED BACK WHEN IT WAS SEEN TO BE ON FIRE AND PRESUMED TAKEN. ARRIVING BACK AT HELPMEKAAR AS FUGITIVES FROM ISANDHLWANA BEGAN TO ARRIVE, THEY PREPARED THE OUTPOST FOR THE DEFENCE AGAINST AN ATTACK THEY WERE SURE WOULD FOLLOW. HAVING BEEN PROMOTED MAJOR, HE WAS AWARDED THE D.S.O OR HIS SERVICES DURING THE BOER WAR



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER, V.R., SOUTH AFRICA 1877-79, CLASP, 1877-8 'LIEUT G. C. PALMES, 1-24TH FOOT'; QUEEN'S SOUTH AFRICA 1899-1902, 3 CLASPS, CAPE COLONY, ORANGE FREE STATE, JOHANNESBURG 'MAJOR, G. C. PALMES, D.S.O., S. W. BORD.'; KING'S SOUTH AFRICA, 2 CLASPS, SOUTH AFRICA 1901, SOUTH AFRICA 1902 'MAJ. G. C. PALMES, D.S.O., S. WALES BRD.'.

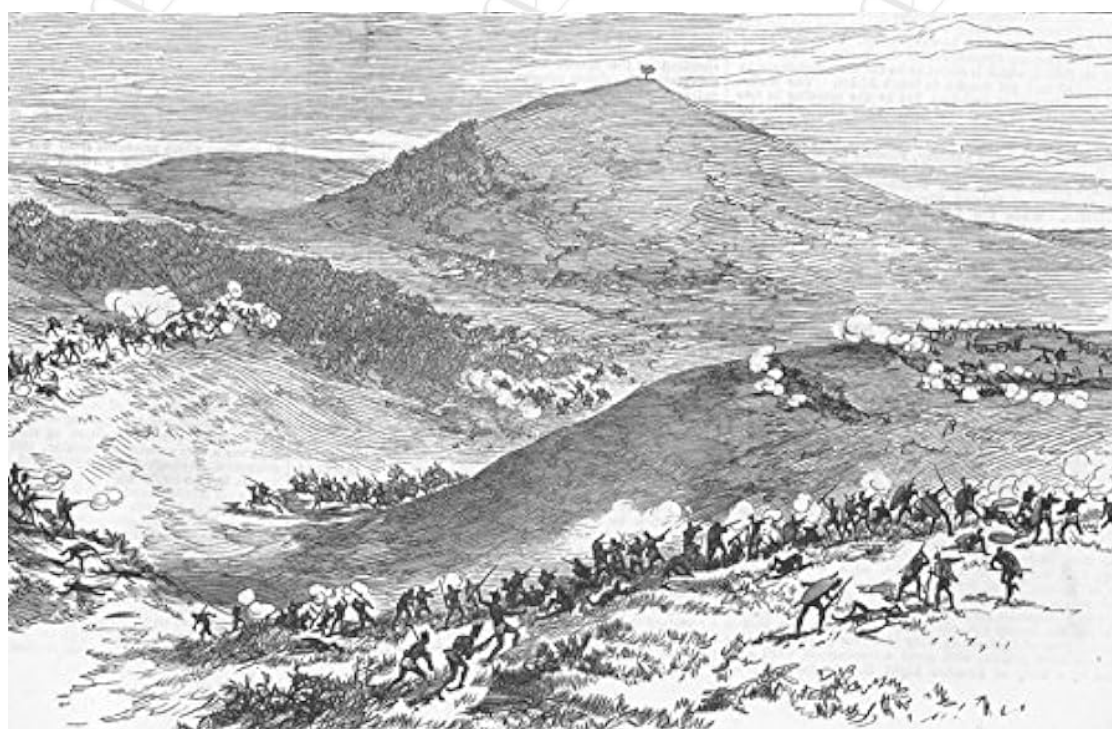
George Champney Palmes was born on 9 February 1857, third son of the Venerable James Palmes, Delhi Durbar. He entered the Army on 10 September 1875, as 2nd Lieutenant, 24th Foot, becoming Lieutenant on 10 September 1877. He served in 'G' Company under Captain Rainforth during the South African War of 1877-79, taking part in the Kaffir campaigns including the operations against the Galekas. Here 'G' Company, along with 'D' Company bore a conspicuous part at the battle of Quintana, being the only two Imperial Companies present. During the Zulu War of 1879, Palmes was at Helpmekaar at the time of Isandhlwana, his company had been ordered to take over from 'B' Company, 24th at Rorkes Drift several days prior to the battle but due to some miscommunication they did not depart until 22nd January* (see note). Now joined by Captain Upcher's 'D' Company, 'G' Company moved to Rorkes Drift but before reaching met Major Spalding who informed them that Rorkes Drift had been taken by the enemy. Fires could be clearly seen at the Drift and it was decided the wise option would be to return to Helpmekaar. On their return they greeted by a small number of fugitives from Isandhlwana and here they prepared for the defence of Helpmekaar against

an attack they were sure would follow. This attack never happened and they were relieved within a few days. During the rest of the War Palmes and 'G' Company served at various bases on the lines of communication.

A fine article on the defence of Helpmakaar can be se here:

https://www.anglozuluwar.com/images/Journal_19/TheDefenceofHelpmekaar.pdf

**TNA (PRO), WO 33/34, Inclosure in No. 168: Glyn to Bellairs, 7th May 1879. It is now so long ago since the occurrences under investigation that, though I have a very distinct recollection of the facts, I regret I cannot be very precise as to the dates. I sent orders to Helpmakaar to await the arrival of Captain Rainforth with his Company, directing him to move down to Rorke's Drift at once. This order, as I subsequently learnt from Captain Rainforth, never reached him. A few days later I sent a second order to Capt. Rainforth to the same purport. To the best of my recollection this order was also sent to him directly, but either this or a third order (which finding neither of the first two had been complied with, I despatched) was enclosed to him under cover to the late Capt., Mostyn, the then Senior Officer at Helpmakaar and who had also in the meantime arrived there. But although Capt. Mostyn moved his Company down at once, in compliance with the instructions transmitted to him at the same time, and arrived at Isandhlwana on the 21st January (I think) yet, Captain Rainforth, it is believed, never received this order either. The order sent under cover to Capt. Mostyn was most unmistakably sent off correctly as Major Clery did it up himself and expressed himself as being unable to comprehend Capt. Rainforth's non-arrival.*



THE BATTLE OF QUINTANA

He was promoted to Captain in June 1882 and became Major in June 1892. He served in the South African War 1899-1902, was Commandant of Klerksdorp, and took part in operations in Orange Free State, Feb-May 1900, including actions at Karee Siding, Vet River (5 and 6 May) and Zand River. Operations in the Transvaal in May and June 1900, including the action near Johannesburg, and West of Pretoria, Aug to 29 Nov 1900. Operations in the Orange River Colony, June to August 1900. Operations in the Transvaal, 30 Nov 1900 to May 1902.



He was mentioned in despatches London Gazette 10 September 1901, and created a companion of the Distinguished Service Order London Gazette 27 September 1901, '*in recognition of services during the operations in South Africa.*' The insignia were sent to Lord Kitchener in South Africa and were presented by Brigadier-General Barber at Klerksdorp on 16 March 1902. Major Palmes retired on 23 July 1902 and died on 22 October 1946.



Note; Although Lieutenant Palmes served with his Regiment during the Zulu War of 1879, he did not cross the border into Zululand and like many others of the 1/24th who took part in the war but did not cross the border, received the 1877-8 clasp.



Condition; minor chipping to green enamel wreath on the first, the others with light contact marks, otherwise GVF. An extremely fine and rare 24th Foot/ South Wales Borderers Officers DSO group