



*Service of Dedication in Memory of  
Lance-Sergeant*

**JAMES TAYLOR**

*2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot*

*'A Defender of Rorke's Drift'*



*11.00am, Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2019  
Holy Trinity Church, Trefnant*

## Introduction

A native of Yorkshire, 25B/82 James Taylor joined the army in 1874 and, as a Lance Sergeant in 'E' Company of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment, was present at the legendary defence of Rorke's Drift which took place in South Africa during the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879.

Along with the rest of the tiny garrison totalling approximately 150 men, LSgt Taylor fought tirelessly against thousands of Zulu warriors as he tried desperately to defend the small supply depot & hospital on the Natal border, just hours after the massacre of over 1300 British troops at Isandlwana several miles away.



The battle raged for twelve hours throughout the night of January 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup>, during which there occurred a frantic evacuation of the hospital after the building was set alight. Following a desperate struggle the Zulu attacks finally lost momentum, & Rorke's Drift was eventually relieved later that morning.

After the battle the heroism of the defenders was recognized by the award of 11 Victoria Crosses & 5 Distinguished Conduct Medals. Seven of the VCs were awarded to members of the 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment, the largest amount ever given to one regiment for a single engagement.

James continued to serve with his regiment (re-named the *South Wales Borderers* in 1881) in Gibraltar, India & Burma, finally returning home late in 1893; he discharged from the army the following year and lived with his family in Manchester before eventually settling in Trefnant.

James passed away on 15 November 1919 aged 64 years, & was buried with full military honours in Holy Trinity Churchyard. A metal

cross simply bearing his initials and year of death once marked the grave but disappeared some years ago; this superb new headstone will now serve as a permanent reminder of James Taylor's involvement in one of the most famous episodes in British military history. His mother, Sarah, also rests with him.

His South African campaign medal is currently on display at the regimental museum of the Royal Welsh, Brecon – the descendant regiment of the 24<sup>th</sup> Foot/South Wales Borderers.

## Order of Service

Introduction & welcome

A short account of LSgt James Taylor by Mr. Graham Mason  
(Anglo Zulu War researcher)

Service of dedication by the Revd. Colin Mansley  
Holy Trinity Church, Trefnant

(On completion, move to graveside)

### Unveiling Ceremony

#### **The Exhortation:**

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn,  
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,  
We Will Remember Them*

**All:** "We Will Remember Them"

Memorial unveiled by;

**Mrs. Sylvia Hughes** - Great granddaughter of James Taylor  
**Miss. Lesley Davies** - Great great granddaughter of James Taylor

*The Last Post - Silence - Reveille*

### Wreath-laying Ceremony

**HM Lord Lieutenant of Clwyd:** Mr. Henry Fetherstonhaugh OBE  
**Chairman of Denbighshire County Council:** Cllr Meirick Davies  
**Family of LSgt James Taylor:** Mrs. Sylvia Hughes & Miss. Lesley Davies  
**The Royal Welsh:** 'D' Coy 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion The Royal Welsh  
**The Royal Marines:** Drum Major T. Needham  
**The Royal British Legion:** Mr. G. Rogerson  
**The Royal Welch Fusiliers/Royal Welsh Comrades Association:** Mr. G. Brazier  
**SSAFA:** SSAFA Clwyd  
**Help For Heroes:** Karen Jackson  
**Army Cadet Force:** Denbigh Detachment

### Final Prayer & Blessing

Including the Regimental Collect of the Royal Welsh



## Acknowledgements

The family of James Taylor & Drum Major T. Needham RM would like to offer their sincere thanks & gratitude to *Vale of Clwyd Memorials* who have generously donated, inscribed & erected the headstone; their invaluable contribution has ensured that the forgotten grave of one of the Defenders of Rorke's Drift shall not remain unmarked.

Also for their much valued assistance:

*Regimental HQ, The Royal Welsh  
The Royal British Legion, North Wales District  
Revd. Colin Mansley, Holy Trinity Church  
Trefnant Church Committee  
Organisations & individuals providing wreaths  
Mr. Graham Mason  
The 1879 Group*



*Some of the men who defended Rorke's Drift; 'B' Company 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment*

On completion of the ceremony all those present are invited to an informal reception inside the church.

Any donations to the Regimental Museum of the Royal Welsh, Brecon, would be gratefully received –

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VALE OF CLWYD  
MEMORIALS



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