

The Anglo-Boer Wars Blog Spot

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The following short articles are taken from my blog which features items on a variety of topics not just casualties.

The selected articles relate to casualties and complement the main display.

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Casualties on-line

Sunday, 8 February 2015

There are two sources on-line for British Empire casualties; Ancestry and The Register which is the one I have been compiling for about ten years now.

The Ancestry data comes from Naval & Military a well-known publisher of military history books, maps and other source material.

In helping a family history researcher on AngloBoerwar.com I was made aware that the casualty data on Ancestry compiled by Naval & Military has been edited to remove facts such as the severity of a wound (slight, severe, dangerous), cause of death and most importantly dates of death. This last piece of information really important and knowing the severity of a wound adds colour to the story of a man's military service.

I have found a number of examples where the wound data is abbreviated to just "Wounded":

Pte 29832 WH Grantham IY - "Dangly wounded Accidentally"
Pte 32616 J Renton IY - "Sev wounded Self Inflicted"
Pte 26744 JH Wilson IY - "Slightly wounded"

Dates of death published in the casualty roll are missing from Ancestry, here are two examples:

Pte 482 AL Tilley SAC - "Wounded 9-11-1901 Died 13-11-1901" - the wounding is shown but the date of death is omitted, and the same for Pte 31776 LR Stewart Scottish Horse

Some men died of unusual causes which are not noted in Ancestry, but simply recorded as "Died" or "Killed":

Pte B Smith, Nesbitt's Horse - bee stings
Trpr TC Fenton, BSAP - killed by a lioness
Trpr S Smart Steinaecker's Horse - killed by a lion
Pte W Cunningham 2nd Dragoons - gored by a bull

The internet has been hugely positive in making research material more easily available. But, where the data has been pulled from original material it is clear some companies are more concerned with profit and show little respect for the historical record or the people they expect to pay to view the data.

There are also errors in the Ancestry casualty records, the non-existent 12th Hussars make an appearance: Pte 3098 W Muirhead was in the 13th Hussars. Such errors are in every single source I have consulted to build The Register which is the only casualty roll that is corrected and enhanced. When errors are found in The Register, they are fixed immediately - no other online resource does this.

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And when looking at casualties The Register offers unique gazetteer data to help you locate the place a casualty occurred.

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Loxton's Horse - The Forty Thieves

Wednesday, 20 April 2016

Loxton's Horse was a small and little known unit on the British side during the Anglo-Boer War. They were raised for the duration of the war only like many other colonial units. But, Loxton's Horse was one of what were known as "loot corps", whose purpose was to loot Boer farms – an extension of the concentration camp policy and farm burning. "Loot corps" were authorised by Lord Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief of British forces in south Africa.

Loxton's Horse was raised in early 1901 at Newcastle, Natal by Samuel Loxton who with his two brothers all won Distinguished Conduct Medals in the war. They were all in the Natal Corps of Guides and later the Field Intelligence Department. The Loxton's are an early settler family in the eastern Cape. The men were allowed to keep and sell the livestock they captured, but later were paid 1s 6d per day and allowed 75% of the livestock along with forage for one horse. The use of "loot corps" was raised in Parliament but more from the fact the public purse was receiving money from this unorthodox source rather than the morality of "loot corps" in the first place. [House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons and Command, Volume 38]

Contemporary documentary evidence is scarce. The raising of the unit was reported by British newspapers in February 1901. The unit was to operate in the south-eastern Transvaal assisting the troops "by carrying off the enemy's stock and and supplying information of the Boer's movements". Composed of "mostly young colonists possessing a thorough knowledge of the country...They are splendidly mounted, each man having a mounted native servant, leading two horses. They have dubbed themselves "The Forty Thieves". [Aberdeen Journal 25-02-1901]

From a diary entry written by a colonial soldier on 26 February 1901:

"Utrecht district. Today we saw for the first time in this war a looting corps of 28 men called Loxton's Horse. They keep 75% of all they can loot, receiving no pay. This is a big shame as we who have been out 17 months cannot keep a horse, even if we catch them, and these men only follow us when we have cleared the country, like a lot of jackals."

[Coghlan, M. 2004. From the very beginning to the very end. The diary and letters of J B Nicholson, Natal Carbineers. Part 2. Natalia 34: 17-49.]

Loxton's Horse were reported returning to Newcastle on 17 March, 1901 from Utrecht district (Transvaal) "with a large quantity of stock" [Lancashire Evening Post 19-03-1901] In August 1901 they were in the Orange Free State and on the

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20th they suffered their only recorded casualty, Cpl CW Abel killed at Nooitgedacht. Abel is not in the official casualty rolls, nor in The Times newspaper, the information comes from the medal rolls and Steve Watt's In Memoriam. The following month Loxton's Horse were on the Orange Free State border with Basutoland (Lesotho) apparently surrounded by a party of Boers. Pte P Mangnall, 3rd volunteer battalion Manchester Rgt wrote that they and some "Irregular Horse" were sent to rescue Loxton's Horse. However, on the march they met Loxton's Horse who had managed to extricate themselves only losing their "pack horses". [Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser 07-11-1901]

There is a medal roll (WO100/268p26) for Loxton's Horse with just two names, Troopers G Tustin and HH Tod. Apparent from the handwriting is that the roll was originally submitted with Tustin's name in 1906 and the medal issued in 1908, no clasps are indicated. The roll was signed by one Sidney W Reynolds "late OC Loxton's Horse" in Newcastle, Natal on 21 June, 1906. Reynolds, like Loxton's Horse, is mystery too – he does not appear on a medal roll, but there are civilian records for him in the National Archives of South Africa as a farmer in Newcastle. Todd's name was added in the same hand that wrote the note that his medal was issued in 1957, unfortunately there is no address shown. Neither Todd nor Tustin appear on any other medal roll for the war.

Other members of Loxton's Horse are known, and a nominal roll has been constructed primarily from the medal rolls where, fortuitously, service in Loxton's Horse has been noted by an assiduous clerk. There are 19 names, perhaps 1/2 of the total who served with the unit.

Nominal Roll:

1. Abel, CW – Natal Carbineers
2. Berg, Arthur - 1st Scottish Horse
3. Berg, John – previous service unknown
4. Cooper, HF - Natal Corps of Guides, Field Intelligence Department
5. de Jager, LP - Field Intelligence Department
6. Dorey, LA - Natal Police, Field Intelligence Department, Reynold's Scouts
7. Harris, William de Montmorency – Natal Corps of Guides, Field Intelligence Department, died Newcastle, Natal July 1902
8. Hester, Francis Danby – Natal Police, Utrecht-Vryheid Mounted Police, Steinaecker's Horse
9. Loxton, Samuel – founder and commander, Natal Corps of Guides and Field Intelligence Department
10. Malandaine (or Mallandain), R – Field Intelligence Department, Army Service Corps
11. Miller (or Millar), Hugh – Natal Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Imperial Hospital Corps, subsequently Bethune's Mounted Infantry, died of wounds March 1902

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12. Pocket, Arthur A - South African Light Horse
13. Reynolds, Sidney W – sometime commander, previous service unknown, possibly commander of Reynold's Scouts
14. Short, William Kirk - Natal Transport, Field Intelligence Department
15. Taylor, Leonard – Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, Rand Rifles
16. Thomas, Llewellyn Hartly – Brabant's Horse, Natal Corps of Guides, Newcastle Town Guard
17. Tod, HH - previous service unknown
18. Tustin, G Trooper - previous service unknown
19. Wood, H – South African Light Horse, Field Intelligence Department, shown as number 39 Loxton's Horse on the FID KSA roll

The Bergs were brothers and are noted as “served with the Methuen’s Regiment and later Loxton’s Horse” [‘The Norwegian Settlers – Marburg, Natal 1882’ (Marburg Norwegian Lutheran Church, Port Shepstone, 1932), was translated into English in 1967 by A H E Andreasen.]

If you come across anymore references to Loxton's Horse, please let me know.

Many thanks to Brett Hendey for the references from Coghlan and Andreasen; Ian Linney for references to Cooper, Dorey and Short from Field Intelligence Department 1899-1902 Honours and Awards & Casualties & Medal Rolls - compiled by David Buxton (2004), both via www.angloboerwar.com, Elne Watson for the House of Commons and JM Wasserman's DPhil thesis references from Facebook.

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More "secrets" from the Casualty Rolls

Saturday, 30 May 2015

The casualty rolls for the Anglo-Boer War do not tell the whole story, a big problem is that the location given is often the place the casualty return was created. This can be many miles from the actual location and, of course, when trying to research what happened leads you down a false trail. This point was observed when The Gazetteer was published in 1999. The published Gazetteer with its 2400 entries resolved many of these problems allowing researchers to quickly learn the exact location and importantly what occurred leading to the death, wounding or capture of soldiers. This process is on-going.

Two recent findings have led to updates to the gazetteer and casualty details in The Register. In the South African Field Casualty Roll for 11-03-1901 there are casualties for "Balmoral", "nr Balmoral" and "nr Wilge River". Are these incidents connected? The casualty roll gives no clues. Using a fabulous resource "Surrenders" (WO108/372 The National Archives, London) we can find out these casualties are connected and exactly what happened.

On 11 March 1903 a train left Pretoria heading north to Middelburg, a line frequently targeted by Boers. The escort composed of men from a variety of regiments was commanded by a young officer recently arrived in South Africa, 2nd-Lt JP Wilson, Army Service Corps. The train was derailed by an explosion, 2nd-Lt Wilson turned out the escort who lined a ditch and began to return fire on the attacking Boers. 2nd-Lt Wilson spotted a group of Boers advancing up a donga, as he organised a counter-attack he was hit in the thigh losing consciousness immediately. Another part of the defence became disorganised and surrendered forcing the remaining defenders to surrender too. Three men had been killed, three wounded and 38 men surrendered. There is no evidence these men were actually detained and removed from the battlefield, reinforcements from Balmoral arrived. There is no record in the casualty roll nor are any listed in The Times.

Because British soldiers surrendered a court of inquiry was held. 2nd-Lt Wilson and a "Colour-Sgt Butler" (senior NCO) were "honourably acquitted". However, Lord Kitchener in his review, did not feel that Butler's conduct was honourable as he surrendered unwounded. Unfortunately there is no positive identification for "Colour-Sgt Butler".

By checking The Times a casualty was revealed not shown in the Official Casualty roll, Pte 6174 J Scott ("Acott" in The Times), King's Own Scottish Borderers. In the medal rolls Scott is shown simply as "deceased". Nor is Scott shown in Watt's *In Memoriam* indicating he has no known grave and is not listed on a memorial in South Africa.

Additionally, all the casualties for the Berkshire Regiment at Zilikat's Nek (02-08-1900) are recorded in the Official Casualty rolls are recorded as "Rietfontein". There are 15 Rietfonteins in The Gazetteer in all corners of South Africa. Correcting the casualties to Zilikat's Nek helps researchers, and crucially for collectors and dealers focused on "associations" reveals that these casualties

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occurred in a Victoria Cross action for the Berkshires. L-Cpl WJ House was awarded the VC for rescuing a wounded sergeant from under a heavy fire when warned not to do so.

Only one sergeant of the Berkshires is recorded as wounded at Zilikat's Nek, presumably this the man rescued by L-Cpl House: Sgt 3744 A Gibbs, Berkshire Rgt. Unfortunately Gibbs died of his wounds the same day.

Research Puzzles: NL Hawkyard

Thursday, 10 March 2016

Another example of conflicting casualty information but this one is plain weird as the two pieces of information are wildly different. Norman Lewis Hawkyard served as Trooper 26371 Commander-in-Chief's Bodyguard (he had previous service with the Cape Mounted Rifles, discharged "worthless character" and as a Corporal Herschel Native Police).

The South African Field Force casualty roll shows he died of disease at Charlestown, Natal on May 6th, 1901. The Times (surname spelt Hawkeyard) confirms this adding that he succumbed to enteric fever. The medal roll and the nominal roll (WO127) show very clearly that he was killed in action at Aliwal North, Cape Colony on May 6th, 1901. Which is correct? The two locations are a seven hour drive apart, so the location and cause really are in conflict.

To resolve this we have one other source to consult: *In Memoriam* (Steve Watt, University of Natal, 2000). This is a marvellous reference work showing the burial location of thousands of Anglo-Boer War fatalities. The entry for Hawkyard show he is buried in Newcastle, Natal just 45 minutes away from Charlestown. With this evidence it is more likely Hawkyard died in Natal rather than the Cape Colony, and he succumbed to disease. There was no fighting in this part of Natal in May 1901 (or in Aliwal North for that matter). Where does the killed in action information come from? It is impossible to tell.



Hawkyard's QSA medal is currently for sale with Liverpool Medals, who may have acquired it from eBay where it was offered for sale in December 2015. Worryingly Liverpool Medals choose to state that Hawkyard was killed in action and ignore the died of disease stated in the casualty roll. I did write to them with this information,

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which they have ignored. The premium for a killed in action is higher than that for a died of disease.

Caveat Emptor!

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Research Puzzles: "Odd" casualties from war memorials

Monday, 14 March 2016

War memorials are a great source of information and supplement the official casualty rolls, they can provide first names, biographical details, exact cause of death and a clue as to where a man came from.

However, there are names on war memorials that just don't make sense, they are casualties but just cannot be found in the usual sources. I will write about three examples that I recently resolved as they reveal interesting stories and illustrate the need to "keep digging".

After the war the Royal Artillery erected a large memorial on The Mall in London - just down the road from Buckingham Palace. On the plaques arranged by battery are the names of all the gunners who died during the war. There are two that, until, recently were a mystery: Lts FC Fox and GTW Webb. Neither man in the official casualty roll nor in the November 1899 Army List which implies they weren't serving officers during the war, why then are they on the memorial?



FC Fox:

On the casualty rolls there is an entry for a Trooper Francis Charles Fox, Border Mounted Rifles, the only similar record to Lt FC Fox RA; what if any is the connection. This research was resolved quickly by contacting the Library of the Royal Artillery. Their records show Lt FC Fox was killed while serving as Captain with the Border Mounted Rifles. He was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1869 and resigned his commission in 1879. When he was killed at Caesar's Camp on January 6th, 1900 he was quite old for a trooper, fifty perhaps? I double checked his rank with a Border Mounted Rifles collector in South Africa and he was not a captain. Exactly how his name was added to the RA memorial is not known, but he had not served with the regiment for 20 years on his death. There must be other ex-gunners killed in the war who are not included. There is certainly a story to be uncovered on what Fox did between 1879 and 1900.

GTW Webb:

The Register, being an agglomeration of records from many sources, had a record for a GT (George Theodosius) Wynne-Webb, 2nd Lt RGA and Trooper Steinaecker's Horse who died May 28th, 1901 at Pietermaritzburg, previously a

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prisoner released June 6th, 1900 at Waterval. This last record comes from The Times and is not in the official casualty roll, he is described as "attached" to the RGA. Obviously there is a great similarity between GTW Webb and GT Wynne-Webb, but what is the connection between the two records?

A name like "George Theodosius Wynne-Webb" is ripe for internet searching, and so it proved. GTW Webb was born in 1876, educated at Merchant Taylors. He was first commissioned into the Royal Marines in 1894, resigned at his own request in 1895. His service record (ADM196/62/304) refers to "confidential reports". He then joined a militia unit, the Royal Jersey Artillery from which he was commissioned into the RGA in 1897. He left the RGA in July 1899, circumstances unknown. Almost immediately he sailed for southern Africa and on the outbreak of war was in or near Ladysmith where he became attached to the 10th mountain battery RGA. The Digest of Service for the battery describes him as "Mr Webb", hence The Times describing him as "attached". How this relationship came about is not known, perhaps he had pals in the battery who invited him along. Whatever the nature of the relationship "Mr Webb" accompanied the battery into battle on "Mournful Monday" and was captured in the ensuing debacle on October 30th, 1899. On his release from POW camp Mr Webb did not re-join the battery but instead turns up in Utrecht, eastern Transvaal employed at the customs office. On May 9th, 1901 he enlists with Steinaecker's Horse as Trooper 3783 but dies three weeks later of pneumonia. The connections that saw him attached as a civilian to the 10th mountain battery RGA persist after his death, his name is included on the RA memorial despite him not being a serving officer at the time of his death and his brief, and perhaps chequered, career when he was commissioned. As ever, "worthy of further research" - see this blog [reproduced here].

QM & Hon Captain EJ Piper:

The third example is Quartermaster & Honorary Captain EJ Piper 1st volunteer battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry (KSLI). He is named on the Devonshire county memorial in Exeter Cathedral, but not the (KSLI) memorial in Shrewsbury which implies Piper did not die on active service with the KSLI. On the medal roll there is a record for a Lieutenant & Quartermaster EJ Piper 5th bn Imperial Yeomanry (IY), roll marked "deceased". His name is not in the official casualty rolls suggesting he died in the UK, but what are the connection between a man from Devon, the IY and the KSLI?

With no first names and a surname like 'Piper' there is not much to search on. Fortunately FindmyPast have uploaded a huge archive of British newspapers which are treasure trove for researchers. Experimenting with different first names "Edwin Piper" drew a direct hit. His obituary was published in the Western Times (Devon) on December 21st, 1900, and full obituary it is too.

Edwin Piper was born about 1841 in (or about) Exeter. He served for 30 years with the volunteers, the last 16 with the 1st vb KSLI and as Supply and Transport Officer, Welsh Border Brigade. On the outbreak of war he was offered the role of Supply and Transport Officer for the 5th bn Imperial Yeomanry, one company of which came from Shropshire. In South Africa he fell ill with dysentery and enteric and was invalided home. He had two operations in July, but never recovered. He left a widow and six children. He was a deacon in the United Methodist Free

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Church, Albert St.

I will continue to work through the "odd" casualties on war memorials, one that I am working on know is Lt SP Knowles, formerly 2nd Life Guards. So far I cannot find any likely casualties with which to work on; one day all will be revealed.

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Research Puzzles: TF Adlard South African Light Horse, was he a casualty?

Saturday, 31 December 2016

The Natal Field Force Casualty Roll (NFF) shows "416 Sgt Adlard TF Died wounds Natal 31-01-1900". Steve Watt's In Memoriam (University of Natal 2000) also shows this man with the additional information that there is a metal grave marker with his name at Mooi River and All Saints Church in Ladysmith.

Adlard's QSA medal has been sold on BidorBuy.co.za, a South African eBay, for R7933 (or GBP467) as died of wounds, a screenshot of the page in NFF is shown. The information from NFF and Watt has been copied uncritically onto AngloBoerwar.com and shown as evidence by the seller.

So what is the problem?

As shown clearly on the medal for sale Adlard earned bars for service after his reported death on January 31, 1900; namely Tugela Heights (February 1900), Laing's Nek (June 1900), Belfast (August 1900). The medal roll makes no indication that he was wounded, died or even discharged early. Where does the NFF record come from?

The NFF is a tertiary source, there is no indication of where it gets its information from. In discussions with other researchers we believe that it was compiled from casualty lists printed in newspapers. The casualty lists in newspapers come from the War Office which in turn forwards information received from South Africa; the lengthy chain of communication is open to errors creeping in. The NFF is full of errors and omissions, some are copied from the newspapers and others come from careless compilation and a lack of double checking.

I use The Times to cross check casualties. On February 2, 1900 reporting on casualties from Natal for the period January 22-27, 1900 it shows Adlard as wounded and a few lines below there is the entry: "Trooper H Adlard, South African Light Horse, died of wounds January 31".

SOUTH AFRICAN LIGHT HORSE.
WOUNDED.

1506 Cpl. J. Marchant	416 Armr.-Sgt. T. F.
4621 Cpl. H. Bell	Adlard

The following telegrams have been received at the War Office from the General of Communications, Natal :—

Pietermaritzburg, Jan. 31.

4582 Pte. J. Milne died January 26, on board Lismore Castle, of pneumonia.

FEBRUARY 1.

Trooper H. Adlard, South African Light Horse, died of wounds on January 31.

So, TF Adlard was apparently wounded - but this is not shown in the NFF, why? Who knows, perhaps they combined the two entries for Adlard on this page from

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The Times (if that was their source) and recorded erroneously that TF Adlard died of wounds.

But what of "H Adlard"? This man did exist; Trooper 99 Herbert Adlard, SALH. He was reported as "Adlar" (sic) wounded in The Times of January 26 in a report from Chieveley dated January 23, and recorded by NFF. Adlard was wounded at/near Hussar Hill during a reconnaissance, he was one of three SALH casualties that day. Adlard's whereabouts and actions that day may well be tied to the story of Cpt HW de Rougemont, SALH who was mortally wounded and his story is told in official dispatches, *The Spion Kop Dispatches* (HMSO, 1902). As a bugler Adlard would probably have accompanied an officer, possibly de Rougemont. When de Rougemont was wounded four men carried him out of the firing line where they were found by Cpt C Dalton RAMC, whose testimony is recorded in the dispatch:

"I dismounted, and was attending to the wounded Officer [de Rougemont], when some Boers rode up from the flank to within 100 yards. I gave my white handkerchief to one of the men, and told him to wave it, which he did. I told another to take the Geneva Cross armband off my arm and hold it up, which he did. In spite of this they opened fire and shot two of us, myself and one of the men [Adlard?]."

Herbert Adlard may not have been with de Rougemont but there is enough evidence to show that he was the only Adlard of the SALH to die from wounds in January 1900.

Researching British Army Casualties: "new" source

Sunday, 7 June 2015

Researching casualties of the Victorian British Army has always been difficult because their service papers were destroyed, although a few have survived. So, the prospect of finding out more about "Pte T Smith" was always slim. War memorials are a potential source in giving the area they came from or giving a first name, but "Thomas Smith" of Birmingham is still difficult. War memorial information is shown as part of a soldier's record on The Register.

On January 15th Ancestry made available the "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929" from the National Army Museum, Chelsea. These books contain 872,395 records detailing the disposal of monies owed to a soldier who died in service. A typical entry shows first name, surname, service number, regiment, date of enlistment, place of enlistment, for early records a trade is shown, date of death, place of death, how much was owed, to who it was paid: wife, parent, sibling.

The image shows a handwritten entry on a grid-lined form. The entry is for Lance-Sergeant 5414 Henry Wyatt, 2nd Battalion South Wales Borderers. The handwriting is in cursive and includes the following details: Service Number: 83573; Name: Wyatt, Henry; Regiment: 2nd Bn South Wales Borderers; Enlistment Date: 22/9/96; Place of Enlistment: London; Trade: Blacksmith's mate; Next of Kin: Sarah; Date of Death: 22/10/02; Place of Death: The Henry; Amount Owed: 32/10/02. There are also some smaller handwritten notes and a signature at the bottom right.

The entry for Lance-Sergeant 5414 Henry Wyatt 2nd bn South Wales Borderers. New information: enlisted 22-09-1896, London, trade Blacksmith's mate; next of kin: mother Sarah.

The value of this data in tracing the family history of a soldier is huge, census searches are more accurate with a first name, an assumed date of birth based on enlistment year, next of kin details and possible location.

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Single Source? - Check Again!

Monday, 1 August 2016

The one thing that I have learnt in over 30 years of research and particularly the ten or so that I have been compiling The Register is that a single source for information is not always good enough.

A recent post on the BMF concerning Lt CGO Harman 1st bn Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) brought this point to light. The owner of the medals had done his research and unearthed a newspaper article quoting Lord Kitchener's despatch following the battle of Rhenoster Kop on November 29, 1900. The despatch clearly states Lt Harman was slightly wounded. Who would not believe the War Office and the Commander in Chief?

In this case they were wrong.

Harman is not listed in The Register as a casualty, this always rings alarm bells; why is he not listed, surely after ten years work I have all the battle casualties? Yes and No (there is always an exception).

Going to The Times Digital Archive (most fantastic resource) reveals the story. On December 4 The Times publish Kitchener's despatch showing Harman is wounded - this must have worried his family and friends in England. The next day they print a retraction, Lt Harman was not "wounded at all", relief all round amongst family and friends (and 116 years later myself included).

To add further proof The Times published the detailed casualty list on December 6th, Harman is not included. But, all the other officers named in Kitchener's despatch are named, so the despatch had just the one mistake. Even in the days of telegraphs linking all corners of the Empire news could travel slowly. On January 7, 1901 The New Zealand Herald printed Kitchener's original despatch - Harman is wounded "again", whether they ever printed a correction I don't know. The danger of this for modern day internet researchers is that these New Zealand papers come up on Google searches, and very useful they are too. But you still can't trust everything you read in the papers.

As a final check I looked at Harman's entry in the War Services section of the Army List - no mention of a wound.

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The curious case of Henry Brummage

Saturday, 4 June 2016

Pte H Brummage is listed on the Yorkshire Regiment memorial to its dead for the Anglo-Boer war.



1 Yorkshire Regiment Memorial, York.
(Nigel Kirby/Loop Images
gettyimages)

However he is not shown in the official casualty roll or on the regiment's medal roll. It is possible he died after the end of the war and did not qualify for a campaign medal. Research shows this not to be the case and reveals a curious tale.

Born March 30, 1882 in Norwich, Henry volunteered with 4th bn Norfolk Regiment. In February 1901 he enlisted for the Regular Army joining the Yorkshire Regiment, number 6502. Henry served in South Africa from April 1902 and would have qualified for the Queen's South Africa medal, but his name is not on the medal roll.

Evidence of his death comes from Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929 where he is shown as having died at Klip River on June 7, 1902, Henry's war gratuity and other monies owing were paid to his father, Christmas Brummage.

His service papers (WO97) show that a court of enquiry found that he was absent without leave "to have committed suicide or been accidentally drowned" at Klip Drift (sic).

Then there is an entry for July 1907 where Henry is subject to a court martial.

Henry's case made the national newspapers in the UK when he came before civil magistrates in Norwich before being handed over to the Army for court martial. No further detail is given except that his clothes were found on the banks of the Klip and he was presumed drowned. Obviously Henry had planned his desertion and returned to the UK without being detected and managed to live in the UK until 1907. How he was found out is not known. The court martial sentenced him to one year imprisonment with hard labour and discharge with ignominy for desertion. Thirteen days after re-joining Brummage was dismissed on July 22, 1907. All former service save for five days from the end of the trial to dismissal was forfeited.

The medal roll on which soldier's names who arrived in South Africa in 1902 was prepared in 1903, when he had deserted. Undoubtedly the regiment did not enter his name on the roll.

In February 11, 1911 Henry married Kathleen Mabel Stone in Norwich. On the 1911 Census, taken in March, they were man and wife with a 14 month old son called Henry, presumably Henry was the father. Henry worked as a general labourer, later he would work as a painter. Henry and Mabel would have a further

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three children.

On the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 Henry re-enlisted in the 3rd bn Norfolk Rgt, number 8070. He declared his former service and discharge for desertion. He was discharged medically unfit after 93 days service, during which time he had four entries in the defaulter's book for being absent without leave.

In April 1915 Henry enlisted for 2/3 East Anglia Field Ambulance, RAMC. In December he transferred to the ASC, later he was posted to the Labour Corps, number 355080, then served with the 2nd, 3rd and 5th bn Bedfordshire Rgt, number 210860. Henry continued to collect numerous entries in the defaulter's book, but he did serve overseas. He was demobilised in March 1918 from the with 20% disability due to rheumatism. For his World War 1 service Henry was awarded the British War and Victory Medals and a Silver War Service Badge.

In the depressed post-war economy Henry served again with 2 East Anglia Field Ambulance, RAMC from April 1921 to May 1922. On discharge his character was "good".

Henry Brummage died in Norwich in 1960.

The Imperial Light Infantry at Spion Kop - restating their casualties

Monday, 5 October 2015

The battle of Spion Kop (January 24, 1900) was one of the bloodiest battles of the war. This was the first action for the Imperial Light Infantry (ILI), a newly raised unit most of whose recruits were refugees from Johannesburg.

The Natal Field Force casualty roll (Hayward & Son) (NFFCR) lists the casualties for Spion Kop. The NFFCR has long been known to be inaccurate and incomplete. David Humphry wrote about the problems with the NFFCR in Medal News in February 2002 citing the ILI casualty lists specifically.

Humphry noted discrepancies between the NFFCR and a list of casualties published in the Manchester Guardian, the NFFCR shows the men as "Missing-Released 06.06.00" or "Missing-Released" the paper shows them as wounded. Which is correct?

As part of the continuous process to update The Register I have looked in detail at the ILI casualties drawing on information not yet used from The Times, medal rolls (WO100), regimental history and the discharge books (WO127). Here is a breakdown of the casualties between the NFFCR and new data in The Register:

	The Register	NFFCR
Killed	33	29
DoW	2	1
Wounded	82	31
POW	28	4
Missing - Released	1	15
Missing - Released 06-06-00	0	45

A new piece of evidence has come to light in The Times which helped settle the issue over the number of men missing vs men wounded. The British prisoners taken by the Boers at Spion Kop were sent to Waterval camp near Pretoria. The camp was captured by the British in June 6, 1900 and most of the men freed; the Boers moved what they thought were "high value" prisoners eastwards. List of the men released from Waterval were published in The Times, the edition for July 27th listed 28 men of the ILI freed. This data has never been used in compiling the casualty rolls.

The 28 men listed in The Times as released and therefore actual prisoners are mostly found on the NFFCR list as "Missing - Released". Most of those in the category "Missing - Released 06.06.00", with that specific date of June 6 were not in the 28, but shown as wounded, two were killed. It appears the NFFCR has made a big mistake and overstated the number of real POWs and understated the number of wounded.

Further proof that these men were not prisoners comes from checking the medal

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entitlement. Fortunately the campaign to relieve Ladysmith was covered by two battle clasps: *Relief of Ladysmith* and *Tugela Heights*. The battle for Spion Kop is covered by the first clasp and *Tugela Heights* is for the subsequent battles starting on February 14th. Therefore if a soldier is captured at Spion Kop one would not expect him to have the clasp *Tugela Heights* and vice versa.

For all the men listed as wounded in The Times and "Missing-Released 06.06.00" they have the clasp *Tugela Heights* and many the next clasp for *Laing's Nek*. These men could not have been prisoners. The data in The Register for the ILI has been corrected to show the figures in the table above. These numbers match closely the figures published in the ILI history (*With the Imperial Light Infantry Through Natal*, Straker 1903 C Boscawen-Wright).

Other corrections have come to light; three men listed in the NFFCR as "Missing-Released" were in fact killed and Pte 215 J Hirst is listed on the ILI memorial on Spion Kop as killed. In fact Pte Hirst survived and served later in the Commander-in-Chief's Bodyguard. The ILI memorial also misses three men from the list of killed.

To confuse matters slightly, having used medal entitlement data to show men were not prisoners, four of those listed in The Times released from Waterval have the later clasps *Tugela Heights* and or *Laing's Nek*. It seems unlikely their names are on The Times list erroneously, perhaps the error lay in compiling the medal roll which has been known to happen too.

The moral of this story is not to trust one source, but start with The Register as it is the only casualty roll to be updated and corrected. Unfortunately the errors in the NFFCR have been blindly copied onto the internet for millions to use.

The Last Post - a major revision

Wednesday, 2 March 2016



The Last Post was compiled in 1903 by Mildred Dooner to commemorate the officers who died during the Anglo-Boer War. These officers “died heroic deaths” and it was her aim that their memory should not “fade into oblivion”. Dooner, the daughter of Colonel WT Dooner, compiled her information from a variety of sources; casualty lists, memorials and correspondence. Dooner recognises her list may not be entirely accurate. There has been no revision to *The Last Post* until now using the updated casualty roll in The Register.

Dooner also included two appendices one for nurses and the other for war correspondents. Nurses are an obvious choice and were beloved by the officers and men, it was the nurses who endeavoured to keep the sick and wounded alive. The war correspondent is a somewhat odd choice as these men (and one woman) merely reported the war, they did not fight or help the sick and wounded. Indeed many officers did not like war correspondents, they resented their quest for information and many thought their reports biased and unhelpful. Although some senior officers manipulated the press. However, this information exists nowhere else, modern day researchers must be thankful to Dooner for this anomaly.

To revise Dooner I have checked every entry in her book against the casualty rolls and a variety of other sources but primarily the medal rolls, war memorials and The Times newspaper. I have verified 1,159 entries, these include 14 war correspondents and 10 nurses. Unfortunately a number of errors and inaccuracies have crept in.

There are three duplicate entries: Betty/Kemmis-Betty, Birch/Burch, Chapman/Clapham. Dooner has included four officers who died after the war but not from related illness or wounds. Another, FE Hancock, was not apparently serving when he died of enteric fever in 1902. The Official Casualty Roll shows him as a civilian and the medal roll indicate he was entitled to the “South Africa 1902” clasp. It is not clear if Hancock was serving the military in a civilian capacity. Dooner does include one civilian, Mr F Chapman, a farmer, was a guide to the British forces attacking Willow Grange (23-11-1899) when he was shot dead. Two men were not commissioned officers when they were killed, G Falcon and A Spencer (Cape Medical Staff Corps) and there is no indication they were about to be commissioned. The unit for Lt AG Warren is incorrect, he was in the Cape Police not the Cape Mounted Rifles.

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For the vast majority Dooner has given the exact cause of death, "enteric" instead of "disease" as often seen in the Official Casualty Roll. However, for some the exact cause is not shown which may be to protect the sensibilities of the family. Lt HG Berghuys, Kitchener's Horse "died of wounds..in Feb., 1901", in fact he was murdered by Trooper F Carpenter in a row over leave in November 1900. Trooper Carpenter was executed. Four officers committed suicide (as per Official Casualty Roll), others died of self-inflicted wounds. Cpt MMD Morrison according to Dooner died of asthma, the Official Casualty Roll shows "Died of wounds Revolver, self inflicted".

There is one man listed who I cannot trace in any source as a fatal casualty: Captain EB Muller, Kaffrarian Rifles killed at Ramathlabana 31-03-1900 with Colonel Plumer's column during the relief of Mafeking. There was a Captain EB Muller, Kaffrarian Rifles who survived the war, he was not involved in the relief of Mafeking neither were the Kaffrarian Rifles. Then there is the case of Lt WBM Carruthers, Canadian Mounted Rifles. Carruthers was widely reported as being killed at Brakspruit March, 3rd 1901, naturally Dooner picked this up and included him in *The Last Post*. Carruthers was not killed in the war, but died in 1910 from tuberculosis apparently contracted on service in South Africa.

As to the omissions from the *The Last Post* I have traced 22 officers, one war correspondent and 20 nurses who died in South Africa during the war. Of the 22 officers 16 are from colonial units, a group Dooner admitted having difficulty finding information about. I have also included in this group Captain HH Morant, Bushveldt Carbineers, who was executed by the British for murdering Boer civilians. Dooner may have deliberately left him out. The additional war correspondent turns out to be the most interesting WH Mackay. Mackay, from Scotland, was a newspaper editor in Pretoria and Reuters agent at the outbreak of war. He remained in Pretoria and handled the telegraph communications between Winston Churchill when he was a prisoner and his mother, Lady Randolph Churchill. Mackay is also credited with breaking the news of the relief of Mafeking to Britain. News of the relief reached Pretoria on the same day, May 17th, Mackay bribed an engine driver to take his despatch to Lourenco Marques in Portuguese East Africa where it was sent on reaching Britain the next day. He died suddenly in Pretoria in July 1900. I have traced information on his death to a notice in the Dundee Evening Post, July 21st. Mackay is on the War Correspondents memorial in St Paul's Cathedral, London and on the War Correspondents medal roll, but is not shown as deceased. A further 25 officers and two nurses died outside of South Africa or after the war in South Africa.

Other revisions to Dooner include adding first names, correcting minor errors in the biographical information, and these records also have medal entitlements, memorials and gazetteer information. Biographical information has been added where possible to the "new" records. Having revised Dooner the numbers of officer, nurse and war correspondent fatalities directly attributable to the war can now be stated as:

Officers: 1,187 (plus 25 died outside South Africa or after the war in South Africa)

War Correspondents: 14

Nurses: 30 (plus two died after the war)

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Dooner has been re-printed in book form and electronically (for free), one version can be found here. Dooner's text has also been included uncritically on various websites which will only serve to mislead the unwary.

[An article with full details of my revision and a biography of Mildred Dooner was published by the Victorian Military Society:

Mildred Dooner and The Last Post, Soldiers of The Queen Issue 164 June 2016]

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The unfortunate death of Private 4991 John Hood, 2nd Dragoons

Saturday, 8 October 2016

The casualty rolls show Pte 4981 (sic) J Hood 2nd Dragoons died of exposure at Dorsfontein (sic) April 25th, 1902. Exposure is not an uncommon cause of death - the climate in South Africa can be harsh - not just heat and dust but rain and freezing temperatures were common place. In the field men usually did not have tents and often slept in wet clothes under a single blanket. Often the blanket was frozen solid in the morning.

Was Pte Hood a victim of the climate? Reading around we find from the most unlikely sources the circumstances of his death. Currently I am researching the Royal Artillery Mounted Rifles (RAMR). In about 1905 Colonel TS Baldock RA wrote a short history of the RAMR for the Royal Artillery Institution. Today this monograph is very scarce if not rare, there are no copies in the British Library or other lending libraries in Britain. The copy held by the RA Library is now in store. There was only one copy available to purchase.

On page 471 Baldock relates how, on April 24th, a patrol of the RAMR came across a "naked and nearly dead" soldier in a burnt out farmhouse in the area between Pretoria, Elandsfontein and Balmoral. The soldier was "too crazy from starvation and exposure" to give a full account. However, his rescuers ascertained he was from the 2nd Dragoons and had been captured and stripped as was common. However the Boers abandoned him in the shell of the farmhouse with no food. The man the RAMR rescued was Pte Hood, the RAMR camp was at Dorstfontein. The casualty rolls do not show Pte Hood being captured. Turning to The Times they record Pte 4991 W (sic) Hood, 2nd Dragoons captured and injured by a fall from his horse at Irene April 18th. So, Hood had spent six days without food, warm clothing and decent shelter before being found.

The RAMR patrol took him back to camp where he died the following day. Soldiers' Effects show John Hood was a miner who had enlisted at Niddrie, Edinburgh on April 30th, 1900. He was unmarried his war gratuity and pay was distributed amongst his father, three sisters and a brother.

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“was lost and is found” The Military Story of GTW Webb

Saturday, 21 May 2016

This research was inspired by “Research puzzles - "Odd" casualties from war memorials”.



George Theodosius Wynne Webb was born 2 March, 1876 in Woolwich (or Charlton) Kent to Capt (retd) John H and Edith G Webb. Cpt JH Webb had served in the 11th Foot and was a Higher Division Clerk in the Admiralty. The family was comfortably off, they had one or two servants recorded in the census. George, one of three sons, was educated at Merchant Taylors School. His two brothers Andrew Henry and William Vere Brandram were commissioned into the RGA. In September 1894, aged 18, George was commissioned into the Royal Marine Light Infantry. His career came to an end just 10 months later in July 1895 when he resigned his commission. His record in ADM196 darkly notes that “confidential reports whilst studying at RN College” were written. Obviously George was in trouble while

studying at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich.

Determined on a military career George gets a commission in the Royal Jersey Militia RA as a route to getting a commission in the regular army. In October 1897 George secures a commission in the RGA. However, on the 12 July 1899 he leaves the Army, he did not resign or was court martialled. Records at the RA Library simply record he left, obviously by agreement and no doubt to save himself and his family from any shame for whatever transgressions occurred. There is no record in the London Gazette I can find. Having failed twice to embark on a military career George did what many troubled young men did and went overseas. George sailed to southern Africa where war clouds were gathering.

George ended up in Ladysmith by October 1899 where he unexpectedly pops up in the Digest of Service for the 10th mountain battery RGA. The 10th mountain battery were stationed in Natal before the war and formed part of Sir George White’s force defending Ladysmith. The Digest records that “Mr Webb (attached)” was among the officers captured at Nicholson’s Nek, “Mournful Monday”, 30 October. A hand written marginal note adds “Mr Webb was a civilian”. This ties in with the record from The Times for “Sec Lieut GTW Webb” being released as prisoner of war. Whether George deliberately went to Natal to find former officer comrades is not known. But, he obviously knew the officers of the 10th mountain battery well enough to be allowed to accompany them on their attack. Whether he had a role beyond observer is not known. Like his previous military careers this one, albeit as a civilian, ended quickly and badly; George found himself in the officer’s prison camp in Pretoria for seven months.

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On release from POW camp George “Left battery on occupation of Pretoria” as recorded on the medal roll. I cannot help think that in the enthusiasm for the first



2Copyright John Deare. From http://www.eggsa.org/library/main.php?g2_itemId=1171702 Retrieved July 2017

battles against “mere farmers”, George’s participation was evidence that some British officers did not take the war seriously. By June 1900, officers knew they were in a serious fight and there was no place for civilian hangers-on. Perhaps put off by his experiences George appears to get a job with the customs office in Utrecht, eastern Transvaal (National Archives of South Africa). How long he stuck at this is not known, but the lure of a soldier’s life was too strong. On 9 May, 1901 he enlists as Trooper 3783 Steinaecker’s Horse, claiming 5 ½ years’ service in the Royal Artillery. It is very unlikely he saw any active service as his fourth attempt at a military career came to an end just 20 days later. George died of pneumonia in Fort Napier, Pietermaritzburg and lies in the St George’s Garrison Church cemetery with a fine marble cross over his grave “Erected by his Sorrowing Parents”. The epitaph they chose is, I think, emblematic of a troubled soul, “was lost and is found”; from the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

George Webb’s QSA is engraved in the correct style to “Lieut. G.T. Wynne-Webb R.G.A.”, the surname an unfortunate error. His name as “Webb, GT Wynne” is found on the roll for the 10th mountain battery (WO100/146p66) appended in a different hand at the bottom of the list of Lieutenants, he has no rank. The medal with two clasps (Transvaal and Natal) was issued 9 April, 1902 with a note to correspondence “93883/19”. What it would be to find that correspondence, undoubtedly his parents and/or brothers petitioned the War Office for a medal engraved as an officer, which of course he was not entitled to. George appears on an Extra Clasp roll for Steinaecker’s Horse (WO100/276p168) and again there is some evidence of correspondence. His entry is crossed out and then re-entered with entitlement to the ‘South Africa 1901’ clasp no reference is made to his previous service or the issue of the clasp, which is not on the medal. There is a large asterisk against his name which is unexplained.

Not only did George’s family secure a campaign medal but they also got his name entered on the corp’s war memorial with the rank he did not hold when he “won” his medal. Perhaps securing these recognitions was justice for the family regarding George’s troubles with the RMLI and RGA.

George’s two brothers were Andrew Henry (older) and Willam Vere Brandram (younger) who were both commissioned into the RGA. Andrew served in South Africa on the Western Front and also in WW1 as a Lt-Col. William did not see in any campaign service and immigrated to Canada, he enlisted in the CEF in 1916 for overseas service. I don’t know if he actually served abroad.

In the Spink April 2016 sale a number of Webb family medals were sold dating from the Peninsula to WWII. All the groups have research apart from the QSA and

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miniature to Lt GT Wynne-Webb RGA which simply states he was the great great nephew of Sir John Webb whose medals are first in the Webb family lots. Andrew's CMG, DSO group was amongst the Webb family medals sold at Spink.