



Frank Alfred Parker

Regimental number 643 – 39th Battery Royal Field Artillery

Frank was born on 21 October 1878 at 7 Sells Court, King Street, Cambridge, England. He was the second of four children born to Alfred Parker and Eliza Jane (née Lee).

The 1881 Census shows Frank age 2 living at 48 Northern Street, Cambridge with his parents Alfred and Eliza and his sister, Alice Maud, who was one week old.

By 1891, Frank was resident at Desford Industrial School in Ratby, Leicestershire after being sentenced at the age of 12 to serve four years at this 'Boys under order of detention' facility for truancy. His occupation is stated as 'Shoemaker' on the 1891 Census record.

The following is a transcript of Frank's 'form of admission' to the Industrial School for Boys in Desford:

"The authority considering that the boy was turning out a persistent truant that home influences owing to the mother is not what it should be in the interest of the boy desire him to be placed under proper discipline and control justices also concerned".

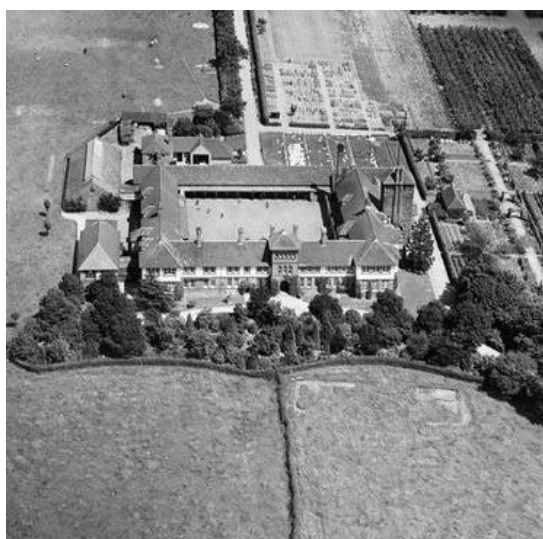


Photo: Desford Industrial School in Ratby 1931¹ – plan from 1903²

In addition to classroom education, Desford provided the boys with industrial training which included tailoring, shoemaking, and mat-making. A report on the school in 1896 noted that it could now accommodate 200 boys and its grounds amounted to 138 acres, of which 28 acres were garden. The stock consisted of 7 horses, 22 cattle, about 100 pigs, plus sheep and poultry. The allocation of boys to various tasks was as follows: on farm, and fruit and vegetable gardens (stock boys included), 74; tailors, 18; shoemakers, 16; laundry, 18; kitchen and house, 16; bakers, 4; office boys, 4; full-time in school, 37; brass band, 24. The School had an asphalted playground, a cricket field with turfed a pitch, and a football field, with matches against outside teams being arranged. There was a fair-sized swimming bath, used once a week in winter, and more often in summer. Physical and military drills were given.³

¹ Britain from Above: Desford Industrial School for Boys, Botcheston, 1931 - <https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/epw036119> - accessed 4 October 2021

² Children's Homes.org.au - <http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/DesfordIS/> - accessed 4 October 2021

³ Children's Homes.org.au - <http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/DesfordIS/> - accessed 4 October 2021

It is believed that Frank signed up in the Army when he was 17 years old (in 1895).

It appears that Frank's military service records were amongst those destroyed when the War Office was bombed during the Second World War as they cannot be found in the online databases where these records are stored at www.ancestry.co.uk and www.findmypast.co.uk.

Nevertheless, it has been possible to piece together a summary of Frank's service in the military based on the following records, which are listed in date order:

- A roll of Individuals entitled to the Queens South Africa Medal and clasps dated 1st October 1902. This record shows Walter's regiment number as 643 and his rank as 'Driver' with the *39th Battery of the Royal Field Artillery*. It also indicates Walter served in the Cape Colony and the Orange Free State districts in South Africa.
- A nomination list of men transferred (or re-transferred after mobilisation) to 1st Class Army Reserve dated 22 July 1903, which provides Frank's regimental service number as 643, his rank as 'Driver' and his unit as *39th Battery, Royal Field Artillery*.
- A baptism record for Francis Parker showing that Frank was baptised at St John's Catholic Church in Kilkenny, Ireland on 17 July 1904. The records indicate that Frank was residing at Kilkenny Barracks in Kilkenny, Ireland.
- A marriage certificate, which indicates that Frank married Kathleen O'Neill at the Catholic Chapel of St Canice in Kilkenny, Ireland on 16 January 1905. The marriage certificates states Frank was a 'Soldier' at the time of his marriage.
- A birth certificate for Frank & Kathleen's daughter (Kathleen Maud) born on 24 November 1906 at the Female Hospital, Woolwich, London, England – Kathleen's birth certificate states that Frank is a 'Driver' in the Royal Field Artillery and provides their address as 121 Samuel Street, Woolwich.
- A birth certificate for Frank & Kathleen's son and namesake (Frank Alfred) born on 19 November 1908 at the Female Hospital, Woolwich, London, England – Frank junior's birth certificate states that Frank is a 'Driver' in the Royal Field Artillery and provides their address as 121 Samuel Street, Woolwich.
- A birth certificate for Frank & Kathleen's son (Albert) born on 22 April 1910 at 29 Ritter Street, Woolwich. The birth certificates states Frank's occupation as 'Driver, Royal Field Artillery' and provides their address as 29 Ritter Street, Woolwich.
- The 1911 census (undertaken on 2 April 1911) shows Frank living at Minden Barracks, Deep Cut, Farnborough, Hampshire. The Census entry shows Frank's rank as 'Driver' assigned to the 39th Battery of the Royal Field Artillery.
- A birth certificate for Frank & Kathleen's daughter (Eileen May) born on 4 March 1912 at 11B Block, Deep Cut Barracks, Frimley, Surrey, England – Eileen's birth certificate states that Frank is a 'Driver' with the 39th Battery of the Royal Field Artillery and provides their address as the same as Eileen's place of birth.
- A death certificate for Frank & Kathleen's son (Frank Alfred) which records that he died of bronco-pneumonia at the age of 15 on 29 November 1923 at 4 Layer Road, Colchester – Frank junior's death certificate states that Frank is a 'Groom (domestic)' and provides their address as 4 Layer Road, Colchester, Essex which is described as 'married quarters'.
- Marriage certificates for Frank & Kathleen's daughters (Eileen May and Kathleen Maud) which both took place in 1935 and state that Frank is a 'General Labourer'.

- A Royal Field Artillery Roll of individuals entitled to the Victory Medal and the British War Medal dated 29 November 1919. This record shows Frank's regimental number as 643 and his rank as 'Driver'.
- A British Army World War 1 Medal Roll Index Card, which provides Frank's regimental service number as 643 and states his rank as 'Driver'. This record indicates that Frank was entitled to the Victory Medal and the British War Medal.

A 'Driver' was a soldier trained in the management and use of horses. The six horses drawing the gun, or wagon, were driven by three Drivers, all on the nearside horses, and much training was required before Drivers would be rated as competent. The Drivers also looked after the horses and the management, condition and state of health of these animals was regarded as one of the most important functions in the battery.

The records show that Frank was attached to the 39th Battery from sometime prior to 1 October 1902 through until at least March 1912, when his daughter Eileen May was born. The locations shown in the various records are consistent with information from Harts Annual Army List,⁴ which shows that the 39th Battery was stationed in the following locations:

1898	– Woolwich
1899 & 1900	– Hilsea [Portsmouth]
1901 & 1902	– South Africa
1903 & 1904	– Kilkenny [Ireland]
1905 to 1910	– Woolwich
1911 to 1913	– Deepcut, Farnborough
1914	– Deepcut, Farnborough (for Colchester)

The 39th, 68th and 88th Batteries of the Royal Field Artillery (RFA) formed XIV Brigade (14 Brigade RFA)⁵ at Colchester in 1914 and came under the command of the British Army's 4th Division.⁶

While there is no record after March 1912 to indicate, which particular battery or unit Frank was attached to, it is known that he was posted to Colchester, where the 39th Battery was stationed at this time. Therefore, it appears that he remained with the 39th Battery until at least 1914/1915. The medal entitlement records confirm that Frank actively participated in World War 1 (WW1) as the British War Medal and the Victory Medal were only awarded to people who entered a theatre of war overseas between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918. It therefore appears that Frank remained with the 39th Battery and went off to France with them in August 1914 to fight in WW1.

THE BOER WAR, SOUTH AFRICA - 39th Battery, Royal Field Artillery

The 39th Battery were stationed in Hilsea, Portsmouth when they received orders on the 1st January 1900 that they would sail at once for the Cape Colony in South Africa. On 22 January, the 39th Battery, dressed in newly issued khaki uniforms left Hilsea, with a large crowd turning out at the railway station at Cosham to see their departure. They arrived at Liverpool early the following morning and set to work transferring the horses from the train to the SS Ulstermore.⁷

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⁴ Harts Annual Army List index accessed via Fibis: Stations of the Royal Artillery in India – http://wiki.fibis.org/index.php/Stations_of_the_Royal_Artillery_in_India - accessed 4 October 2021

⁵ The Royal Artillery equivalent of army battalion was the artillery brigade.

⁶ The British Army 1914 by Mark Conrad 1996 - <http://marksruddianmilitaryhistory.info/BRIT14.html> - accessed 4 October 2021

⁷ The Boer War, A Bombardiers Memoirs – Boer War Diaries of Bombardier Walter Mitton of the 39th Battery, Royal Field Artillery – published by Able Publishing 1996, p.4

the railway station at Cosham to see their departure. They arrived at Liverpool early the following morning and set to work transferring the horses from the train to the SS Ulstermore.⁸



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The Steam Ship Ulstermore was built in 1894 by Harland & Wolff in Belfast. She was 137 meters long, had a gross tonnage of 6411 and a maximum speed of 14 knots.¹⁰

Prior to transporting the troops to the Cape it had been engaged in cattle-running.

A newspaper article from the Liverpool Daily Post, dated 22 January 1900 recorded the following:

LIVERPOOL AND TRANSPORT SUPPLY

EMBARKATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

GREAT SAILINGS OF IMPERIAL YEOMANRY FROM LIVERPOOL

As announced on Saturday the Johnstone Line transport Ulstermore embarks troops at Liverpool today and tomorrow. She is to carry the staff of the Fourteenth Brigade R.F.A. the 39th Field Battery R.F.A. from Hilsea, the 88th Field Battery R.F.A. from Weedon, an ammunition column from Weedon and No.6 General Hospital. The numbers are as follows Brigade Staff R.F.A. Four Officers, One Warrant Officer, twelve rank and file, and sixteen horses. 39th Battery R.F.A. Five Officers, 170 Rank and file. 137 Horses and six guns. 88th Battery R.F.A. Five Officers, 170 Rank and file. 137 Horses and six guns. Ammunition column, three Officers, One Warrant Officer, 88 rank and file and 86 horses. No. 6 Hospital: Three rank and file. Besides these there will be 40 road vehicles – limbers and thus in all the Ulstermore will carry 462 officers and men, 376 Horses, twelve guns and forty wheeled vehicles. A few of the troops along with the guns and road vehicles, will arrive by three trains at Alexandra Dock Station at 10:00 am, 11:30 am and 1 pm today; the remainder of the officers and men and the horses embarking tomorrow between seven o'clock in the morning and midday. The transport will sail from the Mersey direct for the Cape tomorrow evening. The embarkations on both these days will take place at the tin shed between Brocklebank and Langton Docks.

⁸ The Boer War, A Bombardiers Memoirs – Boer War Diaries of Bombardier Walter Mitton of the 39th Battery, Royal Field Artillery – published by Able Publishing 1996, p.4

⁹ The Boer War, A Bombardiers Memoirs – Boer War Diaries of Bombardier Walter Mitton of the 39th Battery, Royal Field Artillery – published by Able Publishing 1996, p.4

¹⁰ Wreck Site - <https://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?67895> – accessed 4 October 2021

The London Times, dated 24 January 1900 recorded the following:

The Ulstermore left Langton Dock, Liverpool, yesterday afternoon with reinforcements for the Cape. There were 10 officers, 340 men and 274 horses for the 39th and 88th Batteries, RFA. The Brigade Staff and an ammunition column with 10 officers, 110 men and 100 horses. Also a medical unit from No.6 General Hospital. 12 15-pounder guns and about 50 road vehicles, 20 of them ammunition wagons.

The Anglo Boer War web site provides the following overview of the 39th Battery's involvement in the Second Boer War:

It was in the engagements about Dewetsdorp and Thabanchu towards the end of April. Throughout 1900 it saw much service in the Orange River Colony, and was trekking with Bruce Hamilton in the last quarter of that year (Lord Roberts' despatch of 15th November 1900). The battery was then split up—a section was with Colonel White in the Orange River Colony; a section with Colonel Monro in that colony and afterwards in Cape Colony with Colonel Du Moulin. The battery was represented in Damant's fierce little action near Tafel Kop on 20th December 1901 (Lord Kitchener's despatch of 8th January 1902 and commendations). The enemy, through being disguised in khaki, imitating the formations of British troops, and even "firing volleys in the general direction of some other Boers", were taken for friends, and so managed to gain a ridge commanding the guns which were with Damant's advance-guard; but his men, notably the 91st company of Imperial Yeomanry, which "sacrificed itself almost to a man", pushed back the enemy, who, on the arrival of Rimington with help, fled as usual. The section lost 5 killed and 7 wounded. At least two officers, two non-commissioned officers, and one man of the 39th Battery gained mention for acts of very great gallantry on this occasion.¹¹

The Boer War Diaries of Bombardier Walter Mitton of the 39th Battery, Royal Field Artillery¹² provides a detailed account of the movements of the 39th Battery from the time it left Hilsea; The Ulstermore reached St Vincent in Portugal on 31 January, where it replenished stores including coal and water. Two men including a Driver from the 39th Battery died during the journey. The horses also suffered acutely from the heat in the tropics and total of 26 horses died during the journey to the Cape, seven of which belonged to the 39th Battery.

After a 22 day journey the SS Ulstermore arrived at Cape Town in the Cape Colony, South Africa on 14th February 1900. The 39th Battery was disembarked by 6:00 am on 23 February and marched from the docks to MAITLAND CAMP, about three miles from Cape Town where they pitched tents and remained until 25 February when they entrained for the journey north. They departed Cape Town station to huge cheering crowds and travelled through BEAUFORT WEST and NOUPOORT to ARUNDEL where they arrived at midnight and disembarked in pitch darkness and pelting rain. They set up camp on 26 February, which was inspected two days later by Lord Kitchener and was then broken up and the column commenced trekking north to COLESBERG, where British forces were being pressed into withdrawal¹³ at Arundel and fighting with the Boers had occurred a few days previous. The 39th Battery, now under the command of General Clements, pitched camp just outside the town at a place called GRASSY KOP on 28 February, but they were immediately detailed to proceed with guns to a bridge spanning the Orange River at NORVALS PONT, which the Boers were attempting to blow-up to prevent the British from entering Orange Free State from the Cape Colony side. It was here that the 39th Battery had their first

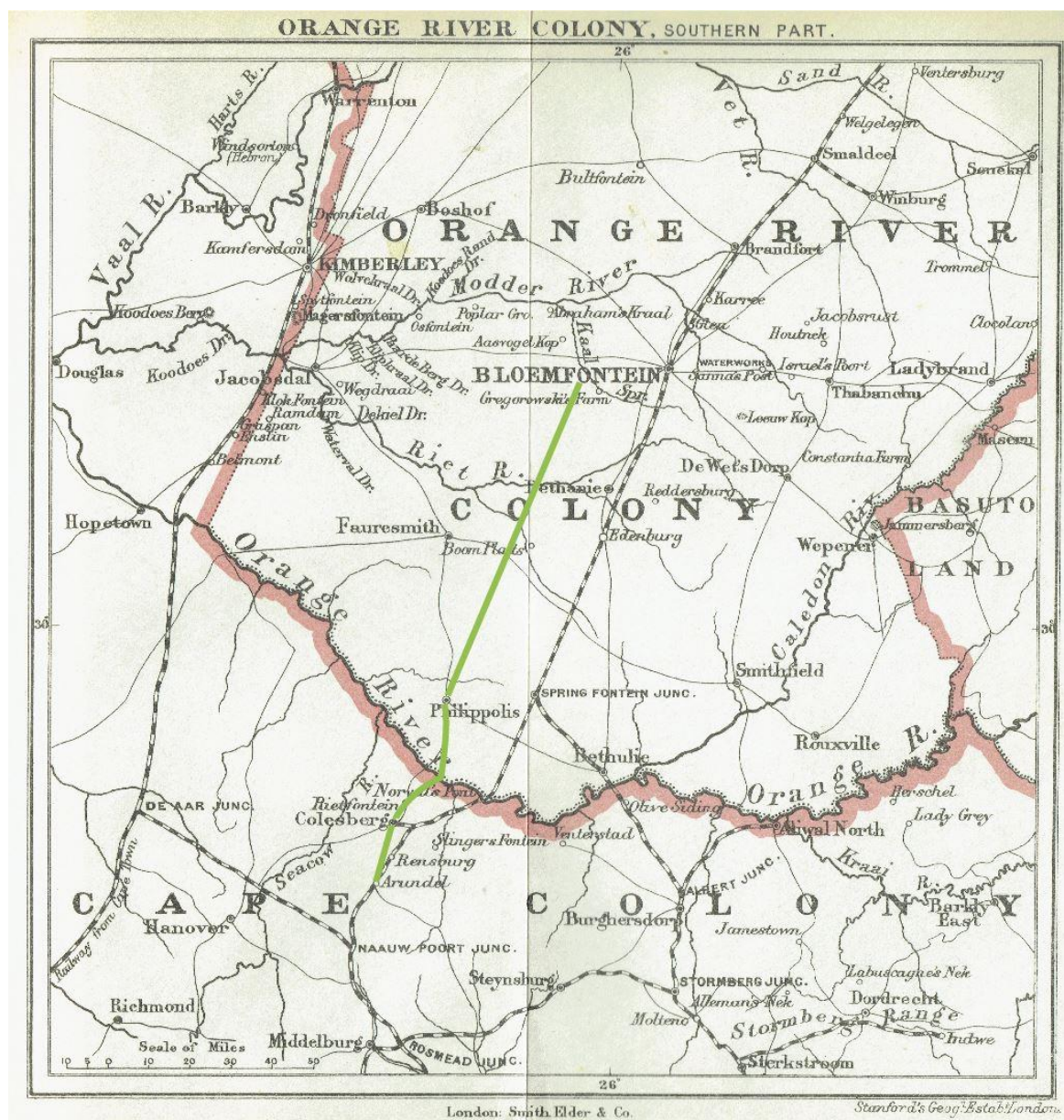
¹¹ Anglo Boer War.com: Royal Field Artillery - 39th Battery - <http://www.angloboerwar.com/unit-information/imperial-units/604-royal-field-artillery-39th-battery> - accessed 4 October 2021

¹² The Boer War, A Bombardiers Memoirs – Boer War Diaries of Bombardier Walter Mitton of the 39th Battery, Royal Field Artillery – published by Able Publishing 1996 p.6

¹³ The Great Boer War by Arthur Conan Doyle, (Fourth impression) published by Smith, Elder & Co. London 1900

brush with the enemy, forcing their retreat and blasting them with over 100 rounds of ammunition, although the Boers managed to blow up the bridge two days later.

The column then trekked (via REITFONTEIN) to ALLIMANS DRIFT, arriving on 7 March and then marched onto CORLUG SPRUIT. While taking up a flank guard position some eight miles from the main portion of the column on 11 March, the 39th Battery was almost isolated by a 2000 strong Boer party who crossed the river in between them and the main column. Fortunately, the Boers were repelled by the 2nd Battery R.F.A. On 13 March, the 39th Battery then shelled enemy positions across the Orange River with 15 ponder guns.



Map showing the southern part of Orange River Colony, bordering the Cape Colony¹⁴ and the route marched by the 39th Battery from Arundel to Bloemfontein

On 17 March, the 39th Battery crossed the Orange River into the Orange Free State via a pontoon bridge, and proceeded about five miles to ZOET FONTEIN, where they camped. On 20 March, they commenced a trek to BLOEMFONTEIN via DONKERSPORT, then 28 miles to PHILIPPOLIS, where they were compelled to camp for three days due to heavy rain. On 27 March they arrived at FAURESMITH, where they, as in PHILIPPOLIS proclaimed the territory and disarmed the local

¹⁴ By Stanfords of London – published by Smith Elder & Co. in The Great War by Arthur Conan Doyle 1900 (Fourth impression with maps)

people. The remaining march to BLOEMFONTEIN was through a sandy desert, water was bad, and food became scarce and both men and horses suffered as a consequence. The men survived on half rations of two and half biscuits per day.

Two days after arriving in BLOEMFONTEIN State on 1 April 1900, they encountered a swarm of locusts, which was so large it took a day and half to clear through before reaching BLOEMFONTEIN town on 5 April.

After just one day in BLOEMFONTEIN, during which time it rained in torrents, the 39th Battery moved 10 miles east of the town to SPRINGFIELD to take up a guard position following reports of Boers being present in numbers at WATERWORKS. The 39th Battery was brought immediately into action upon arrival on a small kopje¹⁵ facing the Boers who occupied a larger kopje across the veld¹⁶ eight miles away. The Boers held onto the Waterworks for three days before the cavalry and infantry managed to drive the Boers back.

With news of a large force of Boers approaching from the south, the 39th Battery received orders to pack up and return to BLOEMFONTEIN on 12 April. By 8:00 pm they were entrained at BLOEMFONTEIN and headed south to head off the Boers. They detrained at BETHANY near the KAFFIR RIVER, where they stayed the night before trekking onto REDDERSBURG and the following day onto ROSENDAL. Incessant rain here turned the camp into a swamp and many men grew sick with dysentery.

On 15 April, news arrived that a Colonial Force were held up in the town of WEPENER by a large body of Boers and the 39th Battery were ordered north to relieve the garrison there.

The 39th Battery came into action against the enemy at WAKKERSTROOM and DEWETSDOROP during heavy fighting commencing 21st April, as did the cavalry and infantry of the 8th Division. The 39th Battery came under fire from the Boers on the 21st and 22nd with a number of shells dropping into their camp amongst the horses and wagons but no soldiers were hit. On the fifth day of action (26 April), the British marched into DEWETSDOROP unopposed, the Boers having retreated north with all their guns.

The 39th Battery remained camped at DEWETSDOROP for the next few weeks much to the frustration of the rank and file who longed to be involved in the fighting being undertaken elsewhere. During this period two soldiers from the 39th Battery succumbed to sickness and were buried at the village cemetery. Towards the end of May 1900, the forces of the 39th Battery were divided, the centre section proceeded to WEPENER (close to BASUTOLAND) to relieve a section of the 68th Battery, the left section proceeded to EDENBURG along with headquarters and the right section remained in DEWETSDOROP. This was the first experience of operating in sections and although the Battery came together again often afterwards, from this time onwards the whole Battery were never in action as a unit. It is not known which section Frank was assigned to and it is therefore impossible to trace his precise location for the rest of the time he served in South Africa.

The centre section came under the command of Colonel White and remained in the ORANGE FREE STATE area at least until mid-1901.

During the last quarter of 1900, the 39th Battery joined Bruce Hamilton's 21st Infantry Brigade and were involved in minor skirmishes with the Boers and often trekked miles in pursuit of the enemy often to find that they had moved or retreated just before they could be confronted. In

¹⁵ Kopje is from the Afrikaans word koppie, meaning a small usually rocky hill in a generally flat area on the African veld

¹⁶ Veld or veldt is an open, uncultivated country or grassland in southern Africa

early September, Bruce Hamilton's brigade marched 80 miles in four and half days to relieve depleted forces under heavy fire at LADYBRAND.¹⁷

In this period, they also cleared and burned farms deemed to be belonging to the enemy and took numerous prisoners. Walter Mitton diaries note that the troops of the Royal Field Artillery and other regiments often suffered through horrible conditions including extreme heat and terrible cold along with periods of torrential rain that soaked them to the skin and turned their camps into a quagmire.

After completing a march from KROONSTAD in torrential rain, the 39th Battery set up camp in VENTERSBURG station on 29 October only to be ordered to march to a position nearer where they could shell the Boers at daybreak. Some three hours into a wearisome march they were ambushed but Boers which resulted in the death of 39th Battery's Major Hanwell, a Gunner and four Drivers were injured, and 12 horses killed.

The following article about this incident appeared in the Cape Town Argus on 3 November 1900:

ARTILLERY HELD UP

VENTERSBURG STATION, Oct 30

Generals Hunter and Bruce Hamilton arrived here today and camped. Arrangements were made to surround to enemy in the vicinity of Ventersburg Town, which is eight miles from the station.

At eight pm the troops commenced moving and at daylight on Tuesday the 39th Battery halted for a rest 500 yards from a kopje on the left, which had been passed shortly before by the Camerons and Berks Yeomanry. While the men were dismounted the enemy from the kopje poured in a heavy fire. The horses and oxen stampeded. Major Hanwell commanding, was shot dead and three men run over by guns. Four shots were fired from one gun.

The Cow gun jammed, and the situation became very serious until the Sussex Regiment fixed bayonets and charged the kopje. The enemy, who had splendid cover, cleared. There were only ten casualties from bullets.

The enemy went off in single file, exposed to the fire of the Camerons and Berkshire Yeomanry. The number hit appeared to put them in a state of consternation. They were uncertain which way to escape, and moved back twice. They numbered about 200.

Keen regret is felt for Major Harnwell, who was an excellent soldier.

The 39th Battery were involved in a skirmish on 20th December 1901, when Lieutenant Colonel Damant's column came under attack from some 800 Boers in the vicinity of TAFEL KOP, between FRANKFORT and VREDE. Disguised in khaki and imitating the formations of British troops, the Boers get gained occupation of the crest of a kopje which commanded the whole field, including the guns and the main body of our troops. The Boers retreated after the arrival of reinforcements, but not before causing severe losses to the British troops including the 39th Battery (one section had 6 killed and 8 wounded).¹⁸

¹⁷ The Great Boer War by Arthur Conan Doyle, published by Smith, Elder & Co. London 1900, p.501

¹⁸ Angloboerwar.com: South African units, Damant's Horse - <https://www.angloboerwar.com/unit-information/south-african-units/463-damants-horse> - accessed 6 October 2021

There are only a few records about the specific locations and deeds of the 39th Battery during the Second Boer War, even Walter Mitton's diary runs out in early June 1901. However, it is known that after peace was declared on 31 May 1902 the 39th Battery moved to DE ARR in July where the 14th Brigade, to which they were attached, assembled again.

On the 11th September they entrained for Cape Town and remained at Greenport until 27 September, when they embarked on the 'Steam Ship Englishman' with the 18th Hussars and Lienster Regiments.

After a rough few days at sea, they entered the tropics and then stopped at the Canary Islands to take on coal.



Photo: The SS Englishman – at Fremantle in 1902 ¹⁹

The London Times, dated 24 January 1902 recorded the following:

The Englishman left for England Sep 29, with the following on passage home:

18/Hussars – Brevet Major R Burnett, Captains C H Leveson, N St V R Steward, Lieutenants C J Thackwell, H O Cape, 2/Lieutenants C L Wood, R S Gregg and 580 men

5/RFA – Captain C E Stewart and 67 men

39/RFA – Captain C L C Hamilton and 61 men

1/Leinster – Lieutenant Colonel H Martin, Major T St C Davidson, Captain J R Moffatt, Lieutenant P McCausland, 2/Lieutenant J G Dill, Lieutenant & Quartermaster G Garrett and 361 men

RA – Lieutenant Hon. D A Forbes, 2/Lieutenant C J A Cooper and 45 men

RE – Lieutenants CB Harvey, G F Evans, H F Edgeworth and 65 men

A/Pontoon, RE – 53 men

RAMC – Lieutenant Colonel H Johnson, Lieutenants W H Odlum, R M K Skinner and 12 men

Due Southampton Oct 22

¹⁹ Pininterest.com.au – accessed 17 February 2018

A newspaper article from the Kilkenny Moderator, dated 22 October 1902 recorded the following:

THE ARMY

The 39th Field Battery R.F.A. will arrive home from South Africa next Wednesday, and will come to Ireland to be stationed. The Battery forms part of the 14th Brigade Division Royal Field Artillery, under Lieutenant-General Pickwood, CMG, which unit is to be located in Ireland.

The SS Englishman landed in Queenstown, Cork on the 28th October 1902. The 39th Battery comprising of 61 men travelled by train to Kilkenny where a draft of 45 men met the Battery.

The London Times, dated 28 October 1902 recorded the following:

The Englishman, from South Africa, arrived Queenstown and disembarked 5 officers and 351 men of the 1/Leinster Regiment, and 1 officer and 61 men of the 39/RFA. She will leave this morning for Southampton.

A newspaper article from the Kilkenny Moderator, dated 1st November 1902 recorded the following:

ARMY INTELLIGENCE

ARTILLERY IN KILKENNY

On Tuesday last the 39th Field Battery, Royal Field Artillery just returned from South Africa, arrived at Kilkenny and will, it is expected, be stationed here for some time. The horses belonging to the Battery arrived later. At an earlier period of the same day a detachment of 45 recruits for the Battery also arrived in Kilkenny. There are now 105 non-commissioned officers and men in the battery. The officers are Lieutenant-Colonel E H Pickwood, CMG, Major W C Nicholson, Adjutant; Captain P D Hamilton, Captain C W Scott, Lieutenant L E Warren, Lieutenant R W S Burrill and Sergeant-Major Rickis.



*The Military Barracks in Kilkenny*²⁰

²⁰ A postcard showing James Stephens Barracks Kilkenny, circa 1920's

While stationed in Kilkenny, Frank met the lady for him; Kathleen O'Neill was two years older than Frank, she was born in Kilkenny on 3 March 1876 and is recorded on the 1901 census as living in Goose Hill (now Lord Edward Street) with her sister Elizabeth (and her husband). Kathleen's occupation is stated on the census as 'domestic servant'. Kathleen, or Kate as she was known, was a Catholic and Frank was baptised in the name Francis Parker on 17 July 1904 in Kilkenny. Frank and Kate were married a few months later at the Catholic Chapel of St Canice in Kilkenny on 16 January 1905.



Photos of St Canice's Church, in Kilkenny – (taken in June 2017)

Frank was not the only member of the 39th Battery to find love in Kilkenny. Walter Mitton, the author of 'A Bombardiers Memoirs', (referenced throughout this document) and from which it was possible to track the activities and movements of the 39th Battery in South Africa also met and married a Kilkenny girl during the Battery's posting there.

In September 1904, the 39th Battery left Ireland and returned to the home of the Royal Field Artillery at Woolwich in England, which was before Frank and Kate's marriage in January 1905. The records show that Frank was transferred to the 1st Class Army Reserve on 22 July 1903. This suggests Frank was a civilian for a period, but other records including for his baptism on 17 July 1904 and his marriage on 16 January 1905 suggest he was still a soldier residing at Kilkenny Barracks. It appears that Frank signed a new attestation with the army, shortly after his proposed transfer to the reserves and after his wedding on 16 January 1905, he re-joined the 39th Battery at Woolwich where Frank was posted for the next six years.

A newspaper article from the Belfast News, dated 18 February 1904 recorded the following:

The 14th Brigade Royal Field Artillery, consisting of the 39th Battery at Kilkenny, 68th at Limerick and 88th at Cork, the whole under Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor, will as soon as possible, move to Woolwich, after being in Ireland only since its return from South Africa in 1902. The 35th Brigade at Newbridge will then move to Limerick and Cork....



*The Royal Artillery Barracks at Woolwich - circa 1904*²¹

Frank and Kate were living at 121 Samuel Street, Woolwich when their first child, Kathleen Maud was born on 24 November 1906. Frank and Kate went on to have three more children while they were living in Woolwich, Frank Alfred born on 19 November 1908, Albert born on 22 April 1910 and Walter born in 1911. Kate gave birth to her first two children at the 'Female Hospital', which was the name given to the Garrison Hospital for the families of army personnel based at Woolwich. Albert was born at 29 Ritter Street, which was in an area of army accommodation situated adjacent the Royal Artillery Barracks in Woolwich.



*Map showing location of Ritter Street*²²



*Houses in Fenwick St (adjoined Ritter St)*²³

The 1911 census, shows Frank, Kate and their four children at Minden Barracks, Deep Cut, Farnborough, Hampshire. Frank is still with the 39th Battery and his rank is recorded as 'Driver'.

Minden Barracks was part of the Blacktown Camp at Deepcut, which is situated near the village of Frimley Green in Hampshire.

²¹ Vintage postcard

²² George Philip & Son, Handy Volume Atlas of London 1896

²³ UCL, The Bartlett School of Architecture vol Chapter 10 - Woolwich Common and Royal Military Academy Areas, p.437

Frank and Kate had their fifth and final child while they were posted at Deepcut. Eileen May was born on 4 March 1912. Their address is stated on Eileen's birth certificate as 11 B Block, Deepcut Barracks.

*Minden Barracks at Deepcut*²⁴

The 39th Battery relocated to Colchester in Essex in 1914, the place that would remain Frank and Kate's hometown for the rest of their lives. The 39th Battery were stationed at the Artillery Barracks at Colchester Garrison.



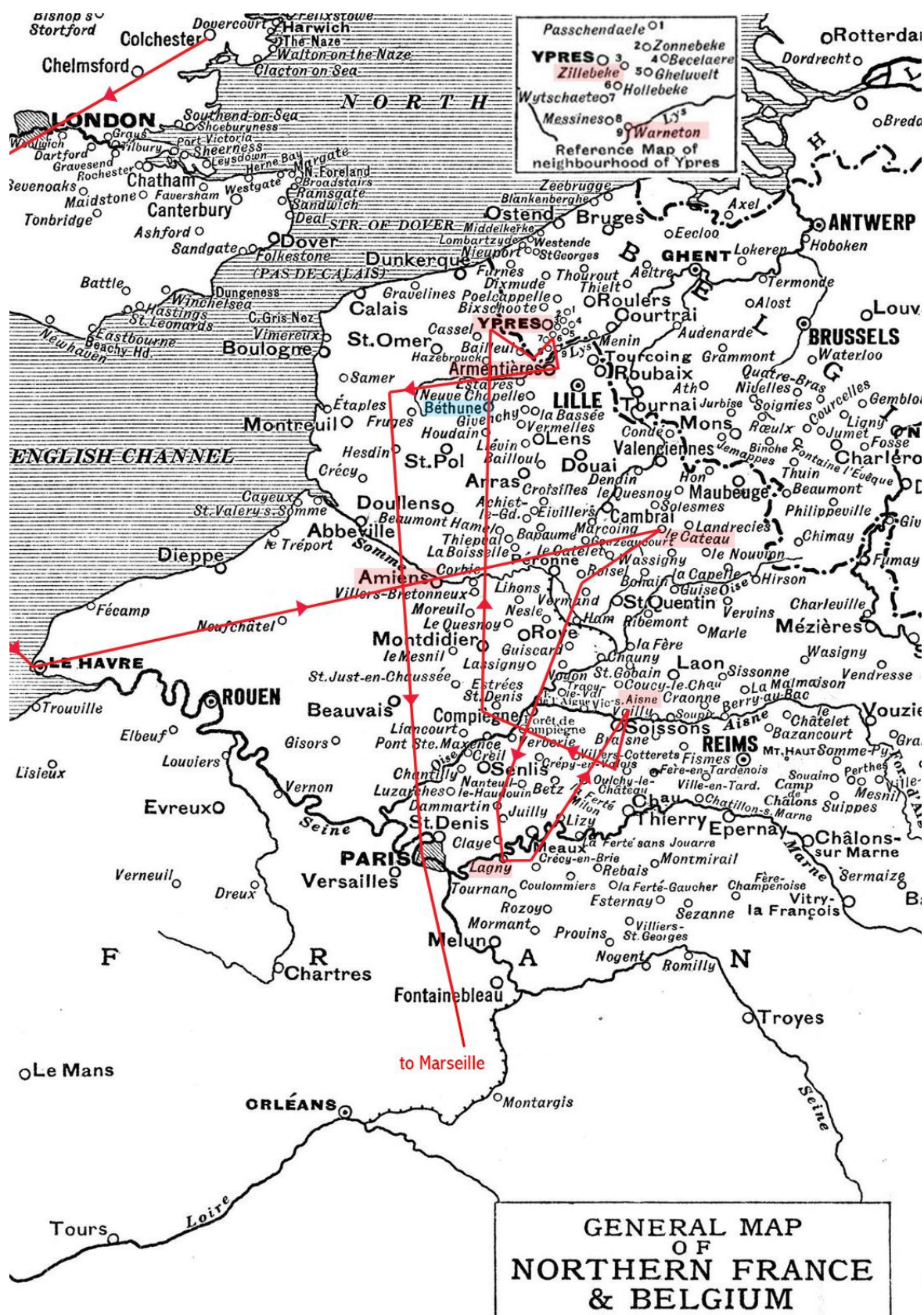
Photograph of Royal Field Artillery at Colchester Garrison (Artillery Barracks in the background)

As previously mentioned, there is no record to indicate which particular battery or unit Frank was attached to after March 1912, although it is known that he remained in Colchester where the 39th Battery was stationed, and it is also known that he went off to France with them in August 1914.

²⁴ Lightwater: 1920 Map of Deepcut Barracks - <https://lightwater.wordpress.com/2017/11/27/maps-reveal-the-history-of-deepcut-and-bisley-camp/> - accessed 6 October 2021

²⁵ Colchester Postcards – accessed 21 February 2018 (web site no longer exists)

WORLD WAR 1 - FRANCE - 39th Battery, Royal Field Artillery



Map of Northern France and Belgium²⁶

This map shows the movements of Frank's 39th Battery in France and Belgium from the time he arrived in Le Havre on 23 August 1914 until it departed France via Marseille on 17 November 1916.

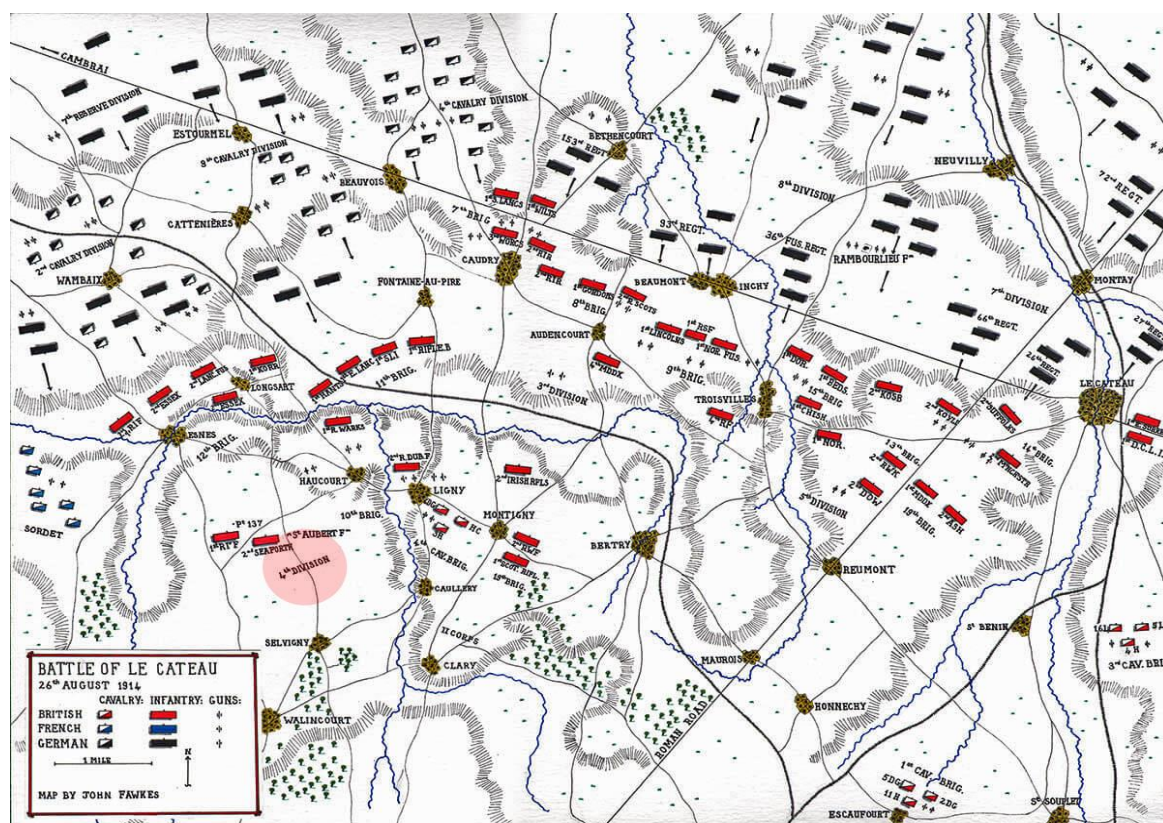
²⁶ Published by George Philip & Son Limited via The Project Gutenberg eBook, 1914, by John French, Viscount of Ypres - The Project Gutenberg eBook of 1914, by John French, Viscount of Ypres - accessed 8 October 2021

The following contains an abridged record of XIV Brigade (14th Brigade), Royal Field Artillery movements and placements from when it was moved to France in August 1914. This summary was compiled using information from a variety of sources including the 14th Brigade War Diary.²⁷

The 14th Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery (the 39th, 68th and 88th Batteries) was stationed at the Artillery Barracks in Colchester Garrison in August 1914 when World War 1 (WW1) began, and was part of the 4th Division of the British Army at the start of WW1 which was sent to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in August 1914.²⁸ The Division was initially held back from the original BEF by a last minute decision to defend England against a possible German landing. The fate of the BEF in France and the lack of any move by the enemy to cross the channel, reversed this decision and they proceeded to France in late August.²⁹

The 14th Brigade arrived at Southampton by train from Harrow on 22 August 1914 and sailed at 8:00 pm the same evening. The brigade, consisting of men on horses and horse-drawn field guns, followed by horse/mule-drawn ammunition wagons landed in Havre in France on 23 August.

By the night of the 25th August, II Corps of the British Army was retreating from the *Battle of Mons*, pursued by the German First Army. The 4th Division had just arrived and was brought forward to join II Corps, although not all its divisional elements were present. The Division took up its position on the evening and through the night of the 25th. The retreat was halted, and II Corps had to stand and fight the German First Army on land to the west of the town of LE CATEAU on the 26th August. II Corps and the 4th Division were heavily outnumbered by the German First Army but managed, largely due to their artillery brigades, to hold the German forces off for a while and to inflict some losses in a heroic delaying/rearguard action before a last-minute retreat.



Map of The Battle of Le Cateau 26th August 1914³⁰

²⁷ War Diaries for the 14th Brigade are held at the National Archives – reference WO-95-1466-4

²⁸ The Long, Long Trail: The British Army in the Great War of 191-1918 - <http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/the-royal-artillery-in-the-first-world-war/batteries-and-brigades-of-the-royal-field-artillery/> - accessed 4 October 2021

²⁹ The Wartime Memories Project, 14th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery - <https://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/fartillery.php?pid=9734> – 4 October 2021

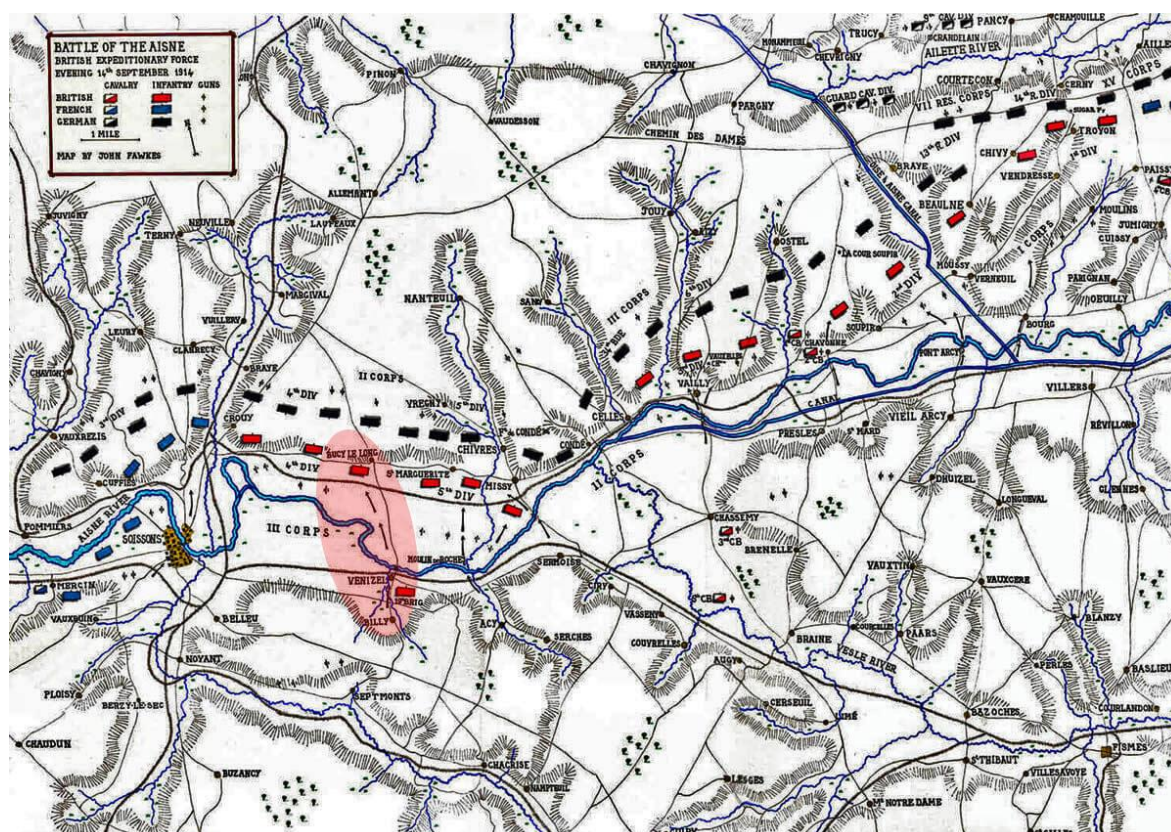
³⁰ Map of the Battle of the Aisne by John Fawkes at British Battles.com: First World War – Battle of Le Cateau <https://www.britishbattles.com/first-world-war/battle-of-le-cateau/> - accessed 7 October 2021

The *Battle of Le Cateau* was only the second engagement of WW1 (eight days after war was declared against Germany) and it was regarded as significant and a British military tactical success despite terrible losses of men (and horses). However, military experts have now revised the number of British casualties down from 7,800 to about 5,000 of all ranks being killed, wounded and missing. Le Cateau was a field artillery battle and 38 British field guns were lost. The 39th Battery were positioned at HAUCOURT and took part in the fighting all day.

The 4th Division, including 14th Brigade, went on to take part in the *Battle of the Marne* (on 7th–10th September), the *Battle of the Aisne* (12th–15th September) and at *The Battle of Messines* (October) in 1914 and it was deployed throughout the war.

The Artillery Barracks at Colchester Garrison were renamed 'Le Cateau Barracks' after the battle in commemoration of 14th Brigade's participation.³¹

The 14th Brigade fell back and after the *Battle of Le Cateau* and commenced a journey south which took them as far LAGNY on the west of Paris on 3rd September. They then headed north-west arriving in very wet conditions at MARIZY ST GENEVIEVE (west of SOISSONS) on 12th September where they camped in mud near ROSIERES. Here they participated in the *Battle of the Aisne* (12th–15th September). On 13 September, they advanced to ACY and then crossed to RIVER AISNE via a partially destroyed bridge at VENIZEL and reached BUCY LE LONG. On 15th September, Brigade Headquarters and 39th Battery retired south of river to high ground south of BILLY where the 39th Battery took up positions west of road. On 19th September, the 39th battery crossed river to east in MONCEL for close defense work with XII Infantry Brigade, where they remained until 1st October when they moved to a new position north-west of BILLY SUR AISNE.



Map of the Battle of the Aisne, 10-13th September 1914 by John Fawkes³²

³¹ The Colchester Archaeologist, Battle of Le Cateau - <http://www.thecolchesterarchaeologist.co.uk/?p=6681> – accessed 4 October 2021

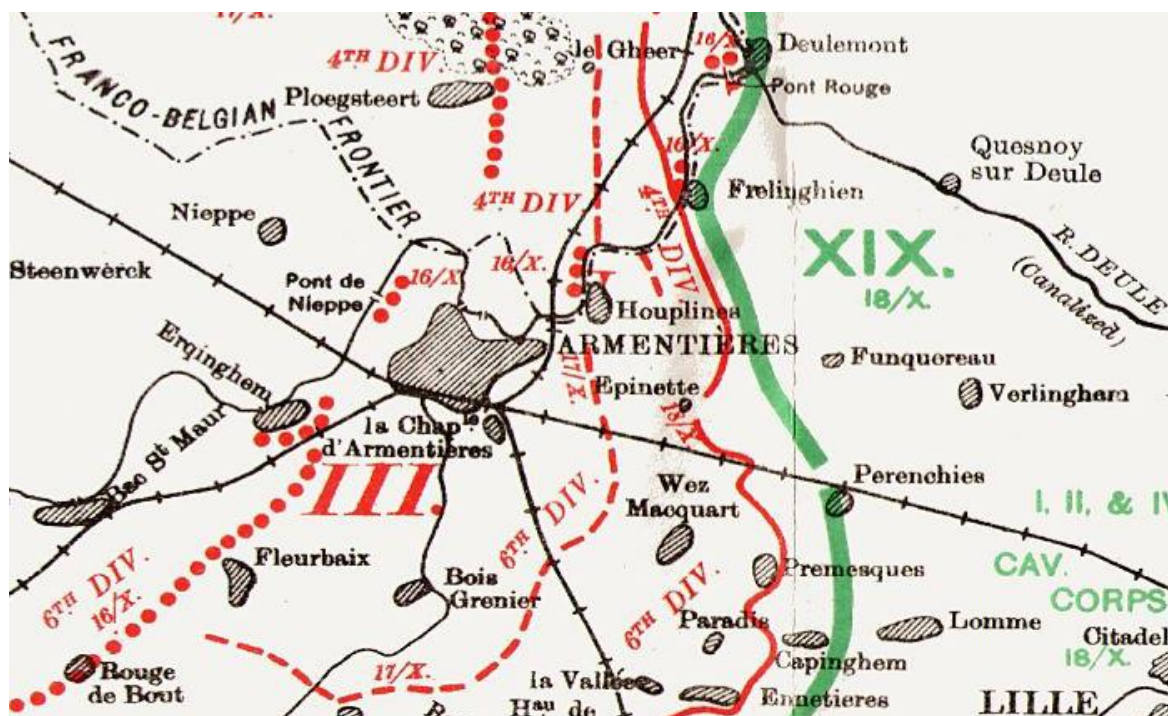
³² Map of the Battle of the Aisne by John Fawkes at BritishBattles.com: First World War - Battle of the Aisne - <https://www.britishbattles.com/first-world-war/battle-of-the-aisne/> - accessed 6 October 2021



*RFA 18 pounder field gun in action during the Battle of the Aisne – 10- 13 September 1914*³³

The 14th Brigade withdrew from the Aisne on 5 October and marched south arriving at LE PLESSIER HULEU on 8th October, before commencing a journey north behind the front-line to ARMENTIERES where engaged the enemy again during the *Battle of Messines* (throughout October).

On 21 October the 39th Battery was in action about ½ mile north of east in LA HUTTE and were almost hit by German heavy artillery on the 22nd which was thought to be as a result of aeroplane observation. The 39th Battery marched to a new position near HOUPLINES on 26th October where they opened fire on three hostile batteries located by an ally aeroplane. The 39th Battery remained in this area north-east of LE BIZET and FRELINGHIEN village where it provided support for the British Infantry and firing on enemy positions in the areas of PONT ROUGE, LE GHEER and PLOEGSTEERT WOOD, while undertaking periodic rest billets in NIEPPE until mid-February 1915. The 14th Brigade War Diary records that it was inspected by His Majesty King George V on 2 December 1914.



*Map showing the position of the 4th Division at the Battle of La Bassée and Armentières*³⁴

³³ BritishBattles.com: First World War - Battle of the Aisne - <https://www.britishbattles.com/first-world-war/battle-of-the-aisne/> - accessed 6 October 2021

³⁴ The Long, Long Trail, The British Army in the Great War of 1914-1918, The Battles of La Bassée, Armentières and Messines, 1914 - <http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/battles/battles-of-the-western-front-in-france-and-flanders/the-battles-of-la-bassée-armentières-and-messines-1914/> - accessed 11 February 2018



This is a rare photo of the 39th Battery, R.F.A. crossing a ford in an unknown location. The soldiers are wearing standard uniform, rather than khaki, so it seems likely it was taken some time after the Boer War,³⁵ possibly in India or in France during WW1.

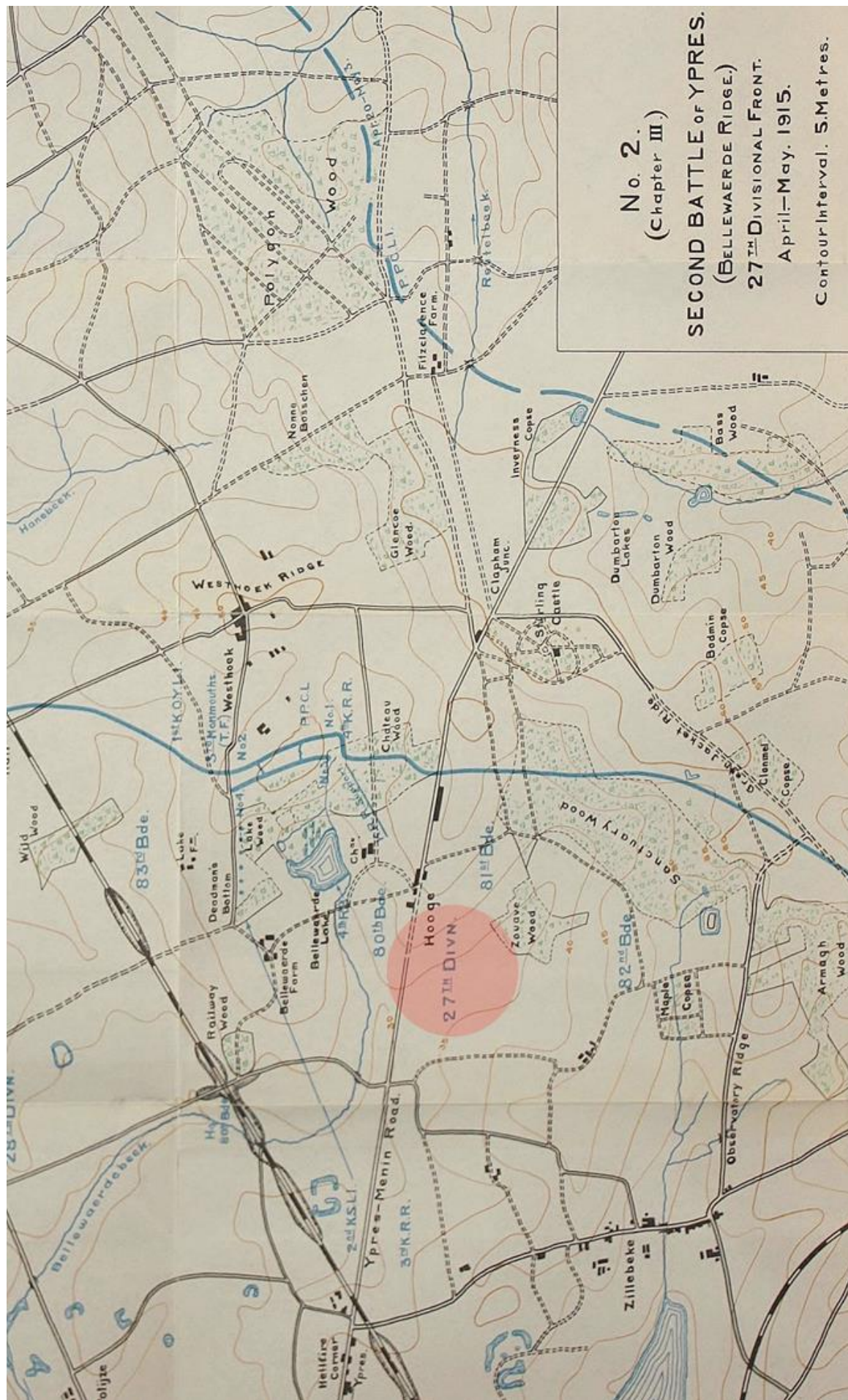
On 9 February 1915, the 39th Battery was transferred to XIX Brigade (19th Brigade) Royal Field Artillery, which now comprised of the 39th, 95th, 96th and 131st Batteries and was attached to the British Army's 27th Division.³⁶ The following contains an abbreviated record of the 19th Brigade's movements and placements from 9 February 1915 until December 1915. This summary was compiled using information from a variety of sources including the 19th Brigade War Diary.³⁷

The 19th Brigade remained at DICKEBUSCHE, southwest of YPRES during February 1915 before being engaged in action at ST ELOI. It then saw action in the *Second Battle of Ypres* (22 April and 25 May 1915), where the allied armies took a stand against strong and relentless Germans attacks.

³⁵ Published on Ancestry.com by Joanne Mitton (descendant of Walter Mitton)

³⁶ The Long, Long Trail: The British Army in the Great War of 1914-1918 - <http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/the-royal-artillery-in-the-first-world-war/batteries-and-brigades-of-the-royal-field-artillery/xix-brigade-of-the-royal-field-artillery/> - accessed 5 October 2021

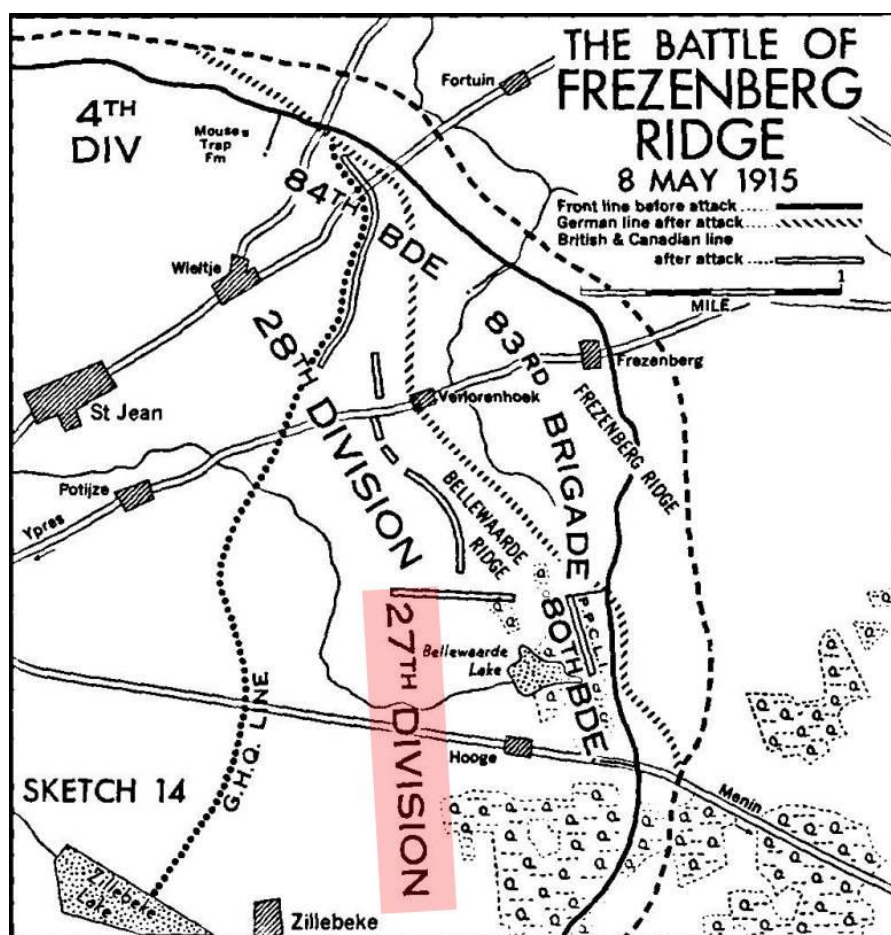
³⁷ War Diaries for the 19th Brigade RFA, Dec 1914 to Dec 1915, held at the National Archives – reference WO-95-2257-4



The 19th Brigade were involved in intense conflict with the Germans in the area for a prolonged period at this time in the area west of YPRES around HOOGE and ZILLEBEKE with all batteries suffering numerous casualties during a number of significant sub-battles. The 19th Brigade were involved in the *Battle of Gravenstafel Ridge* (22-23 April) where the German army released 168 tons of chlorine gas effectively for the first time over a 6.5 kilometre (4 mile) line resulting in thousands of casualties particularly amongst the French troops.

The 39th Battery were commended for repelling a German attack during the *Battle of Frezenberg* (8-13 May) – see the picture below. The Brigade war diary states:

“Enemy broke the 28th Division line, the 80th Infantry Brigade held on to the front of the 27th Division but had to fall back. The 39th Battery under Major Gerald did first class work. I consider that owing to the way the battery fought, the failure of the German attack was mainly due. They were firing most of the day under 1600 yards and though they were firing south at the commencement of the day, turning their guns around in their emplacements fired around 1600 north east at Germans in the open doing great execution, the infantry who witnessed it informed me that the fire was deadly. The Wessex Engineers assisted in carrying ammunition and formed an escort. During a considerable part of the day there were no infantry between the battery and the Germans”.



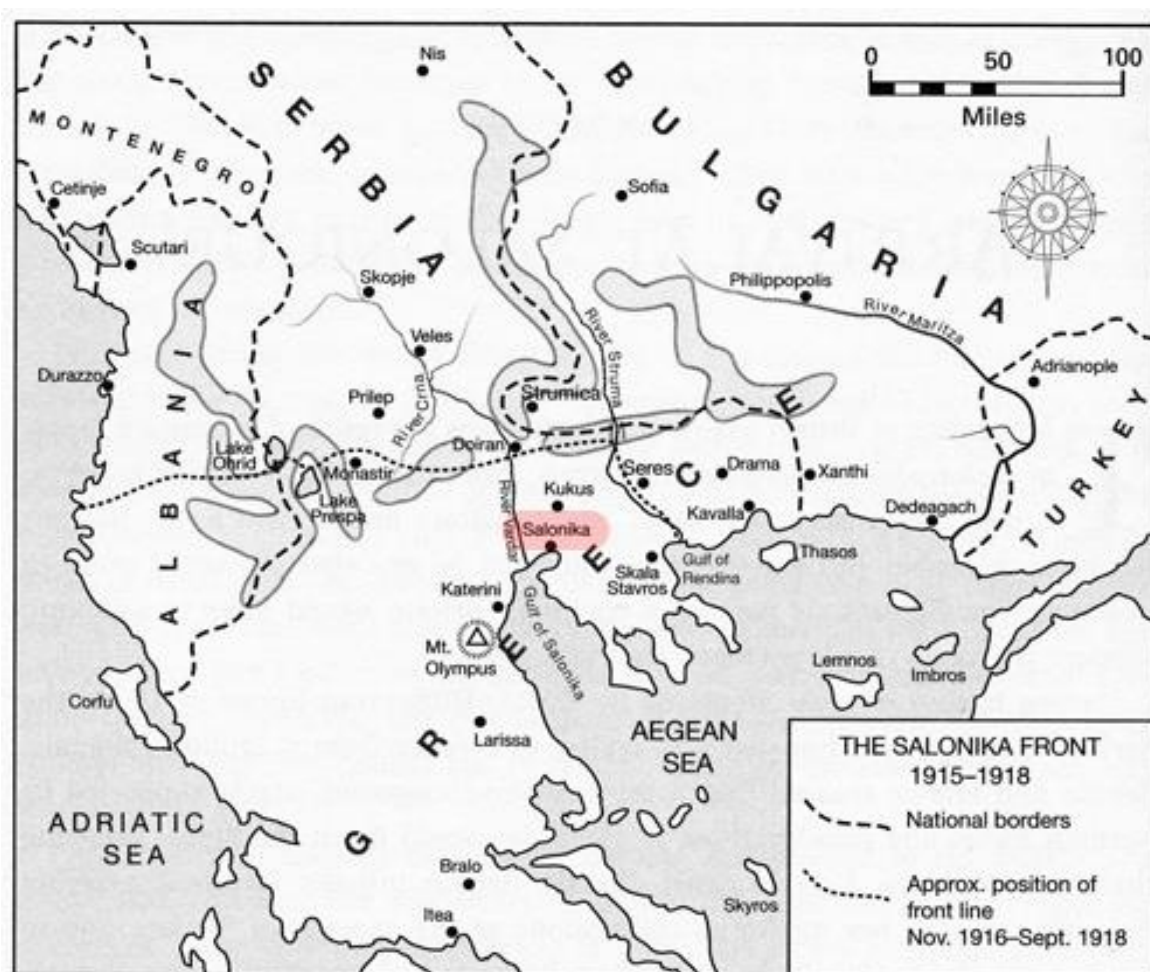
*A map of the day's battle at Frezenberg Ridge*³⁸

The 19th Brigade also managed to repel German attacks and prevent lines being broken by the Germans during the *Battle of Bellewaarde* (24-25 May), during which they engaged the enemy a close range (1000 yards) and were at times left exposed with strong smells of gas and no troop cover.

³⁸ The Great War Blog: 08 May 1915 – Frezenberg Ridge - <http://ww1blog.osborneink.com/?p=7669> – accessed 5 October 2021

At the end of May 1915, the 19th Brigade marched to new positions at LA MENEGATE, near ARMENTIERES. The 39th Battery remained in this area until 21 September, when the 19th Brigade moved south by train to AMIENS where it took up a new position at CHUIGNES directly west of AMIENS) where it provided support to the 82nd Infantry Brigade. It remained in this area until in entrained for MARSEILLES in December 1915.

In November 1916, the 27th Division, which included the 19th Brigade were ordered to Salonika (Greece) embarking on the 17th, although it was not until February 1916 that the whole Division arrived. The Salonika Front also known as the Macedonia campaign which was formed as a result of an attempt by the Allied Powers to aid Serbia against the combined attack of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. Between 30 September and 2 October 1916, they were engaged in the capture of Karajakois, followed swiftly by the capture of Yenikoi (3-4 October) where they fought against the Bulgarian Army. During November and December, they were involved in the *Battle of Tumbitza Farm* and also in the capture of Homondos on 14 October 1917.³⁹



*A Map showing the Salonika front in November 1916 and in September 1918*⁴⁰

While the 27th Division remained at the Salonika Front until the end of the war, some of its units were transferred to France in 1918. It is unknown at this stage whether the 19th Brigade RFA (including the 39th Battery) was amongst them, although a report in the London Daily News on 7 May 1919 stated that a ship carrying 19th Brigade had arrived at Dover, having returned from Salonika.⁴¹

³⁹ The Long, Long Trail: The history of the 27th Division - <http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/order-of-battle-of-divisions/27th-division/> - accessed 5 October 2021

⁴⁰ Poppycock, The Real First World War: Great Britain, Salonika, Serbia – web site no longer exists

⁴¹ The Long, Long Trail: The history of the 27th Division - <http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/order-of-battle-of-divisions/27th-division/> - accessed 5 October 2021

Medals

Military Campaign Medal Nomination rolls from 1902 indicate that Frank was entitled to Queens South Africa Medal with 'Cape Colony', 'Orange Free State' and 'South Africa 1902' clasps.⁴²

The Queen's South Africa Medal is a British campaign medal that was awarded to British and Colonial military personnel, civilians employed in official capacity and war correspondents who served in the Second Boer War in South Africa.

A clasp inscribed 'CAPE COLONY' was awarded to all troops in the Cape Colony at any time between 11 October 1899 and 31 May 1902 inclusive, who had not received a clasp for a specific action in the Cape of Good Hope, or the 'Natal' clasp.

A clasp inscribed 'ORANGE FREE STATE' was awarded to all troops in the Orange Free State at any time between 28 February 1900 and 31 May 1902 inclusive, who had not received a clasp for a specific action in the Orange Free State.

A clasp inscribed 'SOUTH AFRICA 1902' was awarded to all troops who served in South Africa between 1 January 1902 and 31 May 1902 inclusive, who were not eligible for the King's South Africa Medal.

Interestingly, the nomination rolls indicate Frank was not entitled to receive the King's South Africa Medal which was awarded to all British and Colonial military personnel who served in the Second Boer War in South Africa, who were in the theatre on or after 1 January 1902 and who had completed 18 months service in the conflict prior to 1 June 1902. It is not known why Frank did not meet the criteria for this medal although it is possible that Frank did meet the criteria of 18 months service if he went on leave or was convalescing.



Queens South Africa Medal



Cape Colony Clasp

Orange Free State Clasp

South Africa 1902 Clasp



British War Medal



Victory Medal

The WW1 Service Medal Award rolls⁴³ and Frank's Medal Roll Index Card⁴⁴ indicates he was entitled the British War Medal and the Victory Medal for his service during the First World War.

The silver or bronze medal British War Medal was awarded to officers and men of the British and Imperial Forces who either entered a theatre of war or entered service overseas between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918 inclusive. The recipient's service number, rank, name and unit were impressed on the rim.

⁴² National Archives of the UK; Kew, Surrey, England; War Office Campaign Medal and Award Rolls 1793-1949 (WO 100); Class: WO 100; Piece: 141 - Regiment or Unit: 18 - 21, 26, 28, 37 - 39, 42 - 44 Batteries – accessed via Ancestry.com online database – 5 October 2021

⁴³ The National Archives of the UK; Kew, Surrey, England; WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls; Class: WO 329; Piece Number: 36: Royal Field Artillery, accessed via Ancestry.com online database 5 October 2021

⁴⁴ British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920 [database on-line], original data: Army Medal Office, WWI Medal Index Cards. In the care of The Western Front Association website - accessed via Ancestry.com 5 October 2021

The Victory Medal was awarded to all men who entered a theatre of war between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918. The front depicts a winged classical figure representing victory. The recipient's service number, rank, name and unit were impressed on the rim.

Frank continued to serve in the Army after WW1, and he was based at the Garrison in Colchester when he returned to England. Frank's eldest son, Frank Alfred died on 29 November 1923, aged just 15. His death certificate states that he had broncho pneumonia for 14 days. A family account of this event is that Frank junior was doing a newspaper delivery round either bare-footed or at least in inadequate quality footwear during bad weather and this contributed to him contracting pneumonia. Although, Frank and Kate's eldest child Kathleen (Kathy) said that Frank junior got ill after being injured in a football match, and his death was very hard on the family.

Family

Frank and Kate had five children:

Kathleen Maud Parker – Kilkenny, Ireland on 24 November 1906*

Frank Alfred Parker – born at the Female Hospital, Woolwich on 19 November 1908

Albert Parker – born at 29 Ritter Street, Woolwich on 22 April 1910

Walter F Parker – born in Woolwich in 1911

Eileen May Parker – born at 11 B Block, Deepcut Barracks, Frimley, Surrey

*Kathleen's (Kathy) birth certificate states she was born at the Female Hospital, Woolwich. However, Kathy told that she was born in Kilkenny, Ireland and she was brought too England as a very small baby where her birth was registered at Woolwich.

The Army declared that all families must move out of 'married army quarters' at the commencement of World War 1. Kate lived in two rooms in West Stockwell Street, Colchester with her children while Frank was away. Kate did not hear anything from Frank during the whole four years of World War 1, so did not know where he was or even if he was alive. When Frank returned, they moved into two adjoining married quarters so there was room for them all.

Post-army life

Frank was discharged from the Army at Colchester following an accident involving a horse which left his arm permanently damaged. Frank's daughter, Kathleen (Kathy), told that Frank's arm was run over by a gun carriage and after six months of treatment his arm did not regain enough strength for him to continue to serve. This occurred in 1923 after he had served in the British Army for 28 years, having enlisted at the age of 17 (in 1895). Frank junior's death certificate states that the family were still living in 'married quarters' at 4 Layer Road in Colchester at the time. While the house at 4 Layer Road is no longer there, this is known to be very close to the Army Garrison in Colchester and was bounded by army quarters accommodation. It would appear that Frank was still living in army accommodation at this point, although Frank's occupation is stated as 'Groom - domestic' on his son's death certificate, which suggests he may not have been serving in the Army at the time. Frank's daughter Kathy told of how one of Frank's officers employed him as a personal groom after his discharge the Army and it is believed he received a small pension from the Army as he was medically discharged.

According to Frank and Kate's son Walter (Wally), Frank and Kate had considerable trouble finding a suitable home after Frank left the Army and they initially took 'rooms' above a public house (the Recreation Hotel at Old Heath in Colchester). Wally said that because of the noise and fights it was unsuitable for with their five children. Only on account Kate's persistence at the council offices did they finally get a council house at 24 Fairhead Road, Colchester.

Kate's daughter, Kathy, held her mother in high esteem. She told that Kate was an intelligent and courageous woman. She never learnt to read and write but was very shrewd and knew how to look after her money. She was a staunch Catholic who went to church often. Kathy told of

how Kate went to the Council Housing Office every day that it was open until they were given 24 Fairhead Road.



The Recreation Hotel, Colchester



24 Fairhead Road, Colchester

It appears that Frank did not adjust to life outside the Army very well, he found it difficult to find work and hold down employment possibly because of his damaged arm. His occupation was noted as a 'general labourer' on his daughters (Kathleen and Eileen) marriage certificates in 1935.

On 5 August 1939, Frank's wife Kate suffered a fall at her home in Fairhead Road, which resulted in her fracturing the neck of her femur (the very top of her leg near the hip socket). Her health deteriorated significantly after this injury and she eventually died of heart failure on 19 November 1939, aged 63.

Frank, who was still doing laboring work, continued to live at Fairhead Road, although he was recorded as being at his daughter, Kathleen's house at 25 Balcerne Lane, Colchester on the 1939 Register, which also stated that he was unemployed.

After Kate died, her daughter Kathy and her husband looked after Frank, eventually taking over as tenants of 24 Fairhead Road on condition that they gave Frank a home and care until he died.

Frank died at 24 Fairhead Road on 19 February 1947, aged 68. His cause of death was recorded as 1. myocarditis and bronchitis 2. prostatectomy. Both Frank and Kate were buried at Colchester Cemetery in Mersea Road.



Frank Alfred Parker, 1878 – 1947



Kathleen (Kate) O'Neill, 1876 - 1939

A note about Walter Mitton

Walter Mitton's diary about his life and events during the Boer War was the subject of the previously mentioned book about the 39th Battery called 'A Bombardier's Memoirs'. Walter and Frank's pathway's continued to be entwined after they both served in the same Battery during the Second Boer War. They were both married local Kilkenny girls and remained with the 39th Battery when it was posted to Woolwich where they lived in army quarters until 1910, then at Deepcut Barracks in Frimley from 1911 to 1914 and in Colchester after that. Walter also went to France with the 39th Battery on 23 August 1914, although he went on special leave to England in August 1916 when his wife died. He returned to the front and was due for retirement at the beginning of 1917 but thought he would see the war to its end and signed up for another two years. After serving in the 39th Battery alongside Frank for at least 17 years, Walter was posted to a new Battery at the rank of Sergeant. Sadly, Walter was killed in action on 24 March 1918 during the last big German push and he is buried in the British Cemetery in Noyon, France.



A colourised version of a photo of Frank and Kate at their daughter's (Eileen May Parker) wedding which took place on 2 March 1935 at the Register Office, Colchester, Essex.

Back row: Walter Parker b:1911, John Arthur Eagle b:1909, Frank Alfred Parker b:1878

Front row: Kathleen (Kate) Parker (nee O'Neill) b:1876, Eileen May Parker b:1912, unknown lady (Kathy's best friend and bridesmaid)

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This is a summary of research undertaken to date, it is by no means final and my intention is to continue developing the stories of the Parker family as more information comes to light. I would therefore be very pleased to receive any further information, photos and/or stories in the future.

Nick Sheen

Email: sheensinwa@bigpond.com

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