

Archibald Remnant 1892-1917



Image from the Kevis collection Ref: Kevis 1/R104, West Sussex Record Office

A Baker's son from Petworth, Sussex

By Margaret Holloway

Summary

Archibald (Archie) Remnant was born in Petworth, Sussex in 1892. The Remnants owned the bakers and confectioners which was destroyed by a fire in 1898. The family moved to Salfords near Horley in Surrey to live with Archie's sister-in-law Lillian's family the Fosters. The Foster men were employees of the Monotype print works. Aged 18 Archie joined the Royal Engineers for two years and then became a reservist. From August 1914 he served in the British Expeditionary Force as a driver until his death in action on 30 April 1917 aged 24. He is buried at Arras.



Introduction

Had he lived Archie would have been my great uncle. A treasured collection of his possessions including his last letter from the Front inspired me to write this study. I hope that the story of his family will interest local Sussex readers. However, their story reflects how the Great War affected so many of the old large Victorian families when they lost their fathers, sons and brothers and changed the Britain they knew forever.

Remnant's Bakery part of the former Crown Inn on the corner of Church Street and Lombard Street. Photos from the Kevis Collection, West Sussex Record Office.

Background

My mother Dorothy (Dolly to her family) would have been 100 years old on 1 December 2013. Hers was a tough working class childhood and youth typical of the Edwardian era. Like most of her contemporaries she then had to live through another war. As a girl myself growing up in the south London suburbs in the 1950s and 60s I knew that my grandfather Charles Remnant came from Petworth despite now living in Edmonton in North London with my grandmother Lillian. They were in poor health by this time and the house was poorly furnished and very minimal by today's standards. I was always puzzled that his sister Edith (known as Aunt Edie) lived in America. She and my mother corresponded but my grandparents never spoke of her. My mother was always proud of her Petworth connections and knew that some of her family members had been employed at Petworth House as bakers and gardeners. She took me to Petworth one day to show me a bare wall where the Remnant family bakery had stood. She told me that my grandfather Charles who was a boy of 12 at the time woke up in the night to see the curtains on fire. His prompt action in raising the alarm saved his family's lives.

My mother's grandfather also Charles (Remnant) was born in 1860. He was married to Sarah Jane Wadey from Wisborough Green in Sussex. They had four children: Charles, Edith, Mabel and Archie. Mother told me Remnants bakers supplied Petworth House, a fact I was not sure about until later in life as a teacher I took a party of schoolchildren there for a Victorian day. When the guide pointed out the empty space where the bakery had stood I was able to say "well, actually it was my family..." Of the other members of the family: Edith was a nurse at Guildford cottage hospital. At the time of Archie's service Mabel's address is listed as in Knightsbridge so I assume she was in service but I know little else about her except for a photo of her grave in America.

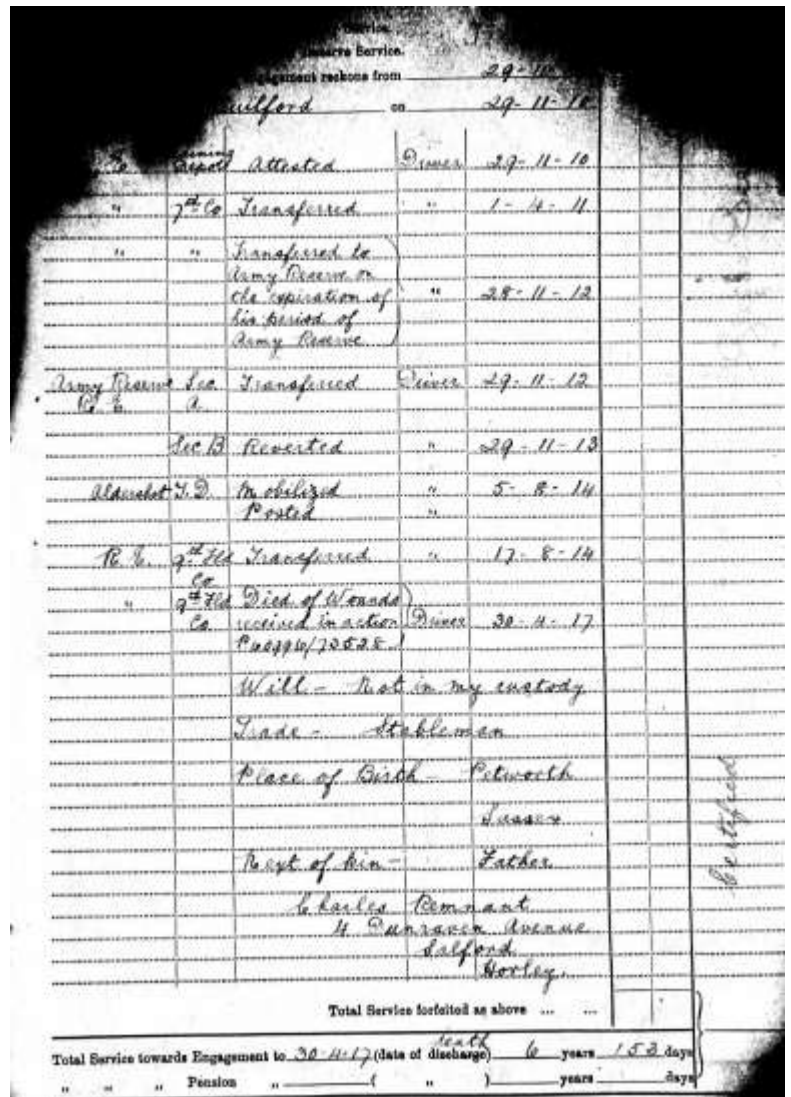


The Foster Family outside their house in Dunraven Avenue, Salfords. Lillian is second from the left in the top row.
 Photo from author's collection

Archibald Remnant Service Record

War Office records and his Soldiers' Small Book tell us that on 29 November 1910 aged 18yrs 5 months he was enlisted into the Royal Engineers at Guildford and signed up for 12 years- the first two years to be in Army service and the remainder in the Army Reserve. His occupation was recorded as stableman.

His medical record states that he had a fresh complexion, brown eyes and brown hair. His height was 5'5", and with a chest measurement of 36" and a weight of only 125lb(9stone), it is not surprising that he is recorded to have only fair physical development. Eyesight was good. Two character references were submitted: one from the licensee of the Prince Albert (his employer for the previous 12 months), and a second from the local rector.



Date	Description	Other
29-11-10	Enlisted	
29-11-10	Present reckons from	
29-11-10	Enlisted	
1-4-11	7 th Co Transferred	
28-11-12	Transferred to Army Reserve on the expiration of his period of Army Reserve	
29-11-12	Army Reserve Sec. Transferred	
29-11-13	Sec. B reverted	
5-8-14	Mobilized Posted	
17-8-14	9 th Co Transferred	
30-4-17	9 th Co Died of Wounds received in action (No. 10525)	
	Will - Not in my custody	
	Trade - Stableman	
	Place of Birth - Petworth	
	Sussex	
	Next of kin - Father	
	Charles Remnant	
	14, Commercial Avenue	
	Guildford	
	Surrey	
	Total Service forfeited as above	
	Total Service towards Engagement to 30-4-17 (date of discharge)	6 years 153 days
	" " " Pension	years 2yrs

First World War Soldiers Service Records from Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk)

25 October 1912 he was enrolled in Section A of the 1st Class Army Reserve at Storncliffe.

28 November 1912 he transferred to the Army Reserve on the expiration of his period of service. He became an Army Reserve Driver for the Royal Engineers.

29 November 1913 a certificate of Release signed at Chatham records the expiration of his period of service in that section.

5-22 August 1914 he was at home.

23 August 1914 he was mobilised and posted to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) 9th Field Company (9F Co)

30 April 1917 he died of wounds received in action aged 24 years 9 months.

... Commanding Officer for information regarding character of Prince Albert residing at Prince Albert ...
 A stamped and directed envelope is enclosed for reply.
W B Stan Esq Recruiting Officer.

The following is a description of the man.

Age 18 years, 5 months	General Description.
Height 5' foot 8 1/2 inches	
Complexion Fresh	
Eyes Brown	
Hair Brown	

QUESTIONS.	ANSWERS.
1. Does the above description answer in all respects to the man you know as <u>Michael Remnant</u> ?	1. Yes
2. How long have you personally known him?	2. 5 years
3. When did you see him last to speak to?	3. 15 days
4. Has he ever been employed by you? If so, please state— (a) The capacity in which you employed him. (b) How long he was in your employment. (c) The approximate date of his leaving your employment. (d) The reason for his leaving.	4. (a) ✓ (b) ✓ (c) ✓ (d) ✓
5. If he has not been employed by you, do you know, or have you heard, whether he has been in any employment? If so, please state the name and address of his employer.	5. ✓
6. As to his character, to the best of your belief, is he— (a) Sober? (b) Honest? (c) Can you give any further information as to his character?	6. (a) Yes (b) Yes (c) I know his letter well
7. Has he to your knowledge, or have you ever heard, that he has served in the Army, Navy, Royal Militia, Special Reserve, Territorial Force, Imperial Yeomanry, or Volunteers? If so, please state which.	7. Not served
8. Is he married or single? If a widower, state number of children, if any.	8. Single

Signature of Referee H J [unclear]
 Trade or Profession [unclear]

... Commanding Officer for information regarding character of Michael Remnant residing at The Old Rectory ...
 A stamped and directed envelope is enclosed for reply.
W B Stan Esq Recruiting Officer.

The following is a description of the man.

Age 18 years, 5 months	General Description.
Height 5' foot 8 1/2 inches	
Complexion Fresh	
Eyes Brown	
Hair Brown	

QUESTIONS.	ANSWERS.
1. Does the above description answer in all respects to the man you know as <u>Michael Remnant</u> ?	1. Yes!
2. How long have you personally known him?	2. about 12 months
3. When did you see him last to speak to?	3. 12 November 1910
4. Has he ever been employed by you? If so, please state— (a) The capacity in which you employed him. (b) How long he was in your employment. (c) The approximate date of his leaving your employment. (d) The reason for his leaving.	4. yes! (a) Assist in stable & garden (b) about 12 months (c) 12 November 1910 (d) of his own accord
5. If he has not been employed by you, do you know, or have you heard, whether he has been in any employment? If so, please state the name and address of his employer.	5. —
6. As to his character, to the best of your belief, is he— (a) Sober? (b) Honest? (c) Can you give any further information as to his character?	6. (a) yes! (b) yes! (c) generally good.
7. Has he to your knowledge, or have you ever heard, that he has served in the Army, Navy, Royal Militia, Special Reserve, Territorial Force, Imperial Yeomanry, or Volunteers? If so, please state which.	7. No.
8. Is he married or single? If a widower, state number of children, if any.	8. Single

Signature of Referee R [unclear]
 Trade or Profession [unclear]

(Address) The Old Rectory, Church Lane, [unclear]

Character References from War Office Records: The pub landlord and the Rector!
First World War Soldiers Service Records from Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk)

This is the pencil-written letter sent home by Archie from the Front followed by a transcript complete with spelling errors.
[in author's collection]

30. 11. 19

Dear Char and Lily

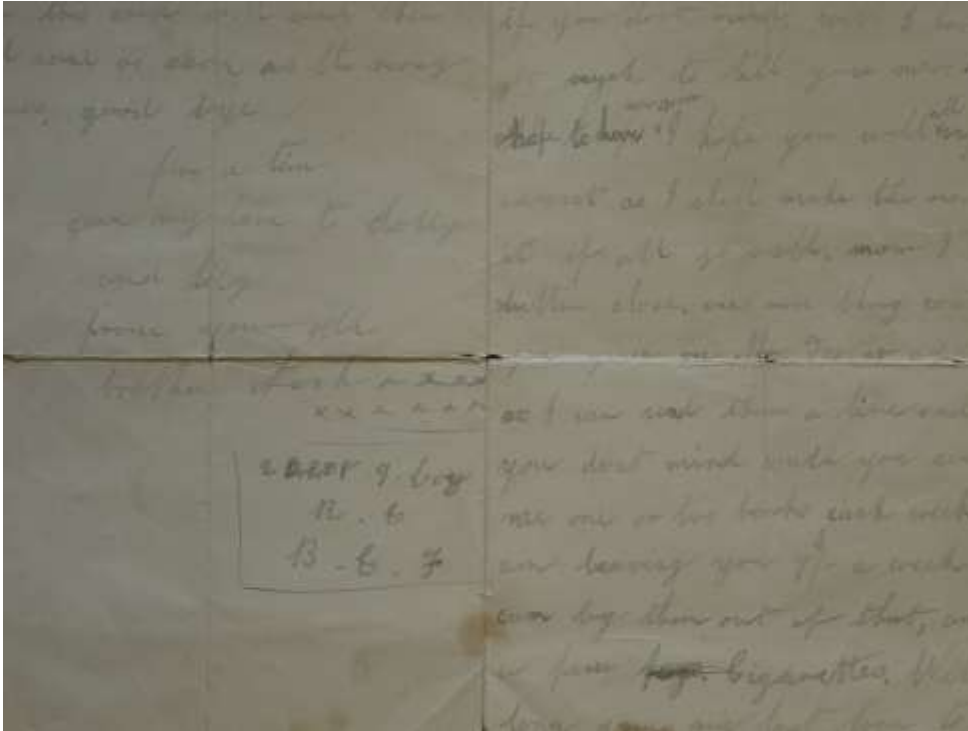
Just a few lines hoping you got my letter safe which I sent a week ago. I sent a card inside I hope you like it. How are Lily and Dolly. I hope they are quite well as I am at present. We are having plenty of snow lately. I expect we shall have plenty of it now. Well have you heard from dad and mother lately. I have lost there address.

So just drop a line and put it inside if you don't mind well I haven't got much to tell you now but hope to have news soon. I hope you will enjoy some rest as I shall make the most of it if all goes well, now I had better close. One more thing could you give me Mr Foster's address as I can send them a line and if you don't mind would you send me one or two

books each week. I am leaving you 7/- a week you can by them out of that, and a few cigarettes. Well so long give my best love to them all. Don't forget the old lady upstairs and give her this card will send them all some as soon as the money comes.

Goodbye for a time
Give my love to dolly and lily
From your old brother
Arch xxx

28.08.9 Coy
R E
BEF



The date must have been added later. It may never have been sent but returned with his belongings after his death. A communication signed by his brother Charles on 18 November 1919 corresponds most closely with that date. It records the soldier's mother, father, sisters as "None". Charles and Lily's address is now 34 Selwin

Rd Mortlake East Sheen. Towards the end of the War Charles Senior, his wife and daughters Edie and Mabel decided to Emigrate to America.

British nurses with their superior training were in demand in the US and Edie may have initiated the move. Charles Junior, however, never forgave his parents and sisters for leaving his little brother to perish in France and that is why he never spoke to them or saw any of them again.

The cards refer to embroidered silk cards made by Frenchwomen for sweethearts or as Christmas cards. There are some in the collection, 7/- 7 shillings (35p but more like £3:50 allowing for inflation)

Charles Foster of Salfords with eldest son also Charles (Charlie) who was in the Lifeguards and survived the War and brother Arthur. It is said that Charlie and Archie met a few days before he was killed. Archie was cold and hungry and Charlie gave him some bread. I remember telling my own



Image from author's collection

NAME OF BIRTH		Age	
Father of the Soldier ...		None	
Mother of the Soldier ...		None	
Brothers of the Soldier	Full blood ...	Charles Fennell	34 29 Mortlake East Sheen
	Half blood ...	None	
Sisters of the Soldier	Full blood ...	None	
	Half blood ...		
If no Relatives in the degrees above are now living the following particulars should be given			
Grandparents of the Soldier ...			
Nephews and Nieces of the Soldier ...			
Uncles and Aunts by Blood of the Soldier (not Uncle and Aunts by marriage) ...			
DECLARATION.			
I hereby declare that the above is a true and complete statement of all the Relatives of the late Soldier living in the degrees required for ...			
Relationship to the Soldier		Signature of the Declarant	
Address in full		34 Mortlake East Sheen	
I hereby certify that the above Statement and Declaration made by ... is true and correct, to the best of my knowledge and belief.			
Signed at		Date	
Signature of Minister or Magistrate		Qualification	

First World War Soldiers Service Records from Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk)

schoolteacher this story once and she dismissed it as sentimental nonsense. Soon afterwards Rolf Harris released the song "Two Little

Boys"!

The saddest episode which his brother Archie was dead. 10 May 1917 not Charles Remnant enquiring about him. 1 June 1917 he home now 963



Charles, Lillian and Dolly
 Image from author's collection

in the story is the way in Charles discovered that

having heard from Archie, wrote to the war Office

received a reply to their Fulham Rd, Fulham.

Fulham
S.W.

received a Telegram announcing
 my Brother's death from war
 on May 8th the number given
 is 29898. but his right
 number is 8050 J. A. Remnant
 RE 9th Company of the Dics
 I should be grateful if you
 could let me know anything
 about it
 I am
 Charles Remnant

There seems to have been some confusion over the service number given for Archie on the letter, which must have given Charles hope that he may still be alive. There follows a series of internal memos inside the War Office confirming that they did have the right man culminating in a very matter-of-fact telegram to Charles.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAM

7-MAY 1917
 ATHAM

Office War Office London

TO { Alford Chatham.

62. Co.	P60996.	46.	#2.	Co.
Regt.	Stn.	France.	reports	1
May	Died	30.	April	2080
201	Remnant	a.	R.	E
9.	Field	Boy	Wounds.	
			Prolicas	

First World War Soldiers Service Records from Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk)

80808
 Williams James
 96th

In reply to your letter in dated
 the telegram you refer to received
 the death of Lt 20808 A Remnant
 of 29898. ~~29898~~ ~~29898~~
 The latter Regt No. 80808
 are allotted to entirely different
 men.

29898
 Alexander

FORK 7.
 WAR OFFICE,
 LONDON, S.W.
 1 June 1917

Any further letter on this subject
 should be addressed to—
 The Secretary, War Office,
 Alexandra House,
 Kingsway,
 London, W.C.2
 and the number below quoted.

C.2, Casualties.
 No. 413203

Re: No. 20808 Private A. Remnant Royal Engineers (9 Coy)
 Sir,
 In reply to your enquiry ^{dated 10 May 1917}
 concerning the soldier named above, I am directed
 to inform you that it is regretted that the only
 information received in this Office is that he
 died of wounds, on the 30th April 1917, in the
 45th Casualty Clearing Station.
 His correct regimental number is 20808.

I am to forward for your information the
 enclosed leaflet regarding soldiers' graves, in
 case it may not previously have come under your
 notice.

I am,
 Sir,
 Your obedient servant,
 R.C. Fowler

Mr. C. Remnant
 963, Tuckham Rd.
 Tuckham.

First World War Soldiers Service
 Records from Ancestry
www.ancestry.co.uk

Letter in author's collection

25 October 1917 the War Office recorded that personal property should be sent to Archie's father Charles Remnant, Box 202, East Selanket, Long Island, USA

29 December 1919 Archie was awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the 1914 Star. These medals were sent to America.

20530. I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the
 British War Medal AND Victory Medal
 granted in respect of the service of
 20808. A. REMNANT. RE.
 Date Nov 26
 Signature Chas Remnant

First World War Soldiers Service Records from Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk)

Conclusion

17 May 1917 my grandparents Charles and Lillian had a son whom they named Archie.

Grandfather Remnant prospered in America and looks very well in this photo compared with those left behind in England. Archie's brother Charles worked as a pastry cook in London having been trained by a Swiss confectioner until an accident involving a hit and run motorcycle left him with severe leg injuries. My mother supported the family, her own brother Archie having been weakened by rheumatic fever as a small boy. This was all pre NHS and benefits.



Image from author's collection

My mother continued to correspond with Aunt Edie. She had been married to a Mr Shutt but by the 1960s was now widowed with no children. During World War II she sent my mother parcels of clothes. In the 1960s she visited us with some friends who were "doing Europe". They sailed on the SS United States into Southampton and stayed in a London hotel. She was very generous giving me several foreign dolls from places she had visited. The best present of all was an empty Helena Rubenstein box which smelt divine. I remember them all talking about the Kennedys and "Tricky Dicky". Edie eventually became infirm and went into an expensive nursing home. She had taken a painting of Petworth to America with her which she always said she would leave to my mother but, as people so often fail to do, she did not record it in her will.



Some months after her death, Edie's friend sent mother a cutting from the local newspaper reporting that an unaddressed, unstamped parcel containing a painting of Petworth in Sussex had been left at the post office and did anyone know who it belonged to. We wrote to the newspaper but never received a reply. We can only assume that the padre who had been visiting Edie in her dying days had left it there as it was too heavy to post or that someone else had claimed it. Thus ended our American connection but I was always fascinated by America and went on to study American History as part of my Bachelor of Education degree. When I became a deputy head I used Archie's story for Remembrance Day school assemblies. I began the assembly with the words "I'm going to tell you the story of a real soldier" and ended with the lines "and when Lily and Charles had a baby boy they named him Archie. This is how families remember".

Bibliography

Original Records

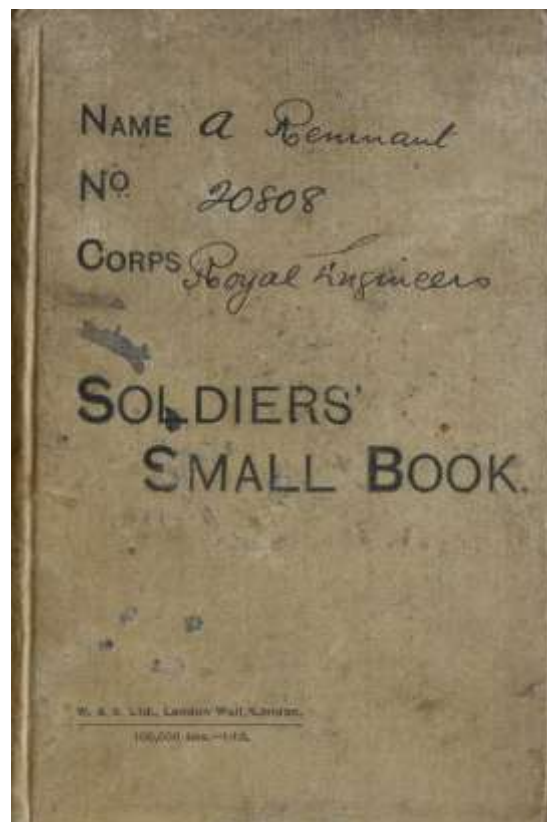
First World War Soldiers Records from Ancestry (www.Ancestry.co.uk)
Soldiers' Small Book, letters and photographs from the Remnant and Foster family collections

Books

Jerome, P. and Newdick, J. *Petworth Time out of Mind* (Window Press, 1982)

Appendix

Pages from Archie's Soldiers' Small Book



[Soldier's small book is in author's collection]

SOLDIER'S NAME AND DESCRIPTION ON ATTESTATION. (REGULAR FORCE).			THE SOLDIER'S NEXT-OF-KIN NOW LIVING. <i>Any change involving names is to be duly noted, with the date of such change.</i>		
Name <i>Archibald Remnant</i>			Note. — No entry on this page has any legal effect as a Will.		
Registered at <i>Salisbury</i>			Nearest degree of relationship.		
in the County of <i>Wiltshire</i>			NAME.		
on the <i>29th November 1910</i>			Latest known address to be given in full.		
at the age of <i>19</i> years <i>4</i> months			1st. Wife.		
for the <i>Royal Engineers</i>			Children.		
for <i>2</i> years in the Army and <i>10</i> years in the Reserve.			2nd. Father. <i>Charles</i> <i>Remnant</i>		
Born in the Parish of <i>Salisbury</i>			<i>Salisbury, Wiltshire</i>		
in or near the Town of <i>Northam</i>			Mother. <i>—</i>		
in the County of <i>Sussex</i>			Brothers and Sisters.		
Trade or calling <i>Stableman</i>			3rd. <i>Charles</i> <i>address unknown</i>		
Last permanent residence <i>Downover Avenue</i>			<i>Salisbury, Wiltshire</i>		
Height <i>5</i> feet <i>6 1/2</i> inches <i>Reilly</i>			4th. Other relatives.		
Complexion <i>Fair</i>			5th. <i>Mable</i> <i>113 Cambridge Street</i>		
Eyes <i>Grey</i> Hair <i>Brown</i>			6th. <i>—</i>		
Marks <i>Scar left elbow</i>			Signature of Soldier. <i>A Remnant</i>		
* Religion <i>Church of England</i>			Regimental number. <i>20808</i> Date of Signature. <i>9.12.1910</i>		
† Signature of Soldier. <i>A Remnant</i>			Signature of Civilian. <i>—</i>		

(f) To pay no compliments, and not to allow any one to distract his attention.

(g) Not to allow more than one stranger at a time to approach his post.

By day he will allow free passage to Officers, parties under military command, patrols, and mounted parties of his own force. All other persons must be sent to the examining post, or detained until the arrival of the visiting patrol, and any such person who disobeys is to be shot.

After dark, any one approaching his post is to be challenged loudly—"Halt! Who goes there?" Should the challenged person not obey the third summons, he will be fired upon.

Bearers of flags of truce, by their waving a white flag, or by other signals, will not be treated as enemies, but sent to the picket or examining post.

HOW TO PREVENT SORE FEET.

To prevent sore feet cleanliness and strict attention to the fitting of boots and socks are necessary. Before marching the feet should be washed with soap and water and carefully dried. The inside of the socks should be well rubbed with soft or yellow soap. After the march the feet must be again washed and clean dry socks put on. Soaking the feet in ash or alum and water hardens the skin. The nails should be cut straight across and not too close. A blister will probably be occasioned by an unevenness or hole in the sock, or an unevenness in the lining of the boot; the cause therefore should be ascertained and removed. The edge of a blister should be pricked with a needle and the fluid drained away by gently pressing the blister; a small pad of cotton wool or soft rag should be applied, and kept in place by a small piece of sticking plaster. Men are cautioned against getting boots too small for them.

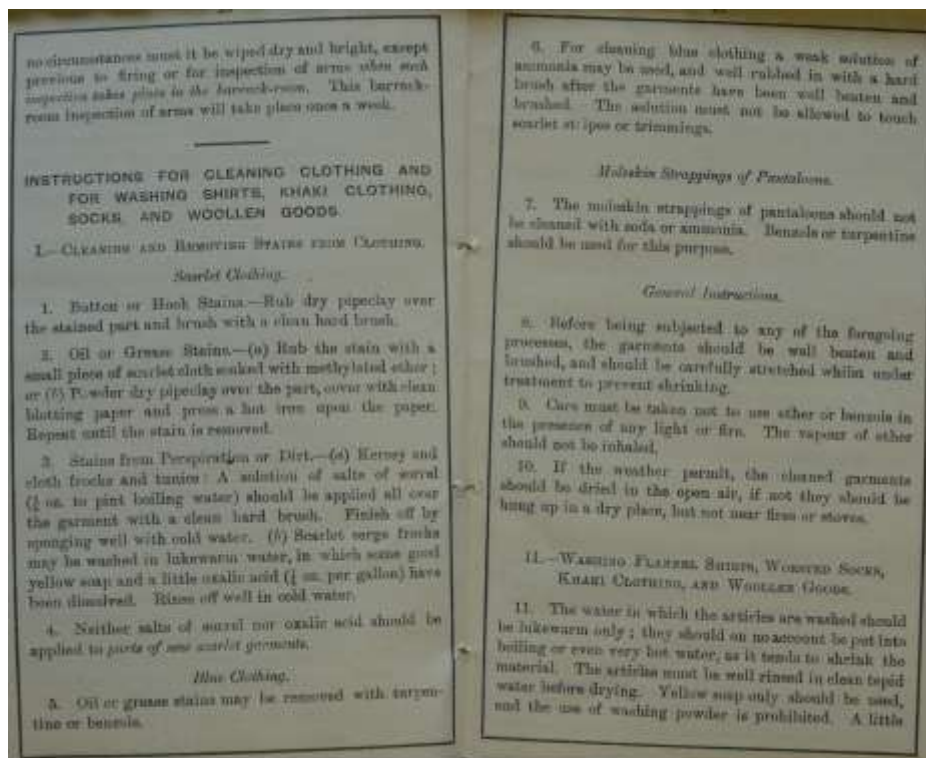
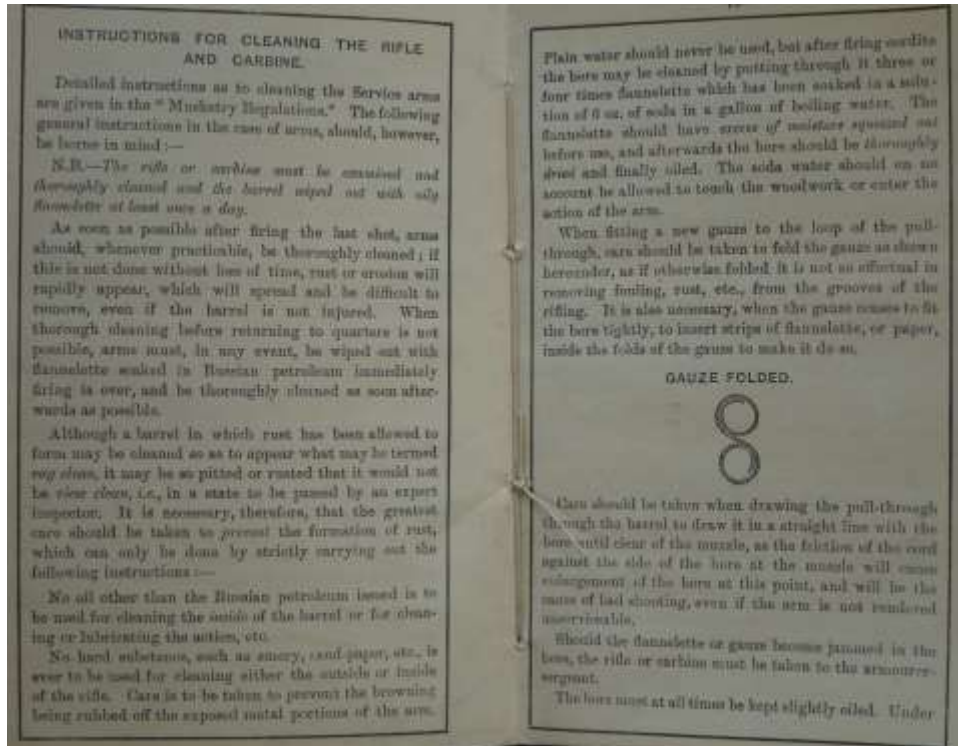
SALUTING OF OFFICERS.

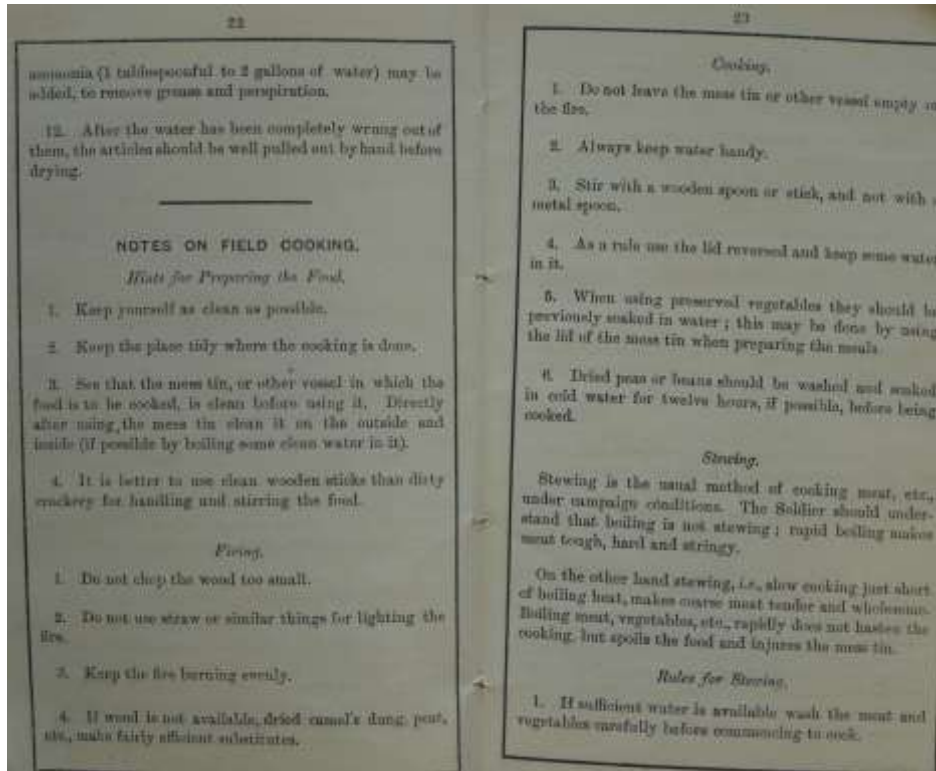
Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and men will salute all Commissioned Officers whom they know to be such, whether dressed in uniform or not, including Officers of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Indian Marine when in Uniform, Special Reserve of Officers, Militia, Honourable Artillery Company, Yeomanry, Volunteers and Territorial Force, and such Warrant Officers of the Royal Navy as have rank corresponding to that of the Commissioned Officers in the Army.

The salute, except when swords are worn, will always be with the hand further from the person saluted. When a Soldier passes an Officer he will salute on the third pace before reaching him, and will lower the hand on the third pace after passing him; when swords are worn the salute will be with the right hand.

A Soldier, if sitting when an Officer approaches, will rise, stand at attention, and salute; if a number of men are sitting or standing about, the senior Non-Commissioned Officer or oldest Soldier will call the whole to "Attention," and salute. When a Soldier addresses an Officer he will halt two paces from him and salute. He will also salute when withdrawing. When appearing before an Officer in arms, he will salute without removing his cap.

A Soldier without his cap, or who is carrying anything that prevents him from saluting properly, will, if standing still, come to attention as an Officer passes; if walking, he will turn his head slightly towards the Officer in passing him.





Register of Rate of Engineer Pay to which
 No 20808 D. Kemnait is entitled.

Trade, _____

Rate	Date	Place	Signature of Officer Comdg. Company
2/11	12 5	Shorncliffe.	M. Anderson Lt CAPT. R.E. COMDG. 7 TH (F ^{LD}) CO. R.E.
6/-	12 11		