

Captain Thomas Fenwick, 1817-1859, Royal Engineer.

Captain Fenwick was the supervisor when Littlehampton Fort was built in 1854.

From the West Sussex Advertiser - February 1st 1854

Littlehampton: The government defensive works at this Port were commenced on Thursday, giving employment to a considerable number of workmen, and Capt. Fenwick, R.E. has arrived to superintend the construction thereof.

For a brief period, 1853-6, Fenwick was responsible for the construction of forts along the south coast of England to ensure the nation's security from invasion. This was a relatively peaceful interlude in a life spent frequently overseas and at war as he was involved in a series of Victorian imperial adventures.

This is his story.

Early life

Thomas Fenwick was born in 1817 at Pendennis Castle, Budock, Cornwall where his father was governor.



Pendennis Castle

Pendennis Castle was built for Henry VIII in 1539 to guard the entrance to the River Fal at Falmouth when Henry feared that England would come under attack from France or Spain as both countries objected to Henry's recent rejection of Roman Catholicism. During the reign of Elizabeth I, at the time of the attempted invasion of England by the Spanish Armada in 1588, a new and much larger type of defensive rampart was added around the original fort. The castle was strengthened again prior to the Civil War and was host to the future Charles II in 1646, before he sailed to the Isles of Scilly. It then withstood five months of siege, before surrendering to the Parliamentary army of Sir Thomas Fairfax. Oliver Cromwell also added to the fortifications by building more walls and bastions. The weak point of the site was the area known as Crab Quay as this was the place ships were most likely to land, and an additional battery was built there in 1715. In 1815, just before Thomas Fenwick's birth, five 18-pounder guns were mounted at Crab Quay, firing through embrasures in a thick retaining wall. The Fenwick family lived in the old castle buildings built at the time of Henry VIII.

Thomas' father was Lieutenant Colonel William Fenwick CB (1777-1832). In 1792 William Fenwick joined the 34th regiment of foot, serving during the Napoleonic Wars against the French. He was

involved in fighting many key battles and he won the Portuguese order of the Tower and Sword, conferred upon him by the prince regent of Portugal, for his distinguished courage in the Peninsula War. At the battle of Maya Pass, in the Pyrenees, on the 25th of July, 1813, he was severely wounded in the knee and in consequence the amputation of his right leg. He was then invalided out of the fighting forces and appointed lieutenant governor of Pendennis castle, a role he kept until his death.

Lieutenant Colonel William Fenwick and his wife had four children: Harriet born 1816, Thomas born 1817, William born 1818 and Percival born 1820. All three Fenwick boys joined the armed forces: Thomas became a Royal Engineer; William joined the 10th Foot and Percival the 69th Foot.

In 1848 Thomas married Hester Melvill at St John's church Hampstead, on the 27th April. The Melvills were a wealthy and well connected family. Hester's father was James Cosmo Melvill (1792 – 1861), who was Chief Secretary of the East India Company. He was knighted in 1853. James' father, Hester's grandfather, had been governor of Pendennis Castle from 1797-1811. At the time of the wedding Thomas Fenwick was listed as living in Gillingham, Kent.

1848. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of St John's Hampstead in the County of Middlesex								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
365	April 27 th	Thomas Fenwick Hester Melvill	34 of full age	Bachelor Spinster	Captain in the Royal Engineers	Gillingham in the County of Kent Hampstead	William Fenwick James Cosmo Melvill	Colonel in the Army (deceased) Lieut. in the E. India Comp ^y
Married in the <u>Parish Church</u> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <u>Established Church</u> by me, <u>Thomas Stanger</u>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<u>Thomas Fenwick</u>			in the Presence of us,		<u>Hester Melvill</u> <u>H. Melvill</u>	

The Royal Engineers

Thomas Fenwick enlisted in the Royal Engineers. Until 1855 this corps was under the supervision of the Board of Ordnance- the government department supplying armaments and munitions to the armed forces. The Engineers were responsible for the design and construction of fortifications and for developing the methods needed to attack and defend them. The corps consisted entirely of commissioned officers who were chosen for their competence and professionalism, unlike the rest of the army where men could purchase commissions.

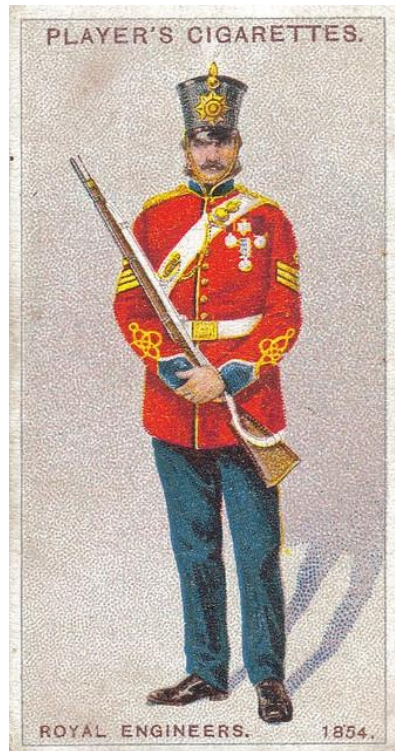
Recruits were chosen when they were boys of 13. They were selected by the Master General of Ordnance and had to pass an entrance examination in written English, maths, French, geography, history and drawing. This meant that only those privately educated had any chance of acceptance. New recruits were sent to the Military Academy at Woolwich where the curriculum was in three parts: Fortifications, Mathematics (mechanics) and Drawing. Upon graduation they received their first commission and were sent to Chatham for further training.

Thomas Fenwick became a 2nd Lieutenant in 1835 at age 18; he became 1st Lieutenant in 1837 and Captain in 1846.

Royal Engineer officers were not deployed as units; they were used as skilled staff attached to other military companies. Their motto "Ubique" means 'Everywhere'. The Engineers supervised men known as 'the Corps Sappers and Miners'; they were artisans and labourers who undertook the physical work. (In 1855 the Board of Ordnance was abolished and the Royal Engineers became part

of the British army under the Commander in Chief and from then on included both officers and other ranks.)

What happened to Thomas Fenwick early in his career is not known, although the Sappers and Miners did spend a considerable amount of time in Canada so he may have gone with them. It is difficult to trace his movements as so many members of the Fenwick family were enlisted, and so many of them were called Thomas, a family name. There was also a Thomas Howard Fenwick (1792-1849) who was Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Engineers and a Captain Robert Fenwick (1801-1843) in the Royal Engineers but they appear to be no relation to this Thomas.



Royal Engineers - (1854) - #78 "Regimental Uniforms" - Series Two - John Player & Sons (1913).



'Royal Sappers & Miners Working Dress 1854', printed by M & N Hanhart, England, 1854.

Surveying South West Britain

There is evidence that in 1844 Thomas Fenwick was in the south west of Britain. In the National Archive there is a plan originally drawn to accompany letter of 4th October 1844 from the Commanding Royal Engineer in the Scilly Isles. It is labelled 'Plan of the Peninsula in the Island of St Mary, Scilly' and it shows ground occupied by the Ordnance; Scale: 1 inch to 200 feet [1:2,400] with Compass indicator; Signed by T Fenwick, Lieutenant, Royal Engineers, 25 September 1844.



The Garrison on St Mary was built in 1593, following the Spanish Armada of 1588. In 1740 Master Gunner Abraham Tovey transformed the Garrison- building walls with gun batteries, in a circular shape following the coast line of the peninsula. Star Castle is at the centre of the fortification system.. The walls of the castle take the shape of an eight-pointed star with strategically placed gun batteries at regular intervals around the outer wall, allowing covering fire at all angles.



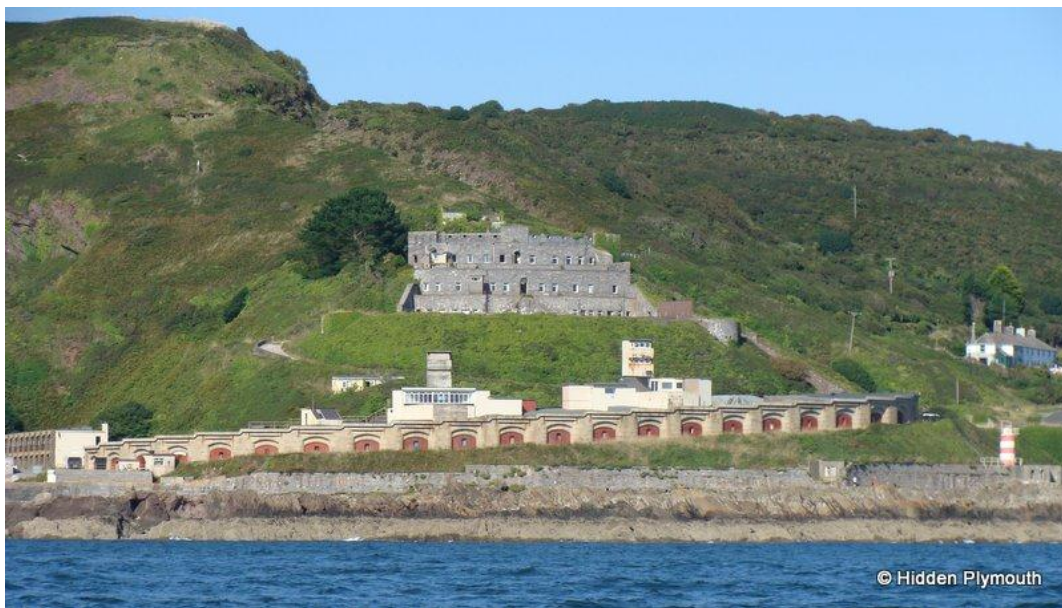
©<http://www.westcountrywalks.com/scillies/scillies/stmarysgarrison/stmarysgarrison-01.php>



St Mary's Garrison, Scilly.

Later in 1844 Thomas Fenwick had moved to the mainland. Also in the National Archive there is a plan showing lands, required for a battery at Staddon Height, to be purchased from the Admiralty and from Mr Bastard; and lands over which Ordnance control would be required; reference table; scale: 1 inch to 100 feet; compass indicator. Signed by T Fenwick, Lieutenant, Royal Engineers, 30th December 1844

The Gun battery at Staddon Height, Plymouth, was begun in October 1845 and completed in 1847. The fort was built on three levels, the lowest was storerooms and the SW a terreplein (where the guns were mounted) and the upper levels comprised barracks, kitchen and servants' rooms for officers. The Battery was one of three batteries recommended by the Inter Service Committee on Harbour Defences in 1844; its intention being to protect the entrance to Plymouth Sound. The other two were constructed in the 1860s as part of the defence system known as the 'Palmerston Forts'.



The Staddon Heights Battery and (below it) the later Fort Bovis.

Newspapers worldwide recorded the progress of the works:

The Morning Post - Tuesday, November 11, 1845

PROGRESS OF THE PLYMOUTH HARBOUR FORTIFICATIONS. The necessary repairs to the Half Moon Battery on Staddon Heights will be completed in the course of the next week. This battery is 151 feet in length and is to be supplied with fourteen 68pounders, instead of ten guns as formerly when the battery was in use. Immediately under this battery it is proposed to construct another 300 feet in length and supplied with ordnance of similar dimensions.

Geelong Advertiser and Squatters' Advocate -Wednesday 18 March 1846

The new Batteries on Staddon Heights at Plymouth, are in active progress under the superintendence of a most intelligent and zealous Officer, Colonel Oldfield, commanding Engineer at the station, and when finished will prove a formidable addition to the defences of the garrison and harbour. Several of the guns in battery at the citadel have been exchanged for new ones of larger calibre; and the greatest activity prevails in repairing all dilapidations in the Ordnance Department, which have, to some extent, remained unnoticed for many years.

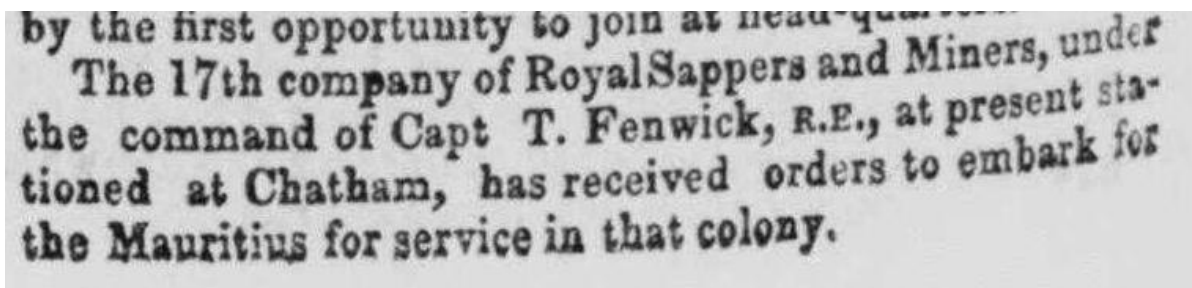
Mauritius

There is far more evidence of Thomas Fenwick's activities from 1848.

It seems that Fenwick travelled to Mauritius in May 1848, just a month after his marriage in London. According to T. W. J. Connolly's book *History of the Royal Sappers and Miners* volume 2 page 18:

1848: A new station was opened for the corps this year, by detaching to the Mauritius a company of 100 strong, under the command of Captain J. Fenwick, R.E., which embarked at Gravesend on the 2nd of May, and landed from the 'Edmundsbury' on the 19th of August. A half company had previously been employed there, but on the completion of the citadel in 1840, it was removed to the Cape of Good Hope.

This extract refers to J. Fenwick, not Thomas but the index of the same book calls him T. Fenwick and other evidence supports the view that page 18 is a typing error. Confirmation of his name comes from a newspaper report.



by the first opportunity to join at head-quarters...
The 17th company of Royal Sappers and Miners, under
the command of Capt T. Fenwick, R.E., at present sta-
tioned at Chatham, has received orders to embark for
the Mauritius for service in that colony.

Hampshire Telegraph - Saturday 18 March 1848

We know that his wife Hester née Melvill went with him, because she gave her nephew James Melvill (1846-1929) some shells which were to become the basis of a famous collection when he grew up to be a naturalist specialising in shells. James Melvill wrote in the *Journal of Conchology* 1912

"It gives me much satisfaction to pay a small tribute to a near relation in thus adopting her Christian name for this species, my aunt, Mrs. Fenwick, wife of the late Col. Thomas Fenwick, R.E., resident several years in Mauritius, from whence she obtained for me (aged 8) the first collection of shells I ever possessed."

Until 1810 Mauritius was a colony of France, but then it was conquered by the British during the Napoleonic Wars and it was formally ceded to Britain in the Treaty of Paris 1814. Most of the French settlers remained on the island and were allowed to keep their customs, religion and laws except for the fact that in 1835 the British abolished slavery on the island. The main activity on Mauritius was sugar growing using indentured workers from India as labour after the abolition of slavery.

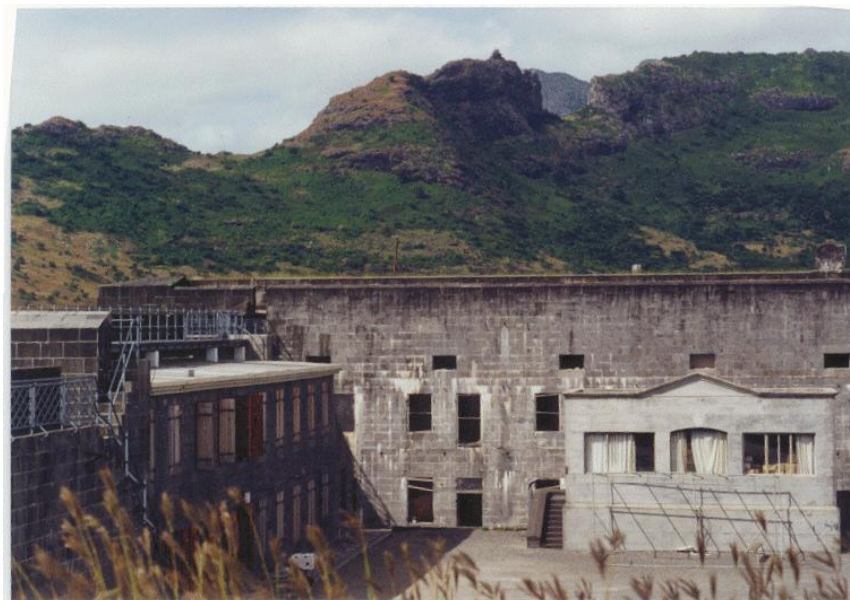
Apart from supplying sugar, Mauritius was a great benefit to the British as a staging post en route to India.



Thomas Fenwick and the Royal Engineers were in Mauritius to supervise the building of the Citadel (also called Fort Adelaide after the wife of William IV.) The Citadel is situated in a very strategic point with an open view of the harbour and the entire city of Port Louis. It was designed by Colonel Cunningham and the first stone was laid on 8th December 1834. On 4 November 1840, Major Savage, the new Commanding Royal Engineer, reported the completion of the building according to the original plans. It was then garrisoned by a detachment of H.M. 87th Royal Irish Fusiliers, consisting of 5 officers and 200 men. However, as relations with France were still deteriorating it was found necessary to extend the Citadel. In December 1840, Savage reported that a working party, "consisting of two officers, four non-commissioned officers and 96 privates have been employed, morning and evening, for the last month, in scarping the hill, and throwing up an earth work in front of the main gate, in order to cover it". The Governor further ordered that the four 24 pounder howitzers, together with two 9 ton brass field pieces should be mounted on traversing platforms on the terreplein over the casemates in the front face, and carpenters were consequently employed in making them. The Citadel was finally complete in 1851 when the last guns were installed.

Here is a description of the work from Charles Pridham's guide to Mauritius of 1849:

The citadel, on which a number of prisoners are employed, stands on the top of a hill of moderate elevation, and situated just in the rear of the town; it has been but recently completed, having been commenced in 1832. It was constructed entirely by the military, to whom credit is due for the strength and durability of the building, and for its completeness as a fortress. It mounts sixteen heavy guns besides a mortar battery, is casemated and well provided with water and provisions sufficient for the support of the garrison. It appears singular that the site was not earlier taken advantage of, as it commands the town and its approaches, and is also cool and healthy for the troops.



The Citadel, Mauritius

Today the Citadel lies deserted and neglected:

The building is at present in a dilapidated condition and, unless immediate steps are taken to arrest further decay, the structure will soon become a ruin. In view of the picturesque character of the building and its historical associations, I am anxious that it should be preserved and reconditioned in so far as the latter process would not alter its original character. – Dr Marina Carter University of Edinburgh (<http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/nheritage>)

In Mauritius the Royal Engineers also made a survey of the whole island and planned a road network to link strategic points.

The Kaffir Wars

From Mauritius Thomas Fenwick went to South Africa and took part in the 'Kaffir War' of 1850-53.

The 'Kaffir Wars' as they were known at the time, are now referred to as the 'Xhosa Wars' or the 'Frontier Wars'. 'The Kaffirs' (so called from the Arabic Kafir, infidel or unbeliever) was the name given by Europeans to the principal native races, especially the Xhosa and including the Zulus, inhabiting southern Africa. The Kaffir Wars was the title given by the British to the conflict between white European settlers in southern Africa and the indigenous people. Early wars took place between the Kaffirs and the Boers (Dutch settlers) but hostilities also took place between British settlers and the Kaffir tribes, after the acquisition by Britain of the Cape Colony in 1806.



Area of the Frontier Wars.

The Frontier Wars were:

- First Frontier War: 1779-1781
- Second Frontier War: 1793
- Third Frontier War: 1799-1802
- Fourth Frontier War: 1811-1812
- Fifth Frontier War: 1818-1819 (War of Nxele or Makana)
- Sixth Frontier War: 1834-1835 (Hints's War)
- Seventh Frontier War: 1846-1847 (War of the Axe)
- Eighth Frontier War: 1850-1853 (War of Mlanjeni)
- Ninth Frontier War: 1877-1878

In 1834-1835 a serious Kaffir war took place, resulting in the expulsion of the Kaffirs to north of the Great Kei River. Another war (the seventh) broke out in 1846, and lasted nearly two years. Its result was an annexation of the land between the Keiskamma and the Grand Kei rivers to the British crown, as a crown dependency under the name of 'British Kaffraria Colony', with King William's Town as capital.



Eastern frontier of the Cape of Good Hope colony, c1835 (Wikipedia)

Settled colonial area, showing districts established in 1820 (in various shades)

□ Neutral zone since 1820, as agreed by Lord Charles Somerset and the Gaika (Ngqika) tribe of the Xhosas

▭ Tribal areas under British administration

▬ Military forts and district boundaries

Thomas Fenwick was involved in the Kaffir War of 1852-3. He is listed as having been awarded the South Africa 1853 Medal as a member of the 17th Company of the Royal Sappers and Miners.

Captain Fenwick was mentioned in dispatches for his part in the Waterkloof operation. Today Waterkloof is a private game reserve near Fort Beaufort. In 1851 Waterkloof was the stronghold of the legendary Xhosa chieftain, Maqoma.

Settlers from Britain had been flocking to the Cape area and were eager for fertile land to graze their cattle which is why they were keen to push the Xhosa people further and further north. The Xhosa had been pushed into land that was not nearly so fertile and also was overcrowded since their arrival. In 1850 they were suffering from drought and famine and so began raids into British territory to steal cattle. They even staged a raid on the British stronghold of Fort Armstrong. By way of reprisal British troops were sent to attack Waterkloof.

In September 1851 a large patrol under Lieutenant-Colonel John Fordyce of the 74th (Highland Light Infantry) was sent against Maqoma's stronghold there, a village weakly fortified with log slabs and heaped rocks, but strong because of its location on the summit of a narrow neck of high ground separating two deep and densely forested valleys. The attack was eventually beaten off by Maqoma and the British lost fifteen dead and about the same number wounded. The men had expended virtually all their ammunition by the time they made their way to safety. On 14 October, Colonel Fordyce tried again but dense fog made progress difficult and in the end the mission was aborted.



Insurgents (indigenous people) defend a stronghold in the forested Waterkloof during the 8th Xhosa war of 1851.

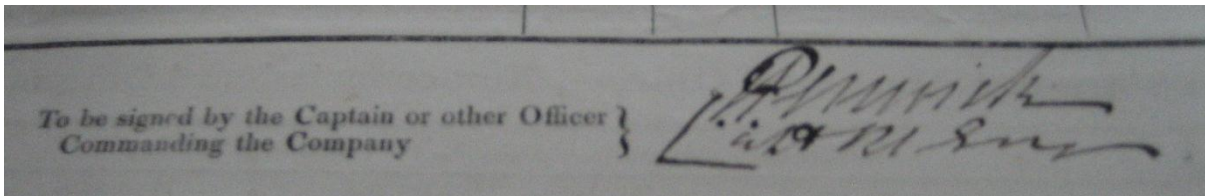
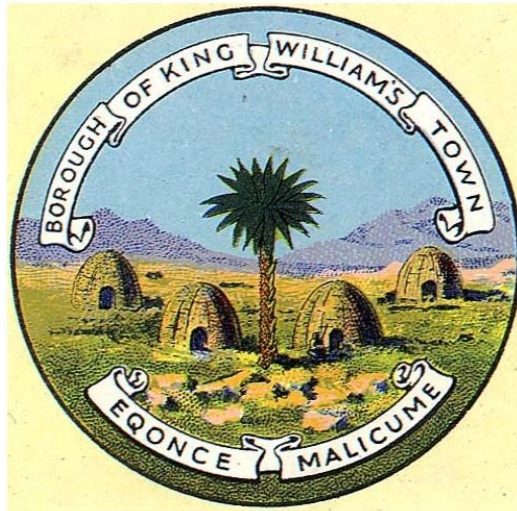
Reinforcements were needed so in October 1851 Thomas Fenwick and his men left Mauritius for the Cape.

1851: The cessation of the works at the Mauritius made the services of the company there available for duty at other stations. Accordingly, with the sanction of Earl Grey, the seventeenth company, under Captain Fenwick, R.E., quitted the island on the 25th October, and landed at the Cape of Good Hope on the 19th November. The force of sappers on the Eastern frontier now consisted of three companies, and counted 276 men of all ranks - T. W. J. Connolly pg 60

Freeman's Journal - Thursday 08 January 1852

The freight ship Sir R. Seppings arrived on the 18th from the Mauritius with Captain Fenwick, Lieutenant Siborn, and 109 men, women and children of the Sappers and Miners; also Lieutenant Robertson, and 35 of the 2nd battalion of the 12th regiment.

In the muster roll of the 17th Sappers and Miners 1852-3 Thomas Fenwick is listed as being stationed in King William's Town and acting as Captain for a corps of 1 Lieutenant, 5 sergeants, 4 corporals, 5 2nd corporals, 80 privates and 2 buglers.



Fenwick's signature.

They soon became useful:

1852 : Captain Fenwick, RE., with twenty rank and file, formed the European part of an escort of 100 strong, which conveyed supplies in five bullock wagons, in addition to seventy head of cattle, to Major Kyle's column in the Tomacha—a distance of seventeen miles from King William's Town, to which place the detachment returned on the 5th February after two days' patrolling. - T. W. J. Connolly pg 99

In March 1852 British troops stormed Waterkloof and captured Maqoma's Den. Maqoma was forced to abandon his stronghold although he reoccupied it shortly after the British withdrawal. Fewer than a dozen of the regular troops were killed in the operation and it was regarded as a great success.

According to T. W. J. Connolly's book *History of the Royal Sappers and Miners* volume 2 page 100:

From 5th to 27th March nine rank and file under Captain Robertson, were present in the operations of the force under his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, in driving the enemy from the Waterkloof and adjacent fastnesses, and finally from the Amatola mountains. The sappers, commanded by Captain Fenwick, R.E., were most useful in rendering the drifts injured by heavy rains practicable for the passage of wagons.

There was another offensive against Maqoma in July 1852 and Waterkloof was finally taken in September 1852. For all practical purposes this was the end of the war, although, officially, this dragged on well into 1853 before the final surrender of Maqoma, his half-brother Sandile, and the

other Xhosa chiefs. In the new agreement, the rebellious tribesmen were moved out of the Amatole Mountains to other locations in British Kaffraria and their lands were given to white settlers.



'The War in Kaffraria-The 74th highlanders attacking Maqomo's Kaffirs and the Hottentot Banditti, at the head of the Waterkloof Pass' 1852 unsigned.

Here is how the Victory of the British was described in 1862 by Archibald K. Murray in his book History of the Scottish regiments in the British army:

The army received the grateful thanks of the country, conveyed through the Government, - in these expressive terms,—" The field of glory opened to them in a Kaffir war and Hottentot rebellion, is possibly not so favourable and exciting as that which regular warfare with an open enemy in the field affords, yet the unremitting exertions called for in hunting well-armed yet skulking savages through the bush, and driving them from their innumerable strongholds, are perhaps more arduous than those required in regular warfare, and call more constantly for individual exertion and intelligence. The British soldier, always cheerfully obedient to the call, well knows that, when he has done his duty, he is sure to obtain the thanks and good opinion of his gracious Queen."

(Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu are Xhosa.)

In the muster roll of the 17th Sappers and Miners 1852-3 Thomas Fenwick is recorded as present until April 1853 and after that he is registered as "On leave in England". Why he went home is not known. He was reported in The Standard as arriving home in Plymouth on July 29th 1853 having travelled on the Royal Mail screw steamship 'Queen of the South'. The muster roll of the 17th Sappers and Miners for 1854 is missing from the National Archive so it is not known how long the leave period lasted.

The South Coast Defences.

From 1853-57 Thomas Fenwick was in England working for Sir John Fox Burgoyne, the Inspector General of Fortifications, and overseeing the construction of a series of fortresses along the south coast.

In 1852-3 there was a wave of panic swirling through the British public about a possible French invasion. In September 1852 the Duke of Wellington died and his funeral occasioned a deluge of reminiscence about the British fight against Napoleon. Coincidentally on 2nd December 1852 Napoleon's nephew, Louis, was crowned Emperor Napoleon III of France promising to relive the glory days of his uncle. (See my essay 'Napoleon Talks of War Boys'.) As a result of this panic Burgoyne was empowered to construct a string of fortresses to guard the Channel coast from the French.

It seems that Littlehampton Fort was one of the first built as part of this venture.

West Sussex Gazette November 1st 1853

New Fort – A visit of inspection from the Ordnance Department has been paid to this port, and the site for a fort on the west side of the harbour determined upon, in addition to that already on the east side, which work is to be immediately tendered for.

The London building firm of Lock and Nesham won the contract and work began in February 1854 - overseen by Thomas Fenwick.

West Sussex Advertiser and South Coast Journal February 1st 1854

Littlehampton: The government defensive works at this Port were commenced on Thursday, giving employment to a considerable number of workmen, and Capt. Fenwick, R.E. has arrived to superintend the construction thereof.

The construction firm seems to have made good progress because the fort was nearly complete a few months later. Fenwick brought an inspection team from the Royal Engineers to approve the work.

West Sussex Advertiser and South Coast Journal November 9, 1854

The new battery, which is nearly completed, was visited on Saturday by the heads of the Ordnance Department, among whom we noticed – General Sir John Burgoyne, F.G.C.B. R.E., General Hardinge, Major Gen. Sir Frederick Smith, R.H.C. R.E., Sir Thomas Hastings, Capt. Fanshawe, Capt. Fenwicke [sic], R.E., and a Colonel of Artillery not to us known. We hear that five heavy Lancaster guns are to be mounted immediately, and that some additional earthwork is to be thrown up on the north side. The parties afterwards left by rail for Shoreham, where a new battery is to be constructed for 11 guns.

Littlehampton fort was completed by March 1855

The Morning Chronicle Thursday March 15th 1855:

At Littlehampton defensible barracks and a five gun battery capable of containing forty men and two officers, and the proper complement of non-commissioned officers, has just been completed on the west bank of the harbour. Messrs. Locke and Nesham, of 68 Theobald's-road, London, built the barracks under the superintendence of Captain Fenwick and Mr Bryson, foreman of works in the Royal Engineer Department. A glacis is in the course of erection by Mr Bushby in the rear of the barracks.

This new battery was erected on the western side of the harbour, as consequence of there being a greater range of beach. It enfilades the beach east and west, and is considered ample protection for the harbour. In case of attack on the town side, two guns will be placed for the protection of the inhabitants.

Littlehampton was a lunette fort - this means it was crescent shaped with ramparts facing the sea like a wedge. The guns faced the Channel to prevent invasion and the inland side of the fort was relatively undefended. The guns were set on top of a rampart (earthwork) which was behind a ditch. There was a wall in the ditch, called a Carnot wall after its inventor - Lazare Nicolas Carnot who had been Napoleon Bonaparte's Secretary of War. The wall was 12 feet (3.66m) high and in it were loopholes (slit windows) for the soldiers to shoot from. At each of the three corners of the wall was a bastion. Littlehampton was the first British fort to incorporate a Carnot Wall.



As mentioned above, Thomas Fenwick was also involved in preparations for the building of Shoreham Fort. According to the historian Judy Middleton, in April 1855 the Shoreham Harbour Master reported that the Government had taken possession of some land on the west side of the west pier for the purpose of constructing a fort and the ground there had already been surveyed by Fenwick in 1854. However, Shoreham Fort was not started until 1856 and it was not finished until 1857 so it is unlikely that Thomas Fenwick was in charge of its construction.

Fenwick left Littlehampton at the end of 1854, bound not for Shoreham but for the Solent.

The Morning Post Monday, December 11, 1854

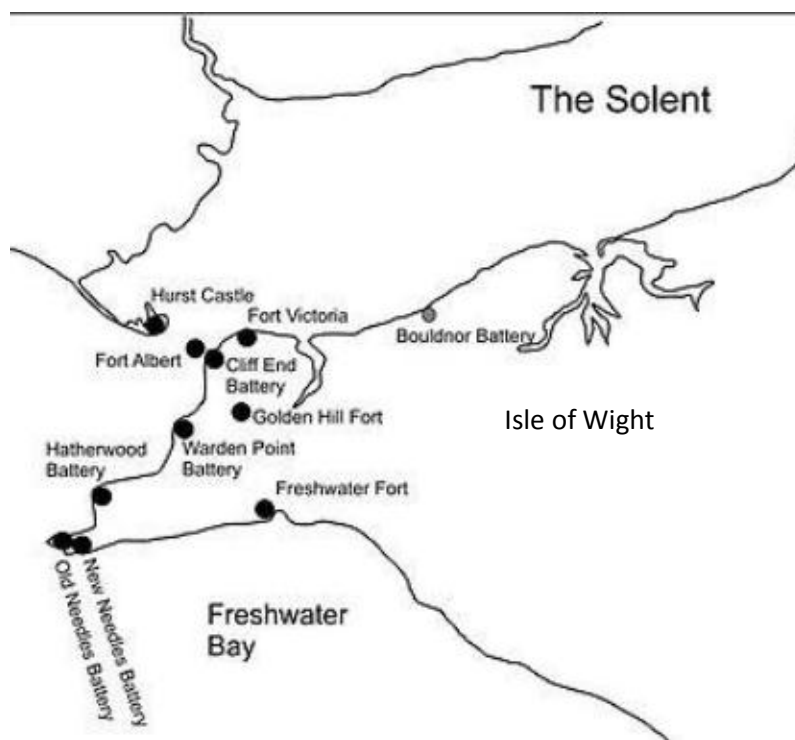
The following change of stations for officers of Royal Engineers took place during the last month: Captain Thomas Fenwick from Littlehampton to Portsmouth.

Many of the other Royal Engineers were sent from Portsmouth for embarkation on ships travelling to the Crimea. The Crimean War against Russia lasted from October 1853 until February 1856, but Thomas Fenwick did not serve there. (His cousin, Captain Bowes Fenwick, serving with the 44th Regiment was killed at Sebastopol on 18th June 1855.) Thomas Fenwick's contribution was to teach men to erect barrack huts.

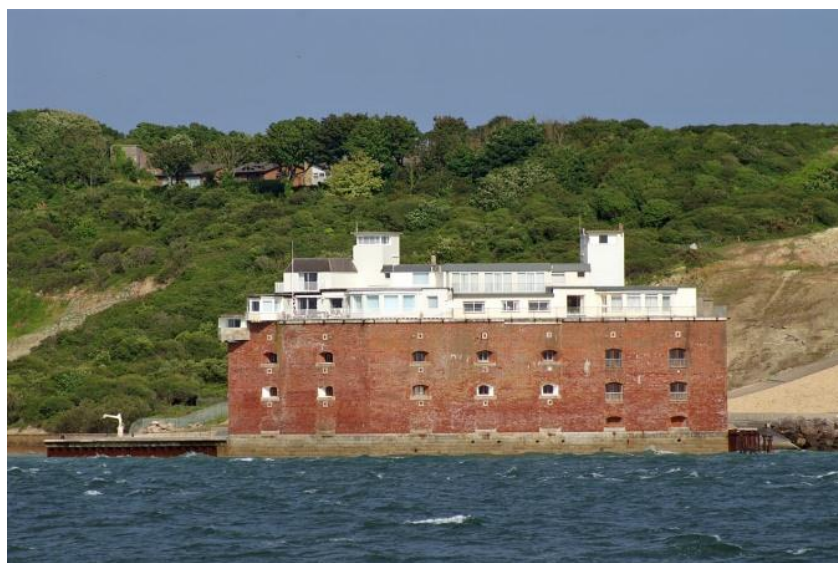
Morning Chronicle - Thursday 14 December 1854

On Tuesday afternoon a party of half-a-dozen sappers were suddenly ordered to erect one of the wooden huts in the dockyard, Portsmouth, in front of the admiral superintendent's office. The object was to ascertain how soon this could be done, and to represent the sappers at the Crimea on the arrival of the huts. From what we could perceive on the emergency, we can state that half-a-dozen sappers can erect a hut in two hours, complete, and ready to accommodate 25 men; a dozen men would do the same in one hour. The erection of the huts was superintended by Captain Fenwick of the Ordnance department, who acted on the principle that men who had never seen the huts would have to erect them.

From Portsmouth Fenwick went to the Isle of Wight to supervise the building of a series of new forts, guarding the entrance to Portsmouth harbour. Three forts were constructed on the Island – Fort Albert, Fort Victoria and Freshwater Redoubt, along with Hurst Castle on the mainland.



Fort Albert (also known as Cliff's End) was designed by William Drummond Jervis, begun in 1853 and completed in 1856. It was built on a rock which was completely surrounded by sea at high tide. It was a tall brick structure with 29 guns in four tiers; seven 68pdrs on the ground floor, seven 8inch shells on the first and second floors and six 32pdrs and two 8 inch howitzers on the roof. The guns faced out to sea but there was also a detached guard house to defend the fort from attack from men elsewhere on the island. The fort suffered from flooding and in 1859 it was decided to replace it with a battery built on the cliff above the beach.



Fort Albert- now residential flats © Ian Boyle, 14th June 2008

The nearby Fort Victoria (also known as Fort Sconce) was begun in November 1852. According to Hampshire Country Life Magazine:

In the August of 1853, a model of the fort was sent to Osborne for Prince Albert, who always took a keen interest in such things. Thereafter the fort was always referred to as Fort Victoria. Albert made a point of visiting it in person in July 1855 after work had been completed to the satisfaction of the Board of Ordnance in the April of that year. During the visit though he complained to the Royal Engineers that the use of concrete in a 'parados' or retaining wall at the rear of the fort was ill-advised, as he surmised that under bombardment this would shatter and injure the backs of the gunners.

The fort was triangular in shape with the two sides facing out to sea armed with guns and the third, inland side, a two storey barracks. It was originally armed with ten 68-pounder smooth bore guns in the western casemates and ten 10-inch smooth bore shell guns in the northern casemate. The central point casemate was also armed with a 10-inch gun. In addition there were 32-pounder guns mounted on the roof of each of the barracks blocks. These were able to fire over the one-storey casemates of the front of the fort. In 1856 the Royal Engineers built a pier next to the fort so it could receive supplies.



©<http://www.islandeye.co.uk>. Fort Victoria is now a museum of underwater archaeology.



©yachtingmonthly.com

Hurst Castle is on the mainland at the end of a narrow spit of land only 2,000 yards from Fort Victoria. Like Pendennis Castle it was built as part of Henry VIII's chain of defences to protect against French and Spanish invasion. During the Civil War it was occupied by parliamentary forces and in 1648 Charles I was held prisoner there. The tower was rebuilt around 1805 during the Napoleonic wars and in the early 1850, at the time of Thomas Fenwick, a West Battery was added.



©<http://www.hurstcastle.co.uk/history.html>. It remains a fort and is a museum.

In 1855-6 it was decided to build a small fort at Freshwater to prevent forces from attacking Fort Albert and Fort Victoria from behind. The fort was built on top of a steep cliff overlooking Freshwater Bay. It was roughly diamond shaped, with the south and east sides facing out to sea and the north and west sides facing inland. The landward approach was protected by a deep brick lined ditch.



Freshwater Battery- now converted into a private house.

Together these works were designed to secure the western entrance to the Solent.

Hampshire Advertiser - Saturday 28 July 1855

Most of our readers are aware that extensive military operations have for some time past been proceeded with at the west end of the Isle of Wight, for the protection of the approaches to the marine arsenals at Portsmouth by the Needles passage. Strong fortifications and barracks have also been constructed at Sconce Point, and verging on completion, have lately been garrisoned by the Isle of Wight Artillery. Further to the westward of the Island, at a place called Cliff End, a four-gun battery is being constructed, and engineering operations have also been made on the outer Needles Rock, on which it is proposed to erect a battery of two guns and a lighthouse, but after cutting into the rock, and making the necessary excavations in the chalk, the idea, we were told, was abandoned. The works at Sconce and Hurst having during their progress been frequently visited and inspected by Her Majesty and Prince Albert, were on the present occasion visited by the royal pair, who appear to have taken great interest in them.

It appearing to the engineers that there was a possibility of taking the works at Sconce in the rear, and the recent operations in the Crimea having, no doubt, taught a lesson to the military powers to guard against a surprise attack on that part of the coast, the attentions of Sir Frederick Smith, commander-in-chief of that district, has been drawn to the subject, and, under his directions, extensive earthworks and fortifications have been ordered to be constructed on the Freshwater Cliff, which will preclude the possibility of the landing an enemy in any of the bays on the south coast, and so protect the larger works referred to. The formation of those works has been intrusted to Mr George Wheeler, of Cowes, the contractor, under the plans of the Board of Ordnance, from the designs of Sir Frederick Smith, and are being carried out under the personal superintendence of Captain Fenwick, R.E.

Hampshire Advertiser - Saturday 04 August 1855

Freshwater Redoubt- On Monday, the cliff works in progress at Hurst Castle, Sconce, and Cliff-end, were minutely inspected by Sir John Burgoyne, the Inspector-General of Fortifications. He was accompanied by the Commander-in-chief of the district, Sir Frederick Smith, Captain Fenwick R.E. Captain Firth R.E. and staff. They afterwards proceeded to the works at Freshwater Gate. Sir John Burgoyne expressed great satisfaction at the manner in which the works are being executed.



Sir John Burgoyne 1855



Victoria and Albert 1854

The Indian Mutiny

In 1857 Thomas Fenwick was sent to India as part of the British response to the Indian Mutiny. Colonel Henry Harness was the Chief Royal Engineer sent out and he was based in Calcutta, with Fenwick in charge of the troops based in Bombay. Before the venture Sir William Gordon wrote to Colonel Harness:

Horse Guards
21st September 1857

Dear Harness,

I hope passage (to India) will be provided for you as herein demanded. Instructions will be sent you. Captain Fenwick, the next senior officer, who goes to Bombay, is, I believe, a good officer. The Secretary of State for War has struck a second Field Officer and four First Captains out of 'the detail for India'. "Engineer First Officers" he says "Are expensive toys." Fenwick will have to report home direct unless his force comes to your Presidency (area of India.).

Fenwick and his troops travelled via Egypt:

Caledonian Mercury (Edinburgh, Scotland), Monday, October 5, 1857

The first body of troops that have embarked from Southampton for the scene of the Indian mutinies left on Friday in the Sultan steamship, one of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's fleet, Captain Neil Cook, in which vessel they will proceed as far as Alexandria, and thence go across the Desert to Suez. They consisted of the 4th and 11th companies of the Royal Engineers. There were in all 235 non-commissioned officers, and men, and 13 officers. The names of the officers who embarked are as follows – Captain Thomas Fenwick, in command of the whole body; Captain Cumberland; Major L. Nicholson; Lieutenants D.C. Walker, Beaumont, J.E.P. Patterson, Macquay, Scratchley, E.E. Wynne, W. Keith, and Sweetenham; Dr Brown and Dr Haversty The men marched with only their sea-kits in their haversacks, all arms, knapsacks, &c., having previously been packed in cases and stowed away on board. The 4th Company is destined for Calcutta, and the 11th for Bombay. The arrangements had been so well made beforehand that within half an hour from the arrival of the troops they were all safely housed on board, and the Sultan moved away from her berth.

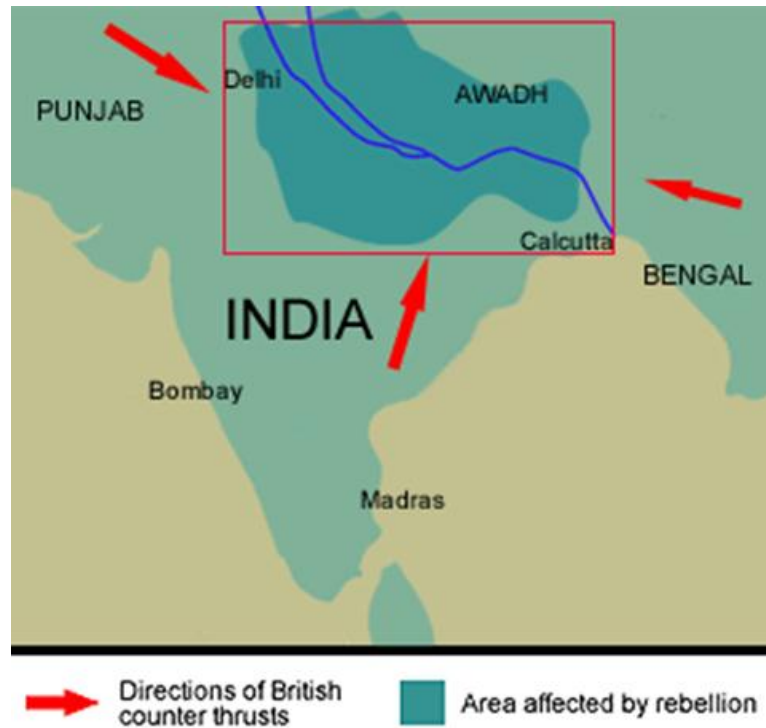
When they arrived in Egypt they had to cross the country by land as the Suez Canal, although started, did not open until 1869. They were given permission to march through Egypt in full uniform by the ruler- Said Pasha.

Leicestershire Mercury - Saturday 07 November 1857

PASSAGE OF BRITISH TROOPS THROUGH EGYPT- A letter from Alexandria of October 20 says:- On the 15th the Peninsular and Oriental steamer Sultan brought us 14 officers and 235 men of the 4th and 11th companies of Royal Engineers en route for India... The Peninsular and Oriental Company's agent of this place, Mr Holton, has made such admirable use of his position to render the transit of troops across the desert efficient, that he is said to be ready to convey two thousand English soldiers per month through the Pasha's sand steppes. The Pasha does not at all object to English soldiers crossing his territory in their uniforms, but I think Government acted very wisely in providing our men with white clothing, allowing them only to carry their great coat, bread bag and replenished water bottle.. The first batch of men will have traversed the Desert in 29 hours; the Royal Engineers will have accomplished their journey through the Desert in little more than half the time.... The Calcutta batch, under Brevet Major Nicholson, a much beloved Crimean officer, is accompanied by Colonel Harness, a fine elderly gentleman of high attainments and most courteous manners. The Bombay batch, under

Captain Cumberland is commanded by Captain Fenwick who has stood the brunt of many a battle in the Kaffir War.

Fenwick and his men arrived in Bombay and marched northwards to deal with the Indian Mutiny.



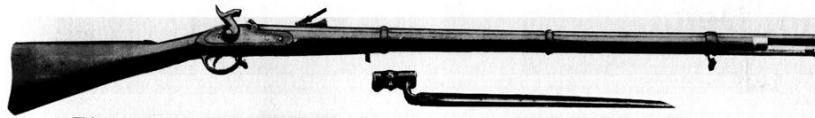
©bbc

The British referred to events in India in 1857 as 'The Indian Mutiny'. This gives the impression that it was a fairly limited rebellion confined to native soldiers. In India, on the other hand, the episode is known as 'The War of Indian Independence' which gives the impression that it was a serious and large scale affair with political intent. The reality is somewhere in between these two interpretations.

In 1857 India was not a single country - it was a collection of states, some of which were controlled by Britain and some of which were independent and ruled by hereditary princes (rajahs). Britain's first acquisition in India was the state of Bengal and from there the British gradually moved north-westwards along the Ganges Valley.

The trigger for the rebellion was a mutiny by the soldiers in the Bengal army. At the time of the mutiny they were stationed not in Bengal but in Meerut, 80 miles north of Delhi. They had two main grievances: a dispute about foreign service and a dispute about using the Enfield rifle. The soldiers in the Bengal army thought they should get extra pay for foreign service but the British did not regard service out of Bengal but in India as 'foreign service'. Even when the troops were sent to the Punjab or to Burma, though both were a very long way from Bengal, Britain refused to pay what the soldiers thought they were due. Secondly, the soldiers were issued with new Enfield rifles which needed loading by biting the end off cartridges containing gunpowder and the bullet. These cartridges were, it was claimed, greased with beef fat - a substance that Hindus were banned from eating. The soldiers claimed this was a deliberate ploy to undermine their religious beliefs.

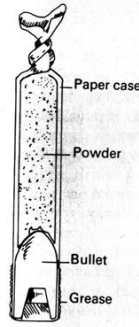
The Enfield rifle



This percussion-lock rifle was produced in the British Ordnance Factory at Enfield near London. It came into use in the British army in 1853. Shortly afterwards it was sent out for trials for the Company army in India. The 'rifling' on the inside of the barrel made the shot more accurate and gave the weapon a greater range. It was an enormous improvement on the Brown Bess smooth-bore flintlock musket which had been the standard weapon of all British forces since the early eighteenth century.

A greased cartridge

How it was loaded



1. The soldier tears open the end of the cartridge with his teeth.



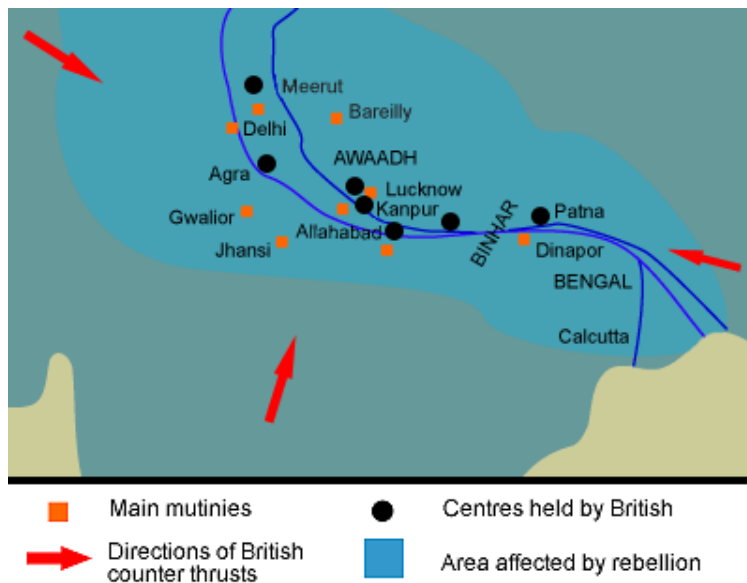
2. He pours the powder down the muzzle of his rifle. Then he thrusts the bullet, still wrapped in the cartridge paper which makes it a tight fit, into the muzzle.



3. He takes his ramrod from its slot beneath the rifle barrel, and rams paper, bullet and powder to the bottom of the barrel.

www.wou.edu/las/socsci/kimjensen/paper1.htm

The rebellious soldiers were rapidly joined by forces led by the aristocratic families of several states which Britain had recently annexed. Under Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General from 1847 to 1856 the area of British territory in India greatly increased. Dalhousie was responsible for adopting the policy of "lapse and annexation." Under this policy, if a raja did not have a direct natural heir, the state would be annexed to the British Empire despite the ruling family finding a new ruler. In 1848 the state of Cawnpore (Kanpur) was annexed ousting the new ruler Nana Sahib on the grounds he was an adopted rather than a natural son. In 1853 Jhansi was also annexed with again Britain refusing to recognise an adopted son, much to the annoyance of the old rajah's wife the Rani of Jhansi. In 1856 Dalhousie's most unpopular action was the annexation of Oudh (now known as Awdh) state on the grounds that the ruler Wajid Ali was incompetent. As a result in Oudh 21,000 nobles lost their power and 40,000 retainers became unemployed. All three of these states joined the mutinous soldiers in 1857.



Events of the Indian Mutiny

May 10 1857	The XI Native Cavalry of the Bengal Army, based in Meerut , mutinied against their British commanders. The mutineers fled to Delhi 80 kilometres away.
May 11	Europeans in Delhi were massacred. Bahadur Shah II (an old man, pensioned descendant of the Mughal dynasty) was proclaimed as the emperor of all India by the rebels.
June	Nana Sahib, who was denied succession to his father, led an army of rebellious soldiers, captured Cawnpore and massacred the British there. Nana Sahib's general was Tantia Tope Lucknow (capital of Oudh) was captured by rebels who restored the ruler of Oudh (deposed by Dalhousie). The troops at Jhansi mutinied. Rani Lakshmi Bai, the widow of the late Raja was proclaimed the ruler of the state.
September 20	Delhi was recaptured by the British army using forces from the Punjab (Sikhs). Bahadur Shah was captured and was exiled to Burma. His two sons and his grandson were murdered by a British intelligence officer.
November	The British using Ghurkha soldiers recaptured Lucknow
December	The British retook Cawnpore. Nana Sahib fled to Nepal and perhaps died there. Tantia Tope escaped and joined the Rani of Jhansi.
April 1858	The British took Jhansi.
June 19	The British won the battle of Gwalior. Tantia Tope was defeated but escaped and the Rani of Jhansi was killed here.

In overall charge of British troops in India was Sir Hugh Rose. Under him were two brigades- the First Brigade Central India Field Force under the command of Brigadier C. S. Stuart and the Second under Brigadier C. Steuart (confusingly similar names!). Thomas Fenwick was part of the 1st Brigade which had a total of 1989 men from 9 different companies. Their task was to reclaim Jhansi.

The rebellion in Jhansi was led by Lakshmi bai, the Rani of Jhansi. In 1853 when her husband the Raja died the British annexed Jhansi instead of letting her adopted son rule it. In 1857 when the mutiny broke out the British unjustly accused her of organising a massacre of Europeans that took place in Jhansi. She then joined the rebellion and became one of its most important leaders. She wore trousers and chainmail instead of a sari and carried a shield but she kept on her pearl necklace. She led an army of 1,500 soldiers and 14,000 volunteers and although she was Hindu she had a bodyguard of Arab Moslems. She was described by Major General Sir Hugh Rose as "tall in stature, handsome in person, young, energetic, proud and unyielding."



Thomas Fenwick acted as Field Engineer for the 1st Brigade going ahead of the main party, scouting out the land and recommending ways to capture the various fortresses that lay on the route from Bombay to Jhansi.

One such fortress was Fort Chandairee which was captured after a siege lasting from 8th -16th March 1858. The enemy fled and the fort was dismantled. When reporting this success Brigadier General Stuart wrote:

“To the officers of my staff my best thanks are due. Captain Fenwick, Field Engineer, carried out the onerous duties entrusted to him with the greatest skill and with the most untiring zeal and energy.”

The 1st Brigade arrived at Jhansi on 25th March 1858. The city was surrounded by a wall 6 to 12 feet thick, varying in height from 18 to 30 feet. In the centre of the city was a fortress perched on the summit of a rock with a commanding view of the area

Thomas Fenwick reported home with a description of the city:

Memoranda relative to Jhansi.

Jhansi, a town in Bundelcund (Lat. 25° 28', Long. 78° 38'), is situated amidst tanks and groves, and is surrounded by a loop-holed bastioned wall from 22 to 26 feet high. The gateways are all flanked, and were all built up inside by the enemy. Several guns were mounted on the ramparts.

On a rock overlooking the town is the fortress. There are 6 gates, one within another. On the east side it is perfectly impracticable. On the south side are 3 towers 50 feet high, of good masonry, connected by curtains ; there is also a second or lower line of works along this face. The tank is close to the south- west tower.

On the west side of the fort there are 4 towers, and an advanced work on a lower level, containing a well of good water.

On the north side there is a double line of works with circular towers.

In the interior there is a large square tower and a palace of four stories, with other buildings. There are some casemates in the north face and a gunpowder manufactory. 27 guns were found in the fort and town.

About 600 yards from the fortress, on the south side, are three ridges of hills nearly as high as the rock on which the fortress stands.

These formed the position of the left attack, and of the following batteries: —

No. 1 Battery of two 18-prs. to counter-batter.

No. 2 Battery of two 10-in. mortars to shell fort and town.

No. 3 Battery of one 18-pr. to breach town-wall at Mound.

No. 4 Battery of two 8-in. mortars and one 8-in. howitzer to shell fort and defences.

*(Signed) T. FENWICK, Captain,
Com. Royal Engineer and Field Engineer.*



Jhansi

Whilst the British were besieging Jhansi they were attacked by rebels led by Tantia Tope who had travelled to the Rani of Jhansi's aid from Kanpur. The British defeated this force in the Battle of Betwa River 1st April 1858, although Tantia Tope escaped.



A Victorian print of the Battle of Betwa River.

For the final attack on Jhansi the British forces were divided into two, with Captain Fenwick leading the party that attacked from the east. The city wall was breached by heavy canon fire; it took two 18 pounder guns 30 days to make the breach and expended so much ammunition that no further breaches could be made. The troops were then required to rush into the city and put ladders up the walls of the fortress. Soldiers then climbed the ladders despite being bombarded by stones by the Indians. The first man up the ladder was shot through the head and the second was dragged over the wall and cut to pieces, but in the end, after two days of street fighting. the British took Jhansi on 3rd April 1858. General Sir Hugh Rose wrote in his despatch "It will be a gratification to the relatives of the two men that I should have recommended both for promotion if they had not died in their country's cause, for conspicuous gallantry in leading the way up two scaling ladders."

Over 5,000 rebels were killed; Major General Hugh Rose had instructed his troops to "spare no one over sixteen - except women of course". Thirty-eight soldiers on the British side were killed in action.

The Rani of Jhansi escaped from the city on horseback and rode to the north east in the direction of Kanpur. She rode the 100 miles to Kalpi in 24 hours and was given a parade of honour on her arrival. There she was joined by the troops of Tantia Tope, the guerrilla leader from Kanpur.



The Rani of Jhansi and Tantia Tope.

Thomas Fenwick kept a diary of the siege of Jhansi:

25th March, 1858. — The 1st Brigade arrived at Jhansi at 7 A.M., 25th March, after a march of 22 miles, and found the 2nd Brigade investing the town.

About 4 P.M. I accompanied Major Boileau, Commanding Engineer, to the front. A mortar battery was established on the eastern side of the town about 1,800 yards from the citadel

26th March. — Sent up a working party of Royal Engineers at 5 A.M., under Lieutenant Gossett (1 non-commissioned officer and 12 men), to lay platforms for two 10-in. mortars. Sufficient material was not furnished by the Ordnance. At 7 P.M. commenced laying platforms for two 8-in. mortars. They are of Bombay pattern and answer admirably. They consist of 3 sleepers, with a pivot in front, and a frame of 8" X 8" timber, with guide-pieces of iron, between which the mortar recoils. Also commenced forming a parapet with an embrasure for an 18-pr. gun to breach an advanced or salient work at the south-east angle of the fort, forming part of the town wall.

27th March. — The two 8-in. mortars were removed to the right front. A battery was ordered to be erected for them and the 8-in. howitzer. I consider that the howitzer would have been more effective in the first position proposed. It is now on a lower level by 30 feet, thus losing the advantage of

command. Also a sand-bag battery for two 18-prs. was commenced on the knoll to the left, to counter-batter the enemy's guns.

28th March. — The 18-pr. opened fire at about 8 a.m. The first two or three rounds missed the white tower about 600 yards distant. A small hill in advance was occupied as a rifle trench during the night.

29th March. — -The mortar and howitzer batteries were completed during the night. After a few hours firing the position of the howitzer was changed by the Artillery officer.

30th March. — The 18-pr. began to have an effect on the wall of the mound. Batteries still firing. Scaling ladders were ordered to the front. The enemy stockaded the breach with trees during the night.

31st March. — An alarm of enemy advancing in force from the eastward. The 2nd Brigade and part of the 1st went out towards the Betwah River. 1st Brigade shifted camp close to 2nd Brigade, and returned about 9 a.m. to nearly- its original position,

1st April. — Enemy advanced during the night and attacked at daylight; they were repulsed after two hours' fighting, with a loss of 17 guns and 4 elephants, and were driven across the Betwah.

2nd April. — The assault of the town in four columns, about daylight, was determined on.

3rd April. — Assaults of the breach at the Mound and of the Rocket Tower by escalade took place at daylight with success. At the right attack 2 officers of Engineers of the Bombay service were killed, and 1 wounded. This attack failed in the first instance.

4th April. — Mortar shelling the fort. Infantry taking gradual possession of the town.

5th April. — The citadel was evacuated before day-break, and the British flag was hoisted on a tower.

(Signed) T. FENWICK, Captain, Com. Royal Engineer and Field Engineer.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward a copy of my report to the Commanding Engineer, Central India Field-Force, of the assault of Jhansi from the left attack, in which the 21st Company Royal Engineers formed the ladder party, and working party for making a lodgement at the breach. I beg to report that the Company behaved very well and steadily on this occasion, and I have the honour to request that you will bring their conduct to the favourable notice of the Inspector General of Fortifications.

I have the honour to be.

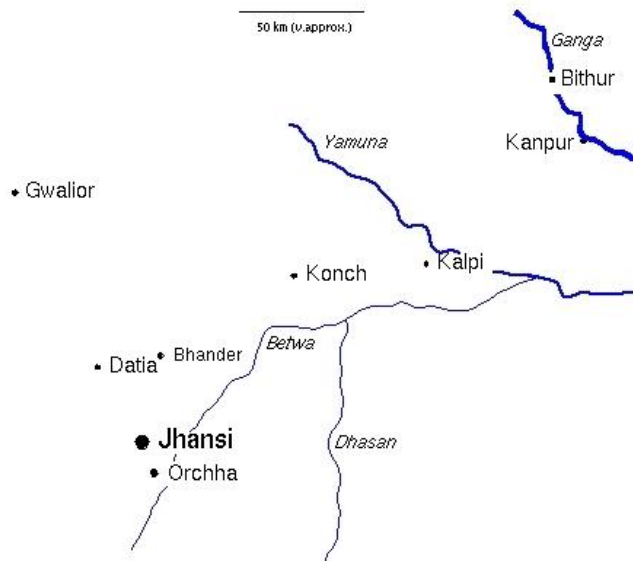
Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) T. FENWICK, Captain,

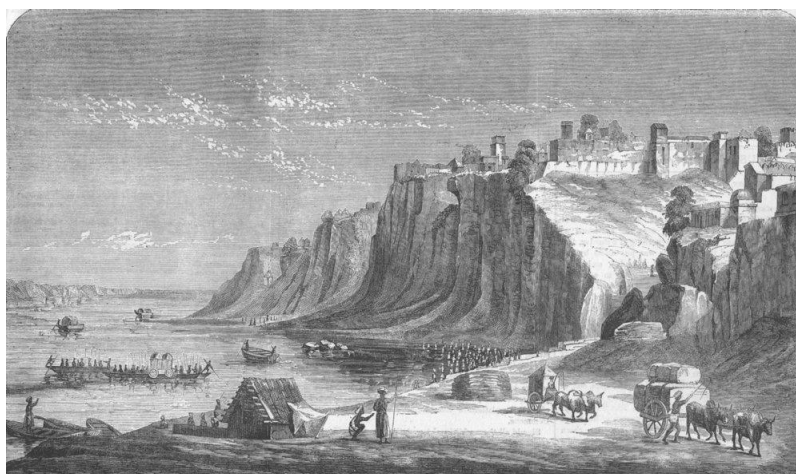
Com. Royal Engineer and Field Engineer, Left Attack.

Thomas Fenwick and 1st Brigade Central India Field Force then pursued the Rani of Jhansi in the direction of Kanpur. They caught up with them at the town of Koonch (Konch) which was not fortified and engaged in a series of skirmishes but again the rebels escaped as the British troops were exhausted.



“The 1st Brigade made their way through the town, as quickly as its narrow and winding streets would allow them, and searched the plains in pursuit of the Enemy. But the infantry had already suffered so much during the morning’s sun, twelve men having died from sunstroke that it would have been a heartless and imprudent sacrifice of invaluable infantry, to pursue with that arm. They were therefore halted... The great heat of the sun and the numerous casualties caused unfortunately by it, called into play all the zeal and devotion of the Medical Department.. Brigadier Stuart, Commanding 1st Brigade reports that his best thanks are due to the Officers of his staff, Captain Fenwick, Field Engineer etc.” - Major General Sir Hugh Rose.

Having secured Konch and rested a while, the British then moved after the Rani again and found her forces at Calpee (Kalpi) on 9th May 1858. Kalpi Fort stands on a high cliff overlooking the River Jumma and is surrounded by a wall nine feet thick



Kalpi

Partly because of the impenetrable situation of the fort and partly because of the exhausted condition of the troops the British did not attack immediately but settled down for a long siege. On

22nd May the rebels came out of the fort and attacked the British camp. Although the rebels had superior numbers their ammunition was very inferior. They were charged at by the British Camel Corps and fled.

Brigadier Stuart reported:

It gives me the greatest pleasure to state that the troops of the 1st Brigade displayed a determined fortitude which nothing could overcome; in the action of 22nd May they were exposed to a fiercely burning sun from 9.0am to 2.0 pm, and though as I have mentioned they were much distressed by the same, yet every man struggled to get to the front until fairly beaten down. I am much indebted to the Officers of my Staff, Captain Fenwick, Field Engineer; Captain Colly, Major of Brigade; Captain Bacon, Deputy Assistant Quarter Master General; and Lieutenant Henry, Sub-Assistant Commissary General, for their gallantry, zeal and indefatigable exertions during these operations.

The Rani of Jhansi then arrived at Gwalior. The fort at Gwalior was considered to be the strongest in India and virtually impregnable. The ruler, the Maharaja Sindia, had maintained a *pro-British* stance throughout the Rebellion so the British expected the rebels to disband. But the bulk of the Maharaja's army defected to the rebels, the Maharaja fled and the Rani took the fort.



Fort Gwalior

During the British attack on Gwalior the Rani of Jhansi was killed on June 18, 1858, – she was shot dead by an unknown trooper from the 8th Hussars. The circumstances of her death are not clear and are surrounded by legend but she seems to have died while leading her cavalry into battle.

Sir Hugh Rose wrote:

I beg to draw His Excellency's attention particularly to the great gallantry and devotion displayed by Her Majesty's 8th Hussars, in the brilliant charge which they made through the enemy's Camp; of which one most important result was the death of the Rani of Jhansi; who, although a lady, was the bravest and best Military leader of the Rebels. The enemy's guns which the 8th Hussars brought back out of the Rebel Camp into their own, were the best proofs of how nobly they had fought and conquered.

Tanti Tope was not killed at Gwalior and the British troops spent until April 1859 chasing him round India.

For his service in India Thomas Fenwick was awarded the Indian Mutiny medal. He also got rapid promotion: on August 9th 1858 he was made a Major and on 7th December 1858 he became a Lieutenant Colonel.

Epilogue

Thomas Fenwick left India the next summer.

The Morning Post Monday, June 3rd, 1859

Royal Engineers -The following change of stations have recently taken: Lieutenant-Colonel Fenwick from India to Mauritius.

He was never to return home to Britain. He died in Mauritius aged 42.

The Royal Cornwall Gazette, Falmouth Packet, and General Advertiser Friday, November 18, 1859;

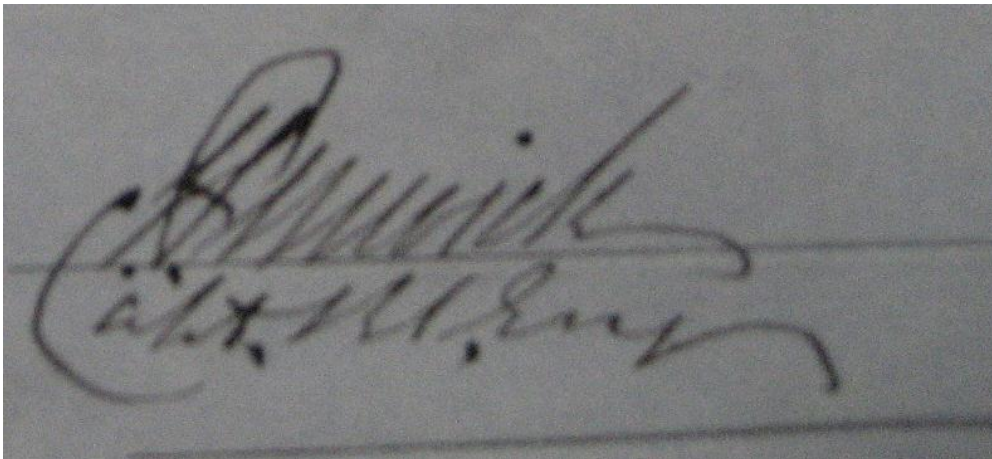
Obituaries :

At the Mauritius, on the 12th of October, 1859, from the effects of an illness, contracted in the campaign in India, during the late mutiny, Thomas Fenwick, Esq., Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Engineers, eldest son of the late Lieut.-Colonel W. Fenwick, C.B. , Lieutenant Governor of Pendennis Castle, Falmouth, Cornwall.

Both his brothers served in India and both died there; Percival, a Lieutenant in the 69th Foot died at Fort Madras on 5th March 1863 and William, a Colonel in the 10th Foot died of sunstroke at Bhosawrel on his way to Mysore, 7 May 1870.

Thomas and his wife Hester had no children. She never remarried but spent the rest of her life in England - living with her twin sister Jean, a spinster. Both sisters died in 1911.

Thomas Fenwick 1816-1859 had left his mark on our landscape and on our history.



Hilary Greenwood
November 2012

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