

**A FINE AND RARE ROYAL NAVY 'AFRICA' SERVICE GROUP TO AN OFFICER WHO WAS MID FOR HIS SERVICES IN THE WITU OPERATIONS OF 1890 AND AFTER TAKING PART IN THE DONGLA CAMPAIGN OF 1896, WAS TWICE MID FOR HIS SERVICES WITH THE NAVAL BRIGADE DURING THE BOER WAR, BEHAVING WITH GREAT GALLANTRY AT THE BATTLE OF GRASPAN, WHERE HE WAS IN COMMAND OF THE NAVAL GUNS, HE WAS SPECIAL PROMOTED TO COMMANDER FOR THESE SERVICES**



EAST AND WEST AFRICA 1887-1900, CLASP, WITU 1890 'SUB. LIEUT. F. W. DEAN. R.N. H.M.S. REDBREAST.'; QUEEN'S SOUTH AFRICA 1899-1902, 5 CLASPS, BELMONT, MODDER RIVER, PAARDEBERG, DRIEFONTEIN, RELIEF OF KIMBERLEY, CLASPS MOUNTED IN THIS ORDER 'LIEUT. F. W. DEAN, R.N. H.M.S. MONARCH'; KHEDIVE'S SUDAN 1896-1908, NO CLASP, UNNAMED AS ISSUED; ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY, SMALL BRONZE MEDAL (SUCCESSFUL), 'LIEUT. F. W. DEAN, R.N., 18TH DECEMBER 1893.' COMPLETE WITH INTEGRAL BROOCH BUCKLE, PIN REMOVED.

M.I.D. London Gazette 6 January 1891- For service during the Witu expedition

M.I.D. London Gazette 30 March 1900 – *'behaving with great gallantry at Graspán, where he was in command of four naval guns in a very exposed position'*

M.I.D - *'specially promoted to Commander for services with Naval Brigade in South Africa, Admiralty, 2 May 1900.'*

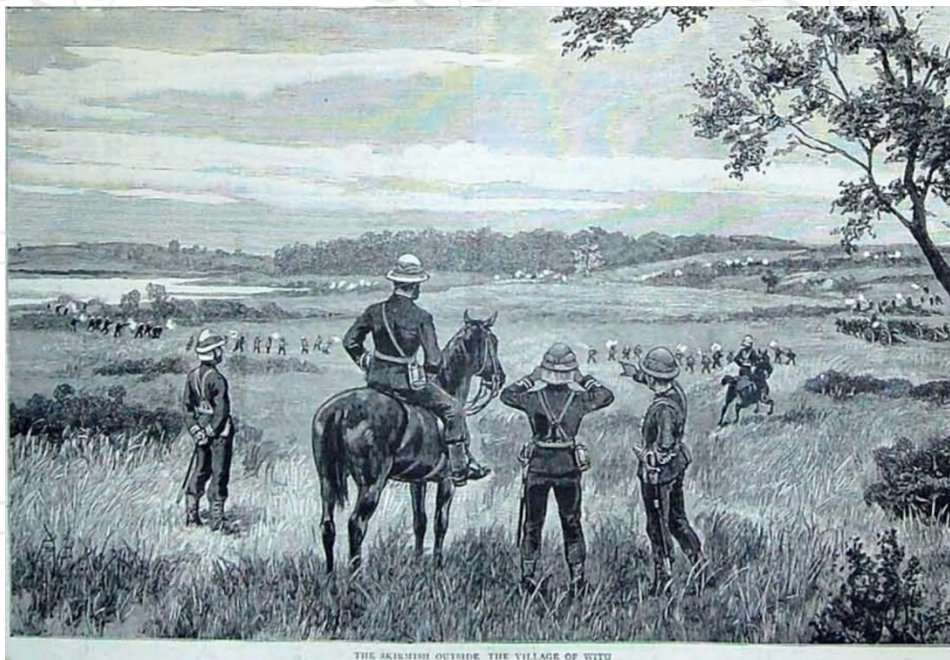
1916 Navy List entry:



"DEAN, F. W., Sub-Lieutenant of "Redbreast"; as orderly officer to Flag-Captain Hon. A. G. Curzon-Howe, served in the Naval Brigade landed under the command of Vice-Admiral Hon. Sir E. R. Fremantle, K.C.b. C.M. G., Commander-in-Chief on the East Indies station, for the punitive expedition against the Sultan of Witu, in East Africa, October, 1890; mentioned in despatches (General Africa Medal, Witu, 1890, Clasp). Lieutenant, H.M.S. "Gleaner," 18th December 1893 (Bronze Medal of Royal Humane Society), for saving W. Ringland, ordinary seaman, of the "Resolution."-Ringland fell overboard from the "Resolution," in Cawsand Bay, on December 18th, 1893, when the latter vessel was about a quarter of a mile ahead of the "Gleaner," and steaming six knots. There was a strong breeze and a heavy cross sea running at the time. The "Gleaner" attempted to get her lifeboat into the sea, but considerable delay occurred. Lieutenant Dean jumped overboard, and held the drowning man up fully ten minutes until assistance arrived. Lieutenant of "Scout" during Dongola Expedition, 1896 (Khedive's Medal); Lieut. of "Monarch," and specially promoted to the rank of Commander for services in South Africa, 2nd May, 1900. Landed first for the defence of Stormberg, and afterwards served in the reinforced brigade attached to General Lord Methuen's Division (South Africa Medal); mentioned in despatches as behaving with great gallantry at Graspan, where he was in command of four naval guns in a very exposed position; mentioned in Lord Roberts' despatch of 31st March, 1900; appointed in command of Devonport Gunnery School, with acting rank of Captain, June, 1915."

Frederick William Dean was born in Newburn, near Swindon on 20 July 1868, and entered the Royal Navy as a Cadet in the training ship Britannia in January 1882. Appointed a Midshipman in October 1884, he was advanced to Sub Lieutenant aboard H.M.S. Calypso in October 1888. Having then obtained a 1st Class Certificate in Seamanship, he was appointed for navigational duties in the Redbreast on the East Indies station in February 1890. And in October of the same year he was landed for service with the Naval Brigade sent to punish the Sultan of Witu for the massacre of a party of Europeans. Here, then, the backdrop to his first mention in despatches, Vice-Admiral Sir Edmund Fremantle reporting that he 'acted as Orderly Officer to myself and Captain Curzon-Howe and was most zealous and active.' (London Gazette 6 January 1891, refers).

<http://www.kaiserscross.com/188001/218001.html>



Promoted to Lieutenant in January 1892, Dean gained further navigational experience in the Hearty and the Gleaner. In mid-February 1894, he had been awarded the Royal Humane Society's Bronze Medal for saving the life of Ordinary Seaman William Ringland of the Resolution, who fell into the



sea whilst his ship was underway. The next ship astern, the Gleaner, aboard which Dean was serving, saw the incident and tried to lower a boat; this was ineffective and so Dean jumped overboard in full uniform and held the man up for ten minutes until a boat arrived.

Joining the torpedo Cruiser H.M.S. Scout in December 1893, Dean saw active service off the coast of Sudan in 1896 during the Dongola campaign (Khedive's Medal, without clasp). The following year he received his first command, the Sparrowhawk, on the North American station. Note: The only Royal Navy personnel to be awarded the no clasp Khedive's Medal without clasps were to H.M.S. Scout (149 medals), H.M.S. Melita (139 medals) and a few Nile gunboats. These medals were issued unnamed and they were not entitled to the Queen's Sudan Medal.

### SERVICE WITH THE NAVAL BRIGADE DURING THE BOER WAR

It was not until joining the Monarch as her Senior Lieutenant in January 1899 that he embarked on the most distinguished chapter of his career, namely his command of naval guns ashore during the opening phases of the Boer War. Such was the prominence of his role in the action at Graspan in November 1899, that he submitted his own report for publication in Admiral Sir Robert Harris's despatch. And that report eventually appeared in the London Gazette on 30 March 1900, from which the following extract has been taken:

*'... I then waited until the Royal Artillery with six guns took up a position on my right front and opened fire on the enemy. I did the same, and subsequently advanced to ranges of 4,000 yards and ultimately 2,800 yards, acting from time to time on requests I received from the officer commanding Royal Artillery, who was attacking the same position, viz., two strongly fortified kopjes on either side of the railway with a well protected gun in each.'*



TAKING THE 4.7 NAVAL GUN ACROSS THE TUGELA.

*About 8 a.m. I received verbal orders to retire from my position, as the Royal Artillery were about to move away to the right, and it would then be untenable for my two guns. The Royal Artillery were already moving off when I got the order, and the Boer guns, having got our range, were pouring on us such an effective shrapnel fire, that I judged it impossible to carry out the order without either leaving*



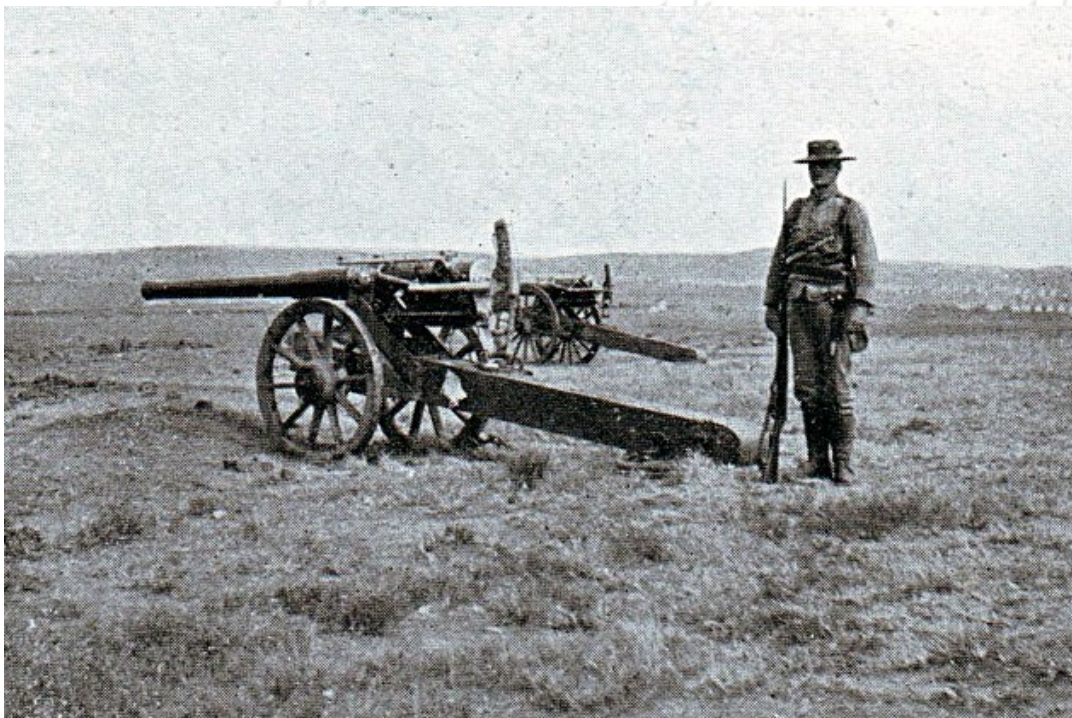
*the guns or suffering very heavy losses, both amongst our own men and the company of Royal Engineers who were helping us, if we attempted to retreat with them.*

*I, therefore, continued to fire as briskly as possible at the Boer guns, with such effect that we continuously put them out of action, for as much as 15 or 20 minutes at a time. Their shells burst with utmost accuracy, and both our guns and ammunition trolly were spattered all over with shrapnel balls; but, owing to my system of making all hands lie down when we saw their guns flash and remain until the shell burst and the balls flew by, we had only six men wounded when, at 9.30 a.m., the Boers finally ceased firing and abandoned position ... '*

Dean was himself specially mentioned by Captain A. E. Merchant, R.M.L.I., who assumed command of the Naval Brigade when his senior officers were killed or wounded:

*'Lieutenant F. Dean who was in command of 4 Naval guns behaved with great gallantry in a very exposed position which was commanded by the enemy and where they were subjected to heavy artillery fire which proved so accurate as to wound 6 men of the guns crews.'*

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Graspan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Graspan)



He was again mentioned in Lieutenant Ogilvy's report to Captain Jones, dated at Ladysmith on 1 March 1900, which brought to notice the uniform good conduct of the officers and men who had been under his immediate command during the operations ending in the Relief of Ladysmith:

*'Lieutenant F. W. Dean, who is now in hospital, I consider worthy of special mention, more especially so as I am sure that his unrelenting hard work was largely the cause of his going down when attacked by dysentery.'*

Yet further recognition followed in Lord Roberts's despatch of 31 March 1900, in which Dean was 'specially promoted to Commander for services with Naval Brigade in South Africa, Admiralty, 2 May 1900.'

The action at Graspan aside, Dean had also commanded his guns at Modder River on 28 November 1899, at the relief of Kimberley on 15 February 1900, at Paardeberg on 17-26 February 1900, and

Driefontein on 10 March 1900. Invalided to hospital in the following month, he was embarked in the S.S. Cymric for the U.K. in May 1900.

Approximately 61 'Relief of Kimberley' clasps awarded to the Royal Navy, to men from H.M.S. *Doris*, *Monarch*, and *Powerful*.

## POST BOER WAR SERVICE

Appointed to the command of *Tamar* in March 1902, the receiving ship in Hong Kong, he returned home in the summer of 1904 and, following further commands, attended a variety of courses, among them the Senior Officers' War Course at Portsmouth.

Of his subsequent appointments in the Great War, which encompassed the cruiser *Sutlej* in the opening months of the conflict and of Devonport's gunnery school as an Acting Captain, it was his command of the armed merchant cruiser *Hilary* that proved the most memorable: she was sunk by the U-88 west of the Shetlands on 25 May 1917. Details of the sinking, including Captain Dean's own report of events can be found [here](https://www.naval-history.net/OWShips-WW1-08-HMS_Hilary.htm#Captain_Dean).

[https://www.naval-history.net/OWShips-WW1-08-HMS\\_Hilary.htm#Captain\\_Dean](https://www.naval-history.net/OWShips-WW1-08-HMS_Hilary.htm#Captain_Dean)

Days before *Hilary* was sunk, Captain Dean and several of the officers and men reportedly sighted a sea serpent, the story of this sighting was published in the shape of a letter in the scientific journal *Nature* in 1930 and is presented as "*an important piece of evidence for the existence of the creature popularly called the sea serpent*".

Details of this sighting can also be found on the above link,

Dean was placed on the Retired List in the rank of Captain at his own request in May 1919 and died in Bristol on 18 July 1943; his services were recognised by the award of the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, the whereabouts of which remain unknown.



Condition NEF, mounted court-style for display. Sold with copy research including service papers etc. Ex Alan Hall Collection, June 2000.