

Birmingham Daily Post – Thursday 15 February 1900

Your readers will be specially interested to know that Mr. Francis Powell Williams, the younger son of the Financial Secretary to the War Office, will sail next month South Africa as a member of the Corps of Electrical Engineers.

This special body, which has never been seen in the field before, was constituted some four years since by the present Secretary of War at the suggestion of the late Mr. Hopkinson, of Manchester, who became its first colonel. Upon that gentleman's death, by accident in the Alps, Colonel Crompton, the head of Crompton's Electrical Works at Chelmsford (from the pupils at which the corps is mainly manned), who had been its honorary colonel, became colonel; and, as he had formerly served in the Royal Engineers, his going out now in command will, in effect, be a return to active service.

Newspaper 2 (unknown source)

Over 3,00 TROOPS LEAVE TO-DAY.

Three thousand four hundred troops, most of whom are for the Eighth Division, will leave Southampton to-day for South Africa.

They will go in two transports - the Bavarian and the Tagus. The Bavarian will embark Major-General Boyes and the staff of the Seventeenth Brigade, two battalions of the brigade (the 2nd West Kent, lately returned from Egypt, and the 2nd Manchester) and reinforcing parties for several line and Militia battalions.

The Tagus will carry a large number of Volunteers, including the Electrical Engineers Volunteers, companies for the Royal Lancaster Regiment, Lancashire Fusiliers, Berkshire Regiment, Royal West Kent, and Cameron Highlanders, and the 57th and 59th Yeomanry companies.

The Electrical Engineers Volunteers will take with them three traction engines and four huge searchlights. Each engine can be used for ordinary haulage, and each one having a dynamo attached will also supply the light for searchlights. The men are also furnished with cycles carrying a large spool of telegraph and telephone wire, which can be laid on the field at the rate of four miles an hour. Captain Lloyd is in command of the Volunteers, and among them is the son of Mr. Powell Williams, Financial Secretary to the War Office.

The 2nd Grenadier Guards will not embark in the Dunera at Southampton until Sunday.