

Major Warren Richard Colvin Wynne R.E.

Architect of Fort Tenedos and Eshowe

Adrian Greaves

---

Warren Wynne was born on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1843 in County Louth, Ireland. He was educated at New Cross Royal Naval School where he distinguished himself by winning numerous prizes, especially for classics and mathematics. He was equally successful at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, and passed out in fourth position, which entitled him to a commission in the Royal Engineers. He was accordingly gazetted to the Corps on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 1862 aged nineteen. To place his success in context, each course commenced with 200 aspiring officer cadets but, due to the rigorous training, often ended with no more than 25 to 30 successfully completing the course. With regard to other notable cadets, the Prince Imperial had been placed seventh out of 35 and Chard was eighteenth out of nineteen.

Wynne's initial posting was to Gibraltar and towards the end of his first year he was appointed to the position of Acting Adjutant. His next posting was to Guildford and then to nearby Reading as a surveying officer for the Ordnance Survey and for the next few uneventful years he was directly responsible for contouring many of the detailed Ordnance Survey maps of Berkshire, Hampshire and Sussex. In December 1878 he was posted to Shorncliffe as a Captain in command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Company which was under orders to proceed to South Africa for service in the impending invasion of Zululand.

At this stage of his career, Wynne's promotion had not been spectacular; promotion in the Corps relied on seniority and not merit, resulting in him spending 12 years as a Lieutenant. He was, however, highly unusual in having been married twice, firstly to Eleanor (died 1873) and then to Lucy, eldest daughter of Captain Alfred Parish, R.N.R. Perhaps the Corps were not too concerned about their junior officers marrying but it was, after all, common service lore that – 'While Captains might marry, Majors should and Colonels must; but Lieutenants definitely should not'. Nevertheless, Wynne's letters home reveal that he was a man equally dedicated to his career and family, being the proud father of three sons.

Wynne was given one day's notice to report to Shorncliffe where he found his new command in some turmoil and in the midst of preparations for their departure to South Africa the following morning. Fortunately Wynne had two excellent and experienced subalterns, Lieutenants Courtney and Willock, who rendered their new commanding officer every assistance. At 7.15 the following morning, Wynne and his 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Company marched off to the railway station for transfer to Gravesend and embarkation on the *Walmer Castle*. The *Walmer Castle* was one of a fleet of vessels, all bearing the suffix 'Castle', which were owned by the Currie family and their Company, the 'Castle Line'. This line originally served the Cape route, and in peacetime was assigned to carry passengers and the Royal Mail. Several of the *Walmer Castle*'s sister ships had been engaged by HM Government to transport men and supplies to South Africa; these included the *Dunrobin*, *Dublin* and *Edinburgh Castle*.

The embarkation of troops was an exceedingly complex operation. The British Army had voluminous regulations for the safe transit of its forces by sea, and all had to be strictly complied with. An officer's cabin allowance was 175 cubic feet, or 275 if two officers shared. This was certainly more generous than the 50 cubic feet for a private soldier or, indeed, 125 for a horse. The copious on-board regulations emphasised the need for sanitary facilities and ventilation, the welfare and discipline of the troops and even more emphasis was placed on the care of the horses.

Wynne wrote home on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1878.

The British soldier is a fine fellow, but you may have too much of him. My own men are very well, exceptionally so, but the others with us are a very rough lot, and the most horrible oaths are sounding around one. What a Sunday I had yesterday. After I finished my letter to you last night, I had to set to work again, and was constantly at it till 1.30 this morning, having to be up again at 5.15. I had, necessarily, parted with nearly all bedding and wraps, so was chilly, and got but little sleep, so you may be sure I shall be glad of a little rest and quiet at sea; though, of course, one will not be left idle, there will be duty in one's turn with the troops... They have certainly lost no time in getting us off, in spite of the Queen's regulations, which require twenty-four hours' delay after embarkation (1). We left Shorncliffe at 7.15am, played down by the fifes and drums of the Guards, and the band of the 45<sup>th</sup>, and arrived on board at 1.30. There are four or five ladies of the 99<sup>th</sup> Regiment with us. I suppose they will stop at Durban. The accounts I hear of the Cape seem in general terms to resolve themselves into 'rough, unluxurious, and very healthy – summer heat, not troublesome on account of cool nights'. We are to call at Madeira and Cape Town, so I must send you good budgets from those places. We have just anchored opposite Sheerness, as we have to take powder on board to-morrow.

Wynne wrote again on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 1878

WALMER CASTLE, – I must now take up my diary letter, from the date of our arrival at Madeira, viz: Sunday, the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. We had a good view of the east side of the island, the outline of which struck me as being very picturesque. The tints upon the hillsides, the greys, purples, russet browns, and emerald, were such as promised, in bright sunshine, to be very lovely. As it was, there was a good deal of heavy mist which shortly turned into heavy rain, and somewhat detracted from the effect; the sea was too rough, making large white surf along the beach. We were, most of us, determined however to go ashore in spite of any difficulties. So first one boat with nine officers, and then another with eight, and one of the ladies, put off for the shore. I was in the

second. It required a certain amount of quickness to effect a landing without being drenched by the surf, and the lady needed strong nerve and the help of our men to get from the boat on to the landing place. It was now 12.30pm, too late for Divine Service, and they had none on board, on account of coaling etc., so it was a second Sunday for me without any. How sadly one will now miss the blessings of such a place of worship as we experienced at Reading. It is only by the loss that one realises the preciousness of it. I was pleased with what I saw of Madeira. We only had a bare three hours there, and one longed for a fine day and seven or eight hours to be able to explore some of the tempting looking ravines and summits if the island. As it was, it never ceased raining while we were there, and we could only walk through and about the town of Funchal. It is clean as foreign towns go, neatly paved with pitcher paving. The conveyances for passengers are peculiar, being light basket carriages on wooden frames like sleighs, iron shod, with a four-poster arrangement closed around with curtains. These are drawn by a pair of bullocks, which go at a very fair pace along the paved streets. At 3.30, we returned to the ship, and left Madeira in a storm of rain, wind, thunder, and lightning, at 5pm, the band of HMS Boadicea striking up Auld Lang Syne, as we steamed off.

During this period, British naval policy was largely built around the maritime need for coaling stations, and many of the Crown's overseas possessions were founded on this requirement. Madeira belonged to Portugal, which was conveniently one of Britain's ancient allies. Clearly, the island owed much of its prosperity to its coaling facilities and strategic position off the coast of West Africa, being directly on the steamer routes for Africa and India. Until the submarine cable reached Cape Town following the Zulu War, Madeira was also the closest telegraphic link to Europe from South Africa.

His next letter put the British invasion of Zululand in context – the war in Afghanistan being perceived by Wynne as a major conflict. Wynne also noticed the growing enthusiasm which junior officers invariably displayed towards minor campaigns, and the Zululand campaign they were all embarking on was certainly considered to be minor. The younger officers knew that the invasion presented them with the possibilities of brevet promotions (2) and, surely, opportunities for medals to be won. He wrote,

15<sup>th</sup> December; To-day is rather more like Sunday than the last two; but now little like our delightful Sundays together at Reading. We had service on the quarter-deck at 10.30am. The Captain of the ship read the service, and the hymns were fairly sung. We shall, I suppose, spend our next Sunday but one at Cape Town, for I do not think we shall arrive there till the Saturday after Christmas Day. Then there will be another four of five days before reaching Durban, by which time I for one will be heartily tired of the voyage. The last fortnight seems like three months at least, I am so very anxious to hear how the Afghan expedition is progressing, especially Arthur's (3) column. I wonder whether the papers at home will have accounts of our little campaign.

The fellows talk of a Zulu War Medal, Brevet majorities and so on. Of course such things are possible. For my own part I shall (God helping me) do my duty without sparing myself, but besides the fact of my having had no experience of the field, not even as many have of 'Autumn Manoeuvres', I do not believe I am naturally fitted for action of any brilliant kind in field service. I therefore do not expect or aspire to a Brevet, though, of course, I should be glad to be so successful, chiefly for my father's sake, as I know it would please him. I hope, however, that Arthur will get his Brevet for Afghanistan.

By Christmas Day Wynne was becoming quite enthusiastic for the coming campaign, he wrote,

We ought to be at Cape Town early on Saturday, i.e. three days hence, and glad indeed shall I be to be on terra firma again, and to learn particulars as to what is before us. I hope that by giving Cetshwayo and the Zulus a crushing blow now, they may be kept quiet for a long time to come.

I wonder whether the London papers will send out any correspondent to inform people at home of our doings. I hope so, for I shall find it difficult to communicate with you when in the field. I expect, however, that the Afghan affair will so eclipse ours that but scanty notice will be taken of it, and yet to compare the two foes both as regards numbers and prowess ours is the most formidable by all accounts, in cunning also, but their arms are inferior. I hope I shall hear something of their doings out there before we go up to the front. This time last year Arthur was busy with his signalling operations in the expedition against the Jowakies.(4) I wonder how he has succeeded this year in Afghanistan. I should like to train some signallers for our expedition, and may perhaps do so, for they would be very useful; but with so many other things on hand it is doubtful whether I could manage it.

Because modern writers frequently view the Zulu War as one of the most significant military campaigns of the time, it is important to remember that in 1879 the forthcoming Zulu campaign was considered to be, at most, a minor affair compared to the earlier and large scale invasion of Afghanistan undertaken by Lord Lytton, Viceroy of India. There was nothing to suggest that this small and globally distant dispute with some African natives would be of any special interest to anyone; after all, the British had been fighting African natives for the last twenty years.

Wynne arrived in Capetown late on the 27<sup>th</sup> December and wrote home,

December 28<sup>th</sup>, 7.30am – we arrived at 11.40pm yesterday. This morning the news has come on board that the women and children are to disembark, and perhaps the heavy baggage. Cetshwayo has received an ultimatum which expires in a week, and we are ordered up to the front at once. It is overwhelming to me to think of such a

thing as far as the RE is concerned, with all our heaps of stores to sort out, to arrange, and to pack – to say nothing of organising the men, the majority of whom are recruits.

Captain Jones (5) and I landed, and lunched with Major and Mrs Nixon, (6) and afterwards went out by train to Wynberg (7) to pay our respects to Lady Frere, the Governor's wife. She was having a garden party, so we saw something of Cape society. We found the country most beautiful two miles out from Cape Town. Such beautiful green foliage, and the Table Mountain grand; also the distant mountains beautiful in outline and hue. There was a delicious breeze, and for a day in summer nothing could be more perfect. The drawback to the place is the dust, a red sand, which covers one if the wind be blowing much. It was certainly additionally agreeable to have such a pleasant outing after our long sea voyage.'

'Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> – I went to see the women and children of the Company in the quarters which had been told off to them here in The Castle. They have one very large Barrack room for the six women and five children,(8) and seem pretty satisfied.

I went with the Nixons to the Military Chapel, and was indeed glad to join in the dear old service again. I had intended going to Holy Communion at the Cathedral at 8am, but was prevented by duty on board, and there was not any at the midday service. While I think of it, please tell everybody that I have found it impossible to do more than write this single letter, as there is so much to be done and thought about. Give all my kind love. I will not forget darling Harry on his birthday.(9)

I went with the Nixons to the Cathedral this evening – the service was very nicely conducted. A Happy New Year, and every blessing to all. We leave at 4pm for Durban, from which place I shall write again.

After a few days rest, Wynne and his men continued their voyage in the Walmer Castle towards Durban where they arrived on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1879. In the meantime, the British invasion of Zululand was set to begin. Spirits on board were evidently high, although Wynne now expresses his first expectation for a short campaign.

3<sup>rd</sup> January. The 99<sup>th</sup> are to land at once, and push on to-morrow. We probably go ashore to-morrow, and shall have to wait two or three days while they provide us with mules. I hope to be able to post this at Durban by the mail that leaves to-morrow or next day. Cetshwayo is in great force, and believes himself a match for the troops we can send against him. He is said to be marching troops to the frontier. So much the better for us, for we shall not have so much trouble penetrating the country to search him out. I sincerely hope we may now settle his business quickly, and so settle down at our station all the sooner. It is true to be a flying column kind of work, and therefore I feel there will be little chance of sending letters; you must not therefore be uncomfortable if you are left without news for some time, though I hope is may not be long.

The landing port for HM forces en route for the Zulu campaign was Durban. (10) It was more of a landing point than a port. The harbour's mouth was invariably blocked to ocean going vessels by a sandbar in spite of repeated failed attempts to remove the bar. Ships would have to wait off shore while their cargo and passengers were loaded into 'lighters', small harbour vessels, for the short but frequently very rough transit to the shore.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> January Wynne and his men departed Durban to join Col. Pearson's column heading for the main supply depot near the Tugela River which marked the Natal border with Zululand. Their march was uneventful, apart from the constant rain and associated problems of getting their laden wagons across numerous flooded rivers and streams. They arrived at Fort Pearson on the 12<sup>th</sup> January where Wynne was briefed on his future role, to build a fort on the far side of the river. This fort, on Zulu territory, was intended for use as both a defensive fort and store area to supply the coastal column as it advanced further into Zululand.

Wynne crossed into Zululand the following afternoon and promptly conducted a survey to locate a suitable site for his fort. There were two forts already in existence on the Natal bank; Fort Williamson had, though, been abandoned in 1870. Fort Pearson was perched on the top of a hill and was both on the wrong side of the river and far too small for the volume of supplies needed for the invasion. Wynne's orders were to build a fort some 600 yards from the river to be named after HMS *Tenedos*. Following the completion of his survey, work began on the 15<sup>th</sup> January. Wynne noted in his diary,

Construction of Field Fort '*Tenedos*' on left bank of Lower Tugela drift to protect a storehouse, 60' by 50', as a depot for feeding the Column No.1 in Zululand Expedition.

He must have been reasonably relaxed about the task being undertaken in enemy territory as initially his men were unarmed. He later raised the matter with Col. Pearson who informed him that "the arms of six invalids of the Buffs might be handed over to me if there were no regimental objections".

Wynne and his men worked tirelessly and by late on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, the fort was virtually finished. Wynne was then detailed to accompany Pearson's column on the march to Eshowe. The nights of the march were regularly disturbed by false alarms caused by sentries imagining the Zulus were about to attack; in fact there were no Zulu forces in the immediate area. By the 21<sup>st</sup> January the column had managed to cover only seventeen miles due to the knee-deep mud along the tracks and drifts.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> January Wynne was supervising his men crossing the Inyezane River when a large party of Zulus attacked the column. This was the first action he was to experience; he extended his men into an open line and was relieved when two companies of the Buffs joined his inexperienced Engineers. The whole group then moved forwards until the Zulus fled; he was satisfied that none of his men was injured and he noted in his diary that,

I captured a shield and two assegais as trophies. The affair lasted about two hours. We then proceeded on our march and bivouacked for the night about 4 miles further on the road to Eshowe. One of our men had the sight of his rifle shot off.

On their arrival at Eshowe, Wynne was tasked with fortifying the Norwegian mission house for the column. He was aware that the position was militarily weak but within a few days the fort had taken shape which was fortunate as, on the 26<sup>th</sup> January, a runner arrived with the news that 'Col. Durnford had been killed but that the General had gained a victory over the enemy'. Interestingly, Wynne's diary records a statement about an incident which is not generally well known,

A second messenger arrived bearing word from Lt. Kingscote RN, commanding at Fort Tenedos. His post had come under heavy, if ineffective, fire on the night of the 25<sup>th</sup>. The Zulus had vanished into the darkness after an hour's shooting.

Chelmsford then sent Col. Pearson a letter cancelling all previous orders and instead instructed him to take whatever action Pearson considered appropriate under the circumstances. Aware that his column was now isolated some thirty miles inside Zululand, Pearson responded by calling a meeting of his senior officers to discuss their predicament, namely, whether to stay and fight or retreat to Fort Pearson. Wynne was strongly in favour of holding Eshowe, as otherwise the Zulus would have had an easy victory. He also pointed out that the fort would provide an ideal base for operations against the Zulus while the General re-organised his army. Wynne's argument carried the day and defensive work was renewed with increasing vigour. The Zulus surrounded Eshowe and effectively trapped Pearson's column.

Wynne undoubtedly worked hard and conscientiously, sometimes in heavy rain, at other times it was unbearably hot. His next letter to Lucy was the first to mention his health.

January 30<sup>th</sup>. Was taken ill with billious (sic) diarrhoea from exposure to sun, and perhaps anxiety. Was forced to lie down all day.

Work continued unabated with Wynne supervising the 300 men under his command. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb. he wrote,

Today is a wet, wet Sunday.....Last night between 11 and 1 we had a terrific thunderstorm. I never heard such angry thunder. The rain came down in buckets full, and I was glad that we had just finished the drainage of the ditch around the fort.... The tarpaulin over my wagon kept me dry, with the exception of one tiny place. I fear the men fared a good deal worse.

Wynne's men continued to fortify the position and during the night of the 1<sup>st</sup> March, Wynne began to suffer from 'bad diarrhoea'. The following day he wrote in his diary, "Very seedy, unable to attend Divine Service". Even so, he found the time to design and supervise the building of a message carrying hot air balloon in order to establish communications with Chelmsford. His diary entry for the 11<sup>th</sup> March is particularly poignant,

March 11<sup>th</sup> – had an attack of diarrhoea during the night; weak in the morning. Started at 7.30 with....

which was his final uncompleted diary entry By this stage, there was a great deal of sickness at Eshowe and Wynne was probably suffering as severely as anyone else. Captain MacGregor wrote that 3 officers and 22 men had died by the 28<sup>th</sup> March.

Fleet Surgeon Norbury of *HMS Active* and his staff were now working extremely hard. The mission station had by now been converted into a hospital; it could not cope with the volume of patients and medical supplies were soon exhausted. An inventive man, Surgeon Norbury then used the fort's veterinary medicines and when these were used, he created his own medicine from tree bark and herbs from around the fort. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> April the siege of Eshowe was lifted and the following day saw the sick transferred back to Fort Pearson. There can be little doubt that Wynne suffered terribly from this wagon journey along the rough track. On the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1879 Capt. Wynne succumbed to his illness and died.

Perhaps the most poignant letter was to come from Lt. Courtney to Wynne's wife, Lucy. After Wynne died he wrote,

He had no pain, and I know that he was quite prepared for another world. At Ekowe, he had directed me to pack up all his books, except his Bible and Prayer Book. I cannot tell you how distressed I am that I was not at his side when he died, but the separation of the hospital from our camp by the river prevents the visits that one can pay when near together as at Ekowe, where I was with him every day. This morning I crossed the river at 6 a.m., and was met by the corporal with the sad news. I tried to obtain the services of a clergyman, but there is none here, the Rev. Mr. Robertson, who was with us at Ekowe, having gone on leave. We buried him at 12 noon today in a cemetery on a hill near Fort Pearson, where five others have already been interred. I read the service myself, in the absence of a clergyman. We had a coffin made for him, but, of course, it is only of wood, as there is no town where one could obtain a leaden one. His grave commands a view of the river Tugela and Fort Tenedos, which he laid out and built when we were here in the beginning of January. *I intend to have it surrounded with a railing, and to put up a wooden cross with the words:*

#### SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

CAPTAIN W. R. C. WYNNE, R.E., C.R.E. AT EKOWE,

DIED AT FORT PEARSON, ON THE 9<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 1879, AGED 36.

Should Mrs. Wynne wish for a more permanent monument I will, if I am spared, be only too glad to do anything to further her wishes, but considering how uncertain our movements are, and the length of time any communication takes, it might be better to write to Major Nixon, R.E., at the Cape, as he could then make arrangements with the Officer, R.E., who would be in permanent charge at Natal.

He later wrote,

During the first part of Captain Wynne's illness, he lived in a covered waggon in the fort. When he grew worse he had a special sentry besides him to call his servant at night whenever he required him. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> March he was, by the doctor's advice, moved into a double tent, and I then detailed the Corporal to sleep at his side, and attend to him personally, leaving his servant for all outside work. On fine days he was moved out of the fort, on a stretcher, to a tent pitched on higher ground and in better air. He had plenty of good beef tea, arrowroot, brandy, and port wine, and Dr. Norbury, R.N., who attended him all through his illness most carefully, said that even if he had been at home, he could not have had better food excepting chicken broth and jelly. Owing to our long stay at Ekowe the supply of medicines ran short, but at the critical period in the fever I fortunately found a bottle of Warburgh's tincture, which Dr. Norbury administered with good effect. The entries in my diary about his state are as follows: -

March 12<sup>th</sup>-Wynne ill.

March 13<sup>th</sup>-Better.

March 18<sup>th</sup>-Still very ill.

March 21<sup>st</sup>-Very bad.

March 22<sup>nd</sup>-A shade better.

March 24<sup>th</sup>-Better.

March 26<sup>th</sup>-Has congestion of the lungs.

March 27<sup>th</sup>-Wynne better.

March 28<sup>th</sup>-Better.

March 31<sup>st</sup>- Better, but his lungs are affected, and the doctor is still anxious about him.

April 1<sup>st</sup> – Hardly so well on account of the congestion of the lungs.

April 7<sup>th</sup> – Doctors think Wynne very bad. He seemed to us to hold his ground on the journey, but I fear the jolting on the road has been too much for him.

Throughout his illness there have been constant queries about him from everyone, and Colonel Pearson, commanding the Column, has been most anxious. It is unnecessary for me to say that he was held in the highest esteem by everyone. His work at Ekowe will not soon be forgotten, and the enclosed extract from his diary will shew that the stand made there was mainly due to his advice. That stand has cost him his life humanly speaking, and he has died a soldier's death, as truly as any man ever did. I have been under fire with him twice, and he was always cool and collected. He was only too devoted to his work, and on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, the morning after the attack he mentions in his diary, he had a walk of six miles and more in the hot sun, and I fear we must attribute his illness partly at least to this. Of course he had to bear the hardships of the Campaign, and short rations, and all combined, have proved too much for him. I did my best to make him comfortable, and if I have failed, you will, I am sure, understand that it has not been from want of will. At Ekowe we buried four Officers and twenty-two men. As regards matters of business, I have secured all his effects here; the usual Board of Officers will be assembled to make an inventory. I know that he left some baggage at the Cape; I will write to Major Nixon, R.E., about this. Most of his effects here will in the ordinary course of things be sold, but of course his sword, watch, trinkets, and any other articles that are likely to be valued by his friends will be carefully packed and forwarded to you.

Please offer my deepest sympathy to Mrs. Wynne. I heard at Ekowe on the day of our relief, of the death of my only brother whilst travelling in Jamaica in December last, and can therefore almost realize how much the sorrow is increased by absence".

"I remain, yours faithfully,  
"D.C. Courtney."

One of Wynne's men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Company RE, Corporal Garner, wrote to his own wife,

It was a sad sight to see our men standing over his grave with tears in their eyes. Capt. Courtney was the only officer present, the others being up country, but he was so deeply cut up he could hardly read the burial service.

Colonel Pearson, recovering from typhoid, wrote from the Officers' Hospital at Durban on June 19<sup>th</sup>,

Dear Mrs. Wynne – Before I say anything else, let me assure you how truly I feel for you in your bereavement. The sudden, and I suppose quite unexpected news of your poor husband's death must have shocked you terribly. This has indeed been a widow-making war and it makes one's heart bleed to reflect what misery and sorrow it has spread through the land.

Dear Mrs. Wynne, your husband and I had been acquainted only a very short time, but in that time I learnt to esteem him very much for his sterling qualities, both as a man and a soldier, and I had hoped that we should never again have lost sight of each other. Before he got ill, I used often to go and chat with Wynne in his waggon. He lived in a tented waggon. We generally began on business matters, and then drifted off to other subjects. His Fort at Eshowe is apparently now quite an historical work, and he and his men did not leave a stone unturned to make the entrenchment perfect. For a long time after he really was too ill to work, Wynne would insist upon remaining at his duty, contrary to the advice of us all. At last, however, he had to give in, and in a very few days I was grieved to learn from the Surgeon that his health was in a most precarious state. We had him transferred from his waggon to a tent, and I used at first to go and sit with him, but latterly, whenever I went to the tent I generally found him in a doze. Of course the journey from Eshowe to Tugela did not tend to improve him, and only three days, I think, after our arrival he died. Poor fellow, he is buried in the cemetery we constructed near Fort Pearson, at the Lower Tugela. Again begging you to accept my most sincere sympathy,

Believe me, dear Mrs. Wynne, Yours sincerely, C.K. Pearson.

An announcement appeared in the *London Gazette* on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1880,

Captain Warren Richard Colvin Wynne, Royal Engineers, to be Major, in recognition of his distinguished services during the Zulu Campaign, 1878-79. Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1879. Since deceased.

At this point in time there was no allowance for posthumous decoration, but on the same day a letter was sent to Lucy from the War Office. It confirmed the majority for Warren Wynne, and went on to state that,

In consideration of the distinguished services rendered by him in the defence of Eshowe, the Secretary of State for War has been pleased to award you a special pension of £100 a year, in lieu of £65, of which you are now in receipt &c &c.

Wynne unknowingly achieved his promotion to Major one week before he died. His neatly tended grave can easily be found at the Euphorbia cemetery overlooking the remains of his fort, Fort Tenedos, and the Tugela river estuary. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Company served throughout the remainder of the Zulu War, with Captain Courtney in command.

### Acknowledgements.

Lloyd, Wilfred, Lt.RA, *The Siege of Eshowe* London, 1881.

Northbury, Henry, *The Naval Brigade in South Africa during 1877-78-79* London 1880

The Royal Engineers Museum, Chatham, Kent.

Whitehouse, Howard, *A widow-making War* London

MacKinnon and Shadbolt *The South African Campaign 1879* London 1890.

*The Zulu War of 1879* *The Illustrated London News*.

### References.

1. This regulation was to ensure that vessels did not sail before regiments had been given a chance to check that all officers, men, animals and stores were physically on board and in good order. In 1878 Sheerness was a thriving garrison town with full naval repair facilities.
2. 'Brevet' was a field promotion, likely to be formally confirmed at the end of the conflict whereas all other promotions in the British Army were strictly by seniority, so junior officers were frequently enthusiastic to face the dangers often associated with Brevet promotions.
3. Captain Arthur Wynne, 51<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Foot, (brother) was appointed as Superintendent of Army Signalling for the Kurram Valley Field Force. He served at the actions of Peiwar Kotal, the Mangior Pass and Matun. He was mentioned in despatches, and was breveted Major.
4. The Jowaki, or Jawaki Afridis, were a Pathan tribal group of the Northwest Frontier, and had been subject to a British 'punitive expedition' in 1878.
5. Captain Walter Parke Jones entered the Royal Engineers in 1864, received his Captaincy in 1877, and commanded the 5<sup>th</sup> Field Company throughout the Zulu War. He resigned his commission in November 1879, and died in Paris four years later.
6. Major Francis William Nixon, RE, had passed out of Woolwich two years before Warren Wynne. He commanded the engineers in the field in the 9<sup>th</sup> Frontier War – but he was left in Cape Town as commandant of the RE depot, in December 1878.
7. The Governor's Residence was at Wynberg – a small town noted for its vineyards.
8. The British Army allowed six soldiers' wives to each company.
9. Harry was Wynne's second son, and almost two years old at this time.
10. Durban was named after Sir Benjamin D'Urban, who had been a general under Wellington in the Peninsular War, and was later Governor of Cape Colony.