

Major Frederick Maurice Crum

Major Crum was born 12th October 1872, his father's name was William Crum and his mother's name was Jean Mary Campbell.

The first documentary evidence that we have of Major Crum is in the THE LONDON GAZETTE, FEBRUARY 7, 1893 where it indicated that "*The King's Royal Rifle Corps*, Gentleman Cadet Frederick Maurice Crum, from the Royal Military College, to be Second Lieutenant, on augmentation. Dated 8th February, 1893. Soon Crum was off to India to join the 1/60th Rifles as a subaltern at Rawal Pindi.

Strangely the London Gazette did not mention him again until 1900.

In December 1896 the 1st Battalion of the 60th Rifles sailed from Bombay for the Cape, which was three years before the second South African War of 1899 to 1902 was declared.

In May 1899 Crum moved to Natal and on the 25th September he was off once again, this time to Ladysmith where he arrived on the second of October, a most unpopular and unpleasant posting. Fortunately the Battalion was marched to Dundee on the 5th October and arrived on the seventh October 1899.

On the 12th October 1899, war was declared.

Soon the young Crum was in the thick of the action and was unfortunate to receive a wound to his right shoulder at the battle of Talana Hill, which would blight him until 1919. Being wounded and unable to fend for himself he was taken prisoner and at times his survival was looking rather doubtful. Fortunately he eventually ended up in a hospital in Ladysmith where he received treatment which saved his life.

The LONDON GAZETTE, MARCH 2, 1900 reported Gentleman Cadet Austin Henry Hull), from the Royal Military College, to be Second Lieutenant, in succession to Lieutenant F. M. Crum, a prisoner of war. Dated 3rd March, 1900.

He remained a prisoner until June 1900 when he and a further 150 or so officers and 3000 troops were released at Ladysmith. Many were in poor condition due to wounds and poor health, but were soon back to fighting fitness.

The LONDON GAZETTE, APRIL 2, 1901 reported that Lieutenant Frederick M. Crum to be Captain, in succession to Major O. S. W. Nugent, D.S.O., appointed to the Staff. Dated 1st January, 1901.

By 1901 Captain Crum had lost all of his molars and his manservant took this into consideration whilst preparing his meals in the field.

January 1902 was Crum's last night patrol of the war as after this he was given leave to return home on medical grounds. His journey started in an ambulance train and then a long sail home. Six months later he was fully recuperated and returned to the Cape, being posted to De Aar.

In December 1902 the Battalion was moved to Malta. In 1903 he gave his first lecture, the topic was "Mounted Infantry". Shortly after this he received leave of 3 months and he returned home to Stirling.

In December 1903 Crum transferred to the 2nd Battalion of the 60th Rifles as a Brevet-Major and in October 1904 he qualified in Hindustani. During his service career he was often bothered by his wound which he received in 1900 and in 1904 a surgeon removed an inch of bone and some splinters from his right arm.

During his time in South Africa, Major Crum had written a book called "With the mounted infantry in South Africa; being side-lights on the Boer campaign 1899-1902" and this was published in 1903. A digital copy of this book can be found at:

<https://archive.org/details/withmountedinfa01crumgoog>

In January 1905 he arrived home on leave, boarding his ship in Bombay. From January to October 1905 he was on leave due to the wound to his right arm. By November 1905 Crum was back in India and was posted to Bureilly.

April to October 1906 was to prove very important for Crum and the Boy Scout movement as he was posted to Scout Training at Rhanikhet where he excelled.

In November 1906 he received leave to return home to cram for staff college exams. On returning home he underwent intensive learning to bring himself up to the level of passing the Staff College entry exams and on the 3rd March 1907 he sailed from Marseille to Aden to sit the exam. Possibly fortuitously for the Boy Scout movement, he failed the exams and therefore did not attend Staff College and further promotion did not follow.

In June 1907 he returned to India and was posted to Jubbulpore and then in October 1907 he was put in charge of the Battalion for 3 weeks until the new Commanding Officer arrived.

The LONDON GAZETTE, APRIL 21, 1908 reported that "*The King's. Royal Rifle Corps, Captain and Brevet Major Frederick M. Crum is seconded for service on the Staff. Dated 28th February 1908.*"

In February 1908 he was posted to the Mounted Infantry School at Fategarh where he excelled. Sadly luck was not on his side and in May 1908 he fell from his horse whilst pig sticking and was given 1 weeks leave to the hills to recover.

It was at this time that the LONDON GAZETTE, MAY 26, 1908 reported, "*To be Assistant Commandant of a Mounted Infantry School. Brevet Major F. M. Crum, 2nd Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps. Dated 28th February, 1908.*"

On 6th November 1908, Crum leaves the Mounted Infantry School to take over the Mounted School at Poona, there was also talks of him being promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He arrived at Poona and was given 6 months leave of absence due to being unwell and overworked.

The LONDON GAZETTE, DECEMBER 18, 1908 reported "*The King's Royal Rifle Corps, Captain George F. B. Hankey is seconded for service as an Adjutant of Territorial Infantry. Dated 1st December, 1908. Brevet Major Frederick M. Crum, from Supernumerary Captain, to be Captain, vice*"

It would take Crum 3 years to become fully recovered from his wound and condition.

During his recuperation period it looks as if there was hope that Captain Crum would return to active service as the "LONDON GAZETTE, JANUARY 26, 1909. *The King's Royal Rifle Corps*, Captain and Brevet Major Frederick M. Crum is seconded for service on the Staff. Dated 1st December, 1908."

LONDON GAZETTE, FEBRUARY 5, 1909 reported "ARMY STAFF. *To be Assistant Commandant of a Mounted Infantry School.* Brevet Major F. M. Crum, King's Royal Rifle Corps. Dated 6th November, 1908.

THE LONDON GAZETTE, MARCH 1, 1910. *The King's Royal Rifle Corps*, Brevet Major Frederick M. Crum, from Supernumerary Captain, is restored to the establishment, vice Captain R. Johnstone, retired. Dated 19th February, 1910.

THE LONDON GAZETTE, MARCH 4, 1910. *The King's Royal Rifle Corps*, Major Lord Robert W. O. Manners, D.S.O., retires on retired pay. Dated 5th March, 1910. Captain and Brevet Major Frederick M. Crum to be Major, vice Lord R. W. O. Manners, D.S.O. Dated 5th March, 1910.

Clearly none of the above took place as he did not take up any of the posts due to his ill health.

3rd November 1910 would prove to be a very important date as this is when Captain Crum met Baden-Powell for the first time and he was very impressed by him and his views on helping the young people.

It was on the 12th October 1911 at Saint Andrews and on his 39th Birthday that Captain Crum decided to leave the army and dedicate his time to the Boy Scout movement. He sent his letter of resignation to the War Office on the 16th October 1911, resigning his commission.

THE LONDON. GAZETTE, .27 OCTOBER, 1911. Major Frederick M. Crum, Half-pay List, retires on retired pay. Dated 28th October, 1911.

From this point on Major Crum (retired) concentrated on building up the Boy Scout movement in Scotland.

For his service during the the 2nd Boer War, Major Crum received the South African medal with South Africa 1901 and 1902 clasps.

28th July 1914 was the date when the First World War was declared a war and Major Crum must have acted fairly quickly to re-enlist as by the 10th August 1914 he was in Hamilton Barracks, Lanarkshire helping to organise the new influx of recruits. This was a most chaotic period with 1600 new recruits in a barracks built for 600. There were few officers and few NCOs and the early bureaucracy was a nightmare. It was during this period that Major Crum used Boy Scouts to act as guides and take recruits to the various areas rather than have them milling about. This brought order to some of the proceedings. Initially there was no-one available to train the new recruits. Fortunately order began to be instilled and training and equipment became a reality.

On 12 October 1915, Major Crum joined the 8th Kings Royal Rifles and was one of Kitchener's first 100 000.

On 19th May 1915 the Battalion left Aldershot for France and by 31st May 1915 they were in the trenches near Kemmel. During most of the 2nd Battle of Ypres the Battalion was mainly in reserve.

Between the 29/30 July, Major Crum and his men had spent a week of hard work in the trenches at Hooge when they were relieved by the 7th Battalion.

May 1916 saw Major Crum on the move once again, this time he was posted to Acq to start a Brigade School of Sniping. It was whilst here that he wrote "Scouts and Snipers in the trenches".

19 June 1916 the Sniping School was closed as it had taught the art to enough officers and men.

July 1916 General Skinner invited Major Crum to join his staff and run the Snipers and Intelligence of the Brigade. The Brigade Head Quarters were in Arras.

20 July 1916, Major Crum notes in his diary that he only goes to the trenches, "one day on and one day off, for I find that I have not the strength to do more".

23 July 1916, Major Crum again notes in his diary "I am doing less because less able". On the line of march to the Somme, he had to fall out and return home and it took him 4 months to recover his health.

10 October 1916 to 30 April 1917 Major Crum was attached to Aldershot Senior Officers School initially as an instructor, but as it was too strenuous, he limited his instruction to his own subject and he also took over the existing Sniping School. Whilst at the Sniping School he suggests to higher authority that co-ordination of training in France and the UK is lacking and that often officers in the trenches do not know how to use the trained scouts or snipers.

17th May to 10 November 1917, Major Crum took over the co-ordination of scouting and sniper training throughout the army.

November to December 1917 Major Crum began to consider resigning his commission from the army and to return to civvy street to help fill the gaps in the Boy Scout movement. With the unexpected release of Germans from the Russian Front, these notions were rejected by him.

At some point in 1917, Major Crum was mentioned in despatches, no details of the reason for this honour can be found at present.

February to April 1918, Major Crum notes in his diary that he had not been able to take up work for some months and after many Medical Boards he was posted to Sheerness where he took up a position with the 5th Kings Royal Rifles, Depot Battalion where he developed and delivered a series of 14 day course on scouting.

23 March 1918 was the date that the Germans broke through at St Quentin and every able bodied man was sent to France at once, and also many who were not fit.

1 April 1918 and Major Crum was offered the task of lecturing on Sniping and Scouting to the various Officer Cadet Battalions around the country. During his tours round the country, Major Crum often visited Boy Scout Troops.

April to October 1918, Major Crum gave numerous lectures such as to 1500 Gaurdsmen in London's Victoria Palace of Varieties and to 1500 Guards at their Depot at Caterham. In Aberdeen he spoke to 1200 Gordon Highlanders and during this period he spoke to some 25 000 men on "Scouting and Sniping", most of them, the leaders of men.

October 1918 and good news was pouring in from every front, but at a horrible cost in lives. In officers alone it was not uncommon top read of 450 casualties in one day.

1 November 1918 and Major Crum took leave of the army and returned to Scouting in Scotland. He was sent to Miss Absolom's Nursing Home in Edinburgh to recuperate and it was whilst there that he heard from his bed of the armistance.

6 February 1919 was a great day for Major Crum as this was the day that Sir Harold Stiles operated on his right arm which had been causing him problems since October 1909 and by May 1919 he was fully recovered.

28th June 1919 signing of Peace.

6 July 1919 the Great Thanksgiving Day.

19 July 1919 Victory Day.

July 1919 Major Crum returned to Scouting in Scotland.

Right through the war Major Crum often wrote to Scout Troops and individual Scouts, giving them news and encouragement.

The 1933 to 1945 Valuation Rolls show that Major Crum was the tenant of Gogar house and from 1945 to 1948 he was the owner occupier of Gogar House where he built a gymnasium for Scouts to use.

Frederick Maurice Crum of Kenmuir, Rosneath, Dumbartonshire died at Rosneath on 8 October 1955.

The diaries of Major Crum can be viewed in the Archives at Glasgow's Mitchell Library.