



Kent Territorial Force Royal Engineer Units

The Kent Fortress Royal Engineers were Territorial Force units formed in 1908 from elements of the Royal Engineers (Kent Volunteers)

Headquarters Kent Fortress Royal Engineers

Drill Hall, Chatham, Kent

Honorary Colonel - Colonel Sir David Solomons (From Tonbridge)



Submarine Mining School

Gillingham, Kent

Lieutenant Colonel H.F Stephens M.Inst.CE (Commanding Officer)

Captain F.V Thompson (Adjutant)

Major W.F Langridge

Captain W.M Butler

Captain A Cobb

Lt Bartram R.S

Lt C.H Igglesden

Lt A.F.G Ruston

2Lt J.S.P Higginson

2Lt L.P Graves

2Lt C.K Cayley

2Lt F.R Whitten

2Lt Stranderson V

Captain T.J Clark (Quartermaster)

Chaplain 4th Class (Captain) Reverend H.C Cannon



No 1 Works Company
Kent Fortress Royal Engineers

Tonbridge, Kent

Captain A.F.G Rushton

Captain J.S.F Higginson

Captain H.W Tyler A.M.I.E.E

Lieutenant R.A Cooksey

Second Lieutenant P.R.J Morgan

Second Lieutenant M.H Canning

Second Lieutenant H.F Edwards

Second Lieutenant G.A Peppercorn

Second Lieutenant E Darby

Second Lieutenant P Richardson

Second Lieutenant H Criswell



No 2 Works Company
Kent Fortress Royal Engineers

Drill Hall, Ashford, Kent

Captain J.W Punter

Captain C.H Igglesden (Possibly a forgotten man - Harry Igglesden)

Lieutenant P.D Igglesden

Lieutenant V Harbord

Lieutenant F.D Tunnicliffe

Second Lieutenant D.H Slack

Second Lieutenant L.C Hall

Second Lieutenant A.C Dunlap



**No 3 Works Company
Kent Fortress Royal Engineers**

Southborough, Kent

Captain D.R.H.P Salomons

Captain A.M Wellington

Lieutenant F.C Goodwin

Lieutenant G.S Steed

Second Lieutenant E.G.P Storie

Second Lieutenant J.C.A Roseveare

Second Lieutenant E.W Young



**No 6 Works Company
Kent Fortress Royal Engineers**

Southborough

Captain F.R Whitten

Lieutenant R Inwood

Second Lieutenant E.E Barlow

Second Lieutenant F.J Wood

Second Lieutenant C.E Maddock

Second Lieutenant F.E Bowater

Second Lieutenant A.F Tabraham

Second Lieutenant B.M Cloutman

Second Lieutenant L.W Barratt

Second Lieutenant W.C Matthews



**No 7 Works Company
Kent Fortress Royal Engineers
Southborough**

Second Lieutenant A.J Kennedy

Second Lieutenant R.H Steed

Second Lieutenant P Buckley

Second Lieutenant G.S Rigden

Second Lieutenant J.E Henshaw

Second Lieutenant R.W.O Lucas

Second Lieutenant A Coveney

Second Lieutenant W.J Turner

Second Lieutenant G.W Toogood

Second Lieutenant B.V Thompson



**No 4 Electric Light Company
Kent Fortress Royal Engineers
Submarine Mining School, Gillingham, Kent**

Captain H.W Devey A.M.I.E.E

Captain E Lefeaux A.M.I.E.E

Captain J.P Bowen A.M.I.E.E

Captain C.B Grace A.M.I.E.E

Captain T.C Manwaring

Lieutenant A.P Isard

Lieutenant L.R.W.A Shuter

Lieutenant R Sawers

Second Lieutenant S.L Richards

Second Lieutenant W Dean

Second Lieutenant D Gillespie

Second Lieutenant A Atkinson



**No 5 Electric Light Company
Kent Fortress Royal Engineers**

Gravesend, Kent

Lieutenant G.R.D Prince

Second Lieutenant C.S Durst

Second Lieutenant H.T.A Twigg



Cinque Ports Fortress Royal Engineers

16 Bench Street, Dover, Kent

No 1 (Dover) Electric Light Company

Not much is known about this unit.



Royal Engineer Cadet Battalions

Southborough

Broomhill

Tunbridge Wells



WARTIME ORDER OF BATTLE

Upon the outbreak of war all 1st Line Territorial Force Kent Fortress Companies were formed into a larger unit ready for field deployment overseas (495th). Second and Third Line Territorial volunteers continued to parade weekly at their normal drill halls but as the war progressed and the casualties mounted, more and more volunteers were formed into these new field deployable units.



495th (1/1st Kent Fortress) Field Company

June 1915 - Left UK for Gallipoli, Turkey

October 1915 - Attached 2nd Mounted Division (Gallipoli)

July 1916 - Attached 54th Division

April 1917 - Attached 75th Division

May 1918 - Rejoined 54th Division

As the war progressed the KFRE was enlarged and a further 2nd Line Territorial Force Royal Engineers Field Company was formed drawing it's personnel from 2nd Line Territorial Force Kent Fortress Engineer units (496th) -



496th (1/2nd Kent Fortress) Field Company

24th March - 25 May 1917 - Attached 74th (Yeomanry) Division

July 1917 - Attached 75th Division

A further 3rd Line Territorial Force Royal Engineers Field Company was formed which drew it's personnel almost exclusively from the Tonbridge area of Kent (497th)



497th (1/3rd Kent Fortress) Field Company

Officer Commanding - Captain Solomons (son of the Hon Colonel)

February 1916 - 52nd (Lowland) Division

February 1916 - 29th Division (Western Front)

See HMS Hythe Disaster below

The HMS Hythe Disaster

On 13 October 1915 the 497th (Kent Fortress) Field Company (formerly known as the 1/3rd Kent Fortress Royal Engineers) who were based at Tonbridge and Southborough left their Depot at Gillingham and proceeded to Devonport where they boarded the troopship "Scotian" bound for the Gallipoli Peninsula Turkey via Mudros. Upon arriving at Mudros on 27th October 1915 the whole company was transferred to the Auxillery Minesweeper HMS "Hythe". The plan was for the unit to be landed at Suvla Bay the following morning. In the early hours of the morning of 28th October 1915 HMS "Hythe" was involved in an accidental collision with another much larger British Troopship the "Sarnia". Almost immediately it became apparent that HMS Hythe was seriously holed below the waterline. The much larger "Sarnia" was hardly damaged probably owing to it's greater size and better construction. The "Hythe" sank within a few minutes of the collision taking most of it's crew and almost all the soldiers to a watery grave! There were very few survivors because British ships in the vicinity were not able to carry out proper search operations in pitch darkness. Captain D.R Salomons (son of Sir David Salomons of Broomhill) and 128 Men lost their lives in the most appalling circumstances and hardly any men's bodies were recovered from the cold sea. The people of Tonbridge took the news of this disaster very badly which is not entirely surprising given the fact that most of the men were drawn from Tonbridge and it's surrounding villages.

The Following Territorial Force RE Companies were raised in the Home Counties including Kent –



490th (1st Home Counties) Field Company
(8th Division)



491st (2nd Home Counties) Field Company
(5th Division)

In 1916 Sappers from this Kent RE unit stormed and took Hill 60 alongside soldiers from the 1st Battalion, Royal West Kent's (13th Brigade, 5th Division)



Kent Field Companies, Royal Engineers

New Army (Kitchener's Army)

These Royal Engineer New Army units were raised in Kent and comprised of men drafted for Kitchener's New Army. They were NOT Territorial Force units.



546th (1/6th Kent Fortress) Field Company

(4th Army Troops 1918)

1914 to March 1915 - Unbrigaded Field Company

March 1915 to November 1916 - Attached 73rd Division

4 June 1919 - Disbanded



547th (1/7th Kent Fortress) Field Company

(3rd Army Troops 1918)

1914 to November 1916 - Unbrigaded Field Company

November 1916 to March 1918 - Attached 73rd Division

4 June 1919 - Disbanded



Home Counties Field Company, Royal Engineers

Other New Army Field Companies drawn from the Home Counties (including but not exclusively Kent)



648th (Home Counties) Field Company R.E

(4th Army Troops 1918)

1914 to 1917 - Unbrigaded Field Company

1917 to 1917 - Attached 9th (Provisional) Field Company 73rd Division

