

Salathiel Braund—Boer War Soldier

Branch 5

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On Monday 10 June 1901, huge numbers of people crowded the streets of Bideford to welcome home local soldiers who had been involved in the Boer War in South Africa.

This is a report from the *North Devon Journal*, 13 June 1901:

*"The reception on Monday evening of the returning Bideford Volunteers who came forward so readily in January, 1901 (sic), to fight for their country was very enthusiastic. The men - Captain W. B. **Dart**, Bideford; Private J. **Fulford**, 21, Honestone-street, Bideford; Private J. **Shaxon**, Cross-street, Northam, Bideford; Private S. **Braund**, 3, Cross-street, Northam, Bideford; Private W. H. **Turner**, 3, Prospect-place, Instow, Bideford; the following had previously returned home on sick furlough, Private S. **Shortridge**, Barnstaple-road, Bideford; Private E. **Lee**, 60, Meddon-street, Bideford; and Private W. **Tucker**, East-the-Water, Bideford....."*

*Excellent arrangements had been made for the reception by the following Committee:- The Mayor (Mr. T. **Goman**), officers of the Volunteers and Church Lads' Brigade, Aldermen J. W. **Narraway** and R. **Dymond**, Messrs. F. A. **Searle**, J.M. **Metherell**, W. D. **Wickham**, W. B. **Seldon** (Town Clerk), and W. B. **Johns** (Hon. Secretary). By an early train an escort under Lieutenant **Boord** left Bideford for Exeter to meet the active service men, who arrived at Bideford by the 7.51 p.m. Train, and long before that time the Quay, Long Bridge, and station were thronged with people. Also assembled at the station were 100 members of the E. and H. Companies 4th V.B.D.R., with the Band, under Bandmaster **Ellis**, commanded by Captain and Acting Adjutant **Martin**, Captain **Paton**, Major **Gorton**, and Sergeant-Instructor **Black**. Immediately the train steamed into the Station, almost deafening shouts of welcome were given by the crowd, and the Band struck up "See the conquering hero comes". The shouts became louder as the warriors proceeded down the steps, and their bronzed faces called to one's mind the hardship which they had endured on the veldt. After having discharged greetings with comrades,*

*friends and relatives, the men of the hour, with their escort on either side, marched into the midst of the E. and H. Companies, and a procession was formed headed by the Band playing “Soldiers of the King” and other patriotic tunes. They proceeded to the Jubilee lamp on the Broad Quay, followed by hundreds of people, and here they were received amid renewed cheers by the Mayor and Corporation, surrounded by the Church Lads’ Brigade, under Command of Lieutenant De **Spailer**. After “God save the King” had been played by the Band, the Town Clerk, on behalf of the borough, the following address written on parchment, and bearing the borough seal, to Captain **Dart** and his men: -*

*“To Captain **Dart**, Privates **Fulford, Braund, Lee, Shortridge, Shaxon, Turner, and Tucker**, members of the Volunteer Active Service Company. On behalf of the ancient borough of Bideford it affords me great pleasure to welcome you on your return from active service in South Africa. It was with pardonable pride that, in common with others whom I have the honour to represent, I witnessed the outbursts of patriotism which led you to volunteer for the arduous and dangerous duties of the War in South Africa. We have from day to day followed the developments of the campaign in which you were engaged, and have rejoiced to know that you have maintained the best traditions of valour for which the men of Devon have ever justly been famed. We trust that on your return to civic life you will continue to be the subject of the same good fortune which hitherto has smiled upon you.”*

*The Mayor, in handing the address to Captain **Dart**, on behalf of the active service men, said he hoped they would hang it in their Drill Hall. It gave him great pleasure to be present to welcome them back from the War safe and sound. (Loud cheers). Captain **Dart**, in acknowledging, said he was not prepared to make a big speech, but they had done their little best. They had not done very badly, though he knew they had had rotten times, but it was not their faults. (Cheers.) He heartily thanked all for the cordial reception given them. (Continued cheers).*

“God save the King” was again played, and the procession re-formed, and proceeded to the Drill Hall by way of Bridgeland-street, Mill-street, Allhalland-street and New-street.

*The scene was of the utmost enthusiasm, and handkerchiefs were waved from the windows of houses as the men passed, whilst bunting was displayed almost everywhere. The active service contingent, with the two Yeomen who have been invalided home (Troopers **King** and **Prouse**), will be entertained to dinner by the Mayor at the Music Hall to-morrow evening, in fulfilment of his promise when the Volunteers left. A medal, with the borough coat of arms on one side and a suitable inscription on the other, will then, on behalf of the borough, be presented to the Volunteers who have taken part in the War.”*

The same edition of the *North Devon Journal* also reported that Bideford Town Council decided to erect a plaque commemorating all the townsmen who fought in the Boer War.

There were two Anglo-Boer wars fought between the United Kingdom and the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State, in what is now South Africa. The second war broke out on 11th October 1899 and ended on 31st May 1901.

Private S. **Braund**, mentioned in the newspaper article above, was Salathiel, born in Northam, Devon, in 1879, the son of Thomas **Braund** and Charlotte née **Hutchings** (branch 5) and a nephew to my great grandmother Mary Snell **Braund**. Salathiel came from a family of blacksmiths. He grew up in Northam, listed at Back Lane in the 1881 Census and at Cross Street in 1891. He has not been found in the 1901 Census, which would have been taken when he was serving with the Bideford Volunteers.

Military records online show Salathiel was in the Volunteer Company, Devonshire Regiment, Regt. No. 5575. He was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal (QSA) with South Africa 1901 clasp. The QSA was issued to all British and colonial soldiers. I found a website <<www.angloboerwar.com>> and I posted some messages about Salathiel on the forum there. I received some very interesting and useful replies including more newspaper articles. I would recommend this website to anyone researching the Boer War. Two researchers replied to my messages and provided more information:-

Salathiel **Braund**, a twenty year old blacksmith from Bideford and serving member of the 4th Volunteer Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment, joined the Army at Exeter upon the 19th of January 1900, having attested at Bideford on the 10th of that same month. He served in South Africa from the 16th of February until the 8th of June 1901 before his discharge later that month. This shows that the *North Devon Journal* article above gave the year of enlistment incorrectly, as 1901, when it was actually 1900, meaning Salathiel served for about 18 months.

The *Western Times* (Friday 16/2/1900) printed the names of all the men who were in the Volunteer Battalion, confirming that Private **Braund**, of Northam, was listed in D Company of the 4th Volunteer Battalion Devonshire Regiment. The Company was commanded by Captain **Speke** from South Molton. The Volunteers had been training at Topsham Barracks, and on Tuesday morning, 13th February 1900, turned out for their final parade at the Barrack drill ground. After breakfast on Wednesday morning, the Volunteers marched to Queen Street railway station, Exeter, where a crowd of over 2000 saw them off, the train departing at 6.30 a.m., and arriving at Southampton Docks at 9.30 a.m. The men then boarded the Union mail boat, the *Greek*, which left Southampton Docks shortly after 2 p.m. on the Wednesday. On Wednesday morning, 21st February, the *Greek* arrived at Teneriffe, and left for Cape Town at 3 p.m. the same day, so the Volunteers would not have been allowed to leave the ship, but mail home would have been sent.

From the *Western Times*, Saturday 10th March, 1900: - "*One of the Devon Volunteer contingent who left Exeter on the 14th of last month and sailed in the 'Greek', writing from Teneriffe says: - "Father Neptune made things lively for us in the Bay of Biscay. On the morning after we had such an enthusiastic and cheering demonstration at Exeter we turned out at six o'clock on board the 'Greek'. We had had a rough night, and nearly everybody was ill. So strong was the wind that the vessel was only making headway at the rate of five knots an hour. Nearly all were wet through owing to the spray. Those of us who can eat are doing first-class. The weather continued rough again on the Friday, the 16th, and few were able to turn out for the reveille, which sounds at six o'clock. It was exceptionally bad in the Bay. On Saturday, the 17th, there was an even worse*

experience. The sea ran mountains high, and the crockery ware was smashed up. Some feel the want of a stimulant to buck their spirits up [probably rum], but none is allowed until Sunday. Owing to the rough weather none of us have been able to wash or shave, and some look pretty queer. A photographer would make a fortune if the camera could stand the strain. The weather improved on Sunday, and we are able to have a wash and shave, and a brush and crop. Our first drill was on Monday, the 19th when we paraded in the forenoon on quarter deck, and did some marching to enable us to get our sea legs. After we leave here we shall do some rifle practice; but we are anxious to get to Cape Town, and shall be glad when we get there.”

The *York Herald* (12 March 1900) reported that the Greek “with 21 officers and 793 rank and file of volunteers, with two guns” was due to arrive at Cape Town. The Devons had been fighting in Natal and in early 1900 were involved in the relief of Ladysmith. The Devon Heritage website <<www.devonheritage.org>> says: - “Subsequently, the Devons took part in **Buller’s** operations at Laing’s Nek and Belfast, and distinguished themselves by the capture of the Mauchberg, a formidable ridge near Lydenburg. Some 300 of them, under Colonel **Bullock**, gallantly defended themselves at Honing Spruit for seven hours against a furious attack by **De Wet** with 700 riflemen and 3 guns. Presumably Salathiel would have been involved in these subsequent operations, serving until the end of the 2nd Boer War, which ended on 31 May 1901.

These next reports mention the Devon Volunteers during their time in South Africa: - “The Hon. Secretary reported that, in reply to an application from Captain **Speke**, in South Africa, he had sent out three Berkfield filters for the use of his Company; also that 20 additional Volunteers were now assembled at the Higher Barracks as a draft for the Volunteer Company of the Devonshire Regiment now in South Africa. Communications were received relative to the sending out of a supply of warm underclothing for the Yeomanry and Volunteers, and it was eventually decided to send reply cablegrams to Captain **Bolitho**, in command of the 27th Company Imperial Yeomanry, and Captain **Speke**, commanding the Rifle Volunteers, asking them what the men needed.”

A mix of two articles in *The Western Times* and *Trewman’s Exeter Flying Post*, both on

Saturday 28th April 1900: *"In reply to a cablegram from the Devon Yeomanry and Volunteer Equipment Committee, Captain **Speke**, in a message from Sunday River Camp, Natal, states that pants, vests, and handkerchiefs will be most useful articles to the men. Mr. J. **Gould**, the hon. secretary, has accordingly made arrangements for sending out, by the detachment leaving the Higher Barracks to-day to join Captain **Speke**'s company, 140 of each of these articles.*

Trewman's Exeter Flying Post, Saturday 5th May 1900

*"Captain **Speke**, who is in command in South Africa of the Devon Volunteer contingent, in a letter dated from Elandslaagte, Natal, giving his experiences at the front. He says: - "Well, here we are right at the front, with very little fighting to do. It all seems to have gone over the other side of the country. However, last week we had a bit of an excitement; the Boers began by bobbing a shell into our camp, and my tent now has plenty of ventilation as they simply riddled it, but luckily I was not at home. They sent us a few more, and then we went out and drove them off."*

The Western Times, Wednesday 16th May 1900

There is also another extract from the *North Devon Journal*, dated 4 July 1901, after the Volunteers had come home. This is specifically about Salathiel's role:- *"Captain **Dart**, of Bideford Volunteers, has presented to Private S. **Braund**, of Northam, a silver watch and chain in recognition of his services as servant to the Captain during the War."*

After the Boer War, Salathiel moved to South Wales, like several Northam men of his generation in my family tree. In 1908 he married Mary Ann **Hughes** in Pontypridd Registration District. Mary Ann was born on 22 August 1889 in Pentre, Glamorgan. By then, it seems Salathiel may have been living in South Wales for several years, or at least, had connections there. The *Rhondda Leader* on 24 December 1904 reported the wedding of Miss Jane **Jacob** of Treorchy, a blacksmith's daughter, to David **Jones**, also a blacksmith, at Carmel Chapel, Treherbert. A list of wedding presents was included. Mr Salathiel **Braund** gave a silver cake stand.

In the 1911 Census, Salathiel **Braund** and his wife Mary Ann were living at 6 Griffiths Street, Pentre, Glamorgan, in the coal mining area of the Rhondda Valley. They had 2 children, Doris born c. 1909 and Thomas Ivor born c. February 1911. Salathiel was a General Shoeing Smith, listed as a Worker but with no employer name recorded.

The *Rhondda Leader* dated 7 February 1914 reported that Mr and Mrs Salathiel **Braund**, son-in-law and daughter, were amongst the mourners at the funeral of Mrs Mary Jane **Hughes** at the Siloam Chapel, Treorchy, on 26 January 1914. In the 1939 Register, Salathiel and Mary A. **Braund** were at 8 Ton Row, Ton Pentre, Glamorgan, in the same area of the Rhondda Valley. Salathiel's occupation was Colliery Fitter. This same address was listed for Salathiel at the time of his death, on 27 October 1968, aged 89. Mary Ann died on 17 September 1976.

Sources

<<www.ancestry.co.uk>>

<<www.AngloBoerWar.com>>

<<www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>>

<<www.devonheritage.org>>

North Devon Journal "Looking Back"

<<www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DEV/Newspapers/NDJ-LookingBack>>

The Keep Military Museum, Dorchester (includes Devonshire Regiment)

<<www.keepmilitarymuseum.org>>

National Library of Wales (newspapers) <<www.library.wales>>