

Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

Colonel Frederick WELLS, VD

(1837-1900)

Frederick Wells was born on 6 August 1837 at Hull, Yorkshire, England, son of William C. and Louisa A. Wells. He was a civil engineer by profession and was employed by the NSW Government on 28 March 1859.

He commenced his Australian military service in 1868 when he joined No 1 Battery, NSW Volunteer Artillery. He was commissioned second lieutenant with No 4 Battery, NSW Volunteer Artillery on 2 February 1869. He was promoted Lieutenant on 15 March 1869 and from 1 October to 31 December 1870 he was Acting Adjutant of the NSW Volunteer Artillery. While so employed he was promoted captain on 26 October 1870 and tasked with raising No 8 Battery (renumbered No 9 Battery in September 1871).

Wells was promoted to major on 16 November 1874 and relinquished command of No 9 Battery to join the staff of the Volunteer Artillery Brigade. On 5 November 1878, the Brigade was retitled the NSW Regiment of Volunteer Artillery, a partially paid force. He was promoted lieutenant colonel and appointed Commander of the NSW Regiment of Volunteer Artillery on 19 December 1881.

On 27 February 1885, he was appointed to command the infantry battalion in the Sudan Contingent an appointment he held until the Contingent was disbanded on 3 July. He was presented with a gold watch, compass and parchment address, before embarkation and was mentioned in dispatches and promoted brevet colonel on 21 December 1885 in recognition of his service in the Sudan.

From 1893 to 1895 he commanded the 2nd Garrison Division NSW Artillery comprising Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6 Companies. He retired on 1 April 1895 with the honorary rank of colonel.

Wells was acting Commissioner of Roads and Bridges in NSW when he retired in 1891. He died in 1900 and was buried in the Waverley Cemetery in Sydney. His medals and a photo of him were presented to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra by his family in 1964. His son, Private F. B. S. Wells, was a member of B Company, Infantry in the Sudan Contingent.

Source: R Grebert (Compiler), *NSW Sudan 1885; Some Biographical Details (Statistics)*, NSW Military History Society Inc., p.134.