

## The Battle of Faber Spruit, Cape Colony – 30<sup>th</sup> May 1900

*"The British empire at home and abroad : an account of its origin, progress and present position, with full descriptions of Canada, Australia, South Africa, India, and other colonies and dependencies"* (S. Edgar, 1902, p. 90) describes the action where both men lost their lives as follows:

*"On May 30th a smart action took place at Faber Spruit, twelve miles from Douglas. Sir Charles Warren, with 700 men, had reached that point on the previous day, and occupied a strong defensive position. Before dawn he was fiercely attacked by a body of 1000 rebels, who, during the moonless night, had crept up and surrounded the British camp beyond the picket-lines.*

*At the same time a strong party, with their boots off, passed between the pickets up a valley into the garden of a farm a short distance from the Yeomanry quarter-guard, while another party advanced, in the open, directly up to another farmhouse where Sir Charles and the Duke's Volunteers were quartered.*

*Just before daylight firing began on all sides upon various parts of the camps, covering a considerable area. A very heavy fire was poured in from the garden upon the space between the two farmhouses. That ground was, fortunately for the British, not occupied by troops, but communication between the infantry and the mounted men was thus cut off. The English Yeomanry horses had been kraaled, and, taking fright at the firing, the animals broke through the walls and stampeded, together with the English horses of the other corps.*

*Most of the Cape horses, and all the Canadian, remained quiet. For some time a very heavy fire was directed by the enemy upon the kraal where **Paget's Horse** and the Colt gun were stationed. The shield of the Colt, promptly brought into action, was smashed to pieces. As day broke, the position of the enemy in the garden was revealed, and Sir Charles Warren directed the whole of the fire of the reserves and of the Maxim gun upon that point.*

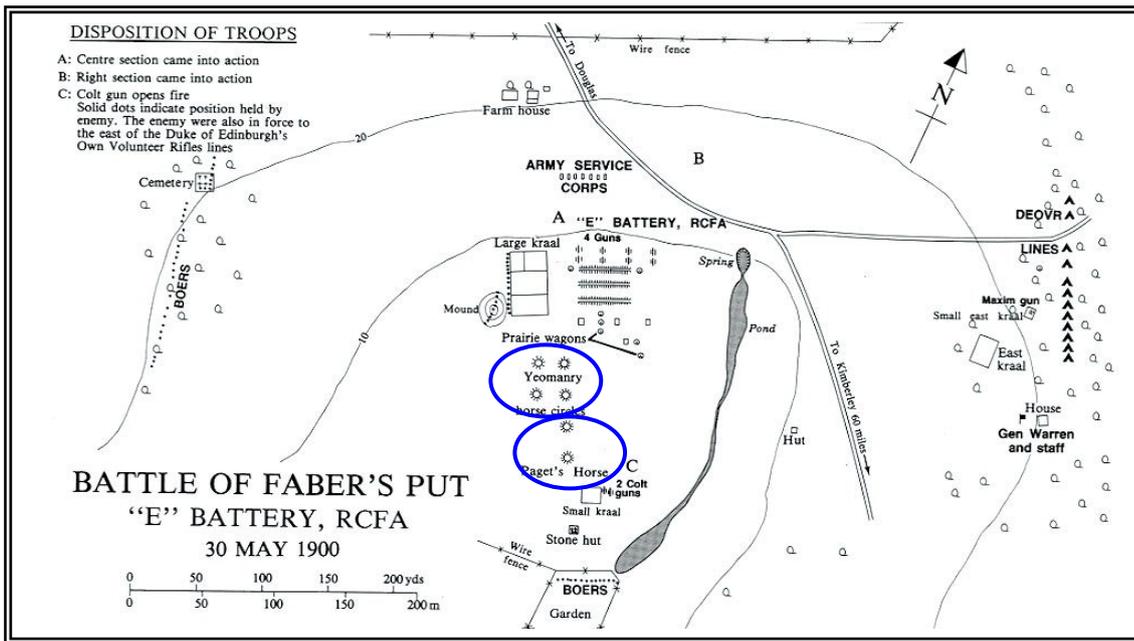
*The enemy fled thence, after heavy loss, as the Duke's Volunteers started to charge them. The Duke's Volunteers, **the Yeomanry under Colonel Hughes**, and Warren's Scouts, advancing to support the pickets, drove off the rebels surrounding the camp, the Yeomanry showing special coolness under a heavy fire as they charged out from their sheltered bivouacs to an adjacent hill, and losing heavily in their advance.*

*The action lasted nearly an hour, the Canadian guns firing shell into the retreating foe, and having a gunner killed. The British loss was 15 killed, including the gallant and popular Colonel Spence, of the Duke's Volunteers, and 30 wounded, including Major Kelly, A.D.C. Sir Charles Warren and his staff were greatly exposed in passing backwards and forwards, mounted."*

..... See Map of Battle of next page .....

# Buxton War Memorials

## Map of the Battle of Faber Spruit – 30<sup>th</sup> May 1900



[Source: Canadian War Museum]