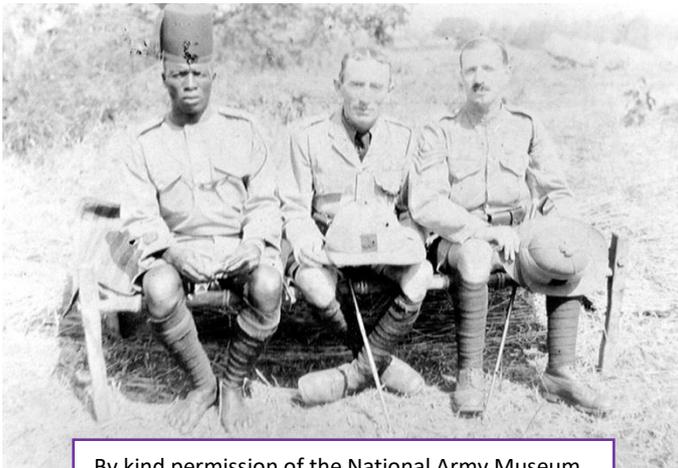


## Colpoys Brodie Clark

In WW1, the Commonwealth fought a difficult campaign in German East Africa against a small but highly skilled German force. **Colpoys Brodie Clark's regiment - the South African Mounted Rifles, were attached to the King's African Rifles, known as 'KAR'**. The African soldiers were called 'Askaris', while most of the officers were seconded from the British Army.



**The operational situation in October 1916 was complex.** In Nyasaland, two, breech-loading Royal Navy guns, pulled by oxen were a prime artillery asset (the only other guns being used at the time were old black powder muzzle-loading guns). Whilst on tactical manoeuvres, Captain Clark and the KAR moved towards more difficult terrain where the naval guns just could not go.



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**General Northey ordered Captain Clark to take his Section, and the precious guns, to the Ngominyi Garrison.** Ngominyi was a target for the enemy, not only for the two precious guns, but also for the wireless station and the British food supplies stored there to sustain the advancing soldiers. On 23rd October heavy fighting took place. The Germans occupied higher ground than Clark and his defenders, and they began firing into the British position. Inside the perimeter fence of Ngominyi, British casualties mounted. **Captain Clark used the**

**wireless and requested a doctor.** One declined to go, but amazingly a Surgeon Captain Storrs did succeed in getting there (and was later released by the Germans!).

**That night, Captain Clark gave all his men the choice to leave Ngominyi if they wished.** Gradually around 30 men left in the darkness, heading for other British Units. At dawn, the enemy charged with bayonets. **Captain Clark was mortally wounded whilst trying to defend the guns – he was last seen throwing his empty revolver at an approaching German. He had been bayoneted.**

**Captain Colpoys Brodie Clark was awarded a posthumous Mention in Despatches.**

The Mention in Despatches is not an award of a medal, but is a 'commendation of an act of gallantry or service'. Colpoys's name appears in the official report written by his superior Brigadier-General E, Northey, C.B., A.D.C., Commanding Nyasaland-Rhodesia Force.

**Colpoys is buried in Iringa Cemetery in Tanzania.**

Colpoys Brodie Clark was born in Isleworth. His father was a solicitor and his Australian step mother Mary, was an artist. It appears that Colpoys's birth mother died the same year (1875) that he was born. He had one older sister Grace and a younger brother Ernest. In 1891 the family lived in Syon Park House (demolished 1953) and not to be confused with Syon House. It is thought that the Brodie Clark's house was originally occupied by the 'Syon Park Academy' where the poet Shelley was educated for a couple of years. A Royal Mail depot now stands on the site. It is clear from the censuses that the Clarks were a wealthy family with servants, cooks and nursemaids.

