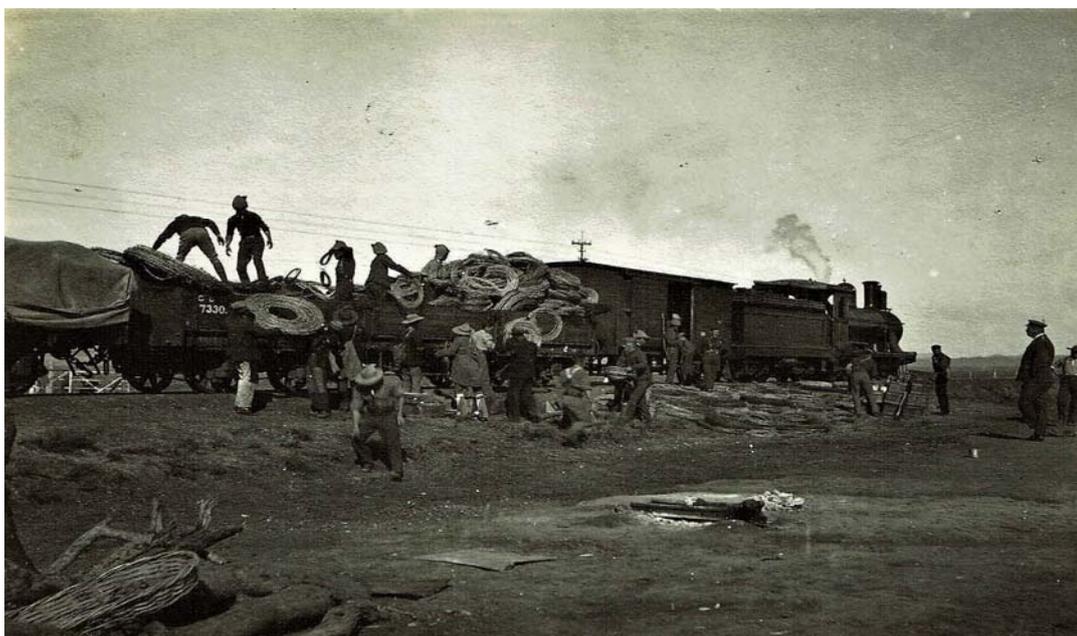




HISTORY OF SIGNALLING IN 100 OBJECTS TELEPHONE C MARK 1



The Morse code had already speeded up communications across the globe, but during the British colonial wars, especially in Southern Africa, voice telephones came into use. The picture above was taken of British soldiers in Southern Africa in approximately 1880. The soldiers can be seen unloading coils of barbed wire from the train, but behind the train and the image of the soldiers, you can see the telegraph wires that were soon to carry speech as well as messages sent in Morse code later during the Boer War.

Ericson from Sweden designed the telephone shown in the picture on the right. It became known in the British Army as the telephone C Mark 1. It came into wide spread use during the Boer War of 1899-1902. Use was made of existing lines for voice, but these communications were then extended to the field using this telephone as well as for extending the telegraph systems. The Royal Engineer Signals had field Squadrons, whose task was to lay line in the field and extend the existing facilities of voice and telegraph that had already been created in South Africa to support mining, railways and civilian communications. In 1884 C Troop and the Postal Telegraph Companies amalgamated to form the Telegraph Battalion RE. The RE signallers became skilled in building long telegraph lines. They were aided by the new "air line" system, which consisted of a single wire carried on lightweight poles. Instruments, such as the Wheatstone Automatic Telegraph managed to clear 6,000 words in 105 minutes. During an action at Bloemfontein, General French, who later commanded the British Expeditionary Force in 1914, controlled his artillery by telegraph. He attributed his victory in part to these good communications.

