

Frederick Noel Cope 131 Kedleston Road

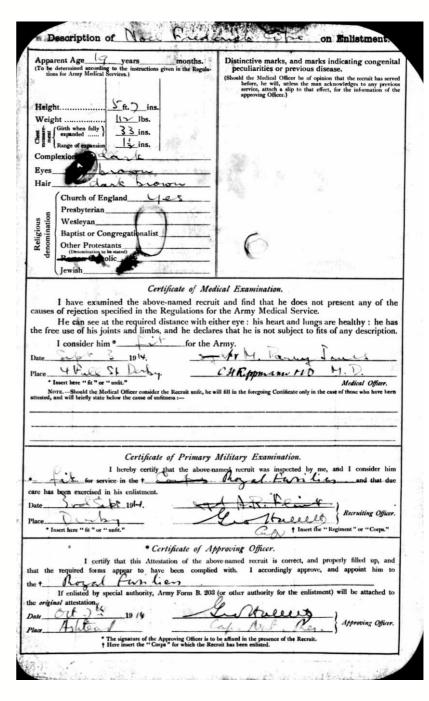
On 3 September 1914 Frederick volunteered for the British Army as "Noel Frederick Cope". On his attestation papers he gave his age as 19 years and 2 months but, born in 31 January 1896, Noel was just 18 years and 7 months when he signed up. This was not technically old enough to serve abroad in the army, but recruiting officers often turned a blind eye — no date of birth was required on signing up but only "apparent age" was recorded.

Noel signed up with the Royal Fusiliers and a statement on his papers suggested that he was enlisted with the 21st Battalion formed in September 1914 by the Public Schools and University Men's Force. His regiment landed in France in November 1915 and Noel served with then until he transferred to the 23rd Royal Fusiliers in November 1916. A year later he was transferred to the Labour Corps, which offered logistical support to fighting regiments. There was a further transfer to the Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry in August 1918, serving all the while in France. He was demobilised in February 1919.

Noel's early life had not been settled; his mother died when he was two, and by the time he was five he was living at a boarding school in Chesterfield along with three of his sisters – he was one of six children. He is recorded as living with his aunt, Mary Brentnall at 131 Kedleston Road in 1911 and

also after he left the army.

On 1 September 1921 Fred left England to work in British East Africa (now part of Kenya) as a farmer. He next appears in official records when he returned to Kenya on 3 September 1936 with his wife. Whether he had married in Britain or whilst living in Kenya is unknown.



Part of Fred's enlistment record from 1914. It gives his height as 5'7", his weight as 112 lb, and his complexion as dark, with dark hair and brown eyes. © The National Archives



