

## The Class of 1852

As discussed in the last issue of the EPG Gazette, numerous pensioner guards became involved in the establishment and stabilisation of the WA Police from the early 1850s onwards. Not that there was much system in making provision for law enforcement in the early years of convictism. A lot was done on an *ad hoc* basis and different types of police were recruited, sometimes for specialised tasks which could generate conflicts about levels of authority and jurisdictions. Mollie Bentley noted: *'it became increasingly evident that the colony's police would never be a truly effective force until it was unified under one head...'*(1).

The colonial press agitated for higher pay for constables so as to attract young and fit recruits, but there were serious financial problems and they were demonstrated in the course of 1852. The needs of the Convict Establishment, the Imperial Water Police and the local military were given precedence over those of the constabulary. For all that recruiting continued steadily and the Government Gazette printed lists of them a couple of times in late 1852, noting some removals and resignations in the process (2).

It seems likely that from 1851 onwards allowance was made for the recruitment of between 25 to 30 constables each year. At this point it is necessary to make a minor correction to our earlier article. During 1851 a total of 27 new constables were inducted, not 26. We omitted Samuel Miller, formerly a private in the Royal Artillery, who worked as a constable at Perth from 16/8/1851 until 14/1/1853. He was the eighth pensioner guard among the new men and his inclusion raises the proportion of them to about 30% of the total for his year(3).

The following men with a military background - mostly pensioner guards - became engaged in constabulary work during 1852:

**James Anderson**, former private in the Royal Horse Artillery, identifiable as a constable of that name who held office from 25/12/1852 to 30/6/1853 rather than with a former soldier (not referred to as an EPF man in Barker) who served in the Convict Establishment from 1851 to 1853 (4);

**James Austin**, former private in the Royal Marines, Constable at Perth from 27/3/1852;

**James Byrne**, former private in the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Dragoons, constable from 7/2/1852 to 10/1/1853(5);

**William Davis**, former private in either the 51<sup>st</sup> or 80<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, constable at Fremantle from 17/5/1852

**John Foley**, former sergeant in the 88<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, constable at Fremantle from 31/8/1852. He is reported to have left the colony without permission soon afterwards, but he is identifiable as an officer who was recruited or rejoined in 1853 and served in Perth or Fremantle for at least another year(6);

**John Jones**, former private in the Royal Marines, gaoler at Toodyay from 8/12/1852

and listed also as a constable, a title which probably went with that custodial position(7);

**Michael Manning**, former private in the Bengal Horse Artillery, constable at Toodyay in place of Shakespeare Hall from about April 1852, dismissed on 16/6/1852(8).

In addition to the above EPF members, the following army veterans entered the WA Police through other channels:

**Richard Buck**, formerly of the 96<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, constable in Perth from 6/8/1852 (9);

**John Carr**, former soldier and then an assistant warder in the Convict Establishment, constable in Perth from 2/4/1852 until his resignation on 4/5/1852(10);

**John Johnson**, formerly of the 99<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, constable and gaoler at Guildford from 30/6/1852 until 1/11/1853(11);

**Samuel Piggott**, formerly of the 96<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, listed as a constable at Albany 5/6/1849 and reappointed to the position in June 1852(12);

**Henry Vince**, a former sergeant of the 96<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot who arrived in WA in the 1840s and served as a constable in Perth from 10/4/1852 to 3/8/1852(13).

In all some 28 new constables were recruited for the year 1852 and of that number a dozen were former soldiers – over 40% in percentage terms. However, only a quarter of the recruits were actually EPF men, a decline in numbers in comparison to 1851. It is also noticeable that a few of the ex-soldiers listed seem to have had shaky careers in the constabulary and moved sideways after only a brief span of service. The situation became very different in the course of the next twelve months; the colonial authorities came up with the money and formerly established a Police Force led by our first Commissioner of Police as of March 14, 1853.

## Notes

- (1) Bentley, M. *Grandfather was a Policeman* (Hesperian Press, WA, 1993), p28 Perth Gazette, 9/11/1849
- (2) Ibid, plus the *Perth Gazette* of 14/5/1852 and the Government Gazettes of the 14<sup>th</sup> 28<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of 1852
- (3) Government Gazette, 14/8/1852; Broomhall, F.H. *The Veterans* (Hesperian Press, WA, 1989), B204; WA Police Record of Service (Electronic Database – hence ED) of S.Miller
- (4) Broomhall (1989), B7; Barker, D.J. *Warders and Gaolers* (Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc, 2000), p4
- (5) Broomhall (1989), B39; WA Police Record of Service (ED)
- (6) Broomhall (1989), B100; Government Gazette, 31/8/1852; Bentley (1993), pp40 and 42
- (7) Broomhall (1989), B149-150; Barker, (2000), p115; WA Police Record of Service (ED)
- (8) WA Police Records of Service of William Shakespeare Hall and Michael Manning; the latter was also dismissed from his later position as a warder, see Barker (2000), p148
- (9) WA Police Record of Service
- (10) Barker (2000), p32; Government Gazette, 14/8/1852
- (11) Barker (2000), p112
- (12) Government Gazette, 5/6/1849; WA Police Record of Service (ED)
- (13) Bentley (1993), pp22 and 29; Government Gazette, 14/8/1852

Unless additional notes are provided, the basic information is derived from our own database entries on pensioner guards who served in the WA Police.

† **Peter Conole, Police Historian**  
**Jean McDonald, Enrolled Pensioner**  
**Guards Special Interest Group**