

# GEORGE BAGG

My husband had done quite a bit of unravelling the stories of both his convict and Pensioner Guard ancestors. One mystery remained which was George Bagg who was in receipt of a medal. Try as he might my husband could not find any clues as to what the medal was or for what action it had been awarded.

After his death I continued his research. Recently, with the encouragement of Mr Sutton, friends in the UK ordered from Kew P.R.O. George Bagg's records from the Admiralty Section. Not expecting much from these I was amazed at the details in them. This is the most up to date story of:

## GEORGE BAGG

George Bagg was born in Wedmore, Somerset in 1818 into a country that was only recently enjoying peace for the first time in a generation. King George III was officially still king but had become so mad that his son Prince George was Regent. Princess Victoria was born in the following year 1819. In March 1839 just two years after the teenage Victoria ascended the throne, George Bagg aged 21 travelled to Bath where he enlisted in the Royal Marines and was posted to the 76<sup>th</sup> Company at Woolwich. One wonders what this country lad, with a broad West Country brogue, made of big city life. In September 1840 he began his life afloat. Deployed to HMS Stomboli, a first class paddle propelled sloop, under the command of Captain Woodford. They sailed for the coast of Syria and took part in the Syrian Campaign under the command of Commander, Later Sir, Charles Napier. George took part in the land and sea attack on Sidon and in the naval bombardment of Acre. His next ship was HMS Cambridge, an 80 gun sailing ship, under the command of Captain Wilson. Then HMS Alecto a wood paddle sloop used for escort duties

with one-gun deck which carried up to 18 guns. Then the HMS Monarch a second class 84 gun three deck gun ship. These ships fought in the centre line of a sea battle and had a reputation for slow and poor handling at sea. Then finally HMS Locust, a wooden paddle propelled gun vessel under the command of Lt. Commander John Lunn, on duty in the Mediterranean.

In October 1844 he returned to land duties after four years one month and twenty two days afloat. He resumed service at Woolwich. In November 1846 he was discharged after suffering a fracture contracted by the service.

April 1848 saw him registering the birth of his daughter Sarah Ann delivered by his wife Catherine, nee Lewis, at Bedwellty Parish, Tredegar, County of Monmouth, Wales. On the 17<sup>th</sup> January 1850 George Bagg enlisted as Private No. 46 in the Enrolled Pensioner guards. Eleven days later when the East India man Scindian left Tilbury, Essex, on board were George, his wife Catherine, pregnant with their second child, and their daughter Sarah. The Scindian was under the command of Commander James Cammell. The guards were under the command of Captain Henderson. In May of 1850, during the voyage, Catherine gave birth to the first baby born to the Pensioner Guards. Unfortunately this baby, as reported by the ships surgeon Dr Gibson, did not survive.

The Scindian dropped anchor on the 1st June 1850. On board were 75 Convicts, 50 Pensioner Guards, 42 women, 78 children and 14 immigrant girls. She arrived unexpectedly and it was three weeks before somewhere suitable to house the convicts was found. In the meantime they were transferred to the old hulk Parmelia also moored in the colony.

The wives and families of the Guards stayed on board the Scindian.

The Baggs then began their lives in Western Australia settling in the York area after purchasing 5 acres of land at three pounds per acre. During this time four other children were born to them. Jane circa 1851, Samuel 1853, George circa 1857 and Charles 1860. In March 1864 a tragedy occurred. While doing the family washing the hem of Catherine's dress was set alight on the open fire of the copper and she was fatally injured. Transported into York by cart she died of her injuries on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1865. After this the family left York and settled in the Kojonup area where George Bagg worked as a stonemason. His death occurred on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1872, he was aged 54. His death was attributed to concussion caused by a blow to the temple. Seemingly he was involved in a fight, fell backwards and hit his head.

In June 1869, Sarah Ann Bagg married Mathew Cull, a convict's son, in Albany and between them they produced fifteen children, ten sons and five daughters, Jane Bagg married James Myer and they produced twelve children. Samuel Bagg married Elizabeth Mary Robinson, the daughter of a Pensioner Guard, and they had five children. George Bagg junior, married Margaret McHugh and they also had five children. So George and Catherine Bagg's children increased the population of this state by thirty seven. Charles Bagg, who became a shepherd, remained a bachelor.

Oh Yes - The Medal! According to the author Laurence Sondhaus' book, *Naval Warfare 1815-1914*, a medal was struck by the Turkish Sultan and awarded to every officer and man who took part in the bombardment of Acre. So after forty three years I have put this particular mystery to rest.

Marion Cull

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*What a great feeling solving a mystery. Thanks Marion for this article. Ed*