

Sergeant James Graham

James Graham, the son of a farmer named Andrew Graham and his wife Agnes, was born in the north of Ireland in early 1829, at Drumgarth near Rathfriland in County Down. The Grahams were an Ulster Scottish family, staunch Congregational Church defenders of the protestant ascendancy (1). Young James worked as a weaver before choosing a more adventurous calling. He enlisted in the 7th Regiment of Foot of the British Army at Newry, County Armagh, on December 30, 1846. His regimental number was 2191 (2).

The 7th was an old regiment, raised by Lord Dartmouth in 1685. Called the 'Ordnance Regiment' at first, it received a number in the Royal Warrant of 1751 and was called either the 7th or 'Ye Royal Fusiliers' or both. The name Royal Fusiliers triumphed when numbers were abolished as a consequence of the army reforms of 1881. The 7th compiled a mightily impressive record of service in several wars, not least in the Crimea during the conflict of 1854-1856, where it acquired the additional battle honours of Alma, Inkerman and Sebastopol (3).

Young soldier Graham was on the thick of it from the time he landed in the Crimea on September 14, 1854. He had already been promoted to corporal and experienced war at its most deadly at the Alma, during which battle the 7th shot to pieces the Russian Kazan Regiment in a prolonged slogging match fought at 50-yards range. Later he did well enough to gain sergeant's rank in June 1855. In the brave attempt to storm the Redan at Sebastopol on September 8, 1855 the regiment performed further wonders, but to no avail. Sergeant James Graham was very badly wounded - shot in the face in such a way that the missile penetrated both cheeks (4).

James returned to England in November 1855, spent time at Chelsea Hospital and

was then discharged because of his wounds in February 1856. He was made a military pensioner and returned to his home town, Rathfriland, until the opportunity came to join the Enrolled Pensioner Force in 1862. He arrived in Western Australia on the 'Norwood' in June of that year. As Broomhall reveals, he had acquired a good conduct badge and received fine character references from a clergyman and an army staff officer.

Within a few years of arrival James Graham began to look for public employment opportunities outside the ranks of the EPF. The colonial Police Force was an obvious choice, partly because of strong reform measures in progress under Superintendent William Hogan. A former soldier himself, Hogan had a 'low tolerance' approach towards breaches of discipline and lapses from acceptable police standards of conduct. After taking charge in 1861 he removed or demoted quite a few sergeants and constables over the following five years (5).

Superintendent Hogan needed replacements and he recruited some through an informal probationary system, as shown in the following letter to the Governor dated January 23, 1865: "*I have the honour to recommend...the following men be appointed constables (on trial for two months) – Adam Bently, Michael Clark, John McKay, Spencer Hayman, Joseph Campbell and James Graham*". Crimean veteran James Graham was not the only soldier listed – John McKay is also identifiable as an EPF man, a former corporal in the 96th Regiment of Foot who arrived in the colony during 1863 (6).

Officer Graham was stationed at Guildford and completed his trial period successfully in March. The end of his brief law enforcement career came quickly. A month later Graham had a confrontation with a violent drunkard, arrested him and used his 'staff' (truncheon) to flatten the man in the process. That was a

direct breach of a Circular Order issued by Hogan in 1861, which emphasised the need for restraint and care in using force.

Hogan felt obliged to take action, though the business made him unhappy, and he wrote thus to the Governor on April 29, 1865: "*I have the honour to recommend that Constable Graham of Guildford be allowed to resign his situation for using a greater degree of violence with his staff in the arrest than I think was absolutely necessary*"(7).

James Graham had been treated kindly, under the circumstances, and probably learned from his experience. More importantly he had not been disgraced and other doors remained open. In December 1866 he became an Assistant Warder in the Convict Establishment and during the next few years served in various locations, sometimes supervising working parties well away from Perth or Fremantle. His record was quite a good one in comparison to many, although Barker's book on Convict Establishment personnel does list a few offences which cost James money by way of various fines. He obtained a permanent transfer to Fremantle Prison in March 1875.

There were signs all was not well: Graham's war wounds were starting to give him major problems. In the 1870s we read of facial infections and swelling on three occasions and just once there is a hint he had taken to the drink. All the same, officialdom held this veteran in some regard and accorded him due respect – he was chosen for temporary duty in the Governor's office in March 1879, probably as an orderly. As a staunch Ulsterman, Graham also became a member of the Loyal Orange Order. In 1883 he received a land grant of one acre in North Fremantle.

James Graham reached the position of Warder before medical issues - most likely involving chronic pain and discomfort - compelled him to retire on September 1, 1889. He died at Jarrahdale in August 1894 and was buried in Fremantle cemetery (8)

Notes

(1) WA Marriage Certificate of James Graham and Eliza Cole (nee Manning),

No.5908/1884. He was a widower, she a widow – they married in the Congregational Church in Fremantle on the last day of 1884. Combined with data in Broomhall and the *Bicentennial Dictionary*, the certificate completes this EPF man's family details.

(2) Broomhall, F.H. *The Veterans* (Hesperian Press, WA, 1989), B116-117. The entry on James Graham in Broomhall is quite copious on his life and services. Only additional, supplementary references will be cited hence.

(3) Ascoli, D. *A Companion to the British Army, 1660-1983* (Book Club Associates, London, 1984) – the 1751 Order of Precedence and the battle honours listings

(4) See Fletcher, I and Ishchenko, N. *The Crimean War* (Spellmount, Staplehurst, 2004), pp89 and 485-486 for some key exploits of the regiment. On Sergeant Graham, note also Oldman, D. *Crimean Veterans in Western Australia -Military Details* (2008), p3

(5) Conole, P. *Protect and Serve: a history of policing in Western Australia* (Western Australia Police Service, 2003), pp46-48

(6) Police General Duties Book, 1862-1895: memo of 23/1/1865 and Broomhall, B193 for Corporal McKay

(7) *Ibid*, memo of 29/4/1865 and WA Police Record of Service: Constable James Graham

(8) Barker, J. *Warders and Gaolers* (Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc, 2000), p86 and Erickson, R. *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians* (University of Western Australia Press, 1987), Vol.2, D-J, p1242

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4th Regiment of Foot