TRIBUTE TO A HERO

Frank Broomhall in "The Veterans, a History of the Enrolled Pensioner Force in Western Australia" discusses Lady Broome's "Colonial Memories" (p148) in which she mentions a "Victoria Cross man who had ridden in the charge of the Light Brigade." The occasion was a dinner on 20th September 1885 to celebrate the 31st Anniversary of the Battle of Alma in the Crimea. Governor and Lady Broome sponsored the dinner for the Enrolled Guard.

In the list of surviving members of the Enrolled Pensioner Force who were present at their final parade in March 1887, again at the invitation of Governor Broome, "One Sgt. Major, and forty eight non commissioned officers and men from forty one different regiments, were no less than one hundred and fifty five medals and clasps" won during many campaigns while serving in the British Army²

Frank Broomhall was of the opinion that there were no Victoria Cross medal winners among the Enrolled Guards. There is a possibility that Broomhall is correct but recent research has identified at least one member of the Enrolled Pensioner Force who was indeed awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery during his service with the British Army in the Crimea in 1854 and who subsequently arrived as a guard for the convicts being transported to Western Australia during 1850-1868. He remained in this State for some years before moving with his family to Victoria.

This is his story.

THOMAS GRADY (O'GRADY) VICTORIA CROSS, DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL, CRIMEA MEDAL with Sebastapol, Inkerman and Alma Bars and TURKISH MEDAL.

THOMAS O'GRADY was born 18th September 1835 at Cheddah (Cheddagh), Galway, Ireland. Son of James and Ellen O'Grady.

ENLISTED as THOMAS GRADY on the 18th July 1853 aged 17 years 9 months, occupation labourer, in the 99th Regiment of Foot at Liverpool, Lancaster, England.
On 14rh February 1854, Thomas Grady transferred as a Volunteer to 4th Regiment of Foot.
Regimental No. 3319.

Service in the 99th Regiment of Foot 150 days Service in the 4th Regiment of Foot 2 years 219 days Service from 2nd September 1856 to 28th October 1856 37 days

TOTAL SERVICE on FINAL DISCHARGE

3 years 41 days3

SERVICE IN THE CRIMEA

Recommended to receive the Order of the Victoria Cross: *Act of Valour:*

For having on the 18th October 1854 volunteered to repair the Embrazures of the Sailor's Battery on the Left Attack, and effected the same, with the assistance of one other volunteer, under a very heavy fire from a Line of Batteries. For gallant conduct on the 22nd November 1854 in the repulse of the Russian attack on the advanced Trench of the Left Attack, when on being severely wounded, he refused to quit the front, encouraging, by such determined bearing, the weak force engaged with the enemy to maintain it's position.⁴

Thomas Grady embarked for England 20th December 1854.5

National Archives, London, WO 97/1395

¹ Broomhall, F. The Veterans a History of the Enrolled Pensioner Force 1850-1880 published Hesperian Press. 1989. p79

² Ibid p79

⁴ National Archives, London, WO 22/7304

⁵ National Archives, London, WO 12/2236

THOMAS GRADY VC

After his return to England, Thomas Grady, wounded in his left arm, was stationed at various places during 1856 and 1857, including time in the Invalid Depot, Chatham, in hospital, or serving on light duties.

On 22nd September, 1856, at the Proceedings of a Regimental Board held at Camp Aldershott, Thomas Grady was to be discharged in consequence of "unfitness for further service". His general character was shown as "good".

A final description of Private Thomas Grady of the 4th Regiment of Foot when discharged from the service at Chatham on 28th October, 1856 –

Age 21 years.
Height 5 feet 5 1/8 inches
Hair Dark Brown
Eyes Blue
Complexion Fresh
Trade Labourer

Marks or Scars, whether on the Face, or other parts of the Body None.7

Thomas Grady was admitted to Out-Pension as a Chelsea Pensioner on 28th October, 1856, Pension Number 3382. 8

Recommendation was made for Thomas Grady to receive the decoration of the Victoria Cross by "Her Majesty's Hand." Various correspondence was exchanged between the Office of Horse Guards and various Palace dignitaries and a list of those to receive the Award was sent on 19th June 1857 – two Officers, one Non-commissioned Officer and two Private Soldiers, together with a statement of the particular act of Valor for which they had been recommended for the Honorable Distinction. That official list contained the name of Thomas Grady and his Citation.

tt has been quoted that "after the Cross had been pinned on the heart of Grady by the Queen he was offered the position of Ranger at Windsor Castle, but preferred to remain in "arms" and was made a Colour-Sergeant. He, however, received only a private's pension."

In a Short History of the 4th Regiment of Foot compiled by Ron Sutton, member of the Enrolled Pensioner Guard, Special Interest Group; information on the Seige of Sevastapol mentions:

"The Russians pulled back to Sevastopol where reinforcements were already starting to arrive.

The allies, deciding not attack Sevastopol from the North, marched south east skirting the city towards Balaklava harbour which was captured without bloodshed. The British established themselves in their new base at Balaclava on the 25th September 1856 using the port to establish supply lines. The siege commenced on the 17th October 1854 with the Russians making repeated attempts to disrupt the siege.

The British forces had pushed forward a British Left Attack force consisting of the 3rd Division and a British Right Attack force and attempted to probe the enemy positions with the assistance from Artillery Batteries. It was during the initial stages of the Left Attack's attempt to breach the enemy defences on the 18th October 1854 that Private Thomas Grady of the 4th Regiment of Foot was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry. On the 22rd November 1854 he was further cited for refusing to leave the front when severely wounded during the repulse of a Russian Attack. His example encouraged the weak force which was engaging the enemy to maintain their position."

The recommendation for the Award was made by Captain Lushington, Royal Navy. 12

⁷ National Archives, London WO 97/1395

10 "Age" 22 May 1891 and "The Herald" 21.5.1891 copy from Neil Ward, Qld.

⁶ National Archives, London WO 12/2236; 2237;2238;2239

Australian Archives – letter dated 18 March 1981
 National Archives, London WO 32/7304

 ⁴th Regiment of Foot a Short History compiled by Ron Sutton.
 Correspondence Australian War Memorial 10.8.2004

THOMAS GRADY VC

Officers under whom Thomas Grady served included Colonel Cobb, Colonel Sadler and Colonel Jeffrey, all of the 4th Regiment of Foot. (Noted in a letter from Australian Archives, March 1891)Copy from Neil Ward Qld.)

The history of the Victoria Cross is in itself interesting - it was founded by Royal Warrant in January 1856, Queen Victoria maintaining it was not an Order, offering no Knighthood, no religious significance and contained no ranks within itself. It was purely won by an act of conspicuous bravery, and could be conferred by the Sovereign alone. The actual Cross was made of bronze and cast from metal melted down from the cannons captured at Sebastapol in the Crimean War. In the form of a Maltese Cross with the Royal Crest and a scroll inscribed simply "For Valour". The Cross is suspended from a bar engraved with laurel leaves. The recipient's name is engraved on the back of the bar, and the date of the deed for which the honour was awarded is engraved on the back of the cross itself. The Victoria Cross is a valued and highly regarded Award for Bravery.

The London Gazette published the date of Thomas Grady's Award on 23rd June 1857.13

THOMAS GRADY VC

After the death of Thomas Grady VC in 1891, Melbourne newspapers of the time covered the life and funeral of the VC winner, reporting that in spite of pain 'he did not complain however, but died peacefully and like a brave soldier'24

The "Daily Telegraph" 2nd May 1891, reported it was most unusual for the funeral of a retired private soldier to be attended with military honors. It appears that came about by the interest in the death of an old pensioner soldier by Major-General Sir Alexander Bruce Tulloch, KCB, CMG of the Welsh Regiment. His position as Major-General Commanding the Victorian Military Forces from September 1889 until 1894 brought him into contact with many of the old ex-British soldiers from past campaigns. Tulloch had served with distinction in the Crimea, India and China, and when he leaned that a Victoria Cross hero of Crimea had been found in a miserable way in a laneway in Fitzroy, he ordered the venerable old campaigner be given a Military Funeral.²⁵

After assembly on the parade ground at the Barracks, "the procession left accompanied by a shooting party of field artillery men, with reversed arms. Then came a gun-carriage drawn by two black horses, in which rested the coffin, covered with the Union Jack. O'Grady's rifle, helmet, and account ments, with the medals he had worn during his lifetime with so much just pride, were laid on the top of the coffin. Then came the band under Bandmaster Riley of the 1st Regiment, playing the solemn strains of "The Dead March in Saul". 26

PEACEFULLY LAID TO REST
THOMAS GRADY VICTORIA CROSS
DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL
CRIMEAN MEDAL with
SEVASTAPOL BAR, INKERMAN BAR, ALMA BAR AND TURKISH MEDAL

²⁴ "The Herald" 19 May 1891 – copy from Neil Ward, Qld.

¹³ London Gazette 23 June 1957

²⁵ The United Service Home, Drysdale (The Romance of a Worthy Achievement) by R.H. Peacock read before the Victorian Historical Society 28.11.1938. – correspondence from Anthony Staunton, 17.3.2005. ²⁶ "Jaily Telegraph" 2.5.1891 Copy from Neil Ward. Qld.

THOMAS AND CATHERINE O'GRADY (GRADY)

THOMAS O'GRADY born 18th September 1835 Claddagh (Cheddah) Ireland

Son of James and Ellen O'Grady

Married 1856 Liverpool, England

Catherine Devaney born c 1829
Daughter of Francis and Mary Devaney,

Galway, Ireland.

Died 18th May 1891 aged 65 South Melbourne, Victoria

Buried Melbourne General Cemetery

Plaque at Springvale Garden of Remembrance, Victoria.²⁷

CATHERINE GRADY (O'Grady)

Died 12th October 1891 aged 62 years

Convent of the Little Sisters of the Poor,

Northcote, Victoria.

Buried Melbourne General Cemetery. 28

CHILDREN OF THOMAS AND CATHERINE GRADY (O'GRADY)

MARY ELLEN born c 1857 Liverpool, England

Note: Came to Western Australia with her parents in 1862 Married 1. aged 18 Victoria to Henry Kenworthy,

Son of George Pixton and Caroline Kenworthy. Henry Kenworthy died 16th June 1881 aged 26

Melbourne, Victoria. 29

Married 2, aged 26 Melbourne, Victoria to

Daniel Coakley.

Died 15th December 1930 aged 73 (78)? Years.

Melbourne, Victoria

Buried Melbourne General Cernetery.30

MARTIN born Liverpool, England?

Died 30th April 1890 aged 28 years

Hospital, Melbourne

Resident Victoria, 21 years.

Buried General Cemetery, Melbourne. 31

Note Other possible children (Listed in the Will of Thomas O'Grady)

Thomas Frederick John Francis Charles Augustine William Henry ³²

²⁷ Death Certificate – Copy from Neil Ward Qld.

Death Certificate – Copy from Neil Ward Qld.

²⁹ Death Certificate - Copy from Neil Ward Qld.

Death Certificate - Copy from Neil Ward Qld.

³¹ Death Certificate – Copy from Neil Ward Qld.

³² Information from Neil Ward, Qld.

Grateful acknowledgement is extended to the following for assistance and support in the preparation of this story:

Neil Ward, Boondali, Queensland, great grandson of Thomas O'Grady
Arthur Ward, Kambalda, Western Australia, great Grandson of Thomas O'Grady
Ron Johnston, England, long time ex- Australian Army friend of Neil War
Australian War Memorial, Canberra
Anthony Staunton, Military History Society of Australia, ACT
Paul Bridges, Army Museum of Western Australia
Graham Donley, Army Museum of Western Australia
John Sweetman, Army Museum of Western Australia
Tony Munday, Enrolled Pensioner Guard Group, Western Australia
Ron Sutton, Enrolled Pensioner Guard Group, Western Australia

Jean McDonald May 2005