

CORPORAL THOMAS MARTIN

Frank Broomhall's book, *The Veterans*, shows Thomas Martin arrived in Fremantle in January 1868 on the *Hougoumont*, which had left the United Kingdom on 26 September of the previous year.

99th Regiment

Corporal Martin had previously served in the British Army in the 99th Regiment, a relatively new Regiment of the British Infantry. By order of the King of England, George IV, the Regiment had been raised in Glasgow in 1824 by Major General John Hall.

In December of 1824 the Regiment marched from Glasgow to Edinburgh Castle. It was designated the Lanarkshire Regiment in 1832 so named after the county in Scotland.

The Regiment wore the ordinary Line Infantry uniform of the period with little or no distinctive Scottish regimental features. However the 99th apparently endeavoured to maintain a link with its raising in Scotland by wearing a diced band on their forage caps. The uniform also had yellow flashings which at times earned them the nickname the *Pompadours*. The yellow flashings were later deleted.

It was engaged in the Maori War of 1845 and the regiment saw action in China and South Africa.

The 99th Regiment was first deployed to Australia as guard detachments for convicts transported to Tasmania. The first detachment sailed from Spithead on the 7th December 1842 on board the *North Britain*, arriving on the 4 April 1843 followed by another eight ships bringing elements of the 99th to Tasmania from Chatham. According to reports, an ageing and unseaworthy vessel named the *Waterloo* crammed with convicts and

members of the 99th entered Table Bay, Capetown in August 1842 and was wrecked near the mouth of the Salt River during one of the *Cape of Storms* notorious North Westerly gales. The *Waterloo* broke up because of its poor condition and most of those that perished were plunged into the sea. One sergeant, two corporals and eight privates drowned, four wives and thirteen children also perished.

The 99th Regiment which did arrive in Australia were housed and organized in Parramatta and Port Phillip. The current Lancer Barracks in Parramatta is sited on the original location of the 99th's first permanent home in Australia.

Other detachments of the 99th were sent to various parts of Australia to maintain law and order and to supervise convict work parties. The Colonial governments were required to pay half the costs of that maintenance. In 1842 a detachment of the 99th were sent to the Illawarra (Wollongong) under the command of Major Ewen McPherson who was the Superintendent of Iron Gangs and Assistant Engineer. Their task was to assist in the building of the harbour facilities and build the Illawarra Military Stockade.

The detachment of the 99th located in Victoria caused a bit of a stir when nine privates absconded. They were never found. Legend has it they were aided by a settler desperate for labourers.

Other detachments were deployed to New Zealand in the first Maori War. For that campaign the 99th were awarded the Battle Honour *New Zealand* to be emblazoned on its Regimental Colour. The soldiers of the 99th were entitled to the award of the New Zealand War Medal. This award was not officially

sanctioned until 1869 and was awarded only to survivors.

The 99th was not a popular Regiment in Sydney with the 99th transferring to Hobart. This explains why there is a magnificent memorial located at Memorial Corner, Anglesea Barracks, Davey Street, Hobart in recognition of the twenty four men of the Regiment who were killed on active service in the New Zealand Maori Wars of 1845-6. This Memorial is unique as it was the first War Memorial erected in Australia and also the only such memorial to be erected by a British Regiment serving in Australia before Federation.

When the 99th returned to England in 1850, they were stationed at Aldershot and were extremely prominent in the public image. Very smart in drill and dress, they were always chosen to find the guard on the Royal Pavilion and were in consequence nicknamed the *Queen's (Queen Victoria) Pets*. Also the officers wore more than the usual amount of gold lace on their uniforms. The 99th sartorial perfection at this time is said to have given rise to the expression ***Dressed to the Nines***. Other Regiments at Aldershot were constantly trying to achieve the same standard.

(Note: Historians have challenged this expression in that it was in existence before the 1850's)

Western Australia

The establishment of Champion Bay (Geraldton) was to be achieved by sending a detachment of the 99th by sea on the *HMS Champion* to support the land party. Lieutenant Elliott was appointed a magistrate in order to be able to take depositions in the event of clashes between Aborigines and the Europeans. *HMS Champion* and Lieutenant Elliott with his troops arrived on 20 November 1849. The Military Barracks were built from wooden panels carried in the hold of the *HMS Champion*. By the 27 December 1849, the 99th had completed a stockade around the Barracks, Battery Hill, the Magazine and the tents. In May 1850 it was reported that the soldiers had built a

commodious dwelling for Lieutenant Elliott.

Further information on the 99th Regiment and their service in other uprisings and wars in Peking, South Africa and the Zulu War were well covered in an article by Ron Sutton, a copy of which appeared in a previous EPG Newsletter.

THOMAS MARTIN

ENROLLED PENSIONER GUARD

Thomas Martin was born in 1821 in Dublin(?). He served in the 99th Regiment. Upon his discharge from the British Army he returned to Dublin where he collected his pension.

In 1867, ex Corporal Martin enrolled in the Pensioner Force and embarked with 43 other Pensioner Force members and a crew of 44 from Gravesend, England on 26th September 1867 on the *Hougoumont* a late frigate constructed from teak and registered in London.

The ship carried a crew of 42 and 280 prisoners, (which included 63 Irish Fenians) under the command of Captain William Cossins, M.N.; Commander SM J. Smith of the Enrolled Pensioner Force and a Surgeon, Dr. W. Smith R.N.

Also on board were 18 wives and 25 juveniles.

The voyage took thirteen weeks and they arrived in Fremantle on 19th January 1868.

Thomas Martin, his wife Helen and three children occupied quarters in No. 1 Barracks in Fremantle.

In April of 1881 ex Corporal Martin purchased bedding and furniture. Much to the delight of his family, ex Corporal Martin was granted land in North Fremantle, Location P 72 of 2.3.0 acres. (*Veterans* b 177)

Children recorded include John b 1869; Elizabeth b 1872; Thomas b 1876; Joseph b 1877. (*Bicent.* v. 3 K-Q p 2101).

It is believed Thomas Martin built himself a house in Thompson Road, North Fremantle.

In *The West Australian* 13th September 1997, in the Real Estate Liftout was an article and photo of a house at 5 Thompson Road, North Fremantle.

..... Carrying out his duties faithfully, the old guard got his gold watch from the service in the form of a plot of land in North Fremantle. Martin, a modest man, built himself a two bedroom limestone cottage (a big living room and a big bedroom) with sturdy timber floors.

It had a good deep lawn to the front with a traditional timber veranda under the shelter of a tin roof, a spot where he could set his chair and watch the sun disappear in the west.

He didn't have long to enjoy his retirement. In October 1886, his wife Helen reported his death to the authorities. Some records show that a year before his passing, a bootmaker Robert Roland, had moved in to 5 Thompson Road. Roland promptly doubled the size of the home when he did move in, adding two more rooms with their thick stone walls.

And that is the way the home stayed for a century. It appears the old Martin home gradually fell into a state of disrepair.

Eventually a new owner, a carpenter with a fondness for antiques, set about the task of restoration. More rooms, and a kitchen with built in benches etc. However, that kitchen still retains the old solid fuel stove.

The Old Martin house was up for sale as a *Heritage Home* in September of 1997 for \$297,000.

Perhaps a leisurely drive down Thompson Road would verify that the *old house* is still in existence and a present day value may have well pleased our Corporal Thomas Martin, who had not only served his old country well, but his new home in the West also.

Jean McDonald