

William Thomas Pollett: An Obscure Dynastic Founder

There are several score West Australian families which may be deservedly labelled 'military/policing' dynasties. That is, families with members of the armed forces and police active in such organisations over several generations.

One dynastic founder was the enigmatic William Thomas Pollett, a member of the Enrolled Pensioner Force who arrived in Western Australia *per* the 'Raglan' in May 1858. His former regiment, career, origins and family background are as yet unknown. More information is desired on these matters – we would appreciate any contributions. He was married to Mary Davis, probably in England. The couple were the parents of five children, one of whom (son Hybert) was born and died at sea on the voyage (1).

EPF man Pollett worked as an Assistant Warder in the Convict Establishment at Claisebrook and in the Champion Bay area from November 1859 and was noted as being a capable, steady and sober man. Sadly, he did not live long – William Thomas Pollett died suddenly on January 18, 1862 (2). His wife and young family would have been in some difficulty, but eventually they flourished.

The oldest son Abraham (born in England, at Leeds, in 1852), became a farmer at Greenough and married Ada Jane Hedges there in 1877 (3). For some reason he moved further north and was attached to the WA Police Force of the day as a special constable in 1886. He formerly joined as a constable in March 1886 and served at nine stations around the State until his health collapsed in 1912. He died in June of that year. One of his three sons – James Edward Pollett - served as a private in the 28th and 51st Battalions of the First AIF during World War One (4).

A younger son of the pensioner soldier was William Thomas Pollett (II), who was born at Victoria Plains in 1862. He went north before his brother, worked as a contractor at

Roebourne and joined the Police Force there in 1885. One year later, while still at the same station, he married Mary Jane Goodbody. The union is of real interest. Mary Jane was the daughter of a rather distinguished EPF member, Matthew Goodbody, a veteran of the Sikh Wars and at this time a sergeant in the Enrolled Guard, a successor body to the EPF under the control of the colony's Commissioner of Police. This younger William Thomas Pollett – who is in the attached photo of about 1887 – served until 1909. He then resigned, found other employment and died in Perth in 1924(5).



Constable William Thomas Pollett the younger in about 1887.

Two of his and Mary Jane's sons continued the family tradition. Lawrence Alphonsus Pollett (born 1888) worked as a labourer in the north-west and became a good bushman. He served briefly as a constable in the WA Police Force and took part in the

notable Canning Stock Route Expedition of 1911-1912.

Lawrence enlisted in the 11th Battalion of Infantry of the 1st AIF in 1914 and later became a sergeant in the Provost Corps. After the war he did a 'disappearing act' after being discharged in 1919 and was not heard from again. His son Philip Lawrence Pollett (born 1913) joined the Police Force himself in 1935 and worked as a constable for sixteen years (6).

Another son of William Thomas Pollett (II) and Mary Anne (nee Goodbody) was Everard John Pollett, born at Northampton in February 1893. After working as a labourer he in turn became a member of the WA Police Force in 1915 and went on to have a truly outstanding career. He was transferred about a dozen times, serving all over the State, and rose gradually through the ranks and received the commissioned rank of inspector in 1949.

Everard John Pollett spent the rest of his career as Officer in Charge of the prestigious Liquor and Gaming Branch. He retired in 1953 and died in North Perth in 1968 (7). One of his sons was Colin Everard Pollett, who fought for Australia in the Second World War (8).

Notes

(1) Broomhall, F. *The Veterans* (Hesperian Press, WA, 1989), B227; *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians* (University of Western Australia Press, 1988), Vol. 3, K-Q, p2510

(2) Barker, D. *Warders and Gaolers* (WA Genealogical Society, 2000), p172

(3) WA Births, Deaths and Marriages - marriage certificate 4291 of 1877

(4) WA Police – record of service of Abraham Pollett (no 29) and death certificate 647 of 1912; the Australian War Memorial site has the service details of James Edward Pollett

(5) WA Births, Deaths and Marriages – marriage certificate 6251 of 1886; WA Police – record of service of William Thomas Pollett (no 25); Broomhall, B112-113 and p126

(6) WA Police - records of service of Lawrence Alphonsus Pollett (no 1011) and Philip Lawrence Pollett (no 1785); National

Archives of Australia record of military service of Lawrence Alphonsus Pollett (online)

(7) WA Police – record of service of Everard John Pollett (no 1189)

(8) Our thanks to Margaret Pollett (daughter of Colin Everard Pollett) of the University of Western Australia for confirming two key family connections and providing documentation

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