

Enrolled Pensioner Guard - Jeremiah Woolhouse

Private Jeremiah Woolhouse, of the 70th Foot, regimental number 804, joined the British army on 15 January 1831.

He was born in Aston, Yorkshire, in 1813 and was living in Wossup, Yorkshire at the time of his original muster. His trade was listed as farmer's servant. It seems likely, therefore, as with so many other agricultural labourers of the time, he joined the army as the lesser option of two evils – survival against starvation.

In all, Private (he was never promoted) Woolhouse served 21 years and 209 days in the army. He served two years and three months at Gibraltar, one year nine months at Malta, three years and two months in the West Indies, two years and one month in Canada and the remaining twelve years at 'home' postings.

Apart from deductions of threepence (two cents) and one penny (one cent) good conduct pay per month, in 1846, Private Woolhouse's total service seems to have been exemplary (his good conduct allowances were restored in 1847). He was discharged with four good conduct badges and was in possession of a pension of four pence per day (three cents). At that time he was 'labouring under chronic hepatitis due to climate and military service and not due to intoxicating liquor.'¹ He was discharged at Chatham military barracks on 14 September 1852.

For a man in his 40th year, married with one child and another on the way, the prospect of living on the army pension of four pence per day, while trying to find employment to supplement this pittance, must have been disconcerting. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Jeremiah Woolhouse was on the Enrolled Pensioner Force draft bound for Western Australia, from Hull, late in 1853.

He arrived aboard *Ramillies* as a convict guard on 21 February 1854. With him were his wife, Margaret (nee O'Mara), and two daughters.² He was posted to Toodyay and served there until he purchased Newcastle location, lot S16, of 6 acres, at one pound (\$2) per acre on 1 December 1860. With their own land now, and the possibility of adding more, the prospects of the Woolhouse family looked far brighter for the future than ever they could have hoped had they remained in England.

Precisely one year later (1 December 1861), Jeremiah Woolhouse died. He was 48 years of age. The sicknesses he had contracted serving in tropical stations while in the army had finally caught up with him. One wonders how he had managed to pass the compulsory medical examination prior to coming to the colony in 1854.

¹ British War Office records, P.R.O., Kew, London.

² Rica Erickson, *Dictionary of Western Australians*, Vol. 3, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1979, p. 920.

Moving then to nearby Newcastle, Martha took up Lot S5 to add to the six acres comprising S16. She carried on and later married John Wilson in 1862.

The children of Jeremiah and Martha Woolhouse later helped pioneer the agricultural regions farther out from the Toodyay/Newcastle region. Today their descendants are spread far and wide throughout the fabric of the vast state of Western Australia.

Of note: Margaret Woolhouse, a daughter of Jeremiah and Martha Woolhouse, married Charles Glass in 1874. A descendant of their 4th son (Charles Edward) is Darren Glass, former captain of both the West Coast Eagles and the All-Australian AFL team.

Jennifer Edgar

(descendant of Jeremiah and Margaret Woolhouse)