

LINK WITH THE PAST.

OLD CITY BUILDING TO GO.

Making Way for Church.

Walls that remember Perth's early soldiery with their red coats, muzzle loaders and grand manners, listened to the swish of long petticoats and brocaded gowns, and saw the great fire at the Barracks in the eighties will come crashing down next week. On Tuesday the wreckers will be let loose on the building at the corner of St. George's-place and St. George's-terrace, successively a military hospital, a colonel's residence, the High School and, in its declining years, an apartment house. One of the dwindling group of relics of the State's past the building must go to make way for a church—the First Church of Christ Scientist, Perth.

Historically the building is linked with the old Barracks at the western end of St. George's-terrace. Information as to the parts it has played in the life of the community were given yesterday by Mr. Edmond Clifton (a son of the late Mr. R. C. Clifton (the State's first Under-Secretary for Lands), Dr. C. Bryan, and Mr. J. E. Hammond. In a book dealing with Western Australia published in 1870 Mr. W. H. Knight gave a list of the important buildings completed during the previous ten years. The third item in the list read:—"Military barracks and guardroom for pensioners on an elevation at the west end of St. George's-terrace containing 120 rooms and attached to it a military hospital, magazine, cooking and ablution shed.

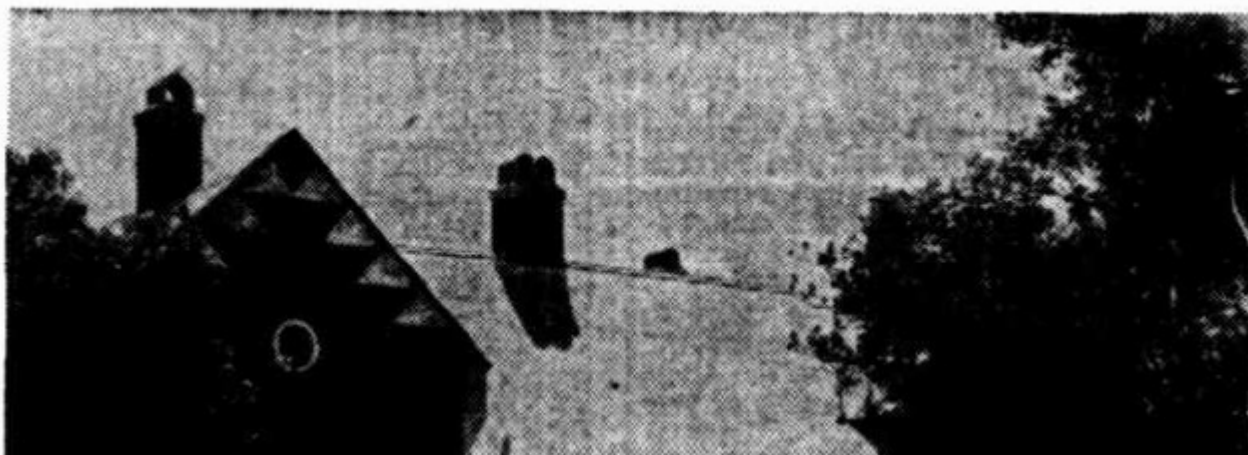
magazine, cooking and ablution shed, workshops, canteen, guardroom and cells." The hospital is the building which will reel under the wrecker's blows next week. In the "West Australian Almanack and Directory" for 1883 it was stated that the new Barracks building was occupied by enrolled pensioners in April, 1866. Presumably the hospital building was completed about that year. It was built in the later stages, according to Mr. Clifton, by convict labour with hand-made bricks made in a hollow by the river.

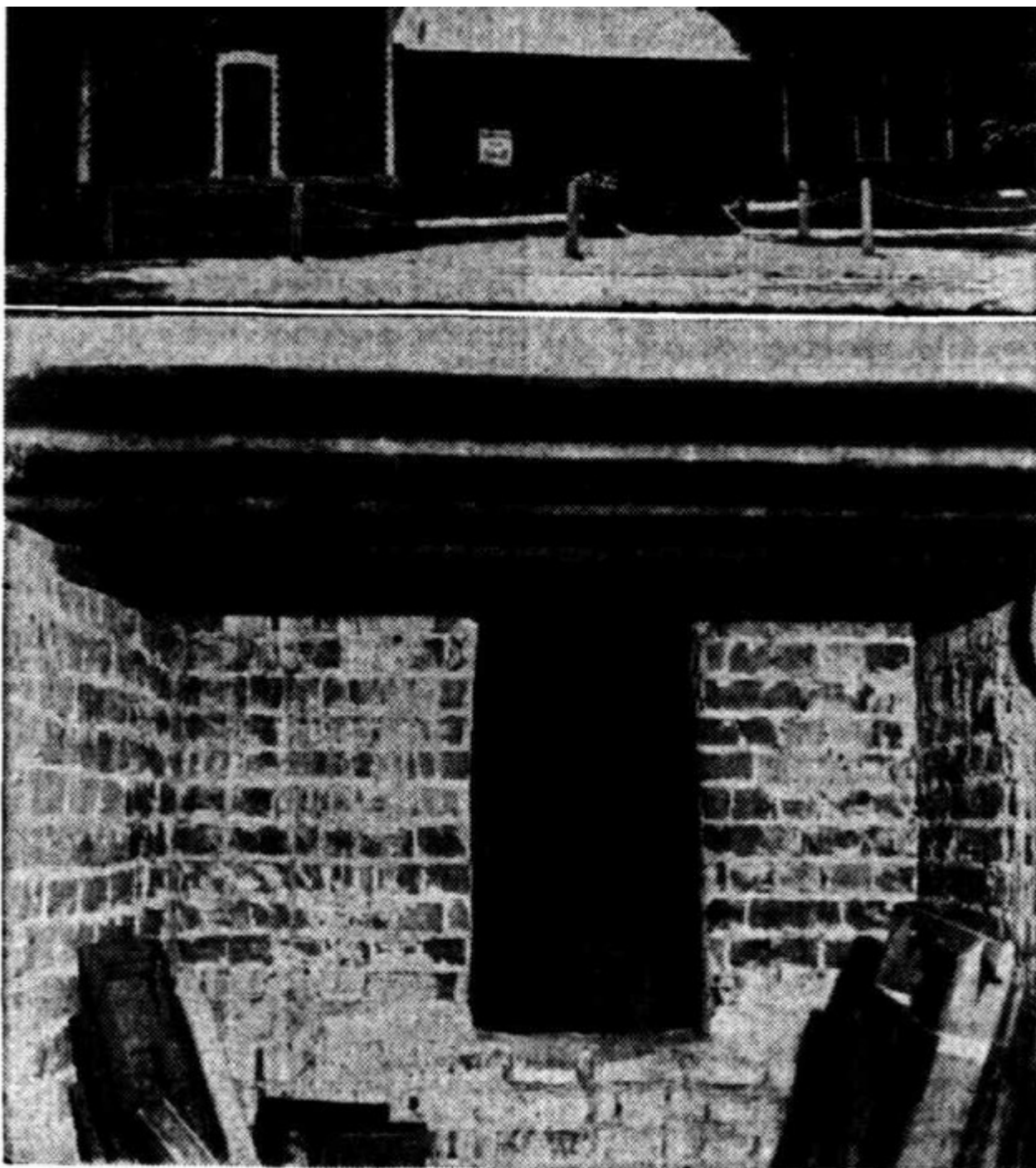
The contract for the Barracks building was let to a well-known contractor named Halliday who lost money on the building. He made his calculations for one wing only and forgetting to double his price submitted this estimate for the whole of the building. The Government Architect, it is said, knew that a mistake had been made, but held Halliday to his contract. Long before the job was completed Halliday found he was unable to go on and the Government seized property that he owned in Perth. About 20 years later Halliday's descendants discovered by accident that his property had not been transferred by the Government but mortgaged by it. To their great satisfaction the property was restored to them, the whole of the indebtedness of the old contractor having been met by the income received from the property in the interim.

In the early days pensioners were stationed as sentries at various points in Perth and throughout the night they called the hour to one another and followed generally by "All's well!" The sentry posts included the Barracks, Government House, the prison guardroom by the Town Hall and at the Causeway. The High School was opened in Perth in 1878 and in February, 1883, a Crown grant of Perth town lot H54 (a block

grant of Perth town lot H54 (a block which included the site of the military hospital and extended in triangular form in Hay-street) was made to the school governors. In December, 1926, the block was sold to the City of Perth for £13,500. The Perth City Council reduced the size of the block by widening Hay and George streets and subdivided the remainder. The site on which the old military hospital stands was bought by the trustees of the Christian Science Church for £4,700. Of the buildings now on the church's block the part facing St. George's-terrace is the original hospital. The two-storey building immediately behind was added by the High School authorities in the eighties. Further additions were made in the early nineties and again in the present century.

The demolition of the old military hospital building will solve a problem which has been the centre of controversy in Perth for many years. Did a tunnel at one time connect the Barracks with the hospital? Mr. Hammond believes that the tunnel is a myth. When the hospital was being built, he says, one of the workmen fell into a well when it collapsed. The whole town turned out to try to extricate him and a cutting was made from a big hollow near Hay-street through to the well and the man





Above: The old military hospital at the corner of George-street and St. George's-terrace which will be demolished next week to make way for a building for the First Church of Christ Scientist, Perth. Below: The reputed entrance to a walled-in tunnel connecting the building with the Pensioners' Barracks (now the Public Works Department).

liberated. This, Mr. Hammond feels, is the origin of the tunnel story.

But the present lessee of the premises, Mr. E. G. Bushell, declares that there was a tunnel. It has been filled in for

was a tunnel. It has been filled in for many years but passing through the series of "dungeons" under the hospital building he found evidence on the outer wall of the existence of a tunnel. Dr. Bryan is equally certain that a tunnel connected the Barracks with the hospital. His father, he says, who lived as a boy in the Barracks spoke often of the tunnel. The "dungeons" described by Mr. Bushell, Dr. Bryan says, were not dungeons but really part of the tunnel. He had seen tunnels under English houses and the foundations of the hospital building were laid out like English tunnels. There was not one tunnel under what is now George-street but several.

Next week the wreckers will solve the mystery.



Above: The old military hospital at the corner of George-street and St. George's-terrace which will be demolished next week to make way for a building for the First Church of Christ Scientist, Perth. Below: The reputed entrance to a walled-in tunnel connecting the building with the Pensioners' Barracks (now the Public Works Department).

BORN AT THE BARRACKS.

Tunnel Tales Discounted.

Mr. Richard Bloomer, of Newcastle-street, Perth, believes that he was the first child born in the Perth Pensioners' Barracks, now the home of the Public Works Department and other Government departments. Mr. Bloomer was born at the Barracks on March 29, 1867, the son of Christopher Edward Bloomer, who came from Ireland, and was one of the first batch of pensioners to occupy the building, then quite new. Richard was only three months old when his father died, but his mother married another pensioner and the boy was seven years old when he left the Barracks. He has lived in and around Perth ever since.

"I'm not absolutely certain that I was the first child born there," he said on Tuesday, "but as it was so soon after the erection I think I must have been. My parents had quite good quarters and were able to live a family life there. The pensioners wore a blue uniform with a red stripe on the trousers and peaked caps. My parents had several children, but I was the only one born at the Barracks. My brothers were born in Ireland before the family came here and my step-brothers and sister were born at the Fremantle Barracks."

Mr. Bloomer discounted tales that an underground tunnel exists or existed at the Barracks. "The first I heard of it was the rumour published in the paper the other day," he said. "I was brought up as a child there and played about the place and I'm certain nothing of the sort ever existed."


Comparing the early days with modern ways, Mr. Bloomer, who will be 72 next

ways, Mr. Bloomer, who will be 72 next month, was wholeheartedly in favour of the past. "Things were cheaper then," he said. "House rent and everything else. We didn't earn so much wages, but the money went a lot further. You could go up town and get a chaff bag full of stuff for a shilling. Now if you change a pound it is soon gone."

WHEN SENTRIES STOOD IN PERTH STREETS

A Quaint and Picturesque Aspect of the City

HISTORY OF THE ENROLLED GUARD

T IS a long time since Perth streets were graced with immaculately uniformed members of the Enrolled Guard, who stood straight and stock-still at various points along the route from the old jail to Government House. They were a quaint and picturesque band and gave to the city a martial touch that has long since disappeared.

There are among us still, however, some who will remember them well, who, when they are recalled to mind, will still be able to hear the cries of "All's well" started by No. 1 sentry and echoed by others all along the route.

In the following article the story of the Enrolled Guard is traced by one who is an authority on such history of the State.

(By C.C.T.)

WHEN the abolition of the Enrolled Pensioner Force took place on November 10, 1880, the authorities were faced with the position of providing guards for the convict establishment and magazine at Fremantle; a guard at Government House, Perth, and an orderly for the Governor.

From a list of 70 of the Pensioner Force a total of 40 men were selected.

Force a total of 49 men were selected, consisting of one sergeant-major (T. McCarthy, of the 18th Foot Regiment), 3 sergeants (Jas. Cunningham, Thos. Minnorgan and William Latimer), three warders (Sergeants R. Donohue, P. Quinn and J. Litton), five corporals and 37 privates. This number was added to in April, 1885, when three more pensioners were taken on to form a guard over the magazine at Perth. The commandant was Captain M. S. Smith, the Commissioner of Police at the time, formerly of the 44th Foot, who had retired from the army in 1867 after a service of 13 years. His service included the Crimean and China wars.

For the maintenance of the force, which was called the Enrolled Guard, a sum of £4000 was provided by the Imperial Government, which grant was to cease on the 31st March, 1887, when the guard was to be disbanded.

THE rates of pay were: Sergeant-major, 5s 6d; sergeants, 4s 6d; corporals, 4s; warders, 4s; and privates 3s 6d per diem respectively. Captain Smith as commandant of the guard received £100 per annum in addition to his pay of £400 per annum as Commissioner of Police. The pension drawn by these men ranged from 8d to 2s 6d per diem, the average being 1s 6d per

per diem, the average being 18 0d per diem, and their ages from 43 to 55. Quarters and medical attendance for themselves and their families were provided, whilst the uniform was similar to that of the Pensioner Guard, with the exception of the buttons and mountings, and consisted of chaco, cloth tunic, trousers, serge tunic and serge trousers and greatcoat. The men were entitled to a chaco once every three years: cloth and serge tunic every other year: cloth trousers every year, serge trousers every other year and a greatcoat once in five years, whilst the estimated annual cost of the uniform per head was £4. Arrangements were made for these uniforms to be supplied by the War Department from their Pimlico Clothing Establishment.

On April 21, 1885, arrangements were made to transfer the whole of the ammunition at the Fremantle magazine to the one at Perth, with the exception of twelve boxes of Snider ball cartridges, which were to be stored at the Barracks, Fremantle, whilst the powder belonging to the Volunteers and Merchants remained at the Fremantle magazine.

AS the term for which this Enrolled Guard was brought into being was approaching its end (March, 1887) a recommendation was made to the Imperial authorities that the pensioners comprising it should be given the same consideration as those who had served in the Enrolled Pensioner Force by having their pensions increased according to their length of service. It was stated on their behalf that although

ing to their length of service. It was stated on their behalf that although they were nominally a civil guard they had performed exactly the same duties as when attached to the enlisted Pensioner Force under the command of Colonel Edward D. Harvest.

A further recommendation was that a grant of £2000 should be made by the Imperial Government in order that the guard on its disbandment might receive a sum equal to one month's pay for each year or portion thereof which its members have served.

The force at Fremantle was in the immediate charge of the sergeant-major. The prison guard which consisted of one corporal and six privates, mounted duty daily at 9 a.m. and all available men paraded for inspection at the same time. The sergeant-major had to visit the prison guard twice a week during the daytime and twice weekly at night, and also to visit the magazine on similar occasions—the latter being guarded by warders who were on the same rating for pay as corporals. With respect to the Government House Guard at Perth the instructions issued respecting the mounting of the guard were practically similar to the ones at Fremantle, and it consisted of one lance-corporal and three privates, who mounted duty at 9 a.m., whilst a corporal with the rank of lance-sergeant, acted as Governor's orderly.

For the purposes of discipline the members of the guard were sworn in as police constables.

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THE Perth Guard was housed at the

THE Perth Guard was housed at the barracks and water for their domestic requirements was drawn from a well in the yard which was 75 feet deep. It was evidently at this well that a lorry some few years ago had a narrow escape from disaster when the wheels crashed through the surface.

The commandant of this old guard died in April, 1887, a few days after its disbandment, when making final preparations to visit England.

No longer is heard the cry of the sentry at the jail, "No. 1: all's well," to be taken up and repeated by the one at Government House, "No. 2: all's well," and echoed by the sentry at the magazine, "No. 3: all's well." Their voices were strong and on a calm night could be heard echoing over Perth.

There were no disturbing influences such as noisy trams, motor vehicles and wireless sets in those days to mar the quiet of the night. No longer will be heard the command of "Gr-r-round arms!" and no longer will the boys of Perth play tricks on the sentries by imitating the commands of the sergeant on his rounds!



