

**Love for his family.** Enrolled Pensioner Guard (EPG), Irishman Benjamin Shemels 1832-1909, joins the army as 14yo following in his father's footsteps.

He serves 21 years in the 73<sup>rd</sup> regiment - 9 of them overseas - 5 years in South Africa, 3 years in India and 1 year in China. In South Africa, in Ben's words "we had nothing to do but eat and drink" before they were shipped to India where he saw action in jungle fighting and was awarded the Indian Mutiny Medal.

Unscathed, he then returns to England and stationed at Chatham in Kent he meets widow of Crimean War Veteran James Creamer – Maria – she has three young children. Ben and Maria marry in 1870. Soon after Ben "goes to pension" and by 1873 they have decided to come to WA, Ben as an EPG on the Naval Brigade. With Maria and three children they set out, sadly the oldest of the three children James dies of meningitis on the Naval Brigade voyage, leaving daughters Elizabeth and Mary as his surviving adopted children.

Interested in civic affairs and along with others, Ben writes to support the successful candidacy of Barrington Clarke Wood for Mayor of Fremantle in 1884 who later is a member of WA's Legislative Assembly. At about the same time Ben builds several houses on his Attfield Street, Fremantle land granted to him for his EPG service. These are passed on to Maria's daughters husbands Godfrey Dixon and John McNeece and Ben and wife Maria live with them and see out a productive life as loved family and respected members of the Fremantle community.

Check him out: <https://enrolledpensionerforcewa.org.au/epf-profiles/s/shemels-shemelds-semelds-benjamin-73rd-regiment/>



#### COMRADES-IN-ARMS.

Mr. Benjamin Shemels, of Atfield-street, Beaconsfield, and Mr. Charles James Woodward, of Hope-street, Fremantle, were both through the Mutiny, and, though they did not know one another then, they were both in the same regiment, the 75rd Foot, previously the second battalion of the famous Black Watch. They were in South Africa, in peaceable times, and, as Mr. Shemels says, they had nothing to do but eat and drink while the Crimean war was on, but when the Mutiny broke out their regiment was sent to India. They landed in Calcutta in April, 1858. The 75rd was at Dinapore, Hoonah, and Cawnpore, and it was at the latter place that Mr. Woodward received a bullet through the left leg. Moving up country, the regiment was engaged for nearly twelve months in jungle-running, which means beating up the rebels who, driven from the towns, had taken refuge in the jungle, and made raids. Mr. Woodward served ten years in the army, and Mr. Shemels spent a quarter of a century in the ranks. He enlisted as a boy of 14, and followed in his father's footsteps as a soldier.

Mr. Shemels remembers very well the terrible tragedy connected with the mutiny of white troops in India in 1860. Several regiments, which had been enrolled for the East India Company's service, objected to being made to serve any

longer when the Crown took over the control of India from the company. In consequence of the insubordination in the ranks more than one regiment was disbanded, and the most severe discipline was instituted to check the disaffection. One of the regiments under the command of Sir Hugh Rose was exceedingly troublesome, and the crisis came when a soldier refused to take a comrade to the guard tent. The refusal of duty was reported, and the man was court-martialled, sentenced to death, and shot in the morning. The circumstances of the execution were revolting to the sense of decency of the nation which had seen and complained of the leniency shown to the first of the Sepoy mutineers. With band playing a slow march the soldier to be shot was made to walk for a mile behind his own coffin to a newly-dug grave, and there, in the presence of the whole of the troops, black and white, in the locality, and with the sullen troops overawed by loaded guns trained on them, in case they sprang to arms, the man was shot. Sir Hugh Rose was generally condemned for sanctioning the execution, and the Queen refused henceforth to permit any soldier to be executed on the warrant of a general officer.