



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PAPER No: 201.

PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY: Grahame H. Cumming

DATE: 20 February 2012.

Wor. Bro. WILLIAM BLIZARD (BLIZZARD)  
SOLDIER and MASON

The desire on the part of European monarchs to extend their empires and increase their wealth, dictated that exploration and claim would be followed by settlers, officials, and sometimes convicts and slaves and small outposts of empire were established under military rule.

It was the soldiers on garrison duty, the warships on station and the officials and settlers who brought Freemasonry to the small communities far from their European homeland.

Their motivation was, perhaps, to cement the bonds of Masonic brotherhood in a remote and often hostile land and they can be credited with the introduction of Freemasonry into many countries.

In 1841, Bro. Rev'd. Dr. George Oliver, DD., summarized the thoughts of English Freemasons when, concerning Masonic activity for the previous one hundred years, he wrote:

Freemasonry is springing up in our colonies, and promises well. To our Brethren in these distant regions we wish health and prosperity, assured that the practice of our principles cannot fail, while it reminds them of their native country, to be a solace and comfort under any privations which may spring from a change of habit and social enjoyments.

Many British, German, Dutch and French regiments had travelling warrants issued by a regular Grand Lodge to enable the Lodge to meet wherever it was convenient to do so.

From the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 until 1870, a total of 25 regiments and sundry detachments of the British Army, including the New South Wales Corps, later the 102<sup>nd</sup> Regiment and derisively known as the Rum Corps, served on garrison duty in the Australian colonies.

Each, in its own way, contributed to the development and history of Australia.

The Marines who accompanied the First Fleet were of the British Navy. They were replaced in 1790.

Some of the Marines chose to stay in the colony, one of whom was Wor. Bro. Thomas Lucas who settled at Norfolk Island and later at Hobart.



The regiments that served in Australia were:

Regiment	Title	Period of Service*
102	New South Wales Corps	1790-1810
73	Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment)	1810-14
46	Light Infantry	1814-18
48	Royal Anglian Regiment	1817-24
3	Queen's Regiment	1823-7
40	Queen's Lancashire Regiment	1824-9
57	Queen's Regiment	1825-32
39	Devonshire and Dorset Regiment	1827-32
63	King's Regiment	1829-33
17	Royal Anglian Regiment	1830-36
4	King's Own Royal Border Regiment	1832-7
50	Queen's Regiment	1833-41
21	Royal Highland Fusiliers (Princess Margaret's Own Glasgow and Ayrshire Regiment)	1833-9
28	Gloucestershire Regiment	1835-42
80	Staffordshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's)	1837-44
51	Light Infantry	1838-46
96	King's Regiment	1841-8
99	Duke of Edinburgh's Regiment (Berkshire and Wiltshire)	1842-56
58	Royal Anglian Regiment	1844-7
11	Devonshire and Dorset Regiment	1845-57
65	York and Lancaster Regiment	1846-9
40	Queen's Lancashire Regiment	1852-60
12	Royal Anglian Regiment	1854-61
77	Queen's Regiment	1857-8
50	Queen's Regiment	1866-9
14	Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire	1867-70
	Royal Irish Regiment	1870
	Royal Artillery	1856-70

\*Since it could take up to two years to bring a regiment piecemeal from Britain, the arrival dates are necessarily approximate.

After arrival in Australia, the regiments were dispersed in detachments guarding penal settlements such as Norfolk Island, Newcastle, Cockatoo Island and Port Arthur. Guards were also provided for chain and road gangs, colonial treasuries, Government Houses and for escorting convicts from one place to another. As the convict population grew, so did the number of penal settlements and the troops required to guard them. Detachments were stationed at Westernport (1826-8); at King George Sound (1826, moved to Perth 1831); and at Fort Dundas and Fort Wellington in the far north during 1821-9. (Port Essington was established by Royal Marines in 1838.) Troops were stationed in the Port Phillip District from 1836 and in South Australia from 1841.

The regiments were also used against Aborigines and bushrangers, and later to restore order during the goldfields disturbances, notably the Eureka rebellion and Lambing Flats riots.

They provided escorts for gold convoys, assisted the authorities during civil disturbances, and were in attendance at fires and executions. Their more military duties included the development of coastal defences and active service during the Maori Wars which began in 1843.

The dispersal of the regiments in small numbers through the colonies gave rise to problems of administration, discipline and morale. Also as the colonies grew, so did the number of troops required to garrison them, rising from one regiment initially to four regiments in the late 1830's, the cost of their maintenance falling on the British Government.



The cessation of transportation to New South Wales in 1840 led to the gradual dismantling of convict establishments. In 1847, the British Government warned the colonies that the garrison would soon be withdrawn, and in 1862 the British House of Commons resolved that self-governing colonies should bear the whole cost of internal defence and should also contribute to external defence. Discussions followed, and in 1870 agreement was reached that the Australian colonies would rely on their own resources for military protection, while the Imperial authorities would remain responsible for protecting the coastline and seaborne commerce. As a result, the last British regiment in Australia was withdrawn in 1870.

The first of these regiments to arrive in Australia with a travelling Masonic Warrant was the 46<sup>th</sup> which arrived in 1814 with the Lodge of Social and Military Virtues No. 2278, Irish Constitution. They also had Mount Olive Royal Arch Chapter attached to the Lodge.

This Lodge admitted some of the leading citizens of Sydney who no connection with the regiment and who seem to have had no further interest in Freemasonry after the 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment and its Lodge left New South Wales in 1818 for service in India.

Earlier, when His Majesty's 48<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, the Northamptonshire Regiment, arrived in Sydney in the spring of 1817, it was the first of the veteran battalions which had served in the Peninsular War to garrison the burgeoning colony of New South Wales. Before the imperial garrisons were withdrawn in 1870 twelve more Peninsular regiments followed in the steps of the 48<sup>th</sup> and veterans of the Peninsular campaigns were still serving with these regiments for at least thirty years after the arrival of the Northhamptons. Five of these regiments had stood shoulder to shoulder with the 48<sup>th</sup> in the battle of Albuera, 'the most bloody of the Peninsular War, in proportion to the numbers engaged.' Five had also fought at Waterloo.

The Peninsular regiments in Australia were:

48 <sup>th</sup> Foot	The Northamptonshire Regiment (Royal Anglian)	1817-1824
3 <sup>rd</sup> Foot	The Buffs, The East Kent Regiment (Queens)	1823-1827
40 <sup>th</sup> Foot	The Second Somersetshire Regiment (Queen's Lancashire) And	1824-1828 1852-1860
57 <sup>th</sup> Foot	The West Middlesex Regiment (Queens)	1825-1831
39 <sup>th</sup> Foot	The Dorsetshire Regiment (Devonshire & Dorset)	1827-1832
4 <sup>th</sup> Foot	The King's Own Regiment	1832-1837
50 <sup>th</sup> Foot	The Queen's Own Regiment	1834-1841
28 <sup>th</sup> Foot	The North Gloucestershire Regiment	1835-1842
51 <sup>st</sup> Foot	Second Yorkshire, West Riding or The King's Own Light Infantry Regiment	1838-1846
58 <sup>th</sup> Foot	The Rutlandshire Regiment (Royal Anglia)	1844-1847
11 <sup>th</sup> Foot	The North Devonshire Regiment (Devonshire & Dorset)	1845-1857
77 <sup>th</sup> Foot	The East Middlesex Regiment (Queens)	1857-1858
14 <sup>th</sup> Foot	The Buckinghamshire Regiment (Prince of Wales Own Regiment Of Yorkshire)	1866-1870



The 48<sup>th</sup> had not been with the British Army at Waterloo but it was cast in the same mould as those other Peninsular regiments that were there.

Although not at Waterloo, when the Northamptons reached New South Wales every officer above the rank of ensign, or second lieutenant, was a Peninsular veteran and there were over two hundred veterans still serving in the ranks.

The regiment had been raised in 1741 during the war of Austrian Succession as the 59<sup>th</sup> of the line. In 1744 it went to Flanders to join the army under the Duke of Cumberland and returned to Britain in 1745 to take part in the campaign against the Young Pretender, Bonnie Prince Charlie fighting at the battles of Falkirk and Culloden. The regiment became the 48<sup>th</sup> in the army reorganisation of 1748 and retained that precedence when the formal numbering of regiments was adopted in 1753. The 48<sup>th</sup> fought against the French in the Seven Years War, at first in North America, gaining its first battle honour at Louisburg in June 1758, an honour not granted until 1882, and it was with Wolfe at the capture of Quebec. It was then present at the capture of Martinique and Havanah in the West Indies, before returning to serve in Ireland in 1763.

The regiment returned to the West Indies in 1773, the first of three more tours in that area. The first was in conformity with the government policy of using the line regiments to ensure the security of the West Indian trade, at that time the largest and most lucrative part of British commerce. On this occasion the need was to control the black population, not to meet any external threat. The West Indies was the graveyard of the British Army and in 1779 the remnants of the 48<sup>th</sup>, depleted by yellow fever, typhus, malaria and dysentery, were captured by the French who had entered the American War of Independence in support of the rebellious colonists. The 48<sup>th</sup> was repatriated to Britain in 1780 and, in 1782, in the move by the War Office to create territorial links as an aid to recruiting, was affiliated with the County of Northamptonshire, becoming the Northamptonshire Regiment. The 48<sup>th</sup> retained this title until 1960 when, in a reorganisation of the British Army, it became part of the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment and, in a later reorganisation, part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment.

The Northampton Regiment rebuilt its strength until, in 1788, it could again be deployed in the West Indies. There, before it could take any part in the hostilities resulting in the declaration of war by the new French Republic in February 1793, the regiment was so reduced by disease that a return to Britain to recruit its strength was again necessary.

Because of French activity in the West Indies and the reduction of the strength of the British forces there through sickness the 48<sup>th</sup> was again committed to the theatre in 1795.

By August 1797, only 50 of the original 847 soldiers who had left England eighteen months before were fit enough to be transferred to another regiment remaining in the West Indies whilst the key group of officers and other ranks necessary to train new recruits returned to Britain.

The regiment then saw service in Gibraltar, Malta and Portugal and then the Peninsular War.

During the battle of Albuera, the 2/48th lost 343 of 552 men. This was just one of fifteen separate actions in which the 48<sup>th</sup> served during the campaign.

Four soldiers who later came to Australia saw service in eleven of them.



They were Sergeant Major John Hine and Privates Thomas Davison, John O'Doll (Ode) and John Scott.

The regiment then spent the next three years in Ireland before embarking for New South Wales.

In 1750, just nine years after the formation of the 48<sup>th</sup> Regiment, the Grand Lodge of Ireland issued Warrant No. 218 to the Regiment.

The Warrant which was surrendered in 1858, travelled with the Regiment throughout its various campaigns and locations. The Lodge was never given a name. A second warrant, No. 982 was issued by the Grand Lodge of Ireland in 1806. The Lodge also had no name. Presumably this was to the second limited-service Battalion which had been raised at Manchester in July 1903.

In 1808, Lodge No. 982 travelled with the 2/48<sup>th</sup> to the Iberian Peninsula. They were later joined by the 1/48<sup>th</sup> from Gibraltar with Warrant No. 218. Warrant No. 982 was surrendered in 1817 prior to the departure of the Regiment for New South Wales.

One distinguished member of the Lodge No. 218 in the early years, and who was at the siege of the French fortress of Louisburg, Nova Scotia, was Captain the Right Hon. Robert Ross.

In 1876, he became Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Ireland; In 1787-88 Junior Grand Warden and in 1789, Senior Grand Warden.

The headquarters division of the 48<sup>th</sup> Regiment disembarked at the King's Wharf on the western side of Sydney Cove on 11 August 1817.

The governor, Bro. Major-General Lachlan Macquarie attended as the regiment marched in heavy rain to the recently completed barracks in George Street. That night the Commanding Officer of the 48<sup>th</sup>, Lieutenant-Colonel James Erskine and his officers dined with the governor at Government House. They were entertained by the regimental band.

By 1819 the regiment had settled into their various duties and there were detachments deployed at other settlements at Bathurst, Newcastle and Van Diemen's Land.

Commissioner John Thomas Bigge arrived to investigate the administration of the colony and the 48<sup>th</sup> were involved in his activities.

In 1819-20, the Worshipful Master of Lodge 218, Irish Constitution, which had arrived with the regiment, was Wor. Bro. William Blizard (Sometimes Blizzard); the Senior Warden was Bro. George Bayley and the Junior Warden was Bro. Abel Martin. The Secretary was Bro. Hugh Barnes.

These were the brethren largely responsible for the introduction of regular Freemasonry in Australia.

Wor. Bro. William Blizard was a bandsman in the regiment which he had joined as a nine-year-old drummer boy on 23 September 1793 at St. Vincent, part of the Windward Islands group in the West Indies.

His father was the bandmaster at the time.



No manpower was officially allocated to the regimental band in spite of it being an essential and much Admired part of the regiment.

In Sydney it consisted of the bandmaster, Private, later Corporal William Blizard and two men from each of the companies.

Blizard was discharged from the 48<sup>th</sup> Regiment when it left New South Wales in 1824 bound for India. He received a pension of one shilling a day for his 31 years of service.

On 6 July 1831 he became the licensee of the *Golden Fleece* hotel at Bathurst Plains (Kelso) however, he died the following year, on 19 February 1832.

It is not known when or where Wor. Bro. William Blizard became a Mason. He did, however, join Lodge 218 in 1816.

On 6 April 1829, the first meeting of the Lodge of Australia No. 820, English Constitution (now No. 3 U.G.L. of N.S.W. and the A.C.T.) was held in Sydney. It was the first English Constitution Lodge in the colony.

One of the founders was Wor. Bro. William Blizard who is stated in the lodge history to have been foundation Outer Guard.

Since Bro. Harrison was shown as Tyler, Wor. Bro. Blizard's position is unclear.

Bro. Maziere was shown as Inner Guard but it seems Bro. Blizard was Inner Guard at the first meeting.

It seems strange that he did not join the Australian Social Lodge No. 260, Irish Constitution which he did so much to bring into being, nor did he chose to join the Leinster Marine Lodge of Australia No. 266, Irish Constitution founded in February 1824.

Towards the end of 1829, the Lodge of Australia was in recess until 13 December 1833 by which time Wor. Bro. Blizard had passed to the Grand Lodge Above.

The resignations of officers and discharges of long serving senior non-commissioned officers to become settlers in the country would have been the subject of much interest and discussion in the regimental barracks, particularly among veteran soldiers who, after a relatively healthy and easy life in New South Wales, were looking at the prospect of service in India with some uncertainty. Although the regiment had not been in the tropics since 1797 the rigours of campaigning in that environment would be recalled in stories of the service of the 48<sup>th</sup> in the West Indies. William Blizard, who had enlisted at St. Vincent in the Windward Islands could doubtless recall for his fellow veterans tales of the overwhelming mortality rate which the v48th had suffered in its last tour of the tropics. Even so, the majority of old soldiers who elected not to go on to India delayed the termination of their service until the regiment was due to embark.

The Senior Warden of the Lodge No. 218, Bro. George Bayley had been registered with the Grand Lodge of Ireland along with 19 others on 4 January 1820.



This was also the date of registration of 8 others, including Bro. Matthew Bacon, who were to become foundation members of the Australian Social Lodge No. 260 Irish Constitution.

These 28 Brethren must have been initiated many months earlier than their registration but there is no record of the dates of their degrees.

Bro. Sergeant Robert Phair, the bSecretary of Lodge No. 218 wrote to the Deputy Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, Bro. William F. Graham on 25 June 1824 from Mount St. Thomas, India. The letter gives a glimpse of the difficulties of a military lodge on overseas duty.

Wor. Sir and Bro.,

I beg leave to acquaint you of our arrival here. We sailed from Port Jackson on 11 March and arrived in Madras Roads on 4 June, landed next day and immediately marched to Mount St. Thomas, a distance of only 9 miles (15km) from Fort St. George, all in good health and spirits.

We have to lament the loss of four members (of Lodge 218), one of which, Bro. Thomas Moran died at sea on 19 May. Bro. Robert Koyle died of the Cholera Morbus on 4 June. Bro. James Holmes died of the same complaint on 19 June and Bro. Abel Martin (the Junior Warden in 1820) also of Cholera Morbus on 23 June 1834.

They were very old, useful and experienced members.

May the Almighty Architect receive them into His realms and greet them as workmen most rare.

The regiment is now suffering severely for the seven years of ease, comfort and health that they enjoyed in New South Wales.

The Cholera rages terribly.

In the course of one month we have lost upwards of 100 souls, 60 of which are men, 11 women and the remainder children.

Bro. Robert Phair wrote again to Bro. William Graham from Trichinopoly, India;

I received yours dated 12 August 1824 yesterday enclosing order from Grand Lodge for the Suspension of George Bayley. He has been sent to England, insane, and discharged in May 1824.

It was a sad end to a military and Masonic career for Bro. Abel Martin and George Bayley. The Secretary of Lodge No. 218 in 1820 was Bro. Sergeant Hugh Barnes who had joined No. 218 from Lodge 898 held within a British Militia Regiment at the Irish county of Meath from 1801 to 1849. Bro. Barnes was the Ordinance Sergeant of the regiment.

His subsequent career is unknown. When the Regiment arrived in India, Bro. Robert McPhair was Secretary of the Lodge and Bro. Barnes was not in the list of members, however, only part of the regiment had arrived in India at the time.

His membership of Lodge No. 218 was registered with the Grand Lodge of Ireland on 19 February 1821.

He was not in the list of 46 Officers and members sent on 8 August 1825 by the then Secretary, Bro. Sergeant Henry Wheeler.

This then, is a sketch of the brethren of Lodge No. 218 of the 48<sup>th</sup> Regiment who were the senior officers of the lodge in 1820 when the first stationary warranted lodge was consecrated in Australia.

Their contribution to Freemasonry resulted in the spread of Lodges to Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, New Zealand and Papua, New Guinea.

I wonder what they would think had they been able to foresee it all.

#### REFERENCES:

- \* W. Henley - History of Lodge Australian Social Mother, The United Grand Lodge of New South Wales etc., Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1920.
  - \* K.R. Cramp and G. Mackaness - A History of the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales etc., Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1938.
  - \* C. Sargent - The Colonial Garrison - the 48<sup>th</sup> Foot in N.S.W., T.C.S. Canberra, 1996.
  - \* Correspondence from Lodge No. 218 to the Grand Lodge of Ireland.
  - \* R.V. Harris - The Beginning of Freemasonry in Canada, Privately Published 1938.
-



