

The Toodyay Barracks and its Soldiers

An updated report on soldiers carrying out a multiple role in Western Australia

Compiled by Alison Cromb, July 2021

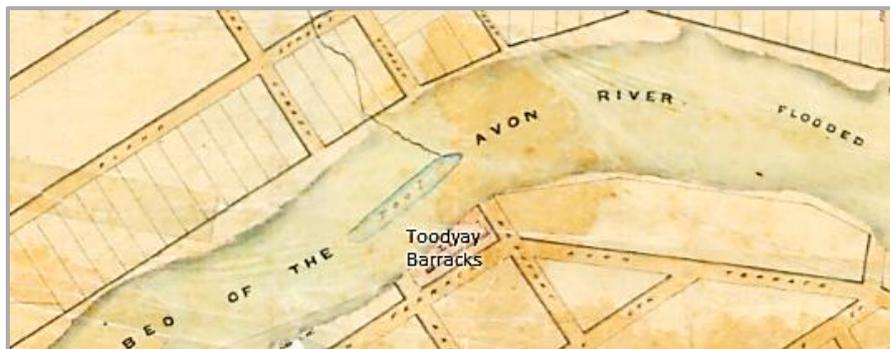
The Toodyay Barracks were the first buildings erected in the proposed township of old Toodyay (now known as West Toodyay). They stood on the southern bank of the Avon River. The Toodyay Barracks, completed in September 1842, were erected by local farmer, William Criddle. The township of old Toodyay was surveyed in 1849. The site of the Toodyay Barracks then became known as Lot L1. To this day, that land remains vested with the Crown.

Governor Hutt approved the setting up of the Toodyay Barracks after it had become apparent that more protection was needed for those settlers located in the Toodyay District situated at the northern end of the Avon Valley. Disturbances caused by local Aboriginal tribespeople were proving difficult to control due to the distance from the Barracks in York, the central town of the Avon Valley.

Toodyay Barracks

The Toodyay Barracks consisted of two buildings both measuring thirty feet by twelve feet. Rammed earth and grass-tree thatch was used in the construction of the main building whilst the floor was earthen. The building contained two rooms with a central fireplace, each room having its own door and shuttered window. At the same time, the Barracks were furnished with beds, tables and other utensils.

The stables stood adjacent and were built of upright wooden slabs with a thatched roof. They contained three divisions where racks and mangers were installed and supplies of chaff and hay were stored.



*The Toodyay Barracks. Extract from Historical Map, Cons 3850 item 41.
Courtesy Western Australian Land Information Authority.*

The Toodyay Barracks were Military Barracks and required a soldier's presence. Before they could begin operation in 1843, the Colonial Secretary directed that a soldier be sent from York to occupy the Barracks.

During the 1840s, the 51st, the King's Own Light Infantry Regiment, the 96th Regiment and afterwards the 99th Regiment were garrisoned in Western Australia. Soldiers from all these Regiments, in turn, were attached to the York Barracks.

A Mounted Native Police constable was also based at the Toodyay Barracks.

Native Police Force

The Native Police Force was formed in 1840 by order of Governor Hutt. Its chief duty was to exercise control over Aboriginal unrest. Regular patrols of the Avon District were carried out in order to keep abreast of disturbances as they arose. Governor Hutt believed constant vigilance was necessary to prevent such matters escalating out of control with sometimes dire consequences. A number of deaths had already occurred.

The Native Police constables were mounted policemen and care of their horses was paramount. In contrast, the town constable of York dealt only with civil matters. The Native Policeman was not an Aboriginal person. However, several trusted local Aboriginal men were attached to the Native Police Force to provide assistance when necessary. Each was supplied with a blanket and a daily provision of flour.

John Nicol Drummond was chosen for the task of organising and supervising the small Native Police Force. On 5 June 1840, he was appointed Inspector of Native Police under instruction from Revett Henry Bland, who was both Protector of Natives and Resident Magistrate of York. Drummond appointed another two Native Police constables to assist him.

The men were paid one shilling per day and were supplied with a jacket, one pair of trousers and one pair of shoes per year. Each month Drummond organised a Police Pay List which he delivered to RH Bland in his capacity as Protector of Natives in York. The Pay List was forwarded to the Colonial Secretary to organise payment from the Colonial Treasury.

Drummond kept a close eye on these two men ensuring they kept a journal of all patrols which reported any incidences which may have occurred. Copies of their journals were included in the monthly report which Drummond forwarded to the Colonial Secretary.

Whilst out on regular patrol, Native Policemen took the opportunity of calling upon each settler as they passed by. In doing so, the men performed another duty which was much appreciated. They delivered the mail to these isolated families.

Although considered a somewhat controversial character, John Nicol Drummond was well respected for his understanding of the Aboriginal people and the way he handled their situation.

The Dual Role of Soldier and Native Police Constable

In determining the role of both soldier and the Native Policeman at the Toodyay Barracks, it must be noted that very few records remain concerning the history of the police and the placement of individual soldiers during this period of time.

However, as luck would have it, Diane Oldman and I happened to cross paths when she became involved in a research project concerning the convict era which was being carried out by Beth Frayne, one in which we both had an interest. Diane, with her knowledge of British Regiments' Muster Books and Pay Lists, had discovered that two soldiers had been attached to the Toodyay Police Station in 1845. This was well before the arrival of convicts to Western Australia in 1850. I recognised immediately that these men were being stationed at the Toodyay Barracks situated at the site of the proposed townsite of Toodyay.

Their names were Private William Pusey and Private William Johnston. Further research confirmed that Private Pusey, in addition to his role as a soldier of the 51st Infantry of Foot, was employed as a constable of the Native Police Force, a situation previously not known about during this period of Western Australia's history. Other soldiers were later found to be employed as Native Police constables in the South West of WA. Civilians would also take up the role of Native Policemen as time went by.

Diane's research also revealed that, according to the soldiers' Pay List records, the men working as Native Police constables were paid at the same rate as all other soldiers. The payment of police duties, as described earlier in this report, was therefore additional income.

The updated list of soldiers, as further researched by Diane, and the details of their service as Native Police constables, are now outlined as follows:

Soldiers Working as Native Police Constables

Those attached to the 51st Regiment which had arrived in June 1840

William Dobson Pusey 1096 was the first Native Police constable to be sent to the Toodyay Barracks. His monthly journal from November 1842 until January 1843, indicates that he was stationed at Toodyay under the supervision of Drummond. He was joined by soldier Denis McCormack 1003 in March 1843. Each had been attached to the York Barracks since 1840. Both were stationed at the Toodyay Barracks, March 1843-June 1844, except for two relatively short periods of service in York.

NATIVE POLICE CONSTABLE	SOLDIER	DATE	STATION
William Pusey 1096		Nov 1842-Feb 1843	Toodyay
William Pusey 1096	Denis McCormack 1003	March 1843	Toodyay
William Pusey 1096	Denis McCormack 1003	April 1843	York
William Pusey 1096	Denis McCormack 1003	May-June 1843	Toodyay
William Pusey 1096	Denis McCormack 1003	July-Sept 1843	York
William Pusey 1096	Denis McCormack 1003	Oct 1843-Dec 1843	Toodyay
William Pusey 1096	Denis McCormack 1003	Jan 1844-March 1844	Toodyay
William Pusey 1096	Denis McCormack 1003	April 1844- June 1844	Toodyay
William Pusey 1096,	William Johnstone 1187	July-Sept 1844	Toodyay
William Pusey 1096,	William Johnstone 1187	Oct-Dec 1844	York
	William Johnstone 1141	January-March 1845	Toodyay
	William Johnstone 1187	January-March 1845	York
William Pusey 1096		January-March 1845	Kojonup
William Pusey 1096,	William Johnstone 1141	April-1845-Nov 1845	Toodyay
William Pusey 1096,	William Johnstone 1141	Dec 1845	Both in Head Quarters
No Native Police Constable		Jan 1846-Dec 1846	Toodyay

When on patrol, Pusey travelled from Toodyay to Northam and Toodyay to the upper Toodyay Valley ensuring no Aboriginal unrest occurred. He could be absent for several days at a time. Unfortunately, McCormick took ill in 1844 and was hospitalised several times. He was invalided back to the regiment in Hobart in September 1844.

From January 1846 until March 1847, no Native Police constable was based at the Toodyay Barracks. Diane reports that William Pusey was stationed at Perth Head Quarters where he carried out garrison duties intermittently. It appears that Private John Dalton 1509, employed as a Native Police constable stationed at York, was now responsible for patrolling the whole Avon Valley District which included York to Toodyay in addition to that of York to Beverley.

Tragically, Dalton drowned on 17 August 1846. He had been on his way to the Toodyay Barracks and had attempted to cross the flooded Avon River at a point downstream from Sinclair's Bush Inn. After his death, the district may have been without the protection of a Native Policeman for some months. The settlers could also have been deprived of their postal assistance.

MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT.—On the 17th inst. the policeman John Dalton, with two others, left Sinclair's Bush Inn, Toodyay, on his way to the barracks, and in crossing the river, separated from the others. When the latter got across, they saw Dalton's horse come out of the river without his rider, who is supposed to have lost his seat and to have been drowned. When our accounts left, they had not succeeded in discovering the body. Dalton was a well-known and esteemed public servant, steady, bold, and intelligent in the performance of duties by no means of an easy character; and his loss will be severely felt in the police department.

Inquirer, 26 August 1846, p.4. Courtesy of Trove

Those attached to the 96th Regiment which had arrived in February 1847

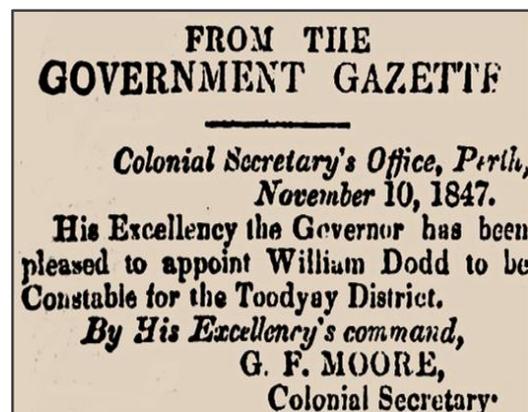
Constable Pusey transferred to the 96th Regiment on 1 April 1847. He was now identified as Private 2019. This transfer had enabled him to remain behind with his family. For Pusey had found time to get married and now had a wife and child. After his transfer, he immediately resumed his duties as the Native Police constable at Toodyay. On 23 April 1847, Mrs Pusey was appointed as Toodyay's postmaster for five pounds per annum.

NATIVE POLICE CONSTABLE	FIRST CIVILIAN POLICEMAN	DATE	STATION
No Native Police constable		Jan 1847-March 1847	Toodyay
William Pusey 2019	William Dodd	April 1847-May 1848	Toodyay
		Nov 10 1847	Toodyay
William Pusey 2019		June-July 1848	York
William Pusey 2019		Aug 1848-March 1849	Toodyay

Meanwhile, although the Toodyay townsite had not yet been surveyed, settlement had begun. William Herbert had started building with the intention of opening an inn. Accordingly, the decision was made to replace the soldier at the Toodyay Barracks with Police Constable Dodd who would undertake civilian duties. On 10 November 1847, William Dodd, was officially gazetted as the Constable for the Toodyay District.

The buildings at the site of the original Toodyay Barracks then became those of the official Police Station for the planned new township. The Native Policemen would continue to operate from there.

William Pusey served as the Native Police constable for the Toodyay District until finally taking his discharge with gratuity on 14 May 1849. He had performed his duties well over a relatively lengthy period of time.



Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal WA: 1833-1847, 13 Nov 1847, p.4. Courtesy of Trove.

Those attached to the 99th Regiment which had arrived in April 1849

Private Andrew Scott transferred into the 99th Regiment prior to being stationed at Toodyay where he worked as its Native Police constable from June 1849 until March 1850. In April 1851, he was stationed at Perth Headquarters before being sent to Albany. On 31 December 1854, he took his discharge from the Army with a deferred pension at the age of 60 years.

NATIVE POLICE CONSTABLE ANDREW SCOTT 2447		
Andrew Scott 2447	June-Dec 1849	Toodyay
Andrew Scott 2447	Jan 1850-March 1850	Toodyay
Andrew Scott 2447	April 1851	Head Quarters
Andrew Scott 2447	May-June 1851	Albany

During 1849, Private Thomas Bailey, a soldier stationed at York, is also recorded as acting as a Native Police constable. In 1851, James Betts, civilian, served as the Native Police constable in Toodyay.

New Police Regulations

The expected arrival of convicts to Western Australia brought about the introduction of new police regulations. In 1849, a new Police Ordinance was drawn up which outlined police powers and responsibilities. Henceforth, police constables could no longer be appointed as easily as before. Of significance, the Ordinance stated clearly that, in future, all police constables would be appointed by the Governor and their appointment notified in the *Government Gazette*.

The Western Australian Police Force was formally established on 14 March 1853 when John Augustus Conroy was appointed as its first Police Commissioner. In addition, a new Code of Rules was drawn up, an abstract of which can be found in the *Government Gazette*, Tuesday March 15, 1853. It includes the following:

The Sergeants will devote their whole time to the Service, and see that all orders given by the Superintendent or senior authority are strictly enforced.

The Constables will obey their superiors and likewise devote their entire time to the Service. They will not be allowed to trade or do any menial service. They will be most vigilant and not pass over the least part of their prescribed duties. They will use civility to all parties as far as it is consistent with the proper discharge of their lawful duties. They will pay the strictest attention to the suppression, prevention, and detection of crime. They will exercise their authority from the Local Police Laws, and from further orders they may from time to time receive from the Magistrates through the medium of their Superintendent or the superior officer of the Station. They will exercise no harshness or violence except in self-defence, or in the resolute and lawful execution of their duties. The whole Force will at all times be on duty, except when special leave is granted.

The regular employment of a soldier as a Native Police constable in Toodyay ceased. However, civilian men continued in the role of Native Police constables. In turn, many Aboriginal people were employed by police in order to aid them in their work. After the arrival of the convict era, the number of policemen based at the Toodyay townsite increased. On 6 May 1910, the old Toodyay townsite was renamed 'West Toodyay'.

Conclusion

It has become apparent that soldiers garrisoned in Western Australia were given civil appointments when needs arose. Soldiers' pay was meagre and an opportunity to earn more money would have been very welcome. Cost of additional pay was met by the Colonial Treasury. Soldiers carrying out multiple roles have been reported in other parts of Australia in the days of early settlement.

The soldiers described here were employed as Native Police constables, a task they were well suited to. They were trusted, efficient, well-trained workers carrying out a task that few others in the colony could have risen to, such was the deficiency of the labour force in Western Australia in the 1840s prior to the arrival of the convict era. In addition, soldiers employed as Native Police constables, although few in number, played a significant role in calming a very volatile situation on the Avon Valley, one which had been described earlier as approaching all-out warfare between the settlers and the Aboriginal population. It is possible that other soldiers could have been employed as Native Police constables in other areas of South Western WA.

Examples of soldiers carrying out roles other than those of normal duty are to be found in the early settlement of Western Australia. Ensign Robert Dale and others of his Regiment undertook the exploration of the Swan and Avon Valleys. Soldiers are known to have accompanied explorers in their task. Their input to these expeditions would have been more than that of a mere escort. Their presence was essential to surveyors carrying out a lonely task. Here they often acted as chainers (necessary in a system of measurement).

The arrival of the convict era to Western Australia in 1850 brought not only convicts but also the 20th Company of Royal Sappers and Miners in addition to a good number of Enrolled Pensioner Guards, all

of whom filled multiple roles. In doing so, the British Government made considerable economic savings and the colony of Western Australia benefited enormously from the additional service of these well-trained men.

Acknowledgement:

This report would not have been made possible if Diane Oldman and I had not been working together. Our combined input enabled the roles of both Native Policeman and soldier to be examined for what they were. The discovery of the dual role of these men thus became apparent. In addition, a good deal of previously unknown information concerning the history of the Toodyay Barracks has been produced. I do thank her for the experience of working on such a project.