

YOUR VIRTUAL DISCOVERY VISIT – 33 TO THE HERITAGE STORIES OF ROTTNEST ISLAND

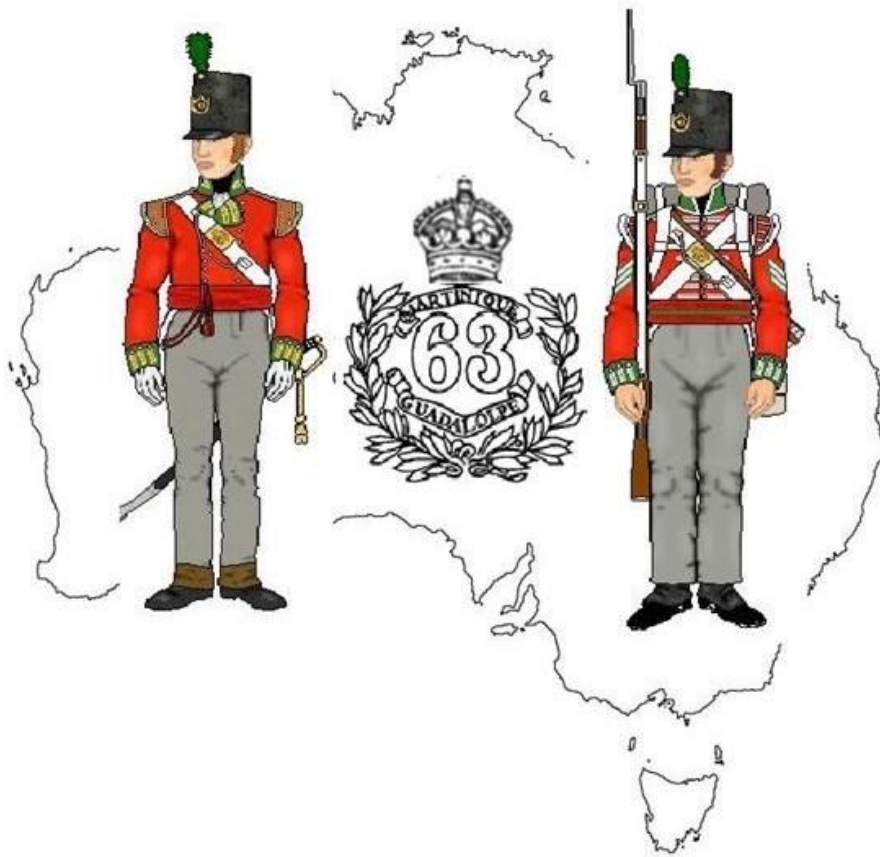


The Virtual Visit series was initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic when Rottneest Island was closed to the public due to social distancing restrictions and periods of use for quarantine from March to June 2020.

Now that the Island is again open to visitors, these Virtual Visits are continuing in 2021 to enable a further enjoyment of stories introduced at the Wadjemup Museum, the Chapman Archives or sites around the Island.

Enjoy, reflect and share.

BRITISH REGIMENTS ON ROTTNEST 63rd REGIMENT OF FOOT



Detachments of the British Army served in the colony of Western Australia for over 40 years with the last of them leaving in 1869. Although Britain established colonial outposts on the Australia continent from 1788, it was not until 1826 that a permanent settlement was created in Western Australia with Major Edmund Lockyer establishing a post in King George's Sound. Further exploration led to the founding of the Swan River Colony under Governor James Stirling in 1829. Around 100 soldiers from the 63rd

Regiment of Foot accompanied the colonists for the purposes of defence and public works.

This colonial initiative set the pattern for the routine deployment to Western Australia of small numbers of regular soldiers from British infantry regiments stationed in Australia. The administrative, technical and military skills of officers and men played an important part in the Colony's establishment and early development.

It is important to understand, when it is noted that the 63rd Regiment was stationed in the Swan River Colony, it was a relatively small presence. During the three years spent in Australia, the Regiment had its headquarters in Hobart Town, Van Diemen's land with the rest of the Regiment split into detachments varying in strength from 71 all ranks to just 2 private soldiers, across 47 different posts.



George Pitt Morison's painting *The Foundation of Perth, 1829* in the Art Gallery of Western Australia, shows Governor Stirling reading the Declaration. On his right is Captain Frederick Chidley Irwin of the 63rd Regiment. An officer and soldiers of the 63rd Regiment are shown in the background. Captain Irwin later became the Lieutenant Governor of Western Australia during 1833 and was to return in 1837 as the permanent military commander until his retirement in 1843. Neither he nor the 63rd Regiment were present at Pinjarra on 28 October 1834

Under the Childers's Reforms of the British Army in 1881, the 63rd was linked with the 96th Regiment to form the Manchester Regiment. Today after successive amalgamations, it is perpetuated as the Second Battalion, Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (King's, Lancashire and Border) [Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is Duke of Lancaster].

For the 1929 Centennial commemoration, the Royal Australian Garrison Artillery, stationed at Artillery Barracks, Fremantle created a ceremonial detachment outfitted in uniforms representative of the 63rd Regiment of Foot (West Suffolk)





(L) HC Hobart and JT Waghorn in historical military dress



(R) Helmet plate of 63rd West Suffolk Regiment of Foot

British Regiments with Detachments Stationed in Western Australia

39th Regiment of Foot (Dorsetshire) Detachment – Albany 1826 - 1827

63rd Regiment of Foot (West Suffolk) 1 Company 1829 – 1833

21st Regiment of Foot (Royal North British Fusiliers) 2 Companies 1833 – 1840

51st Regiment of Foot (2nd Yorkshire) 2 Companies 1840 – 1847

90th Regiment of Foot (Perthshire Light Infantry) 1 Company 1847 – 1849

99th Regiment of Foot (Duke of Edinburgh's) 1 Company 1849 – 1856

12th Regiment of Foot (East Suffolk) 1 Company 1856 – 1867

14th Regiment of Foot (Buckinghamshire) 2 Companies 1867 – 1869

20th Company Sappers and Miners 1852 – 1862

A Short History of
63rd OF FOOT
IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA
1829 - 1833



A Short History of 63rd of Foot in Western Australia 1829 – 1833
by Walter Dennison and Paul Godden, 1978
[Note the inverted Manchester Regiment badge]
<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30076432>