



Crimean War Soldier in the 19th Foot

Synopsis

My great great grandfather, **Patrick McNamara**, served with the 19th Foot between 1847 and 1868. In that time, the Regiment saw action in Canada, the Crimea, and British India.

Whilst researching Corporal McNamara's life, I was provided with invaluable advice and information by the Green Howards Museum. This complemented the considerable amount of research data discovered by me in the Public Records Office in respect of Corporal McNamara's army career.

To help other people with their researches involving soldiers who served with the 19th Foot / the Green Howards, I have set out the sort of information that I obtained **BEFORE** contacting the Green Howard's Museum. I describe the data provided by Public Records Office records, and provide some guidance to help other people trying to find out something about the lives of their ancestors who served in the British Army, and the Green Howards in particular.

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May 2001

1 Ellen McNamara



The story starts with this striking looking woman, - my great grandmother Ellen McNamara.

Although her photograph had been in my parent's bedroom for as long as I can remember, I never enquired about her, - or any other of my ancestors, whilst my parents were still alive. This is something that is heard time and again amongst people researching their family history!

It wasn't until about three or four years ago that my brother and I simultaneously had the urge to find out something about the people from whom we are descended. And one of our first subjects for a concerted research effort was Ellen.

2 Ellen McNamara and the Family Tree

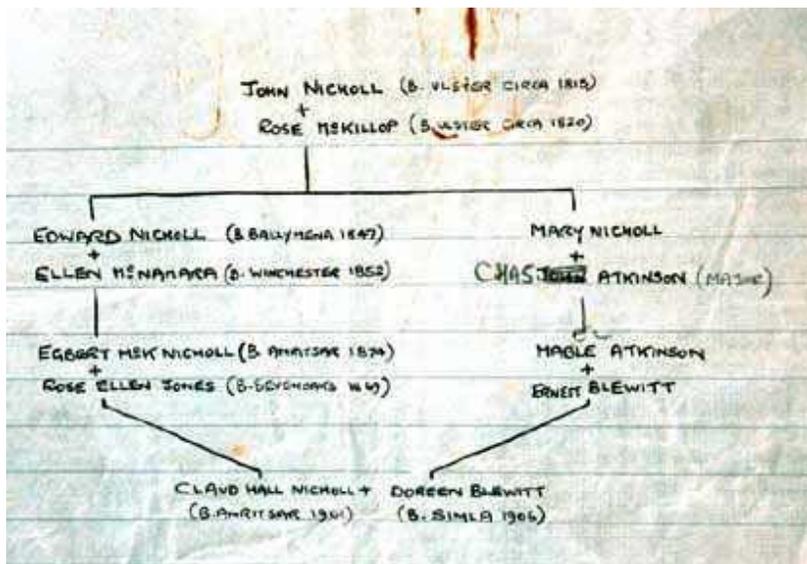
All we knew about Ellen McNamara was obtained from a few scraps of paper on which my father had outlined a very simple family tree, and some anecdotal evidence.

From the few scraps of paper that we had we knew that

- Ellen had been born in Winchester in 1852

- she had been married in 1867 (15 years old!), and
- she had died in 1878 at the early age of 26.

We also knew that Ellen was originally a Roman Catholic, and had converted to the Protestant faith in order to marry my great grandfather. When she died, my great grandfather then married her sister, Mary Ann, who also changed her religion in order to marry.



By visiting the Roman Catholic archives in Winchester, we obtained the information that Ellen was born on 23 July 1852 and baptised on 10 August 1852. We found out that her parents were **Patrick McNamara and Anna McNamara**, nee Connor,

(There is no record of Ellen's birth in the "St. Catherine's Index").

3 The Regiment Stationed in Winchester, 1852

Intuitively, my brother assumed that the reason this (Irish) Catholic girl would have been born in Winchester was because her father would have been a serving soldier. Winchester has a VERY large army garrison located there. So we set about trying to find out whether there was a Patrick McNamara serving in whatever regiment was stationed in Winchester in 1852, - and whether that man was "our" man.

Before finding out anything about the individual soldier, we had to find out which regiment would have been stationed in Winchester in 1852.

This is relatively straightforward, in that from 1754 to 1879 Annual Army Lists were published and are available as bound volumes on the shelves of the Public Records Office in Kew. These Army Lists provide details of the serving officers in each regiment and also give some indication of the depot(s) where the regiment is stationed.

However, much more information is available in the monthly Army Lists which were published from 1798 to June 1940, which provide comprehensive information with respect to the location and strength of all army regiments.



From the Annual Army Lists we found that the 19th Foot was stationed in Winchester in 1852. Another regiment, the 38th, was also stationed at Winchester at the same time. However, records showed that no McNamaras served in that regiment at the time.

The presence of the 19th Foot at Winchester was confirmed by obtaining the Monthly Return for the 19th Foot for June 1852 (WO17/640) in the Public Records Office.

In addition to telling us that the Head Quarters of the 19th Foot was in Winchester in June 1852, we can also find out some other fascinating details on the regiment at this time. Such as:-

- Of the 910 NCO's, Drummers, and Privates in the regiment 543, - 60%, were Irish! (354 were English and 13 were "Scotch")
- 494 of these soldiers were Roman Catholics.
- The health of the regiment was good, but venereal disease prevailed.
- 39 soldiers were on the sick and 5 were in hospital.
- 10 soldiers were in gaol or military prison, and
- 6 soldiers were AWOL.

It is a little appreciated fact, by many people, that British regiments at the time were made up with as many Irish men.

4 The Regiment's Muster List, April - June 1852

Knowing that the regiment stationed at Winchester in June 1852 was the 19th Foot, the next step was to obtain the Muster List for the regiment. The Public Records Offices hold all the Quarterly Pay Lists, - or Muster Lists, for every regiment from 1732 - 1898.

For the regular infantry, - amongst other groups, these Muster Lists are held in class WO/12 at the Public Records Office.

From the April - June 1853 Quarterly Pay List for the 19th Foot, the name 2225 Patrick McNamara was found to be one of the serving soldiers.

Muster Lists can be used to trace the military career of a soldier from the day he joined the regiment to the day he left.

This is exactly what was done when researching the military career of Patrick McNamara. From the Muster Lists for 1846 - 1847 we found that Patrick McNamara joined the 19th Foot at Askeaton in Ireland on 15 January 1847 and was posted to the depot at Boyle.

His career could then be followed on a quarterly basis, listing every depot he was posted to, until his final discharge at the Royal Victoria Hospital at Netley in Hampshire in March 1868. He was discharged on 31 March 1868, and was shown as being accompanied by his wife, Ann, and a daughter of 10 and a boy of 4.

The Muster Lists consulted included WO/12-3623 through to WO/12-3645 (19th Foot), and WO/12-13086 (R V Hospital).

5 Patrick McNamara's Discharge Papers

Now that we knew that Patrick McNamara had been discharged from the army (and had not been killed or bought himself out), the next vital set of documents that could be obtained were his Discharge Papers. By knowing a man's name and number, his regiment, and the date he was discharged, papers in class WO/97 at the Public Records Office can be searched.

WO/97-1453 contained the discharge papers for soldiers of the 19th Foot in 1867-1868, and amongst them were those for Patrick McNamara. From these Discharge Papers, we can pick up a wealth of detail.

This includes;-

- Patrick McNamara's conduct was "very good", with 4 Good Conduct badges, - even though he had been entered 15 times into the Regimental Defaulter's Book and had once been tried by Court Martial!
- He was wounded in the left thigh at the Battle of Alma on 20 September 1854.
- The reason for his discharge was "Asthenia" (poor health), with his old wound giving him trouble, - especially in cold weather.
- His Attestation Papers show him to be a tall man, 5 ft 11 7/8 inches, with grey eyes and dark brown hair. He was 20 years old when he joined up.

6 Help from the Green Howards' Museum

Now that my brother and I knew a good deal about Patrick McNamara's military career, our next step was to see whether there was any useful information to be found in the Green Howards Museum. I was especially lucky in that I only live about 30 miles away from the Museum.

However, I must make one point VERY CLEAR at this stage. The Museum regularly receives enquiries of the type "I believe my grandfather John Smith served in the Green Howards in India and attained the rank of Colour Sergeant. Have you any information on him?". **Generally, unless the soldier was an officer, the chances of the museum (or ANY museum) having any information on the career of a specific individual soldier is virtually zero.**

Where the Museum CAN help, - and helped me, was in providing information on the HISTORY of the regiment, - such as books and photographs, which enabled me to flesh out what I already knew about Patrick McNamara's military career. Thus, for instance, I was able to spend one happy day reading through "A History of the Services of the 19th Regiment" by Major M L Ferrar, - a book published in 1911. I abstracted sections of this book that helped me understand and appreciate Patrick McNamara's army service.

The regiment's casualty roll in the Crimean War is published in Major Ferrar's history, and this showed that Patrick McNamara was wounded not only at the Battle of the Alma, but also at the Assault on the Redan and at Sebastopol. However, Muster Rolls data showed that Patrick McNamara was in Scutari Hospital for nearly a year. Although listed as wounded three times he had, in fact, been wounded just once.

The Museum let me read through several other books, and showed me a whole collection of photographs. Later, I was to be

privileged to have access to Charles Usherwood's service journal, and also that of Job Waterhouse (who served with the regiment in India).

7 Footnote

Just recently I was leafing through an old family photograph album in which there are about 100 Cartes de Visite. This album has been in my family's possession for over a century, and only some of the photographs are clearly identified.

But by re-examining each photograph closely, I suddenly realised that I had found one that showed Patrick McNamara, his wife Anna, his daughter Mary Ann, and his son John Patrick. The photograph was taken in Bolton, presumably in 1868, where Patrick McNamara lived on his discharge from the army.

Patrick died in May 1889 in Salford Lancashire aged 63. By then he had remarried.

Anna McNamara is thought to have died in India in 1875, returning there with her daughter Mary Ann.

It is very possible that Mary Ann returned to India very soon after the above photograph was taken, as there is a photograph of her with Ellen (her sister) and Ellen's first born child which was taken in India either at the end of 1868 or in early 1869.

John Patrick may also possibly have returned to India, and died there in 1941.

It is an extraordinary feeling to look at the above photograph, and think that one is looking at the likeness of the man who has featured so large in all the research undertaken into someone who was initially just a name.

