

## MILITARY SERVICE OF NORRIS BELL

*Received from Rootschat forum - <http://www.rootschat.com/>*

Norris apparently joined the 2nd Battalion of the Rifle Brigade in 1854, aged 13 years. Army records seem to have him 3 years older than he actually is. In 1854 the Brigade were in the Crimea so Norris was likely trained at the base in Winchester.

They were involved in the relief of Lucknow in the Indian Mutiny.

In the Ashantee war the Commander in Chief was Major-General Sir Garnet Joseph Wolseley, C.B., K.C.M.G. Later Norris was to include Garnet in the name of his son, Frank Garnet Bell.

2/Rifle Brigade were in India from 1857 to 1867, then back in England (1867-72), then Ireland (1872-73), then on active service again in the Gold Coast/Ashantee War (1873-74).

They were known at this time as The Prince Consort's Own but later as the 3rd Green Jackets.

He was on the Indian Mutiny medal roll: 112 Private Norris Bell, 2/Rifle Brigade, no clasp.

And the Ashantee War: 112 Col-Sgt Norris Bell, H Coy, 2 Rifle Brigade. He's confirmed as being entitled to the medal plus clasp (the clasp shows he served north of the River Prah; may be the Coomassie clasp.)

Against Col-Sgt Bell's name, the remark is "New Zealand - Rifle Volunteers". The roll was compiled back in England after the war and is dated Winchester 11th June 1874.

He first appears in New Zealand in September 1875 as a Drill Instructor for the Volunteer Corps.

From Evening Post, Volume XIX, Issue 119, 24 May 1880, Page 2

At the conclusion of to-day's Volunteer parade, the following address (which was beautifully illuminated by Mr. Bianchini, of the Public Works Department) was presented to Staff Instructor Bell by the Wellington Guards: — "To Staff Instructor Norris

Bell, late Colour Sergeant of the Rifle Brigade. Dear Sir — I am requested by the officers and members of the Wellington Guards to present you with the accompanying purse of sovereigns, as a mark of their appreciation of the many services you have rendered the Corps since its formation in your capacity of instructor and I cannot, as commanding officer, allow this opportunity to pass without bearing testimony to the great zeal and interest you have at all times displayed in endeavouring to bring the Corps to a state of efficiency. G. Randal Johnson, Captain Commanding Wellington Guards. Wellington, 24th May, 1880." Mr. Bell expressed his acknowledgements in suitable terms.

## SUDDEN DEATH OF SERGT. MAJOR BELL.

*Transcribed from Evening Post, Volume XL, Issue 19, 22 July 1890, Page 2*

The death of Sergt. Major Norris

Bell, who for many years past has occupied the position of Instructor and Sergeant-Major of Volunteers in the Wellington District, will be heard of with very deep and sincere regret, not only by members of the volunteer corps, but also by the public generally. His demise occurred very suddenly at his residence in Rintoul-street, Newtown, yesterday at 4.15 p.m.

The deceased had been suffering from diabetes for the past eighteen months, and had had two fits, but his friends entertained no grave anxiety, nor did they apprehend any immediate danger. The Sergeant-Major was in town yesterday afternoon, and transacted some private business in the City Corporation offices. He conversed with several friends on his way home, and at that time he appeared to be in his usual health and spirits. He arrived home shortly after 3 o'clock yesterday, and partook of a light meal. He then lay down on the sofa, but had not been there long when he complained of a pain in his chest, and said he would go to bed. Mrs. Bell, after he had retired, rubbed some St. Jacob's oil on her husband's chest, and while she was so engaged he suddenly cried out, "Oh! don't," and falling back on his pillow without uttering another word expired. Several doctors were hastily summoned, one after the other, but all were out or engaged. Dr. Collins was the first to arrive, but all he could do was to pronounce life extinct. The military career of the late Sergeant-Major had extended over a period of 36 years, during which time he had done the State some service, having stood face to face with "grim visaged war" both in India and in Africa. When quite a youth, the deceased in 1854 enlisted in the 2nd Battalion of the Rifle Brigade, and shortly afterwards accompanied his corps to India, where he fought through the Sepoy mutiny, and at the conclusion of the insurrection he obtained the Indian medal. Bell served for ten years in India. In 1873-74 he was fighting in the Asbantoo War and during the campaign he distinguished himself in such a manner as to procure for himself that distinguished decoration known as the "commended bar" and also the rank of Sergeant-Major. Some 10 years ago the deceased was selected by the Horse Guards to proceed to this colony as drill instructor to the volunteer force, and in this position he remained up to the time of his death. He accompanied the Wellington Contingent to Parihaka. Mr. Bell was thoroughly esteemed, not only by his comrades in arms and his superior officers, but also by his numerous civilian friends and acquaintances. He leaves a widow, seven sons, and two daughters. The funeral, which will be a military one, will take place tomorrow, the cortege leaving the Mount Cook depot at 3 p.m. The firing party will be furnished by the Naval Artillery. The deceased was insured for £400 in the Government Insurance office. Dr. Collins having given a certificate that the immediate cause of death was disease of the heart, an inquest will not be held.

287 484 O. (Rifle Depot 5/10 -

HER MAJESTY'S



2nd Battalion REG. OF The Rifle Brigade.

Whereof General Sir Royal Highness Viscount of Thelus is Colonel. In Chief

60091

[Place and Date] Middelburg, 21 September 1874.

PROCEEDINGS OF A REGIMENTAL BOARD, held this day, in conformity to the Articles of War, for the purpose of verifying and recording the Services, Conduct, Character, and cause of Discharge of No. 112, G. Ingham Norris Bell, of the Regiment above-mentioned.

President.

Brigadier C.R. Nicholson

Members.

Brigadier G. Sottoby

Capt H.C. Dugdale

THE BOARD having examined and compared the Regimental Records, the Soldier's Book, and such other Documents as appeared to them to be necessary, report that after making every deduction required by Her Majesty's Regulations, the Service up to this day, which he is entitled to reckon, amounts to 17 years, 53 days, as shown by the detailed Statement on the 2nd page; during which period he served abroad 10 1/2 years, viz.

in India 10 years,  
in Gold Coast Africa 4 months years;  
" 2 years 3 1/2

and further, that his DISCHARGE is proposed in consequence of being made supernumerary of his Corps, in anticipation of being discharged to pension on completion of 21 years Service.

[Here state whether—Completion of period, at his own request, or as unfit for further Service. Or any other cause.]

With regard to the CHARACTER and CONDUCT of W. 112 G. Ingham Norris Bell, the Board have to report that upon reference to the Defaulter's Book, and by the Parole testimony that has been given, it appears that they have

[Insert opposite—the man's Character, the number of Good Conduct Badges in his possession, and all Badges of Merit, or gallant conduct in the Field, conferred upon him; and if in possession of a School Certificate, record it and state the class.]

been "Very good" he was when promoted in the preparation of I. G. C. B. and would had he not been promoted have been now in preparation of P. O. G. C. B. No School Certificate

[Insert the number of times his Name appears in the Regtl. Defaulters' Book, and that he has been tried by Court Martial.

His name appears once in Regtl Defaulters Book: once tried by Court Martial.

The charge, finding, and sentence, on each occasion, is to be recorded on a separate sheet, which is to accompany the Discharge Documents.

If never tried or entered in the Defaulter's Book, state so.]

[If this man received Wounds, &c., in action, or other Injuries in or by the Service, although not invalidated on account thereof, state here the nature of the wound, or injuries, and when and where he received the same, and if any Court of Enquiry was held, (as is required) state or annex the result.]

never wounded.