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From Sydney Cove to Paddington Hill: the story of Victoria Barracks

By John F. Kreckler

*Army Museum Society: Sydney; 1993; 102 pp.; ISBN 0 646 13557 0;
Ursula Davidson Library call number 503.2/33,904*



This slim, 102-page volume traces the evolution of Victoria Barracks, Sydney, from its early days at Sydney Cove beginning with the 'Grog Mutiny' until Federation in 1901. In so doing, it provides the reader with a concise overview of life in 19th century Sydney.

It begins with the arrival of British Marines in Sydney and the formation of the New South Wales Corps, which led to the erection of barracks initially in George Street.

Construction of Victoria Barracks at the new Paddington Hill site began in 1848. Various buildings were erected on the new site. They included the main Barracks Block and the largest store building then in use in the Southern Hemisphere. The book tells of the British Regiments which served at Victoria Barracks and then traces its occupation by the New

South Wales Military Forces from their formation around 1860 until Federation in 1901.

Photographs, many courtesy of the Mitchell Library, trace the evolution of the Barracks and features such as Busby's Bore within its grounds which supplied drinking water to early Sydney. A copy of the first military appreciation for the defence of Sydney, which was prepared in 1820, is included. The reader gains an appreciation of early military life in New South Wales, including the challenges for military families and their fortitude in the facing them.

I recommend the book to anyone interested in 19th century Indian colonial architecture and/or the heritage buildings of Sydney; or, indeed, to the many Institute members who have dined in the Officers' Mess at the Barracks.

Priscilla Leece