BACK TO HUSSAR FARM:

In the December Bulletin we gave a few details about William Keevers, the first grantee of “Hussar Farm” (Portion 40, Parish of Kembla) at West Dapto. His great-great-grand-daughter, Miss C. Keevers of Telarah, Maitland, has now forwarded the following further information on the old Hussar:

William Keevers, born in 1790 in Kent, served in the Inniskilling Dragoons (heavy cavalry) and the 18th Hussars (light cavalry) [Qu—did he have to transfer when he lost or put on weight?—Ed.] in the Peninsular War and at Waterloo, and reached the rank of sergeant. He married Sarah Slack, also of Kent, who was a nurse at Waterloo. They came to Australia with one child (Edward) and added ten more to the score here. Sergeant Keevers, after an appointment as drill instructor to the first troop of Mounted Police, received his grant at West Dapto, which he subsequently sold, settling near Woodstock Mills at Jamberoo. Two days before his death in November 1871 he was presented to the Earl of Belmore, Governor of New South Wales. He was buried with military honours in the Anglican cemetery at Jamberoo, where his wife is also buried.

His eleven children included Edward (married Hannah Hunt 6 October 1853), James (born 1824, married Phoebe Golding 1856), William, George, Henry, John (1828-1889), Thomas (1837-1907; married Jane Hunt 1838-1905), Mary (born 1840) and Richard (born 1842; married Sarah Hunt). One was stillborn; the name of the eleventh is unknown.

It will be seen that there are three sons married girls named Hunt. Miss Keevers would appreciate any information on the Hunt family.

Miss Keevers has also sent us a copy of photographs of William and Sarah Keevers, which has been placed in the Society’s collection.

Mr. E. G. West (member) has located William Keevers’s grave at Jamberoo, and has forwarded a transcription of the tombstone:

In
Memory
JOHN KEEVERS
died April 21 1890
aged 84
and his wife
MARIA KEEVERS
died November 1891
aged 82
and his father
WILLIAM KEEVERS
who was present at
the Battle of
Waterloo 1815.
Died November 1871
Aged 91 years
It will be noted that some of these dates and ages do not tally with the information supplied by Miss Keevers. Such discrepancies are one of the things sent to try local historians.

“. . . Let them wha can
Explain the incongruity.”

There were no Roses of No Man's Land (or less respectfully, Old Grey Mares) at Waterloo. Florence Nightingale was still unborn, and as for commissions for women, it wouldn’t have done for the Duke, sir! But no doubt the soldiers' wives who were "on the strength" and were permitted to accompany the regiment on foreign service would, to the best of their ability, have served as nurses in a crisis, like "Ould Pummeloe" in the cholera epidemic in Kipling's story, "The Daughter of the Regiment." The old breed of army wife faded away after short service came in in the seventies—Mulvaney in the same story lamented that "the army has so few rale good, honest, swearin', strapagin', tinder-hearted, heavy-futted wives as it used to have whin I was a corporal.”]