



Chelsea Pensioners

1855

Heddington



Until the 17th century the state made no specific provision for old and injured soldiers.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I it was recognised that provision needed to be made for poor, sick and disabled soldiers. This led to an Act of Parliament, passed in 1593, that levied a weekly tax on parishes for the relief of soldiers and sailors.

By 1673 it was becoming increasingly apparent that some soldiers were no longer fit for service. In 1681, King Charles issued a Royal Warrant authorising the building of the Royal Hospital Chelsea to care for those 'broken by age or war'.

Sir Christopher Wren was commissioned to design and erect the building. Sir Stephen Fox was commissioned to secure the funds necessary to progress the build.

The chosen site, set adjacent to the River Thames in the countryside of Chelsea contained the uncompleted building of the former 'Chelsey College'.

During the reign of King William III and Queen Mary II, the Royal Hospital was still under construction, so they introduced a system for distribution of army pensions in 1689. The pension was to be made available to all former soldiers who had been injured in service, or who had served for more than 20 years.

In 1692 work was finally completed and the first Chelsea Pensioners were admitted in February 1692 and by the end of March the full complement of 476 were in residence. However there were more pensioners than places available in the Hospital. Eligible ex-soldiers who could not be housed in the Hospital were termed out-pensioners, receiving their pension from the Royal Hospital but living outside it. In-pensioners, by contrast, surrendered their army pension and lived within the Royal Hospital.

In 1703, there were only 51 out-pensioners. By 1815 this figure had risen to 36,757. This was due to Napoleonic War Service

The Royal Hospital remained responsible for distributing army pensions until 1955, following which the phrase "out-pensioner" became less common, and "Chelsea pensioner" was used largely to refer to "in-pensioners".

To qualify for a Pension or a place within the hospital you had to satisfy one of two criteria. 1. Be injured whilst on active service. 2. To have served more than 20 years in the service of the country.

In 2009 the first women were admitted to the hospital following a decision in 2007 to modernise the facilities for both men and women use.

For More information about the Chelsea Hospital please visit – [Origins and History](#)

Surname	Reeves
Given Name	George
Regiment	Private, 60th Regiment of Foot
Year of Examination	1855
Date of Examination	28-Aug
Age	40
Place of Birth	Blackland
Years of Service	21 years 9 months, disallowed 2 months, hence total 21years 7 months. Since March 1833. Foreign Service – Mediterranean 4years 4 months; Mauritius 1 month; India 8 years 9 months. Since March 1833.
Occupation on Enlistment	Sawyer
Doctor's report of Examination	Generally health and strength much impaired, chronic pains in lower extremities, dyspnoea and debility.
Character Report	Very Good, 4 marks. Marks for ?? and Good Conduct.
Pension Awarded	1s. per day.
Description	Height – 5ft 7in Hair - brown Eyes - grey Complexion - fresh
Record source	WO 116/64

OPC Note:

In the 1861 census at Heddington, George Reeves aged 46 is recorded as a Chelsea Pensioner with wife Rebecca 45, step children George and Ellen Clifford, and brother Joseph Reeves, 42, born in Blackland