

## ***Monthly Showcase - February 2010***

### ***Captain Murphy by Marcel Pic (1893)***

This caricature is of Captain Murphy, Portsmouth Division RMLI. It is one of a series of twenty by 'Marcel Pic', dated 1893.

James Murphy was the first child born at Forton Barracks and joined the Drums, aged 11 years and 10 months. Two years later he embarked for the China Wars returning after more than five years service. Transferring to the ranks he progressed to Barrack-Sergeant by 1879. At the time the drawing was produced he was the Divisional Quartermaster with the rank of Honorary Captain. He retired as a Major in 1899 having also served in the Zulu Wars and at Alexandria, Suakin and Suez during the Egyptian War. He rejoined for World War I and rose to the rank of Temporary Lt-Col.

Marcel Pic's caricature shows character, personality and, like most in the series, suggests an underlying story. Did the Captain ride a tricycle around the Barracks and was there a once-famous 'dit' now lost in time? And who was Marcel Pic? Nothing has been learnt about him but perhaps he was himself a member of Portsmouth Division, blessed with a keen sense of humour and undoubted talent. Like the rest of the series the picture was drawn on poor quality sugar paper using chinks and crayons, some of which were acidic. All are awaiting conservation.

