My name is Caireen and I came to Scattery Island with my mum and gran last July as we had an ancestor who was based at the islands battery with the Royal Artillery. I saw your post asking for any information or stories that might help build more information on the island.

I live in Ayr on the west coast of Scotland and I hope that our story can bring some more information to the lives lived in the battery. Our ancestor is James Nolan. He was born around 1830 in A place near Shannonbridge/ Balinasloe in Offaly (kings county). We later pin pointed it to be closer to Clonmacnoise.

He joined the army in 1848 and He was based on the island from around 1850-1856. He would of been only young and we believed that he lied about his age to join the army as he was 5ft 11 at the age of “18” and was a little younger in his death certificate to what his army records suggested. While based on the island, he fell in love with a local girl Ellen (Helen) Scanlan. They married in St Senan’s Kilrush in 1953. Her parents were Michael Scanlan and Johanna Causland (or similar). His parents were John Nolan and Catherine Staunton. James and Ellen’s marriage is mentioned in the Scattery island history information on Clare Library website. As well as the parish records. They had 1 child John who was born in 1854 in Kilrush before they moved to England while James went out to fight in the Crimean war. Helen gave birth to two other children while in England,

Mary Ellen and James, we believe this was the Norfolk area of England. After James finished fighting in the Crimean where he fought in Balaclava and Sevastopol as well as having Turkish and Crimean war medals, he took a posting to Glasgow Maryhill Barracks. He taught drill and turnout to the first Voluntary military force and was congratulated at how well he did in the newspaper. Helen went on to have Thomas, Simon, David, Francis, Michael, Andrew, Margaret. As you can imagine, Glasgow city centre during this time was not a great place to live. Many of the children died. Simon was my 3x great grandfather, the whole family never left one specific area of Glasgow (Carlton) until my great grandfather and his children including my gran was relocated after the Second World War to try and tear down the slums they had been living in. As James was growing up in Shannonbridge area there was a significant military presence in the area, especially artillery to protect the Shannon estuary from French invasion from Napoleon. After doing some ancestry DNA, this confirmed that I did have a strong connection to the area of Balinasloe/Shannonbridge/clonmacnoise.

Kilrush meant a lot to the couple, specifically Scattery island. I am not sure if you ever had any photographs of the soldiers living on the island, or any further information from British military records of what they were doing or how long they were there, but anything you find would be fantastic. If you recognise the name Joanne Causland at all, any information on Ellen would be great, there are so many Scanlan’s and more specifically Michael Scanlan’s that it makes it difficult to piece anything together about them. I really hope that I have been able to give you a little insight to just one man who was part of the islands history.

 Caireen McGhee