



## Captain T.R. BEAMISH

[1883 – 1946]



**Lieutenant (and then Captain) Beamish was President of the Club in 1927 - 1929**

Thomas Renney Beamish was born on 24 October 1883 at St Pancras, London. He was the son of Sidney Beamish [1848-1913] and Priscilla Anne (née Barrett) [1849-1935] – both of whom were born and died in London. Thomas was the third of their five children, all born in London:

Sidney Edmund [1878-1926]

Herbert Leonard [1880-1961]

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Priscilla Violet [b. 1881]  
Claude Neville <sup>1</sup> [1886-1917]

It appears that Thomas came from London to Brisbane in 1910 on the “*Orvieto*” and his occupation was listed as carpenter. In the same year it appears that his youngest brother Claude (an insurance clerk) also came to Brisbane on the “*Galeka*”. The remainder of the family stayed in England.

In 1914 Thomas married to Catherine “Kate” Mary Veronica (née Hayes) [1886-1970] at St Stephen’s cathedral, Brisbane She was born and died in Brisbane. The couple had no children. They lived at Yerongilly, and at Kangaroo Point after World War I.

Thomas’ occupation was a commercial agent and broker. In 1914 he worked at Shell Company of Australia, Ann Street, Brisbane. The firm of Beamish & Taylor (Manufacturers and Mercantile Agents) operated pre-1920, and, on the retirement of Major Harold Bourne, Taylor continued trading as T.R. Beamish & Co.

Thomas Beamish’s military service included:

November 1915	Appointed as Second Lieutenant
January 1916	Joined the AIF’s 42 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion
September 1916	embarked for Middle East
May – Aug 1917	Operations France & Belgium
July 1917	Promoted Lieutenant
July 1917	wounded in action
October 1917	Return to Australia
January 1918	AIF service terminated (invalided)
March 1918	Appointed Lieutenant (Citizen Forces)
November 1919	to Reserve of Officers
March 1921	from Reserve of Officers to AASC
March 1923	to Reserve of Officers
June 1929	to 26 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, then Honorary Captain as GSO3 (Int)
October 1931	Promoted Captain as GSO3 (Int)
October 1934	Posted to 15 <sup>th</sup> /26 <sup>th</sup> Battalion
October 1935	to Retired List

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was raised at Enoggera in December 1915 a part of 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade of 3rd Australian Division. Due to sharing its numeric title with the famous Scottish regiment the Black Watch, the battalion became known as the “Australian Black Watch”. This association was recognised with a pipe band.

After training in Australia and Britain, the 42<sup>nd</sup> deployed to France in November 1916 and entered the frontline for the first time in December. The winter of 1916–17 was horrendous, and the 42<sup>nd</sup> spent much of it in the front line, the remainder being spent alternating between training and labouring in the rear areas. In 1917, the operations of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division were focused on the Ypres sector of Belgium. The 42<sup>nd</sup> participated in major battles at Messines on 7 June and Warneton on 31 July (where Beamish was wounded).

He joined the Club in 1919. Following his Presidency, he also served on the Committee in 1932-33. At the annual general meeting, held on 23 October 1929, Captain Beamish was re-elected and became the second person in the Club’s history to hold the position of president for three years in succession; the first having been Colonel D E Evans in 1922-24.

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<sup>1</sup> Driver C.N. Beamish enlisted in the AIF in August 1915 in 5 Company AASC (attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Light Horse Brigade train). He served in Egypt and France and died in London of pleurisy. Before migrating, he had served for 18 months with the Honourable Artillery Company in London.

In response to some concern that the current income might prove to be insufficient to service the Club's increased overdraft, a special general meeting was held on 22 February 1929 to seek approval for an increase of ten shillings in the subscription rate. Dissent was rife on this occasion and, after numerous points of order and some spirited debate, all motions and amendments were lost. The President, Lieutenant Beamish, called another special meeting a month later and this was more successful. A motion by Colonel Hughes increasing town subscriptions to three guineas, country to one pound five shillings and junior to one guinea was finally agreed to. Brigadier General C H Foott then moved 'That the extra amount so raised be definitely earmarked for providing additional comfort for members and for alterations to the Club buildings, and that the members of the United Service Club have every confidence that the Committee will apply the funds of the Club for the greatest benefit of the Members'. After this vote of confidence in the committee was passed by a large majority all went home secure in the knowledge that there would be sufficient funds to service the loan for the extensions.

At the time, the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Imperial League of Australia ("RSL") was still pressing for complete closure of all businesses on 25 April. The matter was raised again at the Club's annual general meeting, on 24 October 1930. It was decided, on the motion of Captain T R Beamish and Colonel D E Evans, 'that it was the opinion of the members of the United Service Club that Anzac Day should not be observed as a holy or sacred day or any other adjectival day and ... that it should be observed as each man thinks fit'. The whole matter of Anzac Day observance generated considerable heat in community forums, with the RSL hierarchy in favour of a closed day and others, including the Club, interpreting the wishes of former soldiers as being for a combination of remembrance and fellowship.

Captain Beamish died in Brisbane on 13 October 1946 and is buried at Toowong Cemetery.

Sources included:

- *Various web pages*
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992 by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton*
- *Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports, and sundry documents*
- *Spirit of the Forty-Second - 42nd Battalion AIF (4th Edition), Brahms, Vivien*
- *AWM and NAA archives*
- *Trove*