



Captain D.A. DOWLING OBE

[1895 – 1979]



Captain Dowling was President of the Club 1944

Donald Augustus Dowling was born to James Patrick and Anne Margaret Dowling on 7 July 1895, at Farina, South Australia. He was educated by the Christian Brothers and at the Gilbert Valley High School and excelled in football, cricket, and rowing.

On 26 January 1929, Donald Dowling married Mollie Rees at St Joseph's Church in Malvern, Victoria.

They had three children: Jill, Anne, and Tony.

Following his high school graduation, Donald attended the University of Adelaide, where he commenced studying medicine. However, his studies were interrupted by the outbreak of WW1 as,

We thank the History Interest Group and other volunteers who have researched and prepared these Notes. The series will be progressively expanded and developed. They are intended as casual reading for the benefit of Members, who are encouraged to advise of any inaccuracies in the material.

Please do not reproduce them or distribute them outside of the Club membership.

on 14 September 1914, at Morphetville SA, he enlisted in the AIF and was posted to the 4th Field Ambulance as a Private.

Private Dowling embarked for Gallipoli on 12 April 1915. Because of illness, he spent two periods in hospital but, on both occasions, he returned to duty and served with his unit until the end of the Gallipoli campaign. On 7 September 1915, he was promoted to Lance Corporal.

On 1 June 1916, following the withdrawal from Gallipoli, he embarked with his unit for France where they joined the British Expeditionary Force. On 3 September he was sent to an officer training unit in England and on 4 November 1916 he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant.

On 27 January 1917, he was posted to the 27th Infantry Battalion. On 3 April 1917, he was promoted to Lieutenant and he served with the 27th Battalion in France and Belgium throughout 1917.

On 25 September 1917, at Menin Road Ridge, during the first Passchendaele Battle, Lieutenant Dowling was wounded in action and was transferred to a hospital in England with a gunshot wound to his neck. He spent two months in hospital before, on 1 December 1917, returning to his unit in Belgium. On 23 April 1918, he was seconded as the Gas Officer to the 7th Infantry Brigade.

After serving in Gallipoli, Suez, Belgium, and France, Lieutenant Dowling returned to Australia in September 1918. His army appointment was terminated on 22 January 1919, with him being granted the rank of Honorary Captain

For his WW1 service, Captain Dowling was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal, and the Victory Medal.

In 1919 Donald resumed studying medicine at the University of Adelaide and he graduated in 1923. During that period, he gained sports blues in lacrosse and rowing and held executive positions in the University sporting clubs and the Medical Student Society.

Following graduation, Doctor Dowling became a resident at the Adelaide Hospital. He then entered private practice until, in 1927, he travelled to London for further study.

In 1928 Doctor Dowling returned to Australia and joined the Commonwealth Department of Health and was appointed as a Medical Officer at Port Adelaide.

In 1933 he gained a diploma in Public Health and Tropical Disease from Sydney University and he then worked on quarantine duties across Australia, until 1946. He followed this with three years as Chief Medical Officer at Australia House, London.

Doctor Dowling then held senior positions as the Australian delegate to the World Health Assemblies. He returned to Australia in 1951 and was appointed as the Commonwealth Director of Health for Queensland, a position he held until his retirement in 1960. During this time, he was also the president of the Queensland Branch of the Australian Medical Association. In 1962 he was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for his service to these organisations.

Donald maintained his interest in sport and public life; he was a delegate to the Australian Olympic Federation and the manager of the Australian Swimming Team during their tour of South Africa in 1959. He was also President of the Australian Amateur Swimming Association and was elected a Life Member of the Association in 1969.

Doctor Dowling served on several industry and War Service Appeal Tribunals. He also served as Medical Officer for the 1st Military District. In 1978 he was made a Fellow of the Australian Medical Association.

Donald was an active member of the Club, which he joined in 1937, having served on the Committee from 1940 to 1941, as Vice President 1943-1944, and as President 1944-1945.

Following 64 years of service to his country, Doctor Donald Augustus Dowling OBE died in Brisbane on 8 March 1979. He was buried at the Pinnaroo Lawn 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
- Australian War Memorial collection <https://www.awm.gov.au/collections/p10721176>