



Major D. G. M. MURPHY AM

[1914 – 2005]



Major Murphy was President of the Club 1954-55

Douglas Gordon Murtagh Murphy was born in Elsternwick, Victoria, on 17 August 1914 – son of Murtagh Robert Murphy and Kathleen Mary (née Bell). He had two siblings, Peter, and Margaret.

He was educated at Tocumwal Public School, Ivanhoe Grammar School, and at Hay War Memorial High School (NSW). He was awarded a Scholarship to Sydney Teachers College, Sydney in 1930, and completed a Bachelor of Economics at the University of Sydney in 1938.

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.

In March 1941 Douglas became engaged to Agnes Millicent "Nancy"(née McWhirter) [2014 - 2017] of Brisbane, and they were married on 5 June 1941 at Larrakeyah Barracks, Darwin - where he had been serving as Adjutant of the Darwin Mobile Force.

They had four children:

- Diana Margaret (b.1944) who became a teacher.
- Derek James Murtagh (b.1946) who became a stockbroker, barrister and businessman in both Hong Kong and Australia.
- Susan Mary (b.1948)
- Douglas Robert Murtagh (b.1951) who became a barrister and later Queens's Counsel in Brisbane

Douglas joined the Army and graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1939. He initially served in the Infantry including Darwin Mobile Force; and later transferred to Signals (including in 3 Division in Melbourne in 1942) before appointment to staff positions. He resigned from the Army after the conclusion of the War. He was Mentioned in Dispatches in 1947.

By 1950, Douglas had established himself as a stockbroker in Brisbane a Douglas G. Murphy & Co. From 1953 to 1955 he was a Director of McWhirters Ltd; and remained active in Brisbane commercial life until the 1980's. He was an Associate of the Australian Society of Accountants, and of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries.

He was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in the 1983 Australia Day Honours for *Service to the Community*

Douglas joined the Club in 1947. He joined the Committee in 1950 and became Vice-President in 1952. He was elected President 1954 – 55 and served as Immediate Past President 1956 to 1960. He served an additional two years in that role in lieu of the late Major MacMinn who had died in office as President. He remained on the Committee 1961 – 1966.

The Club history reports that Major Murphy was an active Member and office bearer of the Club. He was also the first graduate of Royal Military College, Duntroon to become President of the Club.

Douglas had a keen interest in cricket and served as President of the Queensland Cricket Association from 1968 to 1977.

In the post-war years, the club fielded a competitive cricket team in local competition and at various special matches.

One match of note was played at Perry Park in November 1954 between the Club and the Press accompanying the 1954-55 MCC Tour of Australia (proceeds to Legacy). The Press team included past Australian (Lindsay Hassett, Jack Fingleton and Bill O'Reilly) and English (Bill Bowes, Fred Brown, Eric Bedser and George Duckworth) Test players. The Club team included John Tuckfield (captain), Bill Brown, and Doug Murphy. English commentator John Arlott, along with the former Queensland dual international Dr Otto Nothling were umpires. The Governor (and Club Patron) Sir John Lavarack attended. The Club team won 187 runs to 160. Doug Murphy top-scored on the day with 49 runs (out lbw to Eric Bedser).

Doug was still turning out for the occasional game of cricket as a *Lord's Taverner* and turning in very creditable performances as both a wicket-keeper and late order batsman into his 70's.

By the mid-1950's the Club had absorbed the large influx of Officer members from those with service in the Second World War and was firmly ensconced in its new premises on Wickham Terrace. However later in the decade its financial position was not as strong as it could have been (in part due to the financial impact of the Moreton Club tenancy in the Green House ceasing when

that club moved to its present New Farm location; and in part due to membership fees not progressively increasing; and in part due to the effects of the late 1950's credit squeeze).

In 1955 the sale of the Greenhouse was contemplated – however ... *Major Murphy, thought disposal of the Green House was far too important a proposition to be considered in haste. He also knew well that the membership would object to the sale of any of the Club's property.* It did not proceed.

Major Murphy was active as the Immediate Past President – from serving on a Committee to review the Library and Reading Room facilities and operation; to effecting the authorisation of the Secretary to “admit serving officers as 'temporary members for a period not exceeding seven days’” in order to take advantage of the bar trade from their thirsts and their casual accommodation requirements; to being involved in negotiations on the re-development of the Club site (which came to nought).

Doug Murphy died in Brisbane on 20th March 2005. He was survived by his wife Nancy, who died in Brisbane on 9th August 2017, aged 103 years.

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
- Trove
- Contribution from Major Murphy's sons, Derek, and Douglas.