



Captain F. TICKELL CMG, CNF

[1857 – 1919]



Captain Tickell was President of the Club in 1905 ¹

Frederick Tickell was born on 7 March 1857 at Amoy Harbour, China (now Xiamen). He was the son of Captain George Tickell [1823-1890], mariner and member of the Royal Naval Reserve, who was born in London and died in Melbourne. His mother was Charlotte May (née Crabbe) [1821-1877]. She was born in Berkshire and died in Melbourne. He had three siblings:

¹ Under the Club's original 1892 "Rules" or "Constitution", the Presidency of the Club alternated "as of right" between the senior Army and Naval Commanders in the Colony (and later the State) of Queensland. A separate elected position of "Chairman of Committee" also existed who, as implied by its name, actively managed the Club through its volunteer Committee Members – including Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. In 1910 the Rules were amended to reflect a governance model, which has essentially existed ever since, where the elected President chaired the Club Committee.

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.

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- George Edmund [1851-1918] Born in Stepney, London and died in Melbourne. Married Sarah Jane Briggs [1853-1878] in Melbourne in 1878; and after her death he married her younger sister Alice Briggs [1859-1941] in Melbourne in 1881 - they had eight children.
- Windsor Herbert [1855-1925] Born at sea near Calcutta and died in Fremantle, WA. An accountant. He married Susanna (née Hallows) [1857-1940] in Victoria in 1882. They had six children. In 1913, he later married May Blanche (née Sherring) [1889-1943]. She was born in Bourke and died in Kyabram.
- James [1865-1921] Born in London and died in Narrogin, WA. A railway worker. In 1894 in Melbourne he married Josepha (“Jessie”) Martha Mary Ann (née May) [1871-1953]. She was born in Ballarat and died in Perth. It is not known if they had children.

The early part of Frederick's life was spent on his father's ship, but in 1869 the family settled in Melbourne where he was educated at Scotch College in 1870-75. Tickell went to sea and later joined the Union Steamship Co. in New Zealand, gaining a Master's Certificate; and in 1888 he became a Sub-Lieutenant with the Victorian Naval Brigade.

In 1886 at Williamstown, Victoria, he married Mary Elizabeth (née Figg) [1859-1939]. She had been born in West Lothian, and died in Melbourne,

They had four children:

- George Herbert Allan [1888-1909] Born in Melbourne, a mariner and lost at sea on SS *Waratah en route* from Melbourne to London.²
- Charlotte Mary [1892-1988] Born and died in Melbourne. She married Rev. Kenneth Thorne Henderson [1891-1965]³ a Church of England clergyman schoolmaster, in 1915 in Melbourne. They had four children - Dr Margaret Mary Henderson [1915-2017], Jessie Noel [1916-2012], Barbara June [1919-2006], and Kenneth Graham [1922-2006].
- Evelyn Lucy [1896-1976] Born and died in Melbourne. Married John William Wright [1896-1965]⁴, an architect, in Melbourne in 1923. They had five children.
- Kathleen “Kay” May [1901-1981] Born and died in Melbourne. Married Frank Mackenzie George [1899-1952]⁵, a lawyer of Cobden, Vic., in Brisbane in 1927. They had two daughters.

The family followed Frederick's career and lived in Melbourne, Brisbane, and then again in Melbourne.

Promoted Lieutenant in 1889, Tickell spent six months in 1890 attached to the Royal Navy's Australian Squadron, serving aboard HMS *Rapid*. In 1893, he was selected for instruction in

² SS *Waratah* was a passenger and cargo steamship built in 1908 for the Blue Anchor Line to operate between Europe and Australia. In July 1909, on only her second voyage, the ship, *en route* from Durban to Cape Town, disappeared with 211 passengers and crew aboard. No trace of the ship has ever been found.

³ Captain (Chaplain 4th Class) K. T. Henderson M.A., Dip Ed. 1913 - 2nd Lieutenant 5th (City of Melbourne) Battalion, Australian Infantry Regiment. AIF 1916-18 - 12th Infantry Brigade, Anzac Corps Troops, 2nd AGH - UK and France. Medical discharge.

⁴ He is believed to have served in the AIF in 1918.

⁵ Lance Corporal F.M. George. 1942-45 Volunteer Defence Corps

England where he gained first-class certificates in gunnery and torpedo, and completed a course in ordnance at Woolwich Arsenal. During his time in England, he served as a Lieutenant in the

protected cruiser HMS. *Royal Arthur* and joined in manoeuvres aboard HMS *Northampton* and the battleship HMS *Majestic*.

On his return to Australia in 1897 Tickell was promoted Commander and in November became Commandant of the Victorian Naval Forces, a position he was to hold until 1904. In 1900 the Victorian government offered assistance to Britain in putting down the 1900-01 Boxer Uprising in China. With her navy all but defunct after a decade of neglect, Victoria could provide no warships - merely a naval brigade. Under Tickell's command two hundred men left for Hong Kong aboard the requisitioned liner SS *Salamis* in August 1900. Sent initially to occupy the captured forts at Taku (on the Hai River near Tianjin), the Victorians were employed as troops but saw little action. Tickell was mentioned in dispatches and was subsequently appointed CMG for his services in China.

In December 1900 he was promoted Captain and after Federation became third in seniority in the Commonwealth Naval Forces behind (Sir) William Creswell and Captain C. J. Clare. In the reorganization which followed the creation of the CNF, Tickell served as Naval Commandant in Queensland in 1904-07 before resuming his former position as Naval Commandant in Victoria.

He was acting Naval Director while Creswell attended the 1909 Imperial Defence Conference in London. Together with his fellow officers in the CNF, Tickell was an advocate of a local naval force and a supporter of Creswell in his calls for a national Australian navy. In 1910 Tickell brought the recently completed destroyers *Yarra* and *Parramatta* from England.

Like other former colonial naval officers who did not have backgrounds in the Royal Navy, Tickell was transferred to an administrative position when the Royal Australian Navy was formed in 1911. He became Director of Naval Reserves (subsequently renamed Auxiliary Forces) - a post which he held for the rest of his life. In 1912, he was appointed an aide-de-camp to the Governor-General⁶. Promoted Commodore in 1916, he was raised to Rear Admiral in March 1919 in recognition of his war work and length of service.

Rear Admiral Tickell died in Melbourne on 19 September 1919.

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 Dictionary of Biography, Volume 12, (MUP), 1990
- AWM, NAA, DVA archives
- Trove

⁶ The Right Honourable Thomas Denman, 3rd Baron of Denman GCMG KCVO PC JP; and then The Right Honourable Sir Ronald Craufurd Munro-Ferguson GCMG PC