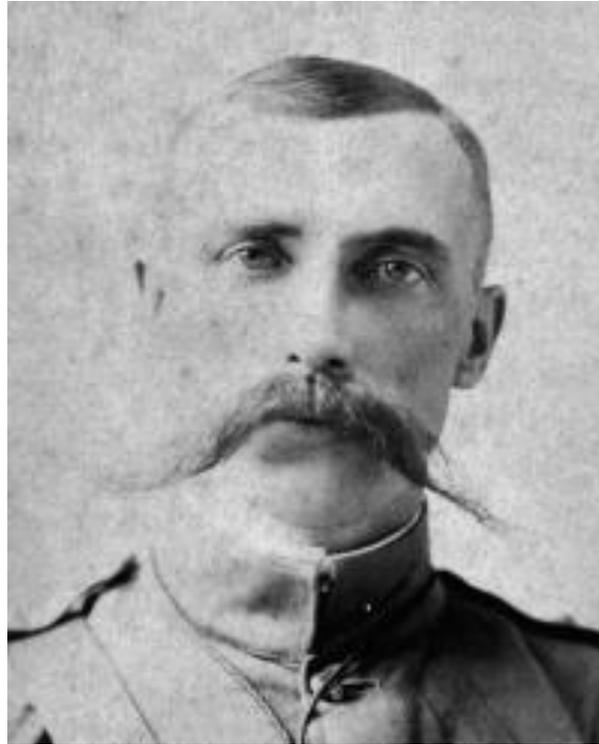




Colonel C.D.W. RANKIN VD

[1869-1940]



Colonel Rankin was elected to Life Membership of the Club in 1934

Colonel Rankin is believed to have been a Founding Member of the Club in 1892

Colin Dunlop Wilson Rankin, soldier, politician, cane farmer and company director, was born on 20 January 1869 at Galston, Ayrshire, Scotland, second son of William Rankin, colliery manager, and his wife Jane (née Anderson). Educated at Galston Public School and Kilmarnock Academy, Colin accompanied his family to Queensland when his father became manager of Queensland Collieries Co. Ltd at Howard, near Maryborough, in 1884. Colin joined its staff. By 1890 he was assistant company manager, grew sugar at *Tigh-na-Bienne* on the Isis River north of Howard, and became a clerk and valuator with the Isis Divisional Board (1890-99).

He had been chairman of the Howard Shire Council since its formation in 1903, and in 1905 successfully contested the seat of Burrum in the Legislative Assembly after unsuccessful attempts in 1899 and 1904. He married Annabelle Davidson (née Thomson) on 5 September 1906 at Maryborough and they settled on his plantation.

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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An eloquent man with a fine physique and strong personality, Rankin promoted rural interests during his thirteen years in parliament. He became a council member of the Australian Sugar Producers' Union. His membership of the Farmers' Parliamentary Union (Country Liberal Party from 1913), however, exacerbated disunity among government ranks. After unsuccessfully challenging Denham's leadership, Rankin was Secretary for Railways briefly in 1915, then became deputy leader of the Liberal Opposition when Labor won the May election.

He failed to hold Burrum in the 1918 election. Next year when his brother William Charles died, he succeeded him as general manager of Queensland Collieries Co. Ltd and moved to the company's house, *Brooklyn*, at Howard.

As managing director in 1924-40, Rankin continued a tradition of paternal despotism. He had found the company in poor shape with falling output and inadequate coal reserves; charges have also been made of 'intense exploitation, sub-standard conditions and hard fistedness'. He courageously took out new leases in the Burrum district and opened new mines which helped the company to weather the Depression of the 1930s.

Rankin was commissioned as a Provisional Lieutenant, in the Wide Bay Regiment, Queensland Defence Force, on 27 March 1986. He was confirmed in that rank on 12 November 1987 and was subsequently promoted to Captain.

A Major when the South African War broke out, Rankin volunteered for service and, on 13 January 1900, sailed with the Second Queensland Contingent. He was appointed second-in-command of the First Australian Regiment of Mounted Infantry. From February to May 1900 Rankin was engaged in operations in the Orange Free State and from July to November in Transvaal. He also saw action at Diamond Hill and Riet Vlei. He was then appointed to the staff of Major General Sir Edward Hutton, as the Deputy Assistant Adjutant General.

In March 1901, Rankin returned to Queensland. In 1903, he was promoted Lieutenant Colonel and was placed on the unattached list. He assumed command of the Wide Bay Infantry Regiment in 1906.

On 26 August 1915, Rankin joined the 1st AIF and he embarked for Egypt on 3 September 1915. He served briefly in Egypt before being appointed to command the 11th Brigade, in the newly formed 3rd Division, as temporary Brigadier General from 1 May 1916.

On 21 December 1916, on Salisbury Plain in England, he was dismissed by Major General Sir John Monash as incapable. He returned to Queensland in November and retired with the honorary rank of Colonel on 27 February 1917.

Colonel Rankin is believed to have been a founding member of the United Service Club in 1892. He was elected as a Life Member in 1934.

Colonel Colin Dunlop Wilson Rankin VD died in a private hospital in Brisbane on 2 November 1940, survived by his wife and two daughters, and was buried with Anglican rites in the Howard cemetery. His daughter (Dame) Annabelle became the first woman to enter the Federal parliament from Queensland.

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 11 (MUP) 1988.