



Lieutenant Colonel Frank O'MAHONY VD

[1880 – 1962]



Colonel O'Mahony was elected to Life Membership of the Club – possibly after 1918 and before 1928.

Frank O'Mahony ¹ was born in Stanthorpe, Qld on 24 February 1880. His father was Captain Timothy Lewis O'Mahony [1834-1883] He was born in England and died in Stanthorpe.²

His mother was Adelaide Beaujolais Stuart (née Cochrane) [1838-1920] ³ She was born in Ayrshire, Scotland and died in Brisbane. They had married in 1860 in St Helier, Jersey; and emigrated to Australia in 1863.

¹ Records show two surname spellings used alternatively on documents (and by the Colonel himself) – initially O'Mahoney and O'Mahony later

² There are no records of his military service in Australia or Britain. One account suggests that he served in "the 12th Uhlans" - the 12th Hungarian (Croatian-Slavonian) Uhlans (Count Huyn's) - cavalry of the Austro-Hungarian Army from 1867 to 1918; however that Regiment appears to have been raised after he had moved to Australia..

³ She was the granddaughter of Admiral The Hon Alexander Cochrane GCB, MP, RN. Admiral of the Blue. [1758-1832]

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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They had seven children – Frank being the youngest – all born in Stanthorpe.

- Ethel Maude [1865-1938] Died in Queensland.
- Augustus [1867-1934] Died in Brisbane.
- George [1870-1873] Died in Stanthorpe.
- Leila Margaret [1872-1957] Died in Brisbane. In 1898 in Sandgate she married Hubert Jennings Imrie Harris [1871-1915] ⁴ They had two sons and two daughters. She did not re-marry.
- Percival George [1875-1941] Died in Brisbane. A public servant. In 1899 in Brisbane married Ella Maude (née Bogle) [1878-1961]. They lived at Ithaca and had three daughters and a son. They appeared to have separated in the mid-1930s.
- Brenda Isabel [1878-1965] Died in Brisbane. In 1904 in Queensland married Gerald Francis Lalor [1877-1949] ⁵. They had three sons and two daughters. They appear to have separated in the mid-1930's.

After Timothy's death in 1883, the family moved to Brisbane.

Frank attended a local school and also received private tuition. On finishing his schooling, he gained employment as a clerk, and then joined the Commonwealth Bank, initially in Brisbane. and after 1928 moved to Sydney. In 1931 with his work, he moved with his family to Perth WA, and in 1936 returned to Sydney and lived at Beach Street Coogee until at least 1958. Frank retired circa 1950.

In 1915 Frank married Jennie (sometimes Jeanie) Stuart (née Whipham) [1885-1965]. They lived at Albion and later in the 1920s at "Rosebank", Swann Road, Taringa. They had two sons:

- Frank Dundonald [1916-2002]. Born in Brisbane and died in Sydney. He followed his father into the banking industry in Sydney and also into the army - serving as a gunner with the 2/1 Medium Regiment, from 1940 to 1945. He married Kathleen Mary (née Cahill) in Sydney in 1941.
- Max Stuart. Born in Brisbane in 1920 and died in retirement at Shoal Bay, NSW circa 2000. He was employed as a clerk in Sydney before enlisting in the Royal Australian Navy, where he served as an Able Seaman, on HMAS Penguin, from 1943 to 1946. He married Mary Veronica (née Downing) in Sydney in 1947.

Frank enlisted in the Queensland Defence Force and served in the Boer war in 1900, with the Australian Light Horse (Queensland Mounted Infantry). In August and again in October 1900, he wrote letters to his family, describing his experiences in South Africa and these were published in the Queensland newspapers. Frank was injured, when his horse fell on him, breaking his arm. He was evacuated to Australia and was subsequently discharged.

On 29 November 1901, he was appointed a Provisional Lieutenant in the Australian Field Artillery. On 1 July 1903, Lt O'Mahoney was appointed as a Provisional Lieutenant in the post federation 13 Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry). On 20 March 1905, he was promoted to substantive Lieutenant.

On 2 April 1910, the Western Star and Roma Advertiser newspaper published an article praising Lieutenant O'Mahoney's care for the men under his command in 13 Artillery Brigade. In 1910

⁴ Lieutenant Colonel H.J.I Harris South Africa 1900-01, Lieutenant 2nd Queensland Contingent. Middle East 1914-15, CO 5th Light Horse. KIA Anzac. Member and Secretary [1902-04] of United Service Club.

⁵ Son of Hon. James Lalor. MLA for Maranoa 1878-88; MLC 1888-1921 (National Party).

Captain O'Mahony, Australian Field Artillery, passed with honours an examination in field engineering.

By 6 September 1913 he was serving as a Captain and on 22 June 1914 he was promoted to Major.

On 17 March 1916 Lieutenant Colonel O'Mahony was commissioned as a Temporary Lieutenant Colonel in the AIF and was appointed to command the 9th Field Artillery Brigade. On 1 April 1916 He was transferred from the Artillery Training Depot as commander of 1 Brigade Field Artillery, as a temporary Lieutenant Colonel. On 11 May 1916 he embarked on HMAT Argyllshire for England. On 18 May 1916 he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel.

An extract from a report by Major General Monash, dated 24 November 1916 stated:

"Lieut Colonel F O'Mahony (Commanding 9th Field Artillery Brigade) -

This officer is not considered qualified to command a group in the field. He has shown a lack of experience and a lack of ability to improve under training ... It is recommended that this officer be sent to a Training Centre for further training."

A subsequent report by the Commandant 3 Reserve Brigade RFA stated:

"Lieutenant Colonel O'Mahony AFA has completed a course of gunnery at this Reserve Brigade Instructional School and has done exceedingly well in all subjects. He has also passed with 'Distinguished' the Revolver Course for Officers."

That report stated that Lieutenant Colonel O'Mahony had completed his training and was available to proceed overseas. However, this report was mislaid and was not received by the GOC AIF Depots. Meanwhile Lieutenant Colonel O'Mahony was sent to command an Australian Artillery Detachment in Swanage, England.

Lieutenant Colonel O'Mahony requested an interview with the GOC Depots however his request was not passed on and he was temporarily placed in command of the Reserve Brigade RAA. He remained in that position for 8 months.

On 27 February 1918, Lieutenant Colonel O'Mahony submitted a report detailing his experience and ability. On 15 April 1918 he was returned to Australia. And, on 28 June 1918, his AIF Appointment was terminated.

He was subsequently appointed to command the 5th Field Artillery Brigade and a number of newspaper articles detailed his distinguished service in that formation.

On 28 March 1925 it was reported, in a newspaper, that a United Service Club dinner was held for Lieutenant Colonel F O'Mahony who had just retired from command of 5 Field Artillery Brigade and the active list, after 20 years of service.

Lieutenant Colonel F O'Mahony had been awarded the 1914/15 Star, the British War Medal. The Victory Medal and the Volunteer Officers' Decoration.

In 1905, Lieutenant O'Mahony was elected to membership of the United Service Club and, on an unknown date possibly between 1918 and 1928, was elected to Life Membership. He was an active member of the club and on 7 April 1927 he and Mrs O'Mahony were recorded as attending the Naval and Military Officers' ball.

On 24 March 1955 Lieutenant Colonel O'Mahony was recorded in the Commonwealth Gazette as being removed from the retired list.

He died in Sydney NSW on 14th July 1962.

O'Mahony had another connection with the Club.

Frank's sister Leila married Hubert Jennings Imrie Harris [1871-1915] in 1898 in Brisbane. Harris was born in Dalby, attended Brisbane Grammar School, and was General Secretary of the Queensland Ambulance. They had four children. Harris and O'Mahony both served in South Africa (Harris in the Second (Queensland Mounted Infantry) Contingent 1900-1901). Harris served in the Great War as a Lieutenant Colonel commanding the 5th Light Horse in the Middle East. He was killed in action at Gallipoli on 1 August 1915 and is buried at Shell Green Cemetery. Colonel Harris was a member of the United Service Club and is commemorated on the Club's World War One Roll of Honour.

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
- NAA archives
- Trove