



Lieutenant Commander W.J. WEATHERILL RANR

[1854 – 1928]



Lieutenant Commander Weatherill was the Honorary Secretary of the Club in 1919.

William John Weatherill was born on 23 August 1854 at Hexham, in the Hunter Valley of NSW. His father was Captain William Foxtton Weatherill [1819-1906] a merchant sailor of Merewether, NSW and born in Whitby, Yorkshire. After retiring from the sea, he had become the Secretary of the Newcastle Marine Board. His mother, Lucy Dorton (née Cole) [1827-1863], was born in Plymouth, England and had married in Gibraltar in 1846. Young William was their eldest child, with four younger sisters and one brother.

William was educated in Newcastle and Sydney and began work in a colliery company's office where he became an accountant. He joined the Naval Brigade in Sydney and then travelled abroad and returned to Newcastle before settling in Brisbane in the mid-1880s.

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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His naval career was erratic from records uncovered. Confusion sometimes develops during the transition from the Queensland Naval Defence Force to its Commonwealth successor. Further confusion relates to the precise titling of ranks – there appears to have been a “senior” Lieutenant which was sometimes called Lieutenant Commander, and a Lieutenant Commander was sometimes called Commander. Weatherill’s service appears to have been

- 1891 Sub-Lieutenant
- 1893 Acting Lieutenant
- 1894 Lieutenant
- May 1900 Lieutenant on the Retired List of the Queensland Naval Forces.
- In the portrait at the head of this article he appears in the uniform of a Commander in the Queensland Naval Defence Force
- 1901 the Queensland Naval Defence Force was transferred to the Australian Naval Forces
- July 1903 Retired list Commonwealth Naval Forces as a Lieutenant with the rank of Commander
- 1904 Commonwealth Navy List as a Commander.
- August 1904 Lieutenant Commander in the Reserve at age 50.
- July 1911 Commonwealth Naval Forces become Royal Australian Navy
- August 1914 Temporary Lieutenant Commander RAN

Club records of the day describe his rank in 1919 as Lieutenant Commander.

While his business was an accounting practice (W.J. Weatherill & Co), William, who never married, was energetic in social and community circles. It was reported that his favourite pastime was sailing, and he was also a keen motorboat owner.

Amongst his prominent interests (1908-1927) was the Institute of Social Service, of which he was President – which aimed to develop social responsibility and service amongst the community. He influenced the Naval Cadets’ relationship with the Institute.

He was:

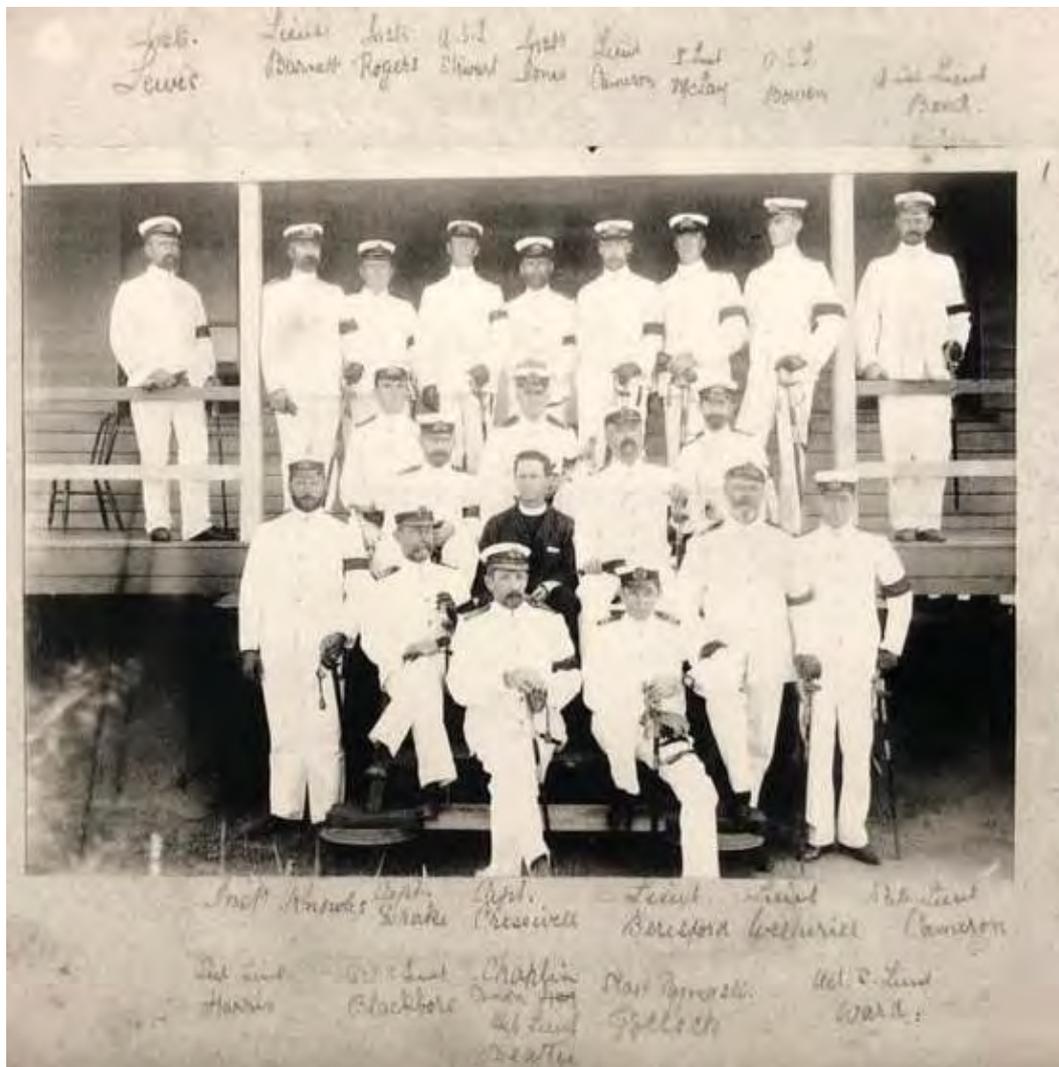
- Secretary of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce (1908-19); Vice-President and President (1918-22)
- Vice-Consul for the United States of America (1892-1908)
- Consular Agent for Panama (1904-12), and
- His Majesty’s Trade Correspondent for Queensland (1920-28)

In addition to being a member of the Club, and Secretary in 1919 (and possibly also in 1920-21); he was:

- a member of the Royal Queensland Yacht Club (now Squadron) - being Secretary (1887-94), and Commodore (1897-98)
- Honorary Secretary of the Brisbane Sailing Club (1892-93)
- First President and Member (1896-1914) of the Naval Association
- President of the Brisbane Rifle Club (1900-01)
- Treasurer of the Boy Scouts Association (1908-1923)
- a Commissioner of the Sea Scouts (1912-16)
- Honorary Treasurer Mission to Seamen (1917)

William lived at “Wyreema” in Butler Street, Clayfield, and he died 18 March 1928 after a prolonged illness and was buried in Toowong Cemetery.

During his tenure, Lieutenant Commander Weatherill served President Pye



Lieutenant Wetherill (Front row second from right)

Captain W.R. Creswell CMG, RN (Front Left)

Commandant of the Queensland Marine Defence Force 1900-04
(and President of the USC in 1901 and 1903)

The black armbands indicate mourning Queen Victoria's death in 1901

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
- Trove
- Commonwealth Gazettes
- Contribution from Commander Weatherill's Great-Great Niece Ms Kate Reeve July 2022