



## Brigadier G. G H. IRVING

[1867 – 1937]



### Brigadier Irving was President of the Club 1917 - 18

Godfrey George Howy Irving was born in Melbourne on 25 August 1867. His father was Professor Martin Howy Irving [1831-1912], a London born Baliol College, Oxford University graduate, and his mother Caroline Mary (née Bruyeres) [1827-1881] – who was born in England and died in Melbourne. They had married in Hampshire in 1855.

The family moved to Melbourne in 1856 where Martin was professor of Greek and Latin Classics with Ancient History at the University of Melbourne. In 1871 he became the headmaster of Wesley College and Hawthorn Grammar. In 1887 he became the Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University. As a Lieutenant Colonel, he had commanded 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Victorian Volunteer Rifles in 1884-90. He died in Surrey, England.

*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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Godfrey had seven siblings:

- Edward Hamilton [1856 – 1929] Born in London and died in Melbourne. Married Julia (née de Mole) [1853-1919] in Melbourne in 1881. He succeeded his father as headmaster of Hawthorn Grammar School in 1884
- Margaret Isabel Mary [1857-1943] Born and died in Victoria. Did not marry. She founded Lauriston Girls School with her sister Lillian.
- Edith Sibella Frances [1859-1931] Born and died in Victoria. Married Richard Barker [1846-1929] in Melbourne in 1888. They had six children <sup>1</sup>
- Alice Maud Mary [1861-1939] Born in Victoria, Died in Sussex, England. Married Arthur Herbert Belcher [1858-1924] in London in 1889.
- Mabel Annie Rose [1866-1949] Born and died in Victoria. Married Hugh Claude Pennefather [1863-1951] in Melbourne in 1899.
- Mary Ethel Lillian [1868-1948] Born and died in Victoria. Did not marry. She was Principal of Lauriston Girls School for many years.
- Harold Alfred Cardale [1870-1933] Born and died in Victoria. Married Grace Anne (née Roberts) [1872-1956] in Melbourne. A doctor who served in the Medical Corps in World War I and was later Superintendent of the Caulfield Repatriation Hospital.

After the death of his first wife Caroline in 1881, Martyn Irving had married Mary (née Mowatt) [1848-1939] in 1882 in Melbourne. She was born in Dublin and died in Surrey, England. They had four children (Godfrey's half-brother and sisters):

- Helen Mary Elise [1884-1988] Born in Victoria, died in Buckinghamshire, England. She had married Dr William Graham Campbell [1864-1948] in England in 1906.
- Kenrick Bower Clark [1885-1947] Born in Victoria and died in Surrey, England. He had married Erminie Maude (née Darlot) in Perth, WA in 1913.
- Audrey Mary Leslie [1888-1889] Born in Victoria and died as an infant.
- Dorothea Mary Ethelred [1889-1975] Born in Victoria and died in Surrey, England.

Martin Howy Irving and his wife Mary returned to England in 1900.

Godfrey Irving was educated at Hawthorn Grammar.

In 1886 he began working for McCulloch, Sellar & Co., a Melbourne import / export, and property company founded in 1861 by the four-time Premier of Victoria - Sir James McCullough KCMG

Godfrey married Ada Minnie Marguerite (née Derham) [1873 – 1994] on 29 Apr 1896 in Melbourne. They had three children:

- Sybil Howy [1897-1973] She was born and died in Melbourne and did not marry. She served in the Volunteer Aid Detachment ("VAD") in World War I, and from 1924-40 was Secretary of the Girl Guide Association of Victoria. She left that role to become the founder and Controller of the

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<sup>1</sup> Including Brigadier Lewis Ernest Stephen Barker CBE, DSO, MC [1895-1981]. Graduated Royal Military College, Duntroon 1916. 8<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade 1916; 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion 1916-18; awarded MC; 12<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade 1918; 2/4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment 1940; 2/1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment, 1940; awarded DSO; Director of Artillery 1941; CRA 1 Corps; CRA 7<sup>th</sup> Division; CRA 1<sup>st</sup> Army; CBE 1945; Comd 4<sup>th</sup> MD; retired 1949

Australian Women's Army Service ("AWAS") during World War II (1941-47) with the rank of Colonel. She was awarded an MBE in 1939.

- Ronald Godfrey Howy [1898-1965] He was born and died in Melbourne. He graduated from Royal Military College at Duntroon in 1919. He married Violet Vaughan (née Hiskens) [1900-1961] in Melbourne in 1924. It is not known if they had children. He enlisted in the AIF in 1939 (number NX1) and served as Lieutenant Colonel in RASC HQ 6th Division. He was awarded an OBE in 1942. He retired in 1953 as a Brigadier and was awarded a CBE in 1954.
- Freda Mary Howy [1903-1985] She was born and died in Melbourne and did not marry. A prominent journalist in Australia and overseas, she served as a Captain on her sister's staff in the AWAS (1943-45), and was awarded an MBE in 1981.

Because of Irving's military career, the family moved frequently.

Godfrey Irving's military career was substantial.

1885 He enlisted in 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Victorian Rifles while still at school.

1887 Commissioned

1891 joined the Victorian Permanent Forces as a Captain.

Over the next nine years he was Adjutant of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Battalions. In March 1900 he became Adjutant of the Victorian Rangers

1900 Promoted Major in July

1902 Volunteered for service in South Africa.

He commanded 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Australian Commonwealth Horse as a temporary Lieutenant Colonel. Four days after arriving in South Africa the Battalion was ordered home as the war had ended. He then resumed duties on the Victorian staff.

1903 Army Headquarters staff

1905 Training overseas in England and India

1906 posted to Administrative and Instructional Staff ("AIS") in Sydney

1909 Appointed Commandant 5<sup>th</sup> Military District (Western Australia) and promoted substantive Lieutenant Colonel.

1911 Promoted temporary Colonel.

1914 Appointed Commandant 4<sup>th</sup> Military District (South Australia).

1915 Promoted substantive Colonel and in May and was appointed Chief of the General Staff – replacing Lieutenant General Legge who had been appointed GOC AIF. [At that time, the Chief of the General Staff was the senior staff officer in the Army, and not the senior operational officer as was the case in later years.]

His chief responsibility was overseeing the expansion of the training establishment in Australia to provide reinforcements for the AIF units overseas and raising and training what would become the 2nd Division.

1915 Appointed in November as GOC Australian Troops in Egypt (Australian Intermediate Base and AIF Training Depot Egypt)

1916 Promoted Brigadier General in February and appointed Commander 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade in Egypt.

1916 Appointed Commander 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade in Egypt in March.

In March, the Brigade (as part of 5<sup>th</sup> Division) moved by foot from Tel-el-Kebir to the Suez Canal. A series of adverse personnel and physical conditions resulted in the march ending in disarray. Irving was relieved of his command by the Divisional Commander.

- 1916 Appointed Commandant 4<sup>th</sup> Military District.
- 1917 Appointed Commandant 1<sup>st</sup> Military District (Queensland)
- 1921 Appointed Deputy Quartermaster General at Army HQ, Melbourne.
- 1922 to the Unattached List
- 1925 Promoted Major General on retirement.

Club records are incomplete, however it would appear that Brigadier Irving joined the Club on his appointment as Commandant 1<sup>st</sup> Military District in 1917. His immediate appointment as President appears to perpetuate the Club's then long-standing practice of alternating the Club Presidency between the senior Army and Navy appointments in the State.

He is recorded as being on the Committee of the reciprocal club The Naval and Military Club, Melbourne in 1900-05 and again on his return to Melbourne on retirement in 1923-27.

Major General Irving died in Melbourne on 11 December 1937.

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, 1899-1939, Vol 9
- Bean, C. E. W., *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918. Volume III: The AIF In France 1916*
- AWM, NAA and DVA archives
- <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Irving-1980>