



## Colonel T. PRICE CB

[1842 – 1911]



### Colonel Price was President of the Club in 1902 and 1904 <sup>1</sup>

Thomas Caradoc Rose Price was born in Hobart on 21 October 1842. His father, John Giles Price [1808-1857] was born in Cornwall <sup>2</sup> and at the time of Thomas' birth was Chief Magistrate in Hobart. His mother, Mary (née Franklin) [1814-1894] was born in Cawnpore, Bengal and died in Melbourne. They had married in Hobart in 1838. Thomas was the third of their eight children:

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<sup>1</sup> Colonel Price's multiple terms of office as President are explained by the following. 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

<sup>2</sup> A younger son of Sir Rose Price, 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet of Trengwainton, Cornwall.

*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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- John Frederick [1839-1927] Born in Tasmania, died in Devon, UK.
- James Franklin [1841-1878] Born in Hobart, died in Mulgrave Island, Torres Straits.
- Emily Mary [1845-1922] Born in Hobart, died in Melbourne.
- Anna Clara [1846-1941] Born in Hobart, died in Melbourne. Married Rowland Hayward [1831-1910] in Melbourne in 1866. They had two sons and eight daughters.
- Emma Julia [1847-1849] Born and died on Norfolk Island.
- Gustavus Lambert [1849-1853] Born on Norfolk Island, died in Hobart.
- Jane DeWitten [1852-1937] Born on Norfolk Island, died in Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

In 1846 the family moved to Norfolk Island when John Price was appointed Commandant at the penal colony. They returned to Hobart in 1851. In 1854 the family moved to Melbourne where John Price was appointed as Inspector-General of Penal Establishments in the State of Victoria. On 26 March 1857 John Price was called to Williamstown where numbers of convicts housed in hulks had mutinied about their provisions. When he boarded one of the ships he was surrounded by convicts and brutally bashed. He died the next day from his injuries. Seven men were hanged for the deed.

After completing school, Tom was given an opportunity to enroll as a cadet at the East India Military College at Addiscombe in England.

In 1874, he took leave to Melbourne where he married Mary Dennistoun (née Baillie) [1853-1899], and they returned to India. She was born in Horsham and died in Melbourne. They had three children:

- Thomas Rose Caradoc [1875-1949] Born in Madras, India, died in London, England. Married Dorothy Patience (née Verey) [1880-1969] in London in 1911. Army Officer.<sup>3</sup> They had three sons and a daughter.
- Lorna Mary Elizabeth Rose [1876-1925] Born in Madras, India, died in Melbourne. Married Ainslie Mills [1874-1908], a station manager, in 1901 in Melbourne. He was born in Melbourne and died in Hay, NSW. They had two daughters and a son.
- Vivian Franklin Lyon Rose [1881- 1915] Born in Biarritz, France, died in Alexandria, Egypt. Married Jean Purvis (née Mills) in Melbourne in 1912. Naval Officer<sup>4</sup>

Following the death of his first wife Mary in 1899, Tom married Emmeline Shadforth (née Reid) [1864-1927] in Melbourne in 1902 - she was 23 years his junior.

Tom Price had a varied and colourful military career.

In July 1861 he began his service in India as an Ensign in the Madras Infantry. In June 1873 he was promoted to Captain, and in June 1879 he was promoted to Major in the 40<sup>th</sup> Native Infantry. He had a period of service in Burma but returned to India where he was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel in April 1883. He retired shortly after this and took his family back to Melbourne. The family moved to Heidelberg to the north-east of Melbourne where Tom Price took up farming.

His arrival in Australia had been noticed and the Victorian Minister for Defence, Lieutenant-Colonel Sargood, prevailed upon him to offer his military skills and knowledge. By the end of 1883 he had been involved in a commission of inquiry into Victoria's ordnance store. In 1884, he became active

<sup>3</sup> Brigadier T.R.C. Price CMG, DSO. Graduate of RMC Sandhurst. Served North West Frontier and Tibet. 1914-18 Welsh Guards, Commander 11 Brigade, DSO 1917, CMG 1919, four times mentioned in Despatches. Post war Commander 142 Brigade and Army Small Arms School.

<sup>4</sup> Lieutenant Commander V.F.L.R Price RN. Served in Royal Indian Marine. Commissioned Royal Navy 1915; HMS *Europa*; OC Alexandra Docks Admiralty Coaling Depot, Newport, Wales. Gallipoli 1915 – sometime NTO and Beachmaster at North Beach, ANZAC

in promoting new and encouraging existing rifle clubs, and he then accepted command of the rifle clubs.

In 1885 he raised and commanded a new volunteer regiment of mounted riflemen in Victoria (Victorian Mounted Rifles) with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and was appointed to the Permanent Military Forces of Victoria. He is credited for first introducing the khaki slouch hat as part of an Australian military uniform in that year.

There was a maritime strike in Melbourne in July 1890 which developed into a general strike and the government feared that the police may be overwhelmed. Price was placed in command of some 225 men at Victoria Barracks who were held ready to take action if a riot developed. Price was alleged to have ordered his men to “fire low and lay them out’. The soldiers were not deployed. Word of this came to the press and a significant public scandal developed involving parliamentarians and a court of enquiry. He was exonerated but many still believed he had effectively ordered the shooting of strikers and his reputation suffered for many years.

In 1900, he commanded the second Victorian Contingent sent to the Boer War. He served in South Africa for nine months and was engaged consistently. He also provided leadership of several formations in the field – including The Hanover Field Force on the Orange Free State/Cape Colony border, and was given command of the Australians in the 4<sup>th</sup> M.I. Corps.

He was awarded a CB for his services in South Africa.

On his return to Melbourne he was tasked to organize the military festivities for the opening of the first Federal Parliament in May 1901.

In March 1902 Price was appointed as the Commandant of the Commonwealth Military Forces in Victoria. In July of that year he was appointed the Commandant of the Commonwealth Military Forces in Queensland. He retired from this position in August 1904 and returned to Victoria.

It has been reported that his was a personality not to be trifled with. He was a strict disciplinarian and measured a man on his ability and not on his birthright. He described himself as ‘somewhat rough at times’, this, no doubt, referring to his being short-tempered, impatient with fools, occasionally lacking diplomacy and being outspoken. He was not averse to using bad language (which frequently got him into trouble), and the Melbourne Punch enjoyed lampooning him and type-casting him in the role of a foul-mouthed, ill-tempered military figure. He was never one to pander to public opinion, being disdainful of it when it turned against him but nevertheless basking in any form of approval or adulation. However, despite the fall-out from the Maritime Strike of 1890, he was not a brutal man, and he showed a great deal of affection for his men, believing that if he did what he asked of them they would support him.

On his retirement in August 1904 he returned to Victoria and bought a house at the seaside town of Warrnambool. He continued to be involved in the activities of Rifle Associations and took a deep interest in all matters military.

He died on 3 July 1911 at Warrnambool and was buried with full military honours at Melbourne’s General Cemetery.

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
- Trove
- AWM, NAA and DVA archives