



Lieutenant J. F. CHURCH VD

[1860 – 1937]

Research has not revealed a photograph of Lieutenant Church

Lieutenant Church was elected to Life Membership of the Club in 1936.

Lieutenant Church was a Foundation Member of the Club in 1892.

John Forster Church was born in Balmain, NSW, on 16 December 1860.

His father was Walter Marshall Church [1829- 1910] and his mother Annie Esther (née Stubbs) [1832-1898] They had married at Hunters Hill, NSW in 1849 and lived in Sydney (variously at Balmain, Concord and Paddington). John was the middle child of their five daughters and four sons:

- Walter Thomas [1850-1923]
- Annie Emily [1854-1916]
- Marian Barbara [1855-1856]
- Ellen Nellie [1859-1933]
- John Forster
- Ernest [b. 1867]
- Clare Amy [1869-1923]
- Edith Nina [1872-1949]
- Charles Edwin [1875-1931]

John married Miriam (née Elphinstone) [1868-1958] in her birth parish of Glebe, NSW in 1889. She died in Brisbane. They had two children:

- Doris Moselle [1890-1974] born in Marrickville, NSW. Moved to Melbourne in 1914 and married George Forrest Davies [1887-1959], a solicitor with the ES&A Bank, in 1916. They had two sons - John Forrest Davies¹ [1917-1943], and William Gardner Davies [1921-1991], and a daughter Beryl Frances Davies [1923-1985]. Doris died in Melbourne.
- Evelyn Fraser [1899-1974] born in Brisbane. Married Samuel King Howes [1884-1931] in Brisbane in 1919. They had two sons – Dr James Fraser Howes [1920-1991], and Dr Samuel John Howes [b.1928]. Evelyn died in Brisbane.

The family lived at Hamilton and then at New Farm from the mid-1920s.

¹ VX66229 Captain J.F. Davies AAMC, RMO of 2/23rd Australian Infantry Battalion. Died of Wounds 12 September 1943 at Lae, New Guinea

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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It appears that John Church was first appointed to the NSW Naval Brigade on 15 April 1873. In view of his age (12 years and 4 months), this may have been as a Midshipman Cadet. He is recorded as a Lieutenant in the Naval Brigade by December 1891 and retired on 26 November 1895. He did not see any active service; and in 1895 was awarded the Volunteer Officers Decoration ("VD") for 20 years meritorious service. This would suggest his commissioning in 1875.

His civilian career was varied and was centred around his successful business as an insurance agent and stockbroker. His first recorded appointment in Queensland was in June 1895 when he was appointed by the NSW Government as magistrate for that colony in Brisbane. This appears to have been some form of pre-federation legal arrangement. The appointment followed his retirement from the NSW Navy and presumably required his residence in Queensland.

In 1904 he was a founding shareholder in the City Electric Light Company Ltd, and then in 1916 was one of the promoters of the Ipswich Electric Supply Company Ltd. Both roles appeared to be in his capacity as a stockbroker.

In 1909 and in 1914 he was appointed to the Brisbane Fire Brigades Board as the member elected by the fire insurance companies. This role appears to be in his capacity as an insurance agent.

By 1904 he was partner with Edward John Holmes in the firm of Holmes & Church (originally in Creek Street and later at 272 Queen Street). Holmes had purchased a seat on the Brisbane Stock Exchange in 1895. The firm was an omnibus business trading as mercantile, fire, marine and general insurance agents; stock and share brokers; and importers. In September 1933, E.J. Holmes retired and was replaced by his son James Harvey Holmes. After Church's death in 1937 James renamed the business as *J. Harvey Holmes* and concentrated on stock and share broking. In 1986 that firm merged with two other Brisbane family broking firms – Tynan & Co. and Lynch & McCarthy- to form Holmes Tynan McCarthy. In turn, in 1989, that firm merged with Wilson & Co to form Wilson HTM. In 1986 the company listed on the Stock Exchange and continues today.

Oral history records Church as a foundation member of the Club – in 1892. While it is possible that he may have moved to Brisbane by then, he still retained his NSW Naval Brigade commission until 1895 – although he may have been seconded or on leave before then.

Lieutenant Church died in Brisbane on 10 March 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
- NAA and AWM records
- Trove