



Brigadier R.M. STODART VD

[1879 – 1956]



Brigadier Stodart was elected to Life membership of the Club in 1934

Robert Mackay Stodart was born on 14 September 1879 in Brisbane, the son of James Stodart [1849 - 1922] and Elizabeth Henrietta Noble (née Gair) [1854 - 1934]. James Stodart had been born in Edinburgh, moved to Melbourne as a child, and moved to Brisbane in 1876 to set up his own business as a general merchant. He was a significant figure in Brisbane and Queensland commerce, and a Member of the Legislative Assembly 1896 – 1918.

Robert had three younger siblings James [1883 – 1922], and twins Charles Cecil [1886 – 1961] and Georgina Louise [1886 – 1972].

He was educated at “Mr Marks’ School” and then at Brisbane Grammar School (1894-96). His school report noted “Manly and earnest showing qualities as officer of cadets, which promise well”.

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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From Brisbane Grammar School, he entered his father's business.

On 4 July 1912 he married Adele Madelene (née Abercrombie) [1886 – 1973] at the Anglican Church of St Mary the Virgin, Brisbane. They had three daughters:

Margaret	[1913 – 2002]
Adele Nea	[1914 – 1964]
Cecil Grace ("Sheena")	[1917 – 2007]

The family home was at "Boonburgh" Chatsworth Road, Coorparoo.

In the inter-war years Stodart had taken over his father's business and was much involved in public affairs. He served on a number of company boards - including National Mutual Life Association, City of Brisbane Building Society, Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade (for 30 years including a term as President), Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (including a term as President). He also served on a number of community and charitable entities – Trustee of the War Nurses Fund, Trustee of the Brisbane General Cemetery, Brisbane Chamber of Commerce. National Parks Association, Coorparoo Rifle Club.

Stodart's military career started at Brisbane Grammar School where he was a Cadet (1894), Sergeant (1895) and Cadet Under Officer (1896).

In October 1897 he enlisted in the Queensland Mounted Infantry. Promoted Lieutenant in 1898, he served in the South African War with the Queensland Second Contingent and saw action at Poplar Grove, Driefontein, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Riet Vlei, and Zilikat's Nek. He was awarded the Queen's Medal with three clasps.



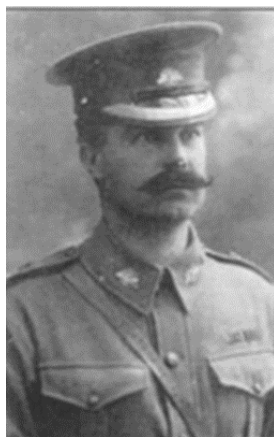
Queensland Contingent to the Coronation of King Edward VII [1902].
Lieutenant Stodart as commander of the contingent (centre, seated)

In 1902 he was selected to command the Queensland contingent to the Coronation of King Edward VII in London.

He was a Captain in the 13th Light Horse Regiment from 1903 and military adjutant in 1907-11. Promoted Major in 1908, he commanded the 13th Light Horse Regiment from April 1912. He transferred to the 2nd Light Horse Regiment in July 1912 and was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel in 1913 and continued to command this regiment until 1916. In 1914, Stodart was instrumental in gaining approval from the Prime Minister for the wearing of emu feathers in the Light Horse headdress – a custom derived from the practice originating in the Queensland shearers' strike of 1891.



Lieutenant Colonel Stodart [centre, fourth from right] and officers of 2 ALH - 1914



Lieutenant-Colonel Stodart (1914)

Stodart served at Gallipoli from May to September 1915 commanding the 2nd Light Horse. 2 LHR and 15 Bn held Quinn's Post for many months, and also Pope's Hill. On 6 August during the offensive across The Nek, Quinn's and Pope's, Stodart decided to not commit his Regiment in view of the slaughter being experienced. He was censured for this decision but exonerated in later years.

Although wounded on 6 June, he remained on duty until evacuated on 15 September. His wound was a bullet to the nose from a Turkish sniper at Quinn's Post. From Egypt on 3 March 1916 he embarked for home medically unfit. He commanded troops on sea transports until 15 April 1917 when his appointment in the Australian Imperial Force was terminated.

On the retired list of the Australian Military Forces with the rank of Honorary Colonel from April 1921, Stodart re-activated to command the 1st Cavalry Brigade in Brisbane as a Temporary Colonel in 1931, and then Colonel in 1935. He was Aide-de-Camp to the Governors-General Sir Isaac Isaacs and Lord Gowrie from 1935-40.

Appointed a Temporary Brigadier in 1938, and then Honorary Brigadier on the Retired List on 1 May 1940, Stodart became Queensland member of the Joint State Council, Voluntary Aid Detachments, and chairman of the Compensation Board, Northern Command.

He was the Consul for Sweden in Queensland from 1921 (his father had been Vice-Consul for Sweden in Brisbane) for which he was appointed Commander of the Order of Vasa. The photograph at the head of this biography shows Stodart in uniform wearing the necklet of the Swedish order and the aiguillettes as ADC to the Governor General.

He was appointed a Commander of the Order of St John of Jerusalem.

Stodart joined the Club in 1898 (on commissioning at age 19). He served on the Committee 1908-10 when he was Honorary Treasurer.

Brigadier Stodart died at his Coorparoo home on 29 June 1956.

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
- A. L. Lougheed, 'Stodart, Robert Mackay (1879–1956)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/stodart-robert-mackay-9236/text15167>, published first in hardcopy 1990, accessed online 18 September 2018.
- Contribution from Tony Walker (grandson) May 2020