



Colonel W.W. ALDERMAN CMG, DSO

[1874 – 1935]



Colonel Alderman was the Part-time Secretary of the Club in 1935

Walter William Alderman was born on 17 February 1874 at Hobart Town, Tasmania - the only child of William Alderman [1824-1903], railway overseer, and his wife Eliza (née Ridley) [1829-1904]. She was born in London and in 1848 was transported to Hobart for seven years imprisonment for her second offence of “uttering” counterfeit coin. In 1850 she married John Miller [1827-1878] of Hobart and bore him five children. They separated and in 1873 she appears to have married William Alderman. It appears she had separated from William and married John Hartley in Melbourne in the 1890s.

In 1878 the family had moved to Melbourne where Walter was educated privately - probably by his father, an Englishman fluent in seven languages. He became a picture-framer by trade before joining the Army at age 18.

Walter married Rose May (née Turner) [1881-1954] at East Melbourne on 16 March 1905. They lived at St Kilda and in Bendigo. They had two daughters and a son:

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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- Enid May [1905-1979] Born in Bendigo. Married Dr Carvosso Wiburd [1893-1985] in Brisbane in 1933, and lived and died in Sydney. They had two daughters.
- Dulcie Mary Barbara [1908-1994] Born in Bendigo. Married David Andrew Swan [1903-1966] in Brisbane in 1933. Died in Brisbane. They had four sons and a daughter.
- Lawrence William "Bill" [1920-2008] Born in Hobart. A doctor with the RFDS and in the Northern Territory. Married Dorothy Elizabeth (née Barry) [1922-2009] in Victoria in 1948. Died in Ballina. They had a daughter and two sons.

In 1892 Walter joined the militia with the 2nd Victorian Regiment, as a private. In March 1901 he joined the Australian Military Forces and was appointed as an Acting Sergeant Major in the Administration and Instructional Staff (CMF). He was commissioned Lieutenant in July 1910 and promoted Temporary Captain in 1912.

In November 1913 Alderman went to Auckland for exchange duty with the New Zealand Military Forces. He was promoted Captain in July 1914, and when war broke out he joined the New Zealand Expeditionary Force as Adjutant of the 1st Auckland Battalion. His unit sailed with the first Australian convoy, and Alderman was wounded at the landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. He re-joined his battalion in August, was promoted Major as (Brigade Major, New Zealand Infantry Brigade), and was in charge of one of the last detachments to leave Anzac Beach on 20 December. For his services in the Gallipoli campaign he was appointed C.M.G. in June 1916.

On the Western Front Alderman, promoted Lieutenant-Colonel in February 1916, was given command of the newly formed 2nd Auckland Battalion which went into the Armentières sector in mid-May 1916. He remained in command during intensive trench warfare until late June when he was evacuated in ill health. In July he was mentioned in dispatches. He spent a year in England, briefly serving at New Zealand Headquarters and then commanding and training reserve battalions. In August 1917 he returned to the 1st Auckland Battalion and led it throughout the third Ypres offensive, then headed a school for non-commissioned officers. In March 1918 he again commanded his battalion in the Somme region, later acted as brigade commander, and took part in the final Allied offensive in the Amiens-Hazebrouck area. That year he was twice mentioned in dispatches and in December was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

Alderman's service with the New Zealanders ended on 10 February 1919. He was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel in the Australian Imperial Force (with seniority from March 1916), returned to Australia in June, and was discharged in July. He resumed general instructional duties with the Australian Military Forces, quickly regaining his wartime rank. He served in various staff appointments in Hobart, becoming District Base Commandant in 1923, and was then transferred to Sydney as Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General. His final appointment was to Brisbane where he served as a General Staff Officer, 11th Mixed Brigade, from 1928 until his retirement on 17 February 1934 - with the rank of Honorary Colonel.

At the time of his death he was the President of the South East Queensland Branch of the Returned Soldiers League.

Colonel Alderman joined the Club in 1928 on his posting to Brisbane and served on the Committee 1933-34. After retiring from the Army, he became the Part-Time Secretary of the Club in 1935. His passing was mourned by the Committee in January 1936; and he was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel Groom (the Club's Auditor of several years) – one of 17 eligible members who applied for the position.

Colonel Alderman was tall (at 6 feet 4 inches) and regarded as a man of considerable personal charm but a strict disciplinarian when it came to training soldiers; he had excelled at instructional

work. The historian of the Auckland Regiment commented on his 'genius for organization' and considered him 'unmatched in the N.Z.E.F.' as a training officer.

Survived by his wife, two daughters and a son, Alderman died of cancer at his Auchenflower home on 24 December 1935.

During his tenure, Colonel Alderman served President Hill

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
- Neil Gow, 'Alderman, Walter William (1874–1935)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/alderman-walter-william-4992/text8295>, published online 1979, accessed online 12 August 2021
- NAA