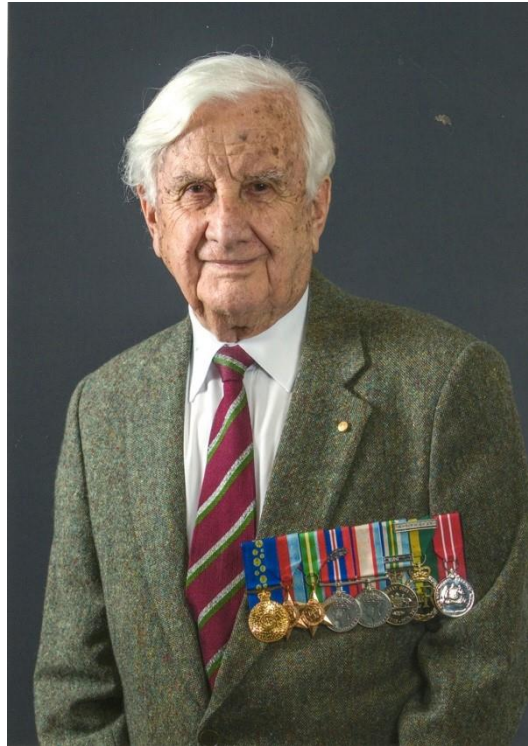




## Lieutenant Colonel J.S.D. MELLICK OAM, ED

[1920 – 2023]



**Colonel Mellick is distinguished by being believed to be the longest serving Club Member with over 75 years of membership.**

*The Club has previously acknowledged Lieutenant Colonel Tom Stephens as its longest serving member. He had joined the Club on 19 September 1924 and passed away on 4 June 1999 (aged 97 years and 1 day) - having been a Club member for 74 years, 8 months and 14 days (27,290 days).*

*Colonel Mellick was elected to membership of the Club on 2 February 1948 and surpassed Colonel Stephen's record on 21 October 2022 at the age of 102. Colonel Mellick died as a respected member of the Club on 2 March 2023 – a member for 75 years and one month [27,423 days]*

John Stanton Davis Mellick (universally known as Stan) was born on 22 Feb 1920 in Londonderry, Ireland.

His father was John Julian Mellick. He had been born on board a ship to Australia in 1892 – via Melbourne and Sydney, then on to Rockhampton, Queensland. He was a motor mechanic and driver, and at one stage operated a bus company in Rockhampton. He died in Brisbane in 1969.

*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.*

*Please do not reproduce them or distribute them outside of the Club membership.*

His mother was Violet Crawford (née Canning) who was born in Londonderry in 1898. She died in Brisbane in 1994.

John Mellick served with the Australian Flying Corps 1916-19 in UK and France. While visiting Ireland with a friend after hostilities ceased, he met Violet, and they married there in May 1919.

They lived initially in Londonderry and returned to Rockhampton, via Sydney, with their infant son in May 1920.

John Mellick also served in the Second World War on part-time duty with LoC Signals, Brisbane [1942-44].

The family lived in Rockhampton, joined in 1921 by Stan's only sibling - Sydney Oliver Alfred – known as "Ollie". He served in the Second World War [1940-43] as a Captain in the Signals Corps. After the war he commenced medical studies but became a pharmacist at Carina. Ollie joined the Club in 1984 and remained a member until his death. He died in Brisbane in 2018.

In 1924 the family moved to Enoggera, and then to "Glenderry" Walton Street, Dutton Park.

In 1929, Violet and her two sons spent a year with her family in Ireland. Stan recalls that, when there, "my grandfather, formerly in the Enniskillen Fusiliers, made my younger brother and me wooden rifles and coached us in handling them. That helped in the cadets!"

Stan attended Dutton Park Primary School to Grade 6, and then Buranda School for his "Scholarship" year. Both he and his brother were awarded scholarships to Brisbane Grammar School, which he attended for two years. Along with many other students in the Depression, he left school at age 15 and sought work. He commenced work with Australian Guarantee Company in the finance industry and started accounting studies. Then the war intervened.

Stan married Brisbane-born Violet "Letty" Katts [1919-2007] in December 1941. Letty was a Brisbane pianist and composer – whose "A Town Like Alice" and "Never Never" remain in the Australian popular ballad repertoire.

Their only child – a daughter Jill, (born in Brisbane in 1948) - subsequently carved out a career in California, where she was a retired professor of psychology and is noted for her work on Carl Jung. Jill died in the USA in December 2022.

In 2016, Stan established *The Letty Katts Fellowship* at the State Library of Queensland – which supports the research and documenting of Queensland's music history.

After Letty's death Stan married Sally Robin (née McPhee) in 2008. A nurse by profession, her family were long-time friends of both the Katts and Mellick families. Sally is a Club member, as were her father and brothers.

Stan's extensive Army career started in 1936, when he joined Kelvin Grove's 11 Mixed Brigade's Signals as a Cadet. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant at the outbreak of war in 1939. He was initially denied enlistment by the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF, due to the availability of older signals officers, and was posted to the Light Horse Brigade at Beaudesert as Brigade Signals Officer.

Three months later, an appointment as Signals Adjutant at Lytton followed with the rank of Temporary Captain. In July 1942, after three months at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, he joined 5th Division's General Staff and was appointed into the AIF as a Captain.

In January 1943 the division deployed to the large US /Australian base at Milne Bay. Action at Salamaua followed, resulting in its capture in September 1943, and Stan's subsequent transfer to HQ First Australian Army General Staff as a Major.

In 1944 the HQ moved to Lae, where it commanded South-West Pacific operations. Stan was involved in forward operational planning for the re-capture of Rabaul - which was not actioned as the Japanese surrender followed in August 1945. Stan was Mentioned in Dispatches for his work on the General Staff in this period. He transferred to Reserve of Officers in December 1945.



LTCOL Mellick ED, RASigs c1960

Stan was requested to return to the Active List in 1958 by the then GOC Northern Command – who had been his wartime G1 at HQ 5 Division and later Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Daly, Chief of the General Staff. An appointment on staff at Victoria Barracks was followed by command of 4<sup>th</sup> Signal Regiment - comprising both regular troops and a Citizens Military Forces complement. With only one interruption, this period of service continued to 1970.

Four years study followed his war service, qualifying him as a pharmacist in 1949. He promptly opened a pharmacy at Enoggera and, some years later, in the city in Isles Lane.



Stan Mellick in the Isles Lane Pharmacy c1957

In addition to his work as a pharmacist Stan served on the Board of St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital; Grace College Council; and the University of Queensland's Board of Studies in Pharmacy. In the latter role, he initiated efforts to upgrade the pharmacy course to university degree level because of the increasing numbers of complex drugs. The faculty took its first students in 1960 and the first graduated in 1964.

A lingering illness from the war asserted itself requiring Stan to withdraw from active work. He rediscovered his interest in literature and in 1964 began an Arts degree at the University of Queensland. He graduated with Honours in 1968.

After graduation, he was invited to join the university's English Department as a tutor. He accepted and advanced to Lecturer, while continuing to retain some pharmacy interests. Stan subsequently wrote and edited several published works in his speciality areas of Australian and Queensland literature. He was awarded a PhD in 1978 on the subject of the British novelist Henry Kingsley in Australia.

In 2005, Dr Mellick was awarded an OAM - recognising his work in Australian literary studies here and overseas and, as well, his involvement with the restoration of St Paul's Presbyterian Church in Spring Hill, a gem designed by colonial architect Francis Drummond Stanley.



LTCOL Mellick with Club President LTCOL Coyle  
at the 50-year Member Lunch 2021

Stan Mellick reminisced about the Club:

“In all this, what about the Club? Well, in earlier days it loomed large but now that I live at Cleveland and don't drive, my visits are necessarily fewer. For me, though, it was and still is a refuge of normality and friendship derived from the values and traditions of the three Services and wartime. Those values, inherent in the Club's ambience, are, I believe, a much-needed presence in a somewhat frantic postmodern world. That's why, I guess, I'm still a member.”

His recollections date back to 1948 (the year he joined) and our Club in George Street which, he says, “was small and quiet, with an Officers Mess ambience accompanied by a sense of privilege in being there”.

Colonel Mellick died peacefully on 2 March 2023, at the age of 103. He was survived by his wife Sally.

Sources included:

- *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
- USCQ Magazine April 2020
- Various web pages, including AWM and National Archives
- Interview with Colonel Mellick, December 2022