

THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PAPER NUMBER: 21

PREPARED AND DELIVERED BY: E.F.Waugh

DATE: 28 November 1994.

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SIR FREDERICK GALLAGHER GALLEGHAN K.B.E., D.S.O., I.S.O., E.D.  
1897 - 1971

Frederick Gallagher Galleghan was born at Jesmond, Newcastle, on 11 January 1897 the first child of 23 year old Alexander Dunlop Galleghan and 17 year old Martha Galleghan (nee James).

Alexander's grandmother, Eliza (no surname recorded) was a West Indian girl who, in 1821, had a child by a Scot named John Jennings, a resident of Barbados. The child, also Eliza, was sent to Scotland for education where, aged 18, she married William Grant, a 55 year old widower.

Eliza and William emigrated to Newcastle, N.S.W., where one of their daughters, Janet, married James Galleghan who also, by coincidence, came from Barbados. One of their children was Alexander who inherited the physique and colour of his Barbados ancestry.

Alex, who worked on the wharves at Newcastle, was a gifted bare knuckle fighter, played football and enjoyed a drink with his mates.

When he married Martha, a deeply religious girl and a strict Baptist, she persuaded him to mend his ways but on the day their son was born he decided to celebrate with some of his friends including the local policeman, who closed the police station. Alex knew exactly what he wanted to call his son and it was decided to register the name there and then. Alex, supported by half the group, and the policeman, supported by the other half, made their way to the locked police station. Having come to the conclusion that 8 people could not squeeze through the door at the same time they finally entered and seated the policeman, who was also the registrar, at his desk. With pen raised he asked for the child's name. Frederick Galleghan he was told. Anybody would agree not easy names to pronounce. Frederick Gallaher? Not Frederick Gallagher, Galleghan. At last it was right. The policeman, who was not at his best that day, dutifully entered it as such in the register.

After Galleghan was born the family moved to Little Dennison St. Carrington, NSW - a poor area of Newcastle at that time and the family was typical of the area. It was a time when work was not readily available and there was no dole, social services or assistance to the unemployed but the family survived on what work Alex could obtain plus his vegetable garden and Martha's good housekeeping.

Galleghan attend Wickham School and from there graduated to Cook's Hill High School. Conditions at both schools were not good as far as teacher/student ratios were concerned. At High School for instance there were 2 different classes, each of 40 pupils, in the one room divided only by a passageway. He was a good

student and in his first year encouraged by a teacher, a Mr Jamison, he began a lifelong interest in history. He was later to earn a reputation as an expert in the lives and reputations of certain generals. He was especially interested in Napoleon.

Galleghan was particularly conscious of the colour of his father's skin, his own was quite sallow, and felt the occasional slight against his family descent by other children.

This consciousness of skin colour became the driving force of his ambition - which was to lift himself above those who were content to remain in the "working class suburb" where he lived.

In 1909 at the age of 12 he was old enough to join the school cadets and thus began his lifelong military career. One of his school mates said "Fred was fascinated with the power and exclusiveness of the Officers of the Corps". He not only enjoyed the Corps but lived it and read every manual that he could get his hands on. He learned them almost by rote. At the age of 16 he transferred to the senior cadets and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the 15th Battalion.

At the age of 15 he left Cook's Hill High school and joined the Post Office as a telegraph messenger boy riding a heavy regulation bike and wearing a red cap. That cap became a symbol to him as through his military career he secretly yearned for the red cap of field rank. A rank that he eventually attained.

Galleghan enlisted in the first Australian Imperial Force on 20 January 1916 - nine days after his 19th birthday. His parents were against his earlier enlistment but agreed he could make his own decision when he turned 19. His Army number was 342.

He was posted to B Company 34 Battalion AIF which was to become part of the 3rd Division. This unit trained at Rutherford and Maitland and on 1 May 1916 left for Sydney. The next day he sailed for overseas service. The unit arrived in Plymouth, England, on 23 June and began rigorous training for action in France. Galleghan was promoted to Platoon Sergeant, B Company, on 16 November 1916 and 5 days later embarked for France.

Galleghan was elated at his promotion and was certain he would regain his commission in the near future. In this he was to be disappointed.

During the battle of Messines in April 1917 Galleghan was twice wounded with shrapnel and was evacuated to England. During that battle, considered to be of importance to the overall strategy of the Western Front, his unit suffered 409 casualties in 4 days of fighting.

Galleghan returned to his unit in February 1918 and in April moved into position to defend Villers Bretonneux. It was reported that Galleghan acted with great courage in the battle - twice being given the task of placing the tapes which guided the troops along the line of attack.

On 7 August of that year, during a battle which it was hoped would be the start of the end of the war, Galleghan was badly wounded by a sniper and for him the war was over.

He was evacuated to England and arrived back in Australia on 21 January 1919 "in a hammock with the rank of sergeant" - his own words. Why not as an officer? His early promotion to sergeant and his complete fearlessness and leadership - his platoon would follow him anywhere - were qualities that should have earned him promotion. It is believed that his mixed descent debarred him from the closed ranks of the officers.

After his discharge he returned to the Post Office and later transferred to the Customs Department.

He continued an active career in the Citizens Military Forces and was promoted to Lt. Colonel on 1 August in 1932, at the age of 35. At the outbreak of World War II he was the senior lieutenant-colonel. He had been the Commanding Officer of 2nd Battalion (City of Newcastle Regt.) 1932-35, 2/35th Btn. (Newcastle Regt.) 1935-37, 17th Battalion (North Sydney Regt.) 1937-40.

Galleghan reported to Victoria Barracks on Monday 4 September 1939 and requested active service in the AIF. Despite the fact that his reputation as a disciplinarian, a leader and a meticulous soldier was already established, he was advised that there would be no battalion for him at that time. It would seem that because he had always ridden rough-shod over red tape and Army bureaucracy he had few friends at Army HQ. He watched both the 6th and 7th Divisions leave for overseas service containing many officers and non-commissioned officers from his 17th Battalion CMF.

After more than 12 months during which he made frequent applications to Victoria Barracks and individual generals he found an ally in William Morris Hughes, renowned World War I leader Billy Hughes, who insisted that Galleghan be given a command.

Finally on 17 October 1940 he was transferred to the AIF and appointed Commanding Officer, 2/30th Battalion, 27th Infantry Brigade, 8th Division. He vowed that he would produce the finest battalion in the AIF. To achieve this he recruited officers from his old CMF unit plus selected officers and non-commissioned officers from other units. He set high standards and anybody who did not meet those standards was immediately transferred out.

The Unit assembled at Tamworth on 21 November 1940. It was here during the first time the troops were assembled that the name "Black Jack" was first used. After introducing his officers he told the troops, some of whom had 6 months service, that reveille would be at 05.30 and they would commence their training by learning to stand to attention and working up from there. He went on to say that there was a chance, just a chance, that they would be allowed to handle a rifle in 2-3 weeks. Stan Arneil in his biography "Black Jack" states that he then said "that's all lads. If you want to be fighting soldiers work hard. If you want to take it easy get out of my unit."

In "The Story of the 2/30th Infantry Battalion" the authors, AW Penfold, WC Bayliss and KE Crispin, state that he said "You are the 2/30th Battalion. I am your Commanding Officer. My name is Galleghan. My rank is lieutenant-colonel. This is not a training battalion. It is an original fighting unit and it is my intention to make it the best unit ever to leave Australia. Your days of leisure are over. From now on you will have to work hard, play hard and fight hard. Go to it."

Although the day was hot he then sent them on a 10 mile route march over the hills as a shakedown. The troops, after recovering from their initial shock, were heard to say "Black Jack - what a bastard." When they finally staggered back to the show-ground they found that a rotunda had been turned into a wet canteen with kegs of cold beer waiting. This gives an illustration of his character - tough but caring.

The unit subsequently trained at Bathurst. Cursing Black Jack was one of the best ways to get through the summer heat and long route marches without water - even though they were carrying full water bottles.

On one occasion the four Companies were sent out on a 28 mile cross-country exercise - each in a different direction. At the end of the day after crossing ridges, creeks, barbed wire fences and fields covered with Bathurst burrs they arrived back at the perimeter of the camp. They then closed from arrow-head formation to march into camp behind their Company Commanders. B Company were first to arrive and they had averaged 3.9 miles per hour. It was feats such as this that earned the unit the title of "Galleghan's Greyhounds". Out of this training came a very close knit unit.

Galleghan's only set back came at Bathurst. The unit returned to camp after a 3 day exercise, tired, dirty and looking for a clean up and rest, only to be told that a kit inspection would be held the following morning. They decided then and there, each company independently, that they would not do it. Despite Black Jack's orders the troops stood fast on the parade ground because they believed the order to be unjust - which it was. The inspection did take place 2 days later.

Galleghan and his unit left Sydney for Singapore on 29 July 1941 aboard the "Johan van Oldenbarneveldt". On arrival he was informed by Bro. Lt. General Gordon Bennet that the Brigade was to be commanded by Brigadier DS Maxwell MC. Galleghan was furious as he could not work with Maxwell, a doctor in the CMF with the rank of Captain, who had not served in the Army since World War 1.

His promotion over Galleghan smacked of the power game all over again. He threatened to return to Australia and seek another unit but his own officers persuaded him to stay. In September 1941 the battalion was moved from Changi to the small town of Batu Pahat in Johore where training continued until 8 December 1941 when the Japanese bombed Singapore and Galleghan moved his troops forward to Batu Anam where he set up an ambush with B Company. It was a brilliant concept.

The Japanese, riding bicycles 8-10 abreast were allowed to cross a bridge at Gemen-Chai to within 600 yards of the end of the ambush area. The bridge was blown, taking with it those Japanese still crossing, and then concentrated fire from riflemen and bren-gunners was brought to bear on the troops in the ambush area. The Japanese lost 700-1000 men and the Australians 1, a sergeant killed by a sniper's bullet.

From then on the 2/30th was engaged in close fighting with Japanese infantry, machine gunners and light tanks. The Japanese pulled back their 5th Division and sent in the 1st Tank Regiment and later the 9th (Japanese) Division.

Galleghan's iron discipline and training were vindicated by the fact that he only lost 26 killed or missing and 55 wounded. Years later Japanese historians wrote "the

Australian troops encountered at Gemenchai - Gemas fought with a bravery the Imperial Japanese Army had not previously encountered". They did not mention any other Australian unit.

As the Japanese advance continued towards Singapore, Galleghan and his troops were engaged in a number of encounters until General Percival announced the surrender. During the campaign they had covered 400 miles, 76 by foot. In the 4 weeks campaign the 6 battalions and support troops of the 8th Division suffered 3100 casualties including 1789 dead.

Galleghan's first days as a prisoner of war were incredibly busy as he organised a clean up of the camp and began to impose strict discipline, allotment of shelter, mess parades, obtaining rations and looking after the sick.

Galleghan always demanded fitness and efficiency but in return gave his "boys" almost tribal loyalty. Stan Arneil said he was a "focal point, he was the one who seemed to be there protecting, succouring."

Yet Russell Braddon describes how Galleghan issued an order that any of the other ranks that possessed walking shoes and shirts, shorts etc. must surrender them to the officers so that they could be properly dressed as officers and gentlemen. He also writes that Galleghan was "as sincere as he was conceited and vain. He was like the monarch at the trooping of the colour. He became quite hysterical if denied by anyone, even officers, the military courtesies. He was in many ways egomaniacal, and although brave and conscientious, destructive." He then goes on to describe what a great job Galleghan did in re-establishing self-respect in the men who returned to Changi from the railway. Also how Galleghan was the officer who was not afraid to stand up to the Japanese - as belligerent to them as with everyone else.

After the Japanese transferred all ranks above that of Lt. Colonel to Formosa in July 1942, Galleghan became Commander of all AIF prisoners of war. He became Deputy Commander Allied POWs Malaya 1942-45 and Commander Changi Prison Camp 1943-45.

In September 1942 the Japanese, in order to force the POWs to sign a statement that they would not escape, assembled every prisoner in Changi into the barrack square at Selarang.

The 15,400 men were confined in an area 240 by 120 metres serviced by 2 taps. Syd Piddington states that Gallagher came to him and said "We'll put on a concert tonight." "Where?" "In the middle of the square." A stage was built out of scraps and the concert went on. At the end Galleghan said to Piddington "Play the King." The band struck up and 15,000 voices joined in. The Japanese were stunned.

On 21 December 1943 a party of 2/30th who had been working on the Burma-Thailand railway arrived back at Changi. Their arrival was expected and Galleghan and others were there to welcome them. They descended from the trucks and lined up as soldiers - those that could standing, others on sticks, others held up by their mates. The officer in charge, Major Johnston, reported to Galleghan "Your 2/30th all present and correct, sir." Black Jack said "Where are the rest?" "They're all here, sir." The man of iron, Black Jack Galleghan, broke down and cried.

There are many other stories of his concern for his men, both in Changi and later after the war, including the formation, in Changi, of his Battalion Association of which he became patron. He believed in loyalty, discipline, morale, care of one's brother soldiers and he practiced them all until his death.

Armistice Day and the fourth anniversary of the Battalion's formation was celebrated in Changi. After "dinner" in the subalterns hut Galleghan met the troops and in his message to them said "the unit morale is still a big factor. ....it is very gratifying to see that the unit still carries on, thanks to the loyalty of all ranks." WO Purdon in his message to the "CO" and the Officers said "You have been a hard and just father to the unit, and our birthday present to you, sir, is our continued loyalty and our best wishes for the future." At Christmas that year Galleghan was the recipient<sup>1</sup> of a remarkable assortment of original and artistic cards and messages from all units, other camps in Singapore and individuals, revealing the esteem in which he was held.

As part of an address to the troops just prior to their release he said "The aim before us has been to send home to Australia, not a mob of ex-prisoners, but a disciplined body of soldiers who can hold up their heads in all circumstances, and of whom Australia can be proud."

On 19 August 1945 the Japanese Commander at Changi, Miura, told Galleghan that the war was over. During his incarceration Black Jack had been promoted to Brigadier and he was offered a flight home which he refused. He led the 2/30th aboard the "Esperance Bay" on 22 September arriving back in Sydney on 19 October 1945 to lead his men ashore wearing the red cap of a Brigadier-General.

He did not like the term "prisoner of war" and refused to join or accept the position of patron with any POW association. He asked all ex-members of the 2/30th not to join any such organisation.

On return to civilian life he became deputy-director (NSW) of the Commonwealth Investigation Service, probably the fore-runner of ASIO.

From January 1948 to the end of 1949 he was appointed to the position of head of the Australian Military Mission to the Allied Control Council for Germany. This was an appointment that provided him with great satisfaction. He was promoted to the temporary rank of Major-General for the duration of his posting. As part of his duty he was the Australian delegate to the International Refugee Organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland. He was one of the 7 member executive and in 1949 was elected as President. He had a great deal of influence on Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration, and the Australian Government on the processing of would be immigrants. During his time in Berlin he received both the Hon Ben Chifley and Dr HV Evatt on their respective visits to Germany.

Perhaps the highlight of his time in Berlin was his audience with His Holiness Pope Pius XII in Rome. His Holiness presented both Galleghan and Vera, his wife, with medals to commemorate their visit to him.

On his return to Australia, Galleghan rejoined the Commonwealth Investigation Service and also became involved in helping others.

He joined Legacy in 1951 and was quickly appointed to the police co-operation unit.

This unit was formed in 1944 with the co-operation of the Commissioner of Police, Bro WJ Mackay. Through this committee he was able to help children by a recognition of wrong-doing, an attitude of genuine compassion and a practical attempt at rehabilitation. He also served on the Children's Homes Committee.

In November/December 19957 the Prime Minister of Japan was to lay a wreath at the War Memorial, Canberra. This caused a storm of protest particularly from the RSL. When asked his opinion Galleghan said "The past is past. The was has been over for 12 years. I will attend the reception to Mr Kishi despite the past because I believe this essentially a gesture towards peaceful association."

In 1958 the Council of the Royal Shipwreck and Humane Society of NSW invited Galleghan to becpmbe a member and the following year he was elected as honorary secretary. He was instrumental in changing the name of the Society to the Royal Humane Society of NSW.

In the same year he became Patron of the Marrickville Anzac Memorial Club. Only the third Patron since World War 1 - his predecessors being Lord Gowrie and Lord Wakehurst.

He was appointed honorary colonel of the Australian Cadet Corps in 1959. This was an appointment which pleased him greatly because it kept him close to youth and he was able to talk to them about his beliefs - particularly that of the obligations of Australians to Australia.

His character could best be illustrated by his address at the unveiling of a memorial to the 8th Division at Bathurst in 1970. He spoke of loyalty, patriotism and unity for an Australia in which all could believe. That day the large crowd really understood the spirit of Anzac.

His leisure pursuits were lawn bowls and reading. Clubs and organisations to which he belonged were Legacy, Imperial Service, Mosman Bowling and United Service (President 1958-62). He resided at 68 Avenue Road, Mosman NSW.

Sir Frederick Gallagher Galleghan died on 20 April 1971 and was buried with full military honours after a service at St Clement's Anglican Church, Mosman NSW. To the sound of the lament, played by Galleghan's personal piper from the 2/30 Battalion, his coffin was carried from the church by 8 Brigadier's and Major-generals, as pall-bearers, and placed on a black draped gun-carriage. On his coffin was his cap, sword and insignia. Among the mourners were surviving members of his battalion who had come from all over Australia.

After settling into civilian life after World War 1, Galleghan had married Vera Dawson at the Baptist Tabernacle at Cook's Hill, Newcastle, NSW. They did not have any children due, it is believed, to the fact that Galleghan, who was to be haunted all his life by the colour of his skin, was afraid that he would pass that colour onto his children.

Vera who had been his help-mate, confidant and loving wife died of cancer on 11 April 1967 and was cremated after a service at St Clement's Anglican Church, Mosman NSW. Her death almost destroyed Galleghan. Aware her life expectancy was short and knowing her man as well as she did she said to Galleghan "You couldn't live on your own - get married again - if anyone will have you."

On 8 December 1969 at St Clement's Church he married Portia Porter, a widow, who had been known to both he and Vera. Portia Porter was to be awarded, in 1978, and OBE for her work as Chief of the Red Cross. She was also awarded the Order of St John. Tragically their happy marriage was to last just a short 16 months.

Frederick Gallagher Galleghan joined Freemasonry in Newcastle at the age of 22. He was initiated on 20 August 1919 in the St John Lodge No.115 UGL of NSW passed to the Second Degree on 17 September 1919 and became a Master Mason on 14 November 1919. His membership of that lodge ceased on 19 August 1931.

He was made an honorary member of Lodge Army and Navy No.517 UGL on NSW on 9 July 1947<sup>1</sup> and continued as a member until 15 October 1970.

He affiliated with Lodge Ubique No.99 UGL of NSW on 7 November 1959 and was still a member of that lodge at the time of his death. At the monthly meeting of that lodge held at Chatswood Masonic Centre on 7 September 1963, and in the presence of the Grand Master (M W Bro EL Beers), M W Bro Harry R Maas IPGM and M W Bro Sir John Northcott PGM, a delegation of G L Officers as well as delegations from Lodge Claymore No.892, Lodge Army and Navy No.527, the choir of Lodge Victoria No.57 and the Russell Phillips Masonic Memorial Band, Galleghan was presented with a testimonial as follows:

"To Brother Brigadier Frederick Gallagher Galleghan DSO, OBE, ISO, ED.

7 September 1963

Dear Fred,

We Masons, who subscribe our names to this Testimonial, proudly number ourselves amongst the legion of Masons, Soldiers and Citizens who take pleasure in your friendship and in admiring your service.

Those of us who are members of Lodge Ubique, the Gunners' Lodge, are particularly proud that you are a fellow member and that in your person we have a Soldier, Infanteer and Masonic Gunner in perfect accord.

We rejoice therefore at the opportunity given by your attainment of Fifty Years Service as a Commissioned Officer in the Armed Services to express these sentiments and to offer our most sincere and heartfelt congratulations.

We tender our tribute to a Citizen, a Soldier and a Mason."

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E F Waugh  
November 1994.



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