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Very Wor. Bro. BISHOP GEORGE MERRICK LONG, GRAND CHAPLAIN

Bishop George Merrick Long was born at Carisbrook, Victoria on 5 November 1874, the youngest son of English parents, William and Eliza Long. He was educated at Maryborough Grammar School and upon leaving, took up employment at a local branch of the City of Melbourne Bank.

His local Vicar taught him public speaking and encouraged him to matriculate and he was eventually offered the Rupertswood Theological Studentship at Trinity College, University of Melbourne. He had a distinguished career there, being awarded first class honours in inductive logic and mental philosophy, in addition to being awarded The Trinity College Dialectic Society's medal for oratory and an Hastie exhibition.

In 1899 he was ordained Deacon and Priest in 1900. From 1899 he was in charge of the district of Foster in Gippsland where the church and rectory had been destroyed by a bushfire.

On 4 July 1900, at Maryborough, he married Felecie Alexandra Joyce.

Upon his return to Melbourne, Very Wor. Bro. Long became senior curate at Holy Trinity Church, Kew, and helped found Trinity Grammar School despite opposition from the council of Melbourne Church of England Grammar School. He became headmaster in 1904, and it was here that he taught the novelist Martin Boyd who later became a close family friend and after whom he was to name his sixth child, Martin Long. He declined nomination for the important position of headmaster of Geelong Grammar School as well as offers of leading parishes.

In 1910 he became a Canon of St Paul's Cathedral and in 1911 was elected Bishop of Bathurst and this was to be the Diocese where his great organising abilities were to come into full play. Outdated diocesan ordinances and finances were immediately revised by him and in 1912 he was awarded a Lambeth Doctorate of Divinity.

In 1917, Very Wor. Bro. Long enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces as an honorary captain and chaplain, first arriving in London before going on to France. His abilities were recognised by General Birdwood and General White who were concerned with organising professional, technical and general training to equip troops for a life outside the army after repatriation.

He agreed to set up the administrative machinery to achieve this educational goal, in the process getting the co-operation of universities, industrial institutions, the British Wool Buyers' Federation, a perfume manufacturer in France who would

accept students to study the secret process of a factory on the Riviera and the expertise of Albert Manbridge, the founder of the Workers' Educational Association.

Some 12,800 soldiers and nurses completed the courses of training and work experience, and thousands more participated. Sadly, just as the Scheme expanded into full operation, Very Wor. Bro. Long's health broke under the strain. His promotion to Brigadier General, although helpful, did not lessen the number of interviews, addresses, letters and appeals that kept him under continuous tension. He was ordered to rest for a fortnight but a month later, he handed over to General McNicoll.

He was awarded an honorary L.L.D. by the Universities of Cambridge (1918) and Manchester (1919) and appointed C.B.E. in 1919.

He returned to the Diocese of Bathurst in 1919 where he began to widen opportunities for education. At Kelso he established Marsden Girls School, moved All Saints College to a new site, established hostel accommodation for country students, and supported the re-establishment of St. John's Theological College at Morpeth. At Dubbo he promoted a training scheme for priests who had little means to undertake study.

In 1920 he began the rebuilding of Bathurst Cathedral, entrusting the design to Louis Williams. The warriors' chapel and choir sanctuary were consecrated in 1927.

He assisted in the drafting of a Constitution for the Church of England in Australia, independent of the church in Britain. This was ratified by every diocese with the exception of Sydney Diocese. He favoured conservative revision of the Book of Common Prayer, and was an advocate of the White Australia Policy on the grounds of racial purity and industrial harmony and as political expedient for a "high spirited people" in an "active and mobile young democracy."

In 1928, Very Wor. Bro. Long was enthroned as Bishop of Newcastle where due to his sensitive knowledge of industrial and economic issues, he was able to relate to the mining unions on the Newcastle coalfields. Having kept up his connections with the Australian Military Forces, he was appointed Chaplain General in 1929.

In March 1930 he sailed to England to attend the Lambeth Conference but suffered a cerebral haemorrhage after the opening session and died on 9 July 1930 in St. Thomas' Hospital. His requiem was celebrated before 300 bishops, and his ashes were placed in All Saints Cathedral, Bathurst. He was survived by his wife, three sons and three daughters.

Very Wor. Bro. Long was a great leader, and had a great knowledge of the problems confronting the nation. His advice was sought by the leaders of the political and industrial affairs of the State, as he was not only a great churchman but also a great citizen.

In his youth he was a fine tennis player, athlete and cricketer. He was a High Churchman and his charm and administrative gifts were appreciated by Anglicans of all persuasions. St. Christopher's Chapel in Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle,

is dedicated to him and his portrait is in the window of its Tyrell Chapel.

The History of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle states that by reason of the death of The Right Reverend George Merrick Long, C.B.E., L.L.D., D.D., "The church lost one of its most prominent ecclesiastics, whose wisdom and statesmanship in the great problems of Australia, left an indelible record of unselfishness, character and efficiency both within and without the church."

MASONIC HISTORY OF Very Wor. Bro. BISHOP GEORGE MERRICK LONG

Very Wor. ro. Bishop George Merrick Long was initiated in Lodge Bathurst United No. 79 in 1919 and was installed as Worshipful Master in 1921.

He was a foundation member of Lodge City of the Plains No. 607 at Bathurst which was consecrated on 10 September 1927.

On moving to Newcastle he affiliated with Lodge St. George No. 78 at Newcastle in October 1929 and was still a member at the time of his death.

In 1923 he was appointed Grand Chaplain and held this office for three years.

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