



## THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PAPER No. 134

PREPARED & PRESENTED BY: G.H. Cumming

DATE: 24 July 2006

### **Right Wor. Bro. RICHARD DOYLE, S.G.W. CRIMEAN WAR VETERAN**

The Crimean War was fought by Turkey, aided by Britain and France and, at a later date, Sardinia, against the encroachment of Russia into the Crimean Peninsular.

The war was proclaimed on 24 March, 1854 and ended with the defeat of the Russians at the Fall of Sebastopol on 8 September, 1855.

A peace treaty was signed at Paris in February, 1856.

None of the Australian colonies sent troops to the war and so the only Australian Freemasons who served in the Crimea are British migrants.

One such was Seaman James Gorman who was one of the first recipients of the Victoria Cross and, after emigrating to Sydney after the war, became a member of Lodge Leinster Marine, formerly No 266 Irish Constitution, and No 1 Grand Lodge of New South Wales at the time of his initiation on 12 August, 1878.

Another Crimean War veteran who came to Sydney and attained high Masonic rank, was Right Wor Bro Richard Doyle.

A brief summary of his life and a photograph were published in the New South Wales magazine, *The Keystone* in the issue of 30 October, 1909. The article in the expressive language of the time, stated:

Right Wor Bro Richard Doyle  
Senior Grand Warden 1909-10  
The United Grand Lodge of New South Wales

This esteemed and valued Grand Lodge officer, whose portrait appeared in the October, 1909 issue of *The Keystone*, has a long and honourable career, both within and without the craft. Our Right Worshipful Brother rejoices in the fact that he first saw the dawn within the audible reach of famous Bow Bells, and that in infancy he listened to Big Ben. Born so long ago as 1834 – three years before the gracious Queen Victoria ascended that throne in which all civilisation pays reverence – he still, at an advanced age, can pay sprightly reverence to the ideals of the past; and, as a matter of fact, supplies evidence that advance of years, if well applied to a regular and properly-regulated life, is no sign of decay.

Right Wor Bro Doyle was the son of Mr James Doyle, an artist and designer in the most famous city of the world. Before the means of education were so easily attainable as we know it to-day, the Crimean war broke out. On the scene of

hostilities, he served under the never-to-be-forgotten Sir Colin Campbell in those dark, frozen, and arduous days when British valour was never at its highest since the days of Corunna, and never excelled since, except in the retreat across that arm of the Nile which Von Moltke said "was not a march of soldiers, but of heroes." Out of eight others who accompanied him he was the only survivor. As the "Iron Duke" once said, "The finger of Providence was upon him," and he was spared to serve this State of New South Wales in many honourable capacities, and long may he be spared to us.

Bro Doyle, some time after the close of the memorable conflict, visited the River Tchernaya, upon the slopes of which the allies suffered so much, but was so overcome with cold that he was forced to take refuge in a crevice in a rock, where he remained for a considerable period.

Our friend was not at Waterloo, or Omdurman, but he was in a tight corner in the Crimea. For the old land he embarked in the transport *Clarendon*, which was wrecked off the coast of Spain. After drifting in an open boat for two days and nights, suffering terrible privations, he was, with the other survivors, picked up by a French schooner from Mauritius, and taken to Cadiz Bay. Soon afterwards the British Government sent the warship *Orinoco* to the relief of the unfortunates, who subsequently reached England in safety. While awaiting the formality of his discharge, Bro Doyle was quartered aboard the *Victory*, and slept within a few feet of the spot where Nelson fell mortally wounded. Still imbued with the militant spirit, on his arrival in Sydney in 1859 he joined the Volunteer Artillery, with which corps he served for 16 years.

His Masonic career dates from his initiation in Robert Burns Lodge of Australia No 817 English Constitution on 10 September, 1866. On 4 March, 1867, he affiliated with Lodge of Australia No 390 English Constitution and from that date until the present has been an active member of that Lodge. He became Worshipful Master on 3 January, 1881, was appointed District Grand Pursuivant the same year, and District Grand Director of Ceremonies, in 1885. When the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales was established he became a member of the first Board of General Purposes, subsequently holding Grand Lodge office as follows:- District Grand Inspector of Workings, 1906; Grand Inspector of Workings, 1907; Junior Grand Warden, 1908; Senior Grand Warden, 1909.

[He also became a member of The Sydney Lodge of Research No 290. Bro Doyle served as a member of the Board of General Purposes from 1908 until ill health compelled his retirement in 1916. He was a member of the Standing Committee on Ritual at the time of his death.]

It is gratifying to note that the name of so valued an officer will be perpetuated in the craft by the younger generation, for Right Wor Bro Doyle's eldest son, Wor Bro Arthur J. Doyle, one of the Grand Stewards in 1909, and his youngest son, Bro Richard H Doyle, was an officer of Lodge of Australia, No 3.

Right Wor Bro Richard Doyle, "*The Keystone*" toasts your prosperity, health, and happiness, and many more years of useful service to the craft in New South Wales!

Both sons, Arthur and Richard enlisted in the first AIF. Sadly, his younger son, Bro Richard Henry Doyle, was killed in action, on the Western Front during the First World War. He had been Worshipful Master of The Lodge of Australia No 3 in 1914. Arthur returned safely.

Right Wor Bro Richard Doyle, Past Senior Grand Warden and veteran of the Crimean War died on 2 March, 1918.



Right Worshipful Bro. RICHARD DOYLE.  
Senior Grand Warden, United Grand Lodge of New South Wales.

In reporting his death to Grand Lodge, the Grand Master, Most Wor Bro William Thompson said of him:

He was one of the most courteous and lovable of men, and there was no one in Grand Lodge more universally esteemed. His memory will ever be revered by the many who were bound to him by the ties of closest personal friendship.