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Sunday, 22 February 2009 00:00



It is with profound regret that I have to report the passing on 21 February 2009 of Most Worshipful Brother Robert Denis Richmond.

Most Worshipful Brother Richmond was initiated 10 March 1953 in Empire Fergusson Lodge No. 225. He was installed as its Master on 8 August 1967. He was also a member of The Research Lodge of Wellington No. 194 and United Horowhenua Lodge No. 464.

He was appointed Grand Lecturer in 1970, Assistant Provincial Grand Master in 1975, Provincial Grand Master in 1982 and elected Grand Master in 1988.

L G Milton
GRAND SECRETARY

The Eulogy as delivered by RWBro Robert J Hogg, PDGM.

Robert Denis Richmond (universally known as Bob): Scots College oldboy – Soldier – Sailor – solicitor – Freemason.



As an introduction to this eulogy I am privileged to deliver on behalf of our Masonic fraternity let me explain that Bob and I go back a long way together with a friendship that has endured for nigh on 70 years. SO!

I will start by saying a few words about our near lifelong friendship. We first met as third formers and by the end of our secondary schooling were firm friends. Not a friendship based on sporting prowess for Bob, but not I, participated at top schoolboy level in both cricket and rugby.

Rather we challenged each other in the classroom and most importantly we had in common a love of pipe music and were members of the college pipe band. Bob, of course, was the all rounder and apart from retaining his position as the school's champion piper, took on the role of Drum Major and effectively managed the band. We had a lot of fun together.

1941 and there was a bitter war being fought, with this country then under threat from Japan. Our final year at school and all we could look forward to was compulsory military service in the near future both of us reaching the entry age of 18 in December/January. We were not disappointed and mid 1942 we were marched into Trentham military camp for basic training and then posted to the artillery to defend Wellington from air attack. 16th Heavy A.A. Regiment with 3.7 guns in batteries were being established around our hills and we were trained to use them. It was very cold and windy on the hills above Wadestown as we learned our new trade while we helped build proper living quarters and completed gun emplacements but we learned our trade well and we both were promoted to the rank of Bombardier.

The Battle of the Coral Sea and the Japanese threat diminished as did the need to maintain the heavy defense capability. Both Bob and I were redundant and the establishment was split up.

He joined the navy and later I did the same. We returned to NZ on the same day both SubLieutenants but on different ships Bob returning from Singapore where he was with the invasion force for Malaya. Apparently the Bomb was dropped while he was in the middle of the Bay of Bengal. We quite naturally slipped back into our previous relationship as we reestablished ourselves in the peacetime environment obtaining the educational qualifications we needed getting married, raising families etc. and establishing long term occupations.

Bob practiced law from 1949 to 1991.

A past president of the Wellington District Law Society he served on their Committees and various local bodies benefitted from his presidencies.

Social life we shared after the War was very enjoyable and we should not be too critical of all the excesses we tend to accuse our young people of today.

It is from this background that I now, very sadly, on behalf of our Masonic brethren, pay tribute to Bob, the man for whom we have held, and will forever hold his memory, with the fondest love and affection.

He had, deservedly, an illustrious Masonic career. He entered Freemasonry through Empire Lodge No. 225 (now Empire Fergusson) in 1953 where he rose to be our Master in 1967 and very shortly thereafter his talents were recognized when he was given Grand Rank in 1970 with that very important office of Grand Lecturer for the Wellington District. His progress thereafter was equally rapid and consistent with his ability. Asst. Provincial Grand Master in 1975 progressing to Provincial GM – 1982/84. and then as our leader the Grand Master for New Zealand for the years 1988/89. He received his 50-year service badge, by my hand, in 2003.

A member of, and contributor to the work of the Research Lodge of Wellington since 1971 he also joined his then local lodge, United Horowhenua in 2004

As Chairman of the Trustees of Grand Lodge, a position he relinquished only about 12 months ago, he also served as Chairman of the Potter Trust which is required to use its quite substantial resources for the benefit of children in the northern half of this Island. In this role he hosted the Prince of Wales when he opened the Potter Children's Garden in Auckland on the latter's recent visit to this country.

In his later years Bob renewed his interest in the Rose Croix Order and with the rank of Grand Chancellor of the Three Charters provided a great deal of assistance in all their legal matters.

Bob, I know, will be remembered by all with fond affection. He had that unique ability of being everybody's friend.

In whatever circumstances he found himself he gave of himself to his friends and to the community as a whole.

His love of community sing songs will long be remembered. Nothing he liked better than getting a group going around a piano. The Levin Home residents will miss his leadership in their social affairs.

In all respects Bob stood tall.



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