

## **Out of the Shadows: Three Unknown Military Surveyors of Early Queensland**

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During the colonial era in Australia there were no “official” military surveyors as there are today. Surveying tasks were undertaken by military engineers or infantry officers with surveying and cartographic skills.<sup>1</sup> This paper highlights how part-time colonial soldiers employed their civilian surveying skill in their service in the military. It also records the surveying achievement of a relatively unknown infantry officer in an event which led to the settlement of Queensland.

The surveying and mapping activities of the three military officers profiled here link them to some of Brisbane’s and Queensland’s major colonial historical events. This discussion complements a companion paper (‘Mapping the Way: Military Surveyors of the Queensland Colonial Era and earlier’<sup>2</sup>) and provides biographical details of the three military officers whose surveying activities are studied there, namely Lieutenant Robert Mackie Stirling, 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot (The Buffs); Lieutenant Joseph Bird Stanley, Queensland Volunteer Engineer Corps and later Brisbane Engineers, Queensland Defence Force; and Lieutenant Edwin Cave Owen, South Australian Adelaide Rifles and later Moreton Regiment, Queensland Defence Force.

The historical record is silent on the military surveying achievements of these three officers whose military careers bear no obvious connection to their military functions and surveying. This paper will bring these officers out of the shadows of colonial history, and in so doing demonstrate that in all three cases their military surveying achievements was not the result of their military training nor role. In this sense, it is akin to the situation today where part-time soldiers are employing their civilian qualifications, skills and experience in the service of their country.

### ***Robert Mackie Stirling (1796-1829)***

Born on 18 April 1796 at ‘Drumpellier,’ in Lanarkshire, Scotland, Stirling received his early education in England before studying classics at the University of Glasgow. Despite coming from a naval family,<sup>3</sup> Stirling chose an army career on returning to England after

two sessions at university and through his father's influence was commissioned into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot (The Buffs).<sup>4</sup> Joining in 1813, he missed service in the main battles of the Napoleonic Wars but would have seen service through his regiment's subsequent engagements, namely the battles of Vitoria (17 June 1813), Pyrenees (July 1813), Nivelle (10 November 1813), Nive (9-13 December 1813), Orthez (February 1814), and Toulouse (April 1814).

After Napoleon's defeat, the Buffs were sent to Canada in June 1814 to reinforce the British forces in the closing days of the War of 1812 opposing the United States. After six months garrisoning Montreal, the regiment was rushed back to Europe on 4 June 1815 as reinforcements to oppose a second coming of Napoleon. They landed at Ostend (now Belgium) in July, missing the Battle of Waterloo which had been fought on 18 June 1815. For the next three years the regiment was part of the Army of Occupation stationed in Paris. In 1818 they were transferred to Ireland.<sup>5</sup> While stationed at Mullingar, County Westmeath, the regiment was recalled to England for duties in the New South Wales colony.<sup>6</sup> The regiment was to provide guard and protection detachments for four groups of convicts being transported to the colony. Stirling commanded the detachment for the convict ship *Shipley*, which departed from London on 7 November 1821 with 150 male convicts. After a direct voyage of some 124 days, the *Shipley* arrived in Sydney on 11 March 1822.<sup>7</sup>

By 1823 the regiment was reconstituted in New South Wales, and until 1827 they were employed guarding prisoners and hunting escapees and other outlaws. Stirling escaped these monotonous duties by, firstly, accompanying John Oxley on his voyage of discovery to Port Curtis and Moreton Bay (23 October to 13 December 1823). It was during this expedition, "regarded by many historians as the genesis of Queensland,"<sup>8</sup> that Stirling's surveying and mapping skills came to the fore. Stirling was responsible for the original mapping of the areas investigated. His field maps, sketches and observations were used by Oxley in his final report to the government on 10 January 1824.<sup>9</sup> Stirling's surveying and mapping contributions to Oxley's highly successful expedition have been outlined in the companion paper.<sup>10</sup>

On 3 March 1824, Stirling was appointed to the position of Assistant Engineer.<sup>11</sup> His superior was Major Owens RE in the Engineer Department of the Public Works and Superintendence of Convicts, including Government Agricultural Establishments.<sup>12</sup> By the end of 1825, records show him to be the Acting Engineer as well as the *aide-de-camp* to the Governor.<sup>13</sup> This raises a number of questions: was the ADC's position an honorary one; did he have two jobs; or was he in transition from the engineers posting to the ADC?

At the end of 1826, Stirling was now ADC to Lieutenant General Ralph Darling who replaced Brisbane on 19 December 1825.<sup>14</sup> There are no known reports of him in the engineer's role post November 1825. Sometime later he appears to have resumed his position as ADC to Sir Thomas Brisbane who had retired to the United Kingdom. The first reference to his captaincy appeared in a newspaper article in January 1827 where it was stated that Stirling had "obtained a Company without purchase."<sup>15</sup> The next month, it was reported: "Captain R. Stirling, *aide-de-camp* to Lieut. Gen., Sir Thomas Brisbane, who, our Readers will remember went with the late Governor to England, is shortly expected to return to this Colony."<sup>16</sup> This evidently did not occur, as he was reported to be in London in January 1828 and still on Brisbane's staff in July of that year.<sup>17</sup> Another newspaper report from March of that year references Brisbane stating that "he would send Captain Stirling to London".<sup>18</sup> Clearly, Stirling was still in Brisbane's service into 1828 at which time the former governor was residing in Edinburgh.

At some stage Stirling made a decision to re-join his regiment then stationed in Calcutta, India. This decision proved fatal as he was killed onboard HMS *Benbow* when pirates captured the ship off the Cape de Verde Islands in the Atlantic Ocean as it was making its way to India.<sup>19</sup> That was on 11 April 1829, when Stirling was thirty-three years of age.<sup>20</sup> He was survived by one daughter, Frances (Fanny) Murdock Stirling, born in Sydney on 22 September 1824.<sup>21</sup> She was later described as an artist and a draftsman,<sup>22</sup> a tangible link to her father who was also considered an artist and had proven his drafting skill with the maps he produced for the 1823 John Oxley expedition. Stirling Park in Gladstone, Queensland is named in his honour, officially opened on 17 June 1986.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Joseph Bird Stanley (1847 – 1912)***

Joseph Bird Stanley was born on 14 January 1847 at Leamington-Spa, Warwickshire, England.<sup>24</sup> Stanley attended Oundle Grammar boarding school (later Laxton Grammar School) in Oundle, Northamptonshire.<sup>25</sup> In July 1862 he was articled to his uncle, William Bird (contractor and brickmaker) of London for 5½ years until January 1868.<sup>26</sup> He was employed in the carpenter's workshop and the office undertaking estimates, *etc.* He also gained on-site experience, overseeing and managing work crews and had responsibility for setting out the sites for some major building projects. He completed a course in drawing and water colours with the Leamington School of Arts.<sup>27</sup>

On completion of his articles, he returned to Leamington and gained further surveying and engineering construction experience

working first for a building contractor (Mr Marriott) then the Leamington Cemetery Board.<sup>28</sup> By 1870, he had established himself as a builder and a contractor.<sup>29</sup> For the next four years, his firm undertook survey and construction work in support of architects and the Leamington Town Surveyor.<sup>30</sup>

He married Roseanna Emily Knox (1850-1913) on 17 January 1870.<sup>31</sup> They migrated to Queensland in 1874,<sup>32</sup> arriving in Brisbane from London on the *Darling Downs* on 5 November 1874.<sup>33</sup> In Brisbane Stanley was a very active member of the Church of England community, serving as a church warden and a member of the Building Committee of All Saints' Parish Church, Wickham Terrace, Brisbane,<sup>34</sup> in which role he played a prominent role in the building of the All Saints' School.<sup>35</sup> He was also a member of the Brisbane Diocesan Synod.<sup>36</sup> His principal Brisbane residences were firstly on Hospital Road, Kelvin Grove, then "Alveston Lodge", Victoria Park Road, Kelvin Grove for the majority of his time.<sup>37</sup> By 1903 his residential address was Marly Street, West End (today's Highgate Hill) where he remained until his death on 1 June 1912.<sup>38</sup>

He was survived by his wife and children Florence, Joseph, Clifford, and Raymond. Two of his sons reached prominence in their later lives, namely Raymond Augustus Stanley (later Lieutenant Colonel, D.S.O., V.D and Past President of the United Service Club for 1925 and 1926)<sup>39</sup> and Joseph Heeney Stanley (later Under Secretary of the Queensland Treasury). As a freemason, he was a member of the Prince of Wales Lodge, Brisbane (initiated 5 October 1875, with his profession given as civil engineer).<sup>40</sup> Prior to that he was a member of the Guys Lodge in Leamington, when his occupation was given as a builder when initiated on 2 May 1870.<sup>41</sup>

### ***Stanley's Civilian Career in Queensland***

Within a month of his arrival, Stanley was appointed an assistant draftsman with the Queensland Department of Railways on 1 December 1874 (annual salary: £250).<sup>42</sup> His initial work with the Railways Department included survey drafting in the engineer's office followed by work as an assistant surveyor on the Southern and Western Railway extension from Dalby to Roma.<sup>43</sup> This was important foundation work for the development of the colony's southern rail network which would link Brisbane to the rich western and southern agricultural areas.<sup>44</sup>

On 31 October 1876 he was appointed a surveyor in the Office of the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers, with an annual salary of £350.<sup>45</sup> He undertook a range of tasks including the preparation of plans, surveys and the supervision of extensive town drainage works. Other major works that Stanley completed included surveying and

developing plans for several rivers in the colony; setting out of a new graving dock; extensive dredging of the Brisbane River; and the preparation of plans, specifications and estimates for infrastructure such as wharves and jetties.<sup>46</sup> The Harbours and Rivers Department was a key infrastructural arm of the early colonial government as the colony's transportation system had developed as separate railway system extending westwards from key ports along the coast with an absence of any north-south linking railway until 1924. Thus, with this reliance on the ports for regional development and the move to larger tonnage ships from the 1880s, priority and considerable financial resources were allocated for the upgrade of ports and harbours.<sup>47</sup>

On 4 February 1879 he was elected an associate member of the Institution of Civil Engineers in the UK.<sup>48</sup> As a surveyor, Stanley was eligible for associate membership with his nomination for membership proposed by W.D. Nisbet, the Engineer-in-Chief of the Harbours and Rivers Department and his immediate superior.<sup>49</sup>

By 1880 his position title had changed to Engineer and Surveyor, General Works, Harbours and Rivers Department.<sup>50</sup> The pinnacle of his career with Queensland's colonial public service was in 1882 when he was made Assistant Engineer, General Works, Harbours and Rivers Department, with an annual salary of £400.<sup>51</sup> His duties positioned him as second-in-command to Nisbet for whom he deputised, especially during the latter's nine month leave of absence in Europe from May 1886 to February 1887.<sup>52</sup> In 1887 Stanley was also granted leave of absence for six months on full pay to visit Europe and no doubt England.<sup>53</sup>

As a senior engineer in the Department's head office, he was required to travel extensively throughout the colony, which required movement by coastal ships. The purpose of these trips ranged from technical undertakings such as surveys, feasibility studies, site inspections<sup>54</sup> to technical support for Parliamentary visits and meetings with community delegations.<sup>55</sup> On one of these trips he was tasked to examine the emerging site for the new town of Ingham with a view to having it moved closer to the Herbert River to gain direct river frontage.<sup>56</sup> It is interesting to speculate on whether Stanley's report may have played a small yet influential role in the establishment of Ingham on its present location.

During the colonial era, Harbours and Rivers had traditionally been a sub-department of Treasury, except for 1889-90 when it came under the control of the Secretary for Mines and Works. The Secretary was John Macrossan (13 June 1888 to 17 September 1890) who held that portfolio across the McIlwraith and Morehead ministries. This very brief change of ministerial control was to lead to some widespread changes in the hierarchy of the Harbours and Rivers Department which would have a profound impact on Stanley.

In October 1888, a month after Macrossan assumed political

responsibility for the Harbours and Rivers portfolio, A.W. Jardine,<sup>57</sup> Superintending Engineer of the Central and Northern Works at Rockhampton, was transferred to the Brisbane head office.<sup>58</sup> Six months later he was appointed Deputy Engineer, second to the Engineer-in-Chief, W.D. Nisbet, essentially sidelining Stanley who was his senior.<sup>59</sup> This triggered a series of events that saw Stanley being granted three months leave of absence and not return to the public service.<sup>60</sup> Likewise Nisbet went on twelve months' leave and Jardine was appointed Acting Engineer.<sup>61</sup> Nisbet retired in September 1890, and with Stanley out of the way, Jardine was confirmed as the Chief Engineer of the Harbours and Rivers Department in early 1891.<sup>62</sup> Ironically, Jardine went on sick leave early 1892.<sup>63</sup> Within a year, he resigned and his position was subsequently abolished.<sup>64</sup>

Immediately after his retirement Jardine embarked on a high-profile speaking circuit to the major cities of the colony.<sup>65</sup> Jardine and a private investment syndicate were making a concerted effort to introduce a newly developing harbour and river dredging technology through the private sector to replace the existing government delivered methods favoured by Nisbet (and presumably Stanley).<sup>66</sup> The evidence suggests that this was a case of political and bureaucratic manoeuvring to gain control of a highly technical branch of government. It was definitely a debate over whether governments should be providing services such as harbour and river maintenance or whether these could be better provided by the private sector. It was also a clear technical debate over dredging technology – the traditional dredging technique of the bucket and ladder system versus the new hydraulic or suction dredging techniques being promoted by Jardine and his syndicate.<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately for Stanley he was inadvertently caught up in this *coup*, finding himself in the middle of the technical debate as well as holding down the deputy's position leading to the top job.<sup>68</sup>

Stanley's post-public service engagement providing supervision and surveying services for channel investigations in the Brisbane River at the end of 1898, presumably as a consultant, clearly indicates that his technical knowledge, skills and experience were still very much in demand.<sup>69</sup>

Stanley had a lifelong interest in rifle shooting, a recreational pursuit that allow him to link his military interests with a very popular pastime of his era.<sup>70</sup> He was a very accomplished marksman and consistently won many shooting competitions as an individual or as a member of a rifle club.<sup>71</sup> When the Queensland Rifle Association was formally constituted on 1 October 1877, he was elected as an inaugural member of its Council.<sup>72</sup> He was subsequently elected as Chairman of the QRA Council on 19 November 1878 – a position he held for two separate terms.<sup>73</sup>

Figure 1: Lieutenant Joseph Stanley (*private collection*).



### ***Stanley's Military Career in Queensland***

Stanley's military service commenced in England in 1866, enlisting with the St Clement Danes Company, Queen's Westminster Rifle Volunteers.<sup>74</sup> He joined this London-based unit when he was nineteen and serving his articles with his uncle. He transferred to the First Administrative Battalion, Warwickshire Rifle Volunteers when he moved back to Leamington.<sup>75</sup>

A year after his arrival in Brisbane, he answered a call for "gentlemen favourable to the formation of a volunteer engineer corps" to meet at Adair's Australian Hotel in November 1875.<sup>76</sup> Soon after, Stanley was an original member of the Queensland Volunteer Engineer Corps when it was raised on 22 January 1876.<sup>77</sup> He played an influential role in the establishment of this corps, being elected the honorary secretary of a sub-committee appointed to manage the affairs of the new organisation until officers could be elected.<sup>78</sup> He was a member of the sub-committee tasked with drawing up the rules and regulations for the new unit.<sup>79</sup>

Elections were held for the two senior officers on 1 March 1876. After a reportedly confusing and conflicting election process, George Newman was elected captain and Joseph Stanley as the first lieutenant.<sup>80</sup> Their commissions were gazetted on 4 May 1876.<sup>81</sup> Some 4½ years on, Stanley was promoted captain on 24 September 1880.<sup>82</sup>

Within a year of being commissioned, he had an opportunity to demonstrate the employment of his civilian skill in the military – an important aspect of citizen soldering for the technical professions. The case-in-point relates to a significant but largely unreported surveying undertaking that Stanley undertook in relation to the York's Hollow Rifle Range.<sup>83</sup>

In 1885, the Volunteers were reorganised into the Queensland Defence Force (QDF), comprising a small permanent force, a paid militia and a smaller unpaid volunteer force.<sup>84</sup> The Queensland Volunteer Engineers were re-designated the Brisbane Engineers in the militia component, and Stanley was confirmed as a captain in the militia.<sup>85</sup>

Immediately after the QDF's annual Easter Encampment in April 1885, with a deteriorating international situation and the perceived threat of attacks by Russian warships on coastal settlements, the government called out an element of the QDF for active service on 14 April.<sup>86</sup> This all-volunteer force included an engineer element under Stanley's command which numbered five NCOs and thirty Other Ranks. The work tasks for the Brisbane Engineers included laying a timber boom across the Brisbane River to block the passage of an enemy ship, preparing and laying down submarine mines, mounting the Nordenfeldt guns in the fort, and laying out the tracing and profile of the redoubt on Reformatory Hill. Stanley had a team of some twenty (later increased to forty) civilian navvies plus infantry parties from the 1<sup>st</sup> Queenslanders.<sup>87</sup>

The force remained on active service until 20 May.<sup>88</sup> It was subsequently reported that Colonel Peter Scratchley, one of the original architects of the Fort Lytton/Reformatory Hill defences, was pleased with the work that the engineers had undertaken and the QDF Commandant, Colonel G.A. French, "was considerably impressed, noting 'they are a fine corps and had done excellent service at Lytton in connection with the fortifications and the submarine mines' [...]."<sup>89</sup>

The following year, from 1 January 1886, Stanley took command of the Brisbane Engineers for six months in the absence of Major Newman.<sup>90</sup> One year on, when Stanley took leave to return to England on private business,<sup>91</sup> he was placed on the Unattached List of the QDF effective from 6 September 1887.<sup>92</sup> He never returned to an active role in the QDF when he returned, and was placed on the Retired List of QDF effective 13 February 1890.<sup>93</sup> In 1903 he was presented with the Colonial Auxiliary Force's long service medal in recognition of his twenty years' volunteer and militia service in the QVB and the QDF.<sup>94</sup>

### ***Edwin Cave Owen (1855-1931)***

Edwin Cave Owen was born on 12 June 1855 at Wrexham, Denbighshire, Wales, United Kingdom.<sup>95</sup> He migrated to Australia at



the age of twenty, arriving at Port Adelaide on 1 September 1876 from Plymouth onboard the *Hydaspes*.<sup>96</sup> He married his first wife, Theresa Helen Marshall of Wallaroo on 12 November 1878 at St Ignatius Catholic Church, Norwood, Adelaide, South Australia.<sup>97</sup> His second marriage was to Anna (Alice) Marie Jessen on 20 November 1901 in Brisbane.<sup>98</sup> An Anglican and a freemason, he was a member of the Lodge of Truth, North Adelaide (initiated 3 July 1883).<sup>99</sup> Moving to Brisbane he became a member of the Prince of Wales Lodge (initiated 2 May 1893), stating his occupation at that time as military draftsman.<sup>100</sup> Owen died on 22 November 1931 aged 76 years, when he was residing in Victoria Park, Western Australia.<sup>101</sup>

### ***Owen's Civilian Career in Australia***

While Owen's civilian occupation is somewhat obscure it can be assumed that for his time in the Australian colonies, it centred around the drafting profession. The earliest reference to an occupation comes from the 1876 immigration shipping records where he was listed as a "cabinet maker."<sup>102</sup> There are no records that he practised this occupation after arriving in South Australia.

Official documents dealing with his time in South Australia (1876 to 1886) cite him being in the civil service<sup>103</sup>, and also in the employ of the Survey Department.<sup>104</sup> His ten years employment with the South Australian Government included in the offices of the Surveyor General and the Engineer-in-Chief.<sup>105</sup> There is evidence that he worked for approximately twelve months in Kapunda, a copper mining town north of Adelaide on the Light River, after his arrival in the colony but no indication of his employer.<sup>106</sup> The mine closed in 1877, the year Owen appears to have left. This suggest that his earliest work was associated with the mining industry and may have involved drafting or surveying activities. Some of Owen's personal documents (*e.g.* marriage certificates and children's birth certificates) list him as a surveyor but there are no official records to confirm this.<sup>107</sup> All official and court documents associate him with the drafting profession.<sup>108</sup>

It appears that he relocated to Queensland during 1886, where he produced the colony's first topographical map – a map of Fort Lytton and environs for the QDF dated December 1886 (four inches to one mile with contour interval of 5 feet).<sup>109</sup> His other significant military mapping assignments included several topographical maps, "North East of Brisbane," October 1889; "West of Cleveland," December 1890 (both at the same scale as the Fort Lytton map); and "Meer Island, Torres Strait," dated June 1891 (500 feet to one inch). A newspaper article noted that his surveying activities for the QDF included defences for "Thursday Island, Townsville and Lytton – the

three most important strategic stations in Queensland".<sup>110</sup>

This article refers to him as a "Staff Surveyor in the Head Quarters Office of the Queensland Defence Force". However, there was no such official position on the establishment of the HQ QDF. The QDF General Debt report on expenditure to 30 June 1895 listed expenditure for the following "Works and Services": "Salaries, Owens [*sic*] and Assistants Surveying", of £1,691.<sup>111</sup> This suggests that he was employed by the QDF during the period 1886 to 1897, on some form of civilian contract separate from his militia appointment.<sup>112</sup>

His first non-QDF civilian appointment was as a topographer on the staff of the Geological Survey of Queensland on 5 April 1898 (annual salary: £250).<sup>113</sup> An insight into Owen's work in many Queensland remote locations can be gleaned from the Senior Government Geologist's (Robert Jack) Annual Report to Parliament:

On 5th April, Mr. Edwin Cave Owen, who had for some years been carrying on military topographical work for the Defence Force, was appointed Topographer to the Geological Survey. He commenced operations near Ipswich on 25<sup>th</sup> April, and left for the uncharted district of Chillagoe on 14<sup>th</sup> May. His operations there, which have been continued to the middle of December, ought to go a long way in the preparation of a basis for a geological survey, and be of great use to the general public as well.<sup>114</sup>

Owen's own report during his first year refers to his preparation of a contour map for a portion of the north Ipswich coal district followed by survey and contour mapping work in the Chillagoe district. His next report notes a period of field work in the Ravenswood area, a brief time in the office before spending the rest of the year surveying in the Clermont coal field of the Dawson River area.<sup>115</sup>

Owen spent his final year in the Central District (Dawson River) before finishing in the Brisbane office undertaking mapping work.<sup>116</sup> He resigned from his position on 30 November 1900; however, it was later revealed that Owen's position (described as a topographical surveyor) was retrenched probably due to the reduction in Queensland's government administration in preparation for Federation.<sup>117</sup>

After a short period in South Africa during 1902, he returned to Perth, Western Australia, to his position with the Surveyor General's Office, a position he appears to have acquired some time during 1901.<sup>118</sup> Prior to August 1905 he was on the temporary staff of the Public Works Department.<sup>119</sup> His principal assignments included

engineering surveys of parts of the Darling Range and the Peel Estate.<sup>120</sup> On 1 August 1905 he transferred to the Mines Department as a temporary draftsman with remuneration set at £16/13/4 per month.<sup>121</sup> Subsequent Electoral Roll entries confirmed his occupation as a draftsman while identifying a number of changing residential locations throughout and around Perth.<sup>122</sup> On his death in 1931 it was noted that he was “late of the Lands Department and Public Works Department”, Western Australia.<sup>123</sup>

Owen’s civilian employment undertakings do not neatly fit the current conventional professions, falling between drafting and surveying. He spent considerable time in the field using surveying instruments such as the theodolite and plane table to gather data from which to construct and draw his topographical maps. These skills he must have acquired while in the employ of the Surveyor General’s Office in South Australia.

Figure 2: Lieutenant Edwin Owen  
(courtesy *Queensland Museum of  
Lands, Mapping and Surveying*,  
PE1615, Kornweibel Collection).



### ***Owen’s Military Career in Australia***

Owen appears to have enlisted as a private in an independent infantry rifle company of the South Australian Brigade of Volunteers in the Adelaide metropolitan area sometime after his arrival in 1876. He rose to the rank of colour sergeant before gaining a commission as a lieutenant in the Adelaide Rifles on 21 April 1884.<sup>124</sup>

He resigned from the Adelaide Rifles on the last day of 1886 and was placed on the Reserve List of Officers of the South Australian Active Militia Force.<sup>125</sup> By 12 May 1887 he had gained a provisional

commission as a lieutenant in QDF.<sup>126</sup> The significance of these latter two dates is that Owen's surveying and mapping work in relation to Fort Lytton and associated environs was undertaken whilst he was still technically an officer of the South Australian militia.<sup>127</sup>

He was appointed a lieutenant, effective 16 June 1888 and posted to A Company of the Moreton Regiment (1<sup>st</sup> Queenslanders).<sup>128</sup> He was promoted to provisional captain on 30 July 1891, with a posting to A Company, Moreton Regiment presumably becoming the Officer Commanding.<sup>129</sup> His captaincy was confirmed on 15 December 1891.<sup>130</sup> In March 1892, he successfully passed his major's examinations.<sup>131</sup> In August that year it was announced that Captain Owen would conduct voluntary classes of instruction in "Elementary Military Sketching and Road Reconnaissance" for officers and NCOs of the Defence Force and the Volunteer Force over six Friday evenings at the Brisbane Central Girls School.<sup>132</sup> On 25 March 1897 Owen was placed on the Unattached List, QDF, and on 25 August 1900 was transferred to the Retired List.<sup>133</sup> Within three months he had resigned from his civilian position with the Geological Survey, Queensland Department of Mines.

He appears to have unsuccessfully attempted to enlist in at least the first four Queensland contingents raised for the South African War (October 1899 – May 1902).<sup>134</sup> The next known military activity of interest concerns the enlistment of 3116 Trooper Edwin Cave Owen in the 1<sup>st</sup> Imperial Light Horse at Durban, South Africa on 15 January 1902 (aged 47).<sup>135</sup> He was discharged on 20 June 1902 after the conclusion of hostilities at the end of May.<sup>136</sup> His service with the Imperial Light Horse entitled him to the South African Medal with the Orange Free State and the Transvaal clasps. Interestingly, a daughter recalls an old faded photograph of her father in South Africa with a theodolite.<sup>137</sup> There is some suggestion that Owen did not return to Australia until 1904, which leads to the speculation that he may have undertaken surveying assignments during or immediately after the Boer War in South Africa. During the next major military conflict, there is a record that Owen applied to enlist in the AIF in 1916 when aged 61. The records show that he stated his age as fifty, and it would appear that he was unsuccessful.<sup>138</sup>

By all accounts Owen was an interesting but complex character. He lived a full life, and contributed to the early developments in three Australian colonies. He appears to have been a self-made man who, without any formal education, entered into and developed in a profession through which he would make his mark. There can be no doubt as to his technical skill in surveying, mapping and cartography – the quality of his maps attests to that. In Queensland history he has the distinction of having produced the first topographical map in the

colony. He also has the distinction of being the first topographer to be employed by the Queensland colonial government. On his military side, he was clearly a frustrated soldier whose opportunities to apply his military skills acquired over some twenty plus years came too late in his life. Nevertheless, the South African and First World War records demonstrate that he tried, such that his patriotism is beyond question.

### ***Conclusion***

The surveying activities of Stirling, Stanley and Owen serve as examples of contributions to the State's history by some hitherto relatively unknown early military officers whose personal achievements have largely been overshadowed by the exploits of their leaders or their sponsoring organisations. This paper and its companion paper seek to bring these early military surveyors out of the shadows to highlight their achievements and acknowledge their rightful place in the historical records of Brisbane and Queensland.

Stanley and Owen were part-time military officers who employed their civilian skills and experience in the military in the service of the QDF, and hence, their biographical details include their civilian as well as their military careers in order to provide a full appreciation of their respective contributions to the state's development beyond their military service.

It is through these detailed biographical accounts that a fuller appreciation can be gained, not only of the lives of these contributors to Queensland history, but the personal contexts in which they successfully went about completing their respective tasks. The addition of these biographical profiles provides personalised perspectives that serve to add another dimension to our understanding of some of the major historical events that have helped shape our state.

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### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> As treated in this paper, military surveying also incorporates mapping (cartographic) activities.

<sup>2</sup> D.C. Low Choy, 'Mapping the Way: Military Surveyors of the Queensland Colonial Era and earlier,' *Queensland History Journal*

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<sup>3</sup> His grandfather was Admiral Sir Walter Stirling and an uncle was Admiral Sir Charles Stirling.

<sup>4</sup> *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 26 January 1830, p. 3. His older brother was Admiral Sir James Stirling KCB who founded the Swan River colony and became the first Governor of Western Australia in 1829.

<sup>5</sup> The Buffs: East Kent Regiment, [www.britishempire.co.uk](http://www.britishempire.co.uk), accessed 8 September 2021.

<sup>6</sup> P. Denham, 'The Buffs and the Discovery of the Brisbane River: Captain Robert Mackie Stirling - 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot,' unpublished, 2017, 6pp.

<sup>7</sup> Free Settler or Felon: Convict ship *Shiopley* 1822, sourced online at [www.freesettlorfelon.com/convict\\_ship\\_shiopley\\_1822](http://www.freesettlorfelon.com/convict_ship_shiopley_1822), accessed 10 September 2021; *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 15 March 1822, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> J.C.H. Gill, *The Missing Coast: Queensland takes shape* (Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1988), p. 191.

<sup>9</sup> Barron Field, *Geographical Memoirs of New South Wales* (London: John Murray, 1825), pp. 8-20.

<sup>10</sup> See Low Choy, 'Mapping the Way.'

<sup>11</sup> *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 4 March 1824, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 3 October 1825, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 20 October 1825, p. 1; *Australian*, 20 October 1825, p. 2; *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 7 November 1825, p. 1; *Australian*, 29 September 1825, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 20 December 1826, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 13 January 1827, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Monitor*, 24 February 1827, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 7 July 1828, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Colonial Advocate, and Tasmanian Monthly Review and Register*, 1 March 1828, p. 37.

<sup>19</sup> *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol. 26, No. 155 (1829), p. 268.

<sup>20</sup> *Sydney Monitor*, 14 November 1829, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Frances' mother was Harriet Callcott (Scott), who had a *de facto* relationship with Stirling due to her convict past.

<sup>22</sup> Design & Art Australia Online, accessed 10 September 2021.

<sup>23</sup> A plaque in the park states: "Stirling Park is named in honour of Lieutenant Stirling who as master of H.M.S. Mermaid sailed to Port Curtis with John Oxley's expedition of 1823. It was Stirling who first sighted and later landed at the mouth of the Boyne River in November 1823."

<sup>24</sup> R.A. Stanley's birth certificate (Certificate No: 16474, 1883).

- <sup>25</sup> English Census 1861, Parish of Oundle, Schedule 146, p. 30.
- <sup>26</sup> Nomination for membership to Institution of Civil Engineers [hereafter ICE], dated 15 September 1877, ICE archives, London.
- <sup>27</sup> ICE, op cit.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> English Census 1871, Parish of Leamington, Schedule 167, p. 37; *Kelly's Directory of Warwickshire*, (1872) p. 1318.
- <sup>30</sup> ICE, op cit.
- <sup>31</sup> Personal records of Christine Purvis, great granddaughter of J.B. Stanley and granddaughter of R.A. Stanley.
- <sup>32</sup> *Telegraph*, 9 September 1903, p. 4.
- <sup>33</sup> Queensland State Archives: Registers of Immigrant Ships' Arrivals; Series ID 13086; Roll: M1697.
- <sup>34</sup> D.L. Kissick, *All Saints' Church, Brisbane 1862-1937*, (Brisbane: All Saints' Parish, 1937); *Brisbane Courier*, 9 March 1885, p. 5.
- <sup>35</sup> *Week*, 30 August 1884, p. 7.
- <sup>36</sup> *Week*, 8 September 1888, p. 7.
- <sup>37</sup> *Brisbane Post Office Directory* (Watson), 1885-1886, p. 144; *Brisbane Post Office Directory and Community Guide*, 1887, p. 282; 1888, p. 404; *Brisbane Post Office Directory* (Hollander), 1889, p. 206; 1890, p. 432.
- <sup>38</sup> Queensland Electoral Rolls 1903 West End, Oxley Division, p. 41; *Telegraph*, 1 June 1912, p. 6; *Telegraph*, 3 June 1912, p. 2; *Brisbane Courier*, 4 June 1912, p. 6.
- <sup>39</sup> Raymond Augustus Stanley born in Brisbane on 14 April 1883 at "Alveston Lodge." His birth certificate lists Stanley's profession as civil engineer.
- <sup>40</sup> Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London: Freemasonry Membership Registers; Register of Contributions: Country and Foreign Lodges, 1140-1230 (1832); 838-928 (1863).
- <sup>41</sup> Library and Museum of Freemasonry: Freemasonry Membership Registers; Register of Contributions: Country and Foreign Lodges, 421-588 (1832); 336-407 (1863).
- <sup>42</sup> *Queensland Blue Book for 1875*, p. 51.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>44</sup> I. Cameron, *125 Years of State Public Works in Queensland 1859-1984* (Brisbane, Boolarong Publications, 1989), pp. 43-4.
- <sup>45</sup> *Queensland Blue Book for 1876*, p. 47.
- <sup>46</sup> ICE, op. cit.
- <sup>47</sup> Cameron, *125 Years of State Public Works*, pp. 25-6.
- <sup>48</sup> *Queenslander*, 12 April 1879, p. 465; *Telegraph*, 10 April 1879, p. 3; 'List of Members of the Institution of Civil Engineers for 1885' (London, 1886), p. 76. The Institution of Civil Engineers is an independent professional association for civil engineers with

members from the UK plus some overseas countries. It offers professional qualifications, and by the end of the nineteenth century had introduced examinations for professional engineering qualifications. Associate membership applies to professionals other than civil engineers working in the built environment.

<sup>49</sup> ICE, *op. cit.*

<sup>50</sup> *Queensland Blue Book for 1880* (Brisbane: Government Printer, 1881), p. 53.

<sup>51</sup> *Queensland Blue Book for 1882*, p. 56.

<sup>52</sup> *Queenslander*, 13 August 1887, p. 259; *Queenslander*, 23 October 1886, p. 645; *Morning Bulletin*, 9 February 1887, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> *Queenslander*, 16 July 1887, p. 85.

<sup>54</sup> *Capricornian*, 15 May 1880, p. 10; *Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser*, 25 August 1880, p. 2; *Brisbane Courier*, 23 February 1887, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> *Telegraph*, 17 April 1880, p. 2; *Brisbane Courier*, 11 March 1881, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> *Morning Bulletin*, 11 May 1880, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> In 1864 he and his older brother Frank drove a herd of cattle 1,200 miles from Rockhampton to their father's property at Somerset in Cape York.

<sup>58</sup> *Morning Bulletin*, 13 April 1889, p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> *Queensland Blue Book for 1889*, p. 81.

<sup>60</sup> *Week*, 18 May 1889, p. 11.

<sup>61</sup> *Queensland Government Gazette* [hereafter *QGG*], Vol. 48, No. 82, 23 November 1889, p. 1049.

<sup>62</sup> *Queensland Blue Book for 1891*, p. 104.

<sup>63</sup> *Telegraph*, 25 March 1892, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> W. Davenport, *Harbours & Marine: Port & Harbour Development in Queensland from 1824 to 1985* (Brisbane: Queensland Department of Harbours and Marine, 1986), p. 250; *Warwick Argus*, 13 June 1893, p. 2. At the time of his resignation Jardine's annual salary was £1,000, the same as the Chief Secretary's (the most senior bureaucrat in the colony).

<sup>65</sup> *Morning Bulletin*, 16 September 1893, p. 6; *Queenslander*, 19 August 1893, p. 340; *Telegraph*, 15 August 1893, p. 7; *Maryborough Chronicle*, *Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, 14 November 1893, p. 3; *Bundaberg Mail and Burnett Advertiser*, 15 November 1893, p. 3; *North Queensland Register*, 4 October 1893, p. 8; *Northern Miner*, 30 September 1893, p. 2.

<sup>66</sup> These revelations raise question of Jardine's motives in promoting the hydrologic dredging in one his last annual reports as Chief Engineer, Harbours and Rivers Department.

<sup>67</sup> Interestingly, two major histories concerning Queensland



Harbours, Rivers and Marine make no direct references to these debates: see N.S. Pixley, 'Queensland – Harbours, Rivers and Marine,' Presidential Address to RHSQ, 27 September, 1972 and Davenport, *Harbours & Marine*.

<sup>68</sup> Further research is required into this interesting period of colonial Queensland's technical, administrative and political development which is beyond the scope of this paper. Potential conflicts between Stanley and Macrossan and with Premier Morehead require further exploration to ascertain if they had a bearing on Stanley's demise. The latter possibility is examined in Low Choy, *A Park for the People: The York's Hollow Rifle Range Confrontations* (Brisbane: Queensland Military Historical Society, forthcoming).

<sup>69</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 25 November 1889, p. 4.

<sup>70</sup> His interest in rifle shooting and his marksmanship abilities were passed onto his son, Lieutenant Colonel R.A. Stanley D.S.O., V.D.

<sup>71</sup> A.T. Jackson, *Southern Queensland Rifle Association Jubilee, 1877-1927: A Brief History of the Association during the past fifty years* (Southern Queensland Rifle Association, 1927); *Telegraph*, 9 September 1903, p. 4; *Week*, 17 April 1880, p. 15.

<sup>72</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 2 October 1877, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> Jackson, *Southern Queensland Rifle Association Jubilee*.

<sup>74</sup> St Clement Danes is an Anglican Church in the City of Westminster, London. He lived in London between 1862-3 and 1868, undertaking his articles as a builder with his uncle.

<sup>75</sup> *Telegraph*, 9 September 1903, p. 4.

<sup>76</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 20 November 1875, p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> D.C. Low Choy, 'The Origins of the Queensland's Colonial Military Engineers,' *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, 10 (2), 1976-77, pp. 44-53.

<sup>78</sup> *Week*, 29 January 1876, p. 14.

<sup>79</sup> *Telegraph*, 20 January 1876, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Low Choy, 'The Origins of the Queensland's Colonial Military Engineers.'

<sup>81</sup> *QGG*, Vol. 18, No. 46, 6 May 1876, p. 956.

<sup>82</sup> *QGG*, Vol. 27, No. 41, 25 September 1880, p. 704; *Queensland Blue Book for 1880*, p. 28.

<sup>83</sup> Low Choy, 'Mapping the Way,' Low Choy, *A Park for the People* (forthcoming).

<sup>84</sup> General Order No. 20, 24 February 1885 (Supplement to *QGG*, Vol. 36, No. 34, 25 February 1885); also D.H. Johnson, *Volunteers at Heart: The Queensland Defence Force, 1860-1901* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1975), p. 128.

<sup>85</sup> Supplement to *QGG*, Vol. 36, No. 34, 25 February 1885, pp. 634-5.

<sup>86</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 13 April 1885, p. 4.

<sup>87</sup> ‘Queensland Defence Force: Report of the Commandant for the Year 1884-5,’ in *Queensland Parliament Votes & Proceedings*, 1885, Vol I, pp. 743-58.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Geoff Ginn, Hilary Davies, and Brian Rough (eds), ‘A Most Promising Corps’: *Citizen Soldiers in Colonial Queensland, 1860-1903* (Brisbane: Colonial Forces Study Group, Queensland, 2010), p. 78.

<sup>90</sup> *QGG*, Vol. 38, No. 7, 9 January 1886, p. 116. This coincided with his civilian job when he deputised for W.D. Nisbet who had nine months’ leave of absence.

<sup>91</sup> *Telegraph*, 9 September 1903, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> *QGG*, Vol. 42, No. 8, 10 September 1887, pp. 138, 353; *Queensland Blue Book for 1887*, p. 22.

<sup>93</sup> *QGG*, Vol. 49, No. 55, 15 March 1890, p. 934; *Queensland Blue Book for 1890*, p. 25; *QGG*, Vol. 49, No. 65, 22 March 1890, pp. 934, 1052.

<sup>94</sup> *Telegraph*, 9 September 1903, p. 4. Leading Brisbane journalist Spencer Brown wrote of Stanley: “extremely punctilious as a civil engineer, a brainy man, and a good driving power and he was a capable soldier.” *Brisbane Courier*, 14 February 1925, p. 19.

<sup>95</sup> Pers. comm. Natalie Beryl Easter (née Owen), 1 March 2001 (Queensland Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying records).

<sup>96</sup> Passenger List 1876, 25/1876 *Hydaspes* (Registry No 117), [www.archives.sa.gov.au](http://www.archives.sa.gov.au) (accessed 28 September 2021).

<sup>97</sup> *South Australian Advertiser*, 13 November 1878, p. 4.

<sup>98</sup> Queensland Registration No: B001455 - Ancestry.com. Australia, Marriage Index, 1788-1950 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

<sup>99</sup> *West Australian*, 24 November 1931, p. 1. Owen’s Christian name was incorrectly entered in the roll – all other details (*e.g.* second name, age) are correct. United Grand Lodge of England, 1863-1887, ‘Register of Contributions: Country and Foreign Lodges’, p. 307.

<sup>100</sup> United Grand Lodge of England, 1887-1909, ‘Freemason Membership Registers: Colonial and Foreign’, p. 124.

<sup>101</sup> *West Australian*, 24 November 1931, p. 1.

<sup>102</sup> Passenger List 1876, 25/1876 *Hydaspes* (Registry No 117), [www.archives.sa.gov.au](http://www.archives.sa.gov.au) (accessed 28 September 2021). His mother’s father had a shop trading in timber, and his father’s occupation was given as upholsterer and cabinet and coffin maker.

<sup>103</sup> *Sands & McDougall’s South Australian Directory for 1886*, p. 80.

<sup>104</sup> *Sands & McDougall’s South Australian Directory for 1885*, p. 565.

<sup>105</sup> *South Australian Register*, 21 April 1898, p. 4.

<sup>106</sup> Unclaimed letter: E.C. Owen care of J.W. James, Railway Camp, Kapunda (*South Australia Government Gazette*, No. 45, 4 October 1877, p. 944).

<sup>107</sup> Unpublished records of Queensland Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying.

<sup>108</sup> *South Australian Advertiser*, 21 May 1886, p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> Owen produced this map some eight years after it was first recommended by Lt. Col. Peter Scratchley RE in his defence report to the Queensland Government. See 'Queensland Defences – Third Progress Report' (11 February 1879), p. 3. The records show a sequence of drawn-out events and back and forth correspondence between the QDF and the Survey Department that demonstrate the Survey Department had no idea of the type of map or maps required, nor the capability to produce one, and the QDF's inability to provide an officer who could provide that advice and coordinate the task.

<sup>110</sup> *South Australian Register*, 21 April 1898, p. 4.

<sup>111</sup> *Queensland Parliament Votes & Proceedings*, 1895, Vol XLV, Part 1, p. 575.

<sup>112</sup> The situation is somewhat blurred as he used his military rank to designate his authorship on the maps he produced.

<sup>113</sup> *QGG*, Vol. 69, No. 99, 9 April 1898, p. 1114; *Queensland Blue Book for 1898*, p. 254. A 'topographer' is a specialist in the study of the physical appearance of the natural features of land – someone who could be associated with military surveying.

<sup>114</sup> Geological Survey of Queensland, *Annual Progress Reports of the Geological Survey for the Years 1896-98* (1899), p. 21.

<sup>115</sup> Geological Survey of Queensland, *Annual Progress Report of the Geological Survey for the Year 1899* (1900), p. 16.

<sup>116</sup> *Annual Report of the Under Secretary for Mines for 1900* (Brisbane: Government Printer, 1901), p. 185.

<sup>117</sup> *QGG*, Vol. 74, No. 157, 24 November 1900, p 1535; *Queensland Blue Book for 1900*, p. 161; *Brisbane Courier*, 5 July 1910, p. 4.

<sup>118</sup> *Australians in the Boer War: Oz-Boer Database Project*, [www.pcug.org.au](http://www.pcug.org.au), accessed 1 September 2021.

<sup>119</sup> *Western Australia Blue Book for 1905*, p. 77.

<sup>120</sup> The Peel Estate was a failed group settlement scheme (1919-1936) designed to attract English farmers through an assisted migration scheme to WA.

<sup>121</sup> *Western Australia Blue Book for 1905*, p. 54.

<sup>122</sup> Australian Electoral Roll for WA, Division of Perth (1910), p. 80; Australian Electoral Roll for WA, Division of Perth (1916), p. 106; Australian Electoral Roll for WA, Division of Forest (1925), p. 30.

<sup>123</sup> *West Australian*, 24 November 1931, p. 1.

<sup>124</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 12 April 1900, p. 2; *South Australian*

*Government Gazette*, No. 21, 24 April 1884, p. 1490.

<sup>125</sup> *South Australian Advertiser*, 31 December 1886, p. 7; *South Australian Government Gazette*, No. 56, 30 December 1886, p. 1205.

<sup>126</sup> *QGG*, Vol. 41, No. 7, 14 May 1887, p. 69; *Queensland Blue Book for 1887*, p. 21.

<sup>127</sup> Mention has previously been made to his liberal use of his militia military rank with his authorship on the maps that he produced, while technically a civilian contractor.

<sup>128</sup> *QGG*, Vol. 44, No. 68, 28 July 1888, p. 941; *QGG*, Vol. 44, No. 74, 3 August 1888, p. 1027.

<sup>129</sup> *QGG*, Vol. 53, No. 79, 1 August 1891, p. 980; *QGG*, Vol. 53, No. 97, 8 August 1891, p. 1163.

<sup>130</sup> *QGG*, Vol. 55, No. 14, 13 January 1892, p. 212.

<sup>131</sup> Supplement to *QGG*, Vol. 56, No. 6, 7 May 1892, p. 56.

<sup>132</sup> Supplement to *QGG*, Vol. 56, No. 110, 20 August 1892, p. 177.

<sup>133</sup> *QGG*, Vol. 67, No. 74, 27 March 1897, p. 853; *Queensland Blue Book for 1897*, p. 25; *QGG*, Vol. 74, No. 84, 22 September 1900, p. 719.

<sup>134</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 12 April 1900, p. 2.

<sup>135</sup> He stated his age on his Attestation Form as 39 years and the reason for his discharge from the QDF as “time expired.”

<sup>136</sup> *Australians in the Boer War: Oz-Boer Database Project* (accessed 2 September 2021) and *AngloBoerWar.com*. – *Imperial Light Horse* (accessed 7 September 2021).

<sup>137</sup> Pers. comm. Grace Kornweibel (née Owen), (correspondence to Bill Kitson, 31 May 1993).

<sup>138</sup> National Archives of Australia, Item MT1486/1, Owen/Edwin Cave.