

## OBITUARY

### Francis John Doolan

Francis Doolan, BEM, FIS Aust, FCIV, will be remembered, particularly by the older members of our profession, as a notable surveyor and valuer of real estate. His death on 1 August 1988, at the age of 92, has brought to an end a most colourful career; for besides Frank Doolan's technical achievements, he was an outstanding humanitarian whose influence in this regard was infectious.

Frank was born at Armadale, Victoria, on 1 June, 1896, He was educated at schools at Malvern, Ballarat, Albert Park and Woori Yallock, and finally at South Melbourne from 1912 to 1914. He married Lillian Johnston in March 1924 and had three sons - Desmond, Geoffrey and Maurice.

He served articles from 1914 to 1917 with JM and HE Coane, Consulting Civil Engineers and Surveyors, during which time he gained wide experience in many types of surveys. But before he took the Surveyors Board practical examinations in 1917, Frank enlisted in the AIF and served with the 1st Division Signals in France and Belgium. Before returning home in 1919, he attended the AIF Survey School at Southampton.

On completing the Board examinations in 1919, Frank Doolan entered a partnership in private practice with EC Bartels, which firm was allegedly the first to be set up in Victoria as purely a surveying practice. During the early years of this partnership, which was dissolved in 1924, Frank worked mainly in rural areas - largely on surveys for the Forests Commission. When extensive city work again became available, the firm employed Charles Goodchild; and then followed a period of carrying out many hundreds of check surveys for War Service Homes.

It was also at this time that the firm was commissioned to prepare plans for the most ambitious development of some hundreds of acres of foreshore stretching from Airey's Inlet to Point Roadknight. The idea was to create the *Riviera of Australia* to include hotels, casino, racecourse, aerodrome and a large residential subdivision. But of course it was all ahead of its time, although part of the subdivision was completed as the Sunnymead Estate at Anglesea.

In 1925, the firm of Doolan and Goodchild was formed, and one of the most notable of Frank's surveys was made. This was the location (on road axes) of the site for the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, its construction control to exact measurements and the determination of the placing of the aperture for the famous *ray of light* on the Stone of Remembrance. (The details of this particular job may be found in his paper *The Survey of the Shrine of Remembrance*, *The Australian Surveyor*, September, 1935.) With the advent of "Summertime a decade or two ago, necessitating an adjustment to the alignment of the *ray of light*, the original work by Frank Doolan was brought to attention, and this resulted in the somewhat belated award of the British Empire Medal made to him in the New Year Honours of 1979.

As with many other surveyors, the depression years of the thirties were not kind to him and with Goodchild having already left the firm to work in the Malay States, Frank was forced to diversify to other fields. These included a farm planning service which, although technically successful, was a financial failure. These were testing years for the character of any man and Frank was strained to the full with both financial and family health troubles, and he was forced to close his survey practice.

However, in 1936, he became valuer to the Shire of Eltham. He carried out a complete revaluation of the shire within six months, and this was so successful that his work brought only 30 appeals, only two of which were upheld. Then followed several short term appointments, including Instructor in Surveying at the Melbourne Technical College, and Senior Surveyor with Meudell, Gillespie and Co. - leading to the final phase of Frank's professional career.

He began this as a surveyor with the Department of the Interior in 1938, and became Chief Property Officer for Victoria in 1950, which position he held until his retirement in 1961. In 1942 he was, by examination, admitted as Associate Member of the Commonwealth Institute of Valuers, and elected a Fellow in 1952. It was in his senior position with the Department of the Interior that Frank again on many occasions exhibited his character as a humanitarian and a gentleman.

Until his professional career demanded almost full-time attention to valuation matters. Frank was an active member of our Institution, being for ten years a Councillor of the Victorian Institute of Surveyors. He was elected a Fellow in 1954.

But, in keeping with his character, he maintained another intense interest which grew from his war service. In 1923, a group of returned soldiers formed what they called a *remembrance club*, mainly for mutual assistance. However, Frank, as a member, suggested that they should *care for the dependants of comrades who served their country in war and who died in service or subsequently*. From these words came the formation of the Legacy Club, with the actual words forming part of the opening paragraph of the Charter of Legacy.

Thus can Frank Doolan be said to have been a foundation member of Legacy, if not its originator. He continued his efforts in this field as long as his activity was possible, Frank was, of course, also an active member of the Returned Servicemen's League.

His funeral service at St. Mary's Anglican Church, Caulfield, was attended by a very large gathering, including many confreres from both of his professions, from Legacy, and from the RSL, which latter group conducted a tribute in the church grounds before the departure of the funeral cortege.

(Courtesy Australian Surveyor : Anonymous (1988), *Obituary - Francis John Doolan*, Australian Surveyor, Vol.34, No.4, pp.426-427.)