



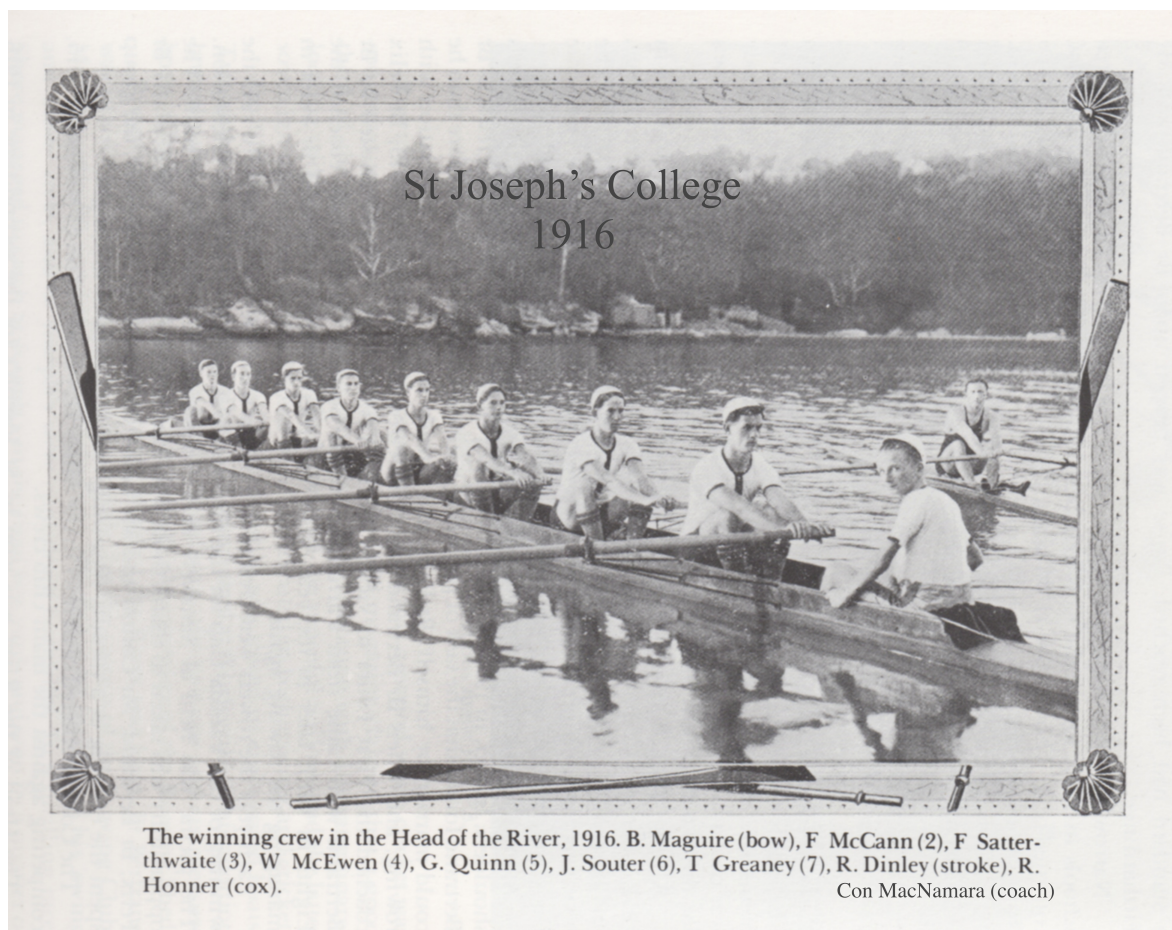
In memory of
Gunner **Cornelius MacNamara**
1888 - 1963

St Joseph's College - Balmain Rowing Club

It is well documented at St Joseph's College that their early rowing coaches were from the Balmain Rowing Club, names such as J Zeller, R B Fitzhardinge, O J Wood have all left their mark on the early success of the College rowing. For me, the one coach who stands out is Cornelius (Con) MacNamara - Captain of the Balmain Rowing club in 1915-16. Con MacNamara took over coaching the College boys in 1916, coaching them to victory in the Head of the River that year - exactly a century ago!

Referee - Saturday 15th April 1916

St Joseph's College boys had the valuable assistance of Mr O J Wood of Balmain Rowing Club, owing to his enlistment he had to discontinue coaching them. Since then Mr Con MacNamara, captain of the Balmain Rowing Club, has kindly volunteered his services, which were eagerly accepted by the College Authorities. *"When I last saw them at work I was very favorably impressed with their form. The body swing was nice and long and the recovery fairly steady, and the combination of the crew was very good. Of course, like all crews, faults were noticeable. The principal defect in their rowing in my opinion was the absence of a bright catch, caused by the want of a smart shoulder lift. There was an absence of distinction between their forward swing and backward swing. If this fault be not corrected the crew will fail to get much pace out of their boat. The leg drive in the boat is not near vigorous enough. If the legs are not driven down hard the slides are not of much use. Three of last years eight are again rowing this year."* Con MacNamara



The connection between BRC & SJC is also documented in the Balmain Rowing Club minute books, entries record lending their boats to the St Joseph's College boys in 1917. This is followed by correspondence to the College asking for payment for damage the boys did to the boats - payment was eventually paid.

Con MacNamara is first noted as rowing for Balmain Rowing Club from about 1912. In 1913 he was elected secretary to the club and by 1915 was elected captain holding this position until his enlistment in the Great War in October 1916. Con MacNamara is recorded as attending meetings and being active in the club up until 1952. During his career he was a delegate to NSW Rowing Association, on the NSW selection committee, on the BRC coaches committee, secretary, captain, vice president and president of BRC and was made an active life member.

Aged 28, Cornelius MacNamara enlisted in the Great War on 10th October 1916, his rank being - Gunner. He embarked per Shropshire from Melbourne in May 1917 attached to the 14th F.A.B. Soon after arriving in England the 14th F.A.B. marched out to Rouelles, France where, according to Army records, Gunner MacNamara remained for 12 months. After spending a short time in hospital in England for a septic hand, he returned to Australia in March 1919.

Cornelius along with his brother Marshal are listed on the BRC WWI Honor Board.

At the opening of the meeting of the Balmain Rowing Club, in the club house, on Monday 17th June 1963, the Committee stood in silence in respect to their late President, Con MacNamara, who passed away on 8th June.

