

Foundation Day 2013 Report

2/6 Cavalry Commando Regiment and 2nd. Cavalry Regiment Association (Vic.) Inc. Reports on: 74th Annual Pilgrimage - Foundation Day Commemoration at 1200 hours on Sunday 3/11/2013

What a wonderful sense of pride, gratitude and comradeship our annual Foundation Day pilgrimage inevitably provides. This year, although sadly missing several loved and familiar faces, was no exception, and our tributes were equally as much for them as for those who have passed but never been forgotten. See photos here

The day began auspiciously with sunshine and a fair breeze, but in true Melbourne tradition, 10 minutes before the opening, the skies blackened, the wind sprang up via Antarctica, and we were bravely trying to withstand sleet and pretending it didn't matter. Fortunately the experienced Shrine staff is prepared for every eventuality and in the blink of an eye had retrieved all the seating and sound equipment from under The Tree and re-organised it in an excellent setting within the Shrine of Remembrance itself. For a variety of reasons, many of them sad ones, we were expecting a smaller attendance this year, and so were very gratified at the numbers who took the time out to attend, in particular 2 Cav representatives, PLC padre and pipers, and many family members from the country joining us for the first time. We were welcomed in a warm speech from the Shrine of Remembrance Governor John Coulson, followed by our president, Susan McLaughlin who firstly spoke for all of us when welcoming the serving 2 Cav soldiers who had made a special trip from Darwin for the occasion, to act as our flag bearers and bring us their CO's message. Susan spoke of our reason for honouring this day each year and I can do no better than directly quote from her welcome as her words hold true for each and every one of us: "We gather here for many reasons: certainly to remember our brave departed soldiers who fought battles on our behalf, but also on a more personal level each of us gathers to honour and remember a husband, a father, a grandfather or maybe a brother or an uncle. Or to remember mates, comrades, heroes and friends. Whichever it is, today is our day to honour and remember when the 2/6th began and what has unfolded since. This is our day to exhibit our loyalty and to humbly and solemnly reflect and remember the soldiers of our regiments who fought and gave their lives selflessly and courageously. It is our day to justly give appreciation, unreservedly and abundantly, to those who lay down their lives for us so we could have an opportunity of life with freedom and with peace. Our thoughts are with all soldiers of 2 Cav, especially those who are currently on deployment overseas. We hold you and your families in our hearts and pray for your safe return. So I say thank-you to all the men of the 2nd / 6th and 2nd Cavalry regiments. Thank-you from the bottom of our hearts, for your courage, for your determination, for your commitment and love of our nation, for your strength and sacrifice for us. Part of your legacy is the values which many Australians are proud of: such as mate-ship, loyalty, integrity and honesty. Our gratitude and appreciation is sincere and we shall always remember you! As our journeys continue without you, we take strength from the knowledge that through mud and blood your job was done and done well. We take peace from the faith that you now rest in the Green Fields beyond" Our President was followed by our guest speaker, Padre Charles Green, also representing our linked school, the Presbyterian Ladies College, who support our organisation on formal occasions and provide our wonderful Pipers and Drummers. Padre Green spoke of our association with his school and fondly remembered Shorty Corbett who had facilitated the tie and inspired PLC students with his passion. This year the topic related to the lesser known Battle of Sidon, amongst our battle honours. A short extract follows and the full text is available on our website: "This regiment was a WWII unit, which was founded on November 3, 1939. It saw action in the Middle East, Northern Australia and the South West Pacific. Its name captures its history. Initially it operated with Bren carriers and tanks in the Middle East. In mid-1942 it returned to Australia to help defend Australia. As there was less need for motorised cavalry in the Pacific war, the unit retrained as a commando unit. During WWII the regiment was awarded 17 battle honours and at the end of the war it was disbanded. The Association currently has a close relationship with 2 Cavalry Regiment in Darwin and in many ways sees them as carrying on the spirit and traditions of the regiment." The battle of Sidon occurred on and around Friday 13 June 1941. One of the veterans (shared) with me what it was like travelling through the Holy Land during the war. He talked about how profoundly moved he was by the experience. One story (from the unit history "To the Green Fields Beyond") grabbed my attention. Some of the tanks used by the regiment had been captured from the enemy. In order to avoid being shot at by their own side (called friendly fire), the men painted large kangaroos on the sides of the tanks. Sidon was known to me as one of the ancient coastal Phoenician cities mentioned in the Bible. In the Old Testament, Sidon is often mentioned in a negative way, as the Canaanite people from Sidon were sometimes in conflict with the Israelites. In the New Testament, it gets a mention when Jesus visited the region and commends one of the local women for her faith (see Matthew 15:21-28). Later in the Book of Acts we are told that this region was one of the first places evangelised by the early church. The Battle of Sidon is an interesting battle to read about, because both sides were very mindful of Sidon's great historical significance and were reluctant to see it damaged. Much of the fighting occurred on the outskirts of the town and in the end the Vichy French simply withdrew from the town in the middle of the night. (Note: At our celebratory dinner after the Ceremony, Charles spoke with one of our original veterans and writes: "My conversation reminded me of why I happily come back each year and play a part in this service. I don't believe anyone comes to this service to glorify war. They do come, however, to faithfully honour those who lost their lives while serving their country. They also come to tell stories and to hear stories that remind them about the things that are most important and enduring in life - friendship, loyalty, integrity, good humour, courage, family, faith and service. Although it is not an occasion where people strongly parade their faith, there is a very deeply rooted sense of respect for the role that faith has played in the history of the regiment (including some very fond memories of the various Padres). I suspect it is yet another expression of that old saying, "In the end there are no atheists in foxholes" I am looking forward to attending the service again next year. Hopefully it won't rain!") If any readers have any additional stories, memories or recalled anecdotes on Sidon, we would be grateful to hear from them so they can be added to the historical treasures in our website library

The Annual message from the

Commander of 2 Cav, our daughter regiment who holds our battle honours has become an important part of our present tradition and melds the past together with the future. As all of us who follow national news know, 2 Cav has done an outstanding job in an eventful, disruptive and very difficult year. The CO's message was conveyed by 2 Cav soldiers who flew from Darwin to join us in the pilgrimage. It is published in full as all soldiers, ex soldiers and families of soldiers will relate to his words, and in the future, this too will become a part of the history of our past and exemplifies why we are here. It is a continuing part of our story: C.O.'s Message from 2 Cav conveyed by LCPL Borce Trajkov, accompanied by LCPL Nigel McMullen “It is extremely hard to place the year that has passed, in some form of context. Having been in the Unit off and on since 1996, one has never witnessed a more demanding and disorientating time frame in which our group of ne men and women have experienced being pulled in divergent directions. Without additional augmentation, manning or support 2 CAV Regiment has had to contend with the following assigned tasks throughout 2013: . Deploy C SQN to Townsville in effort to prepare it for integration into the ACR Trial . Temporarily move A SQN to 1st ARMD REGT in February in order to train all personnel in A SQN to become M113-AS4 drivers. This was directed to occur in order to build an APC SQN for use in the ACR Trial. . Integrate B SQN, SPT SQN, RHQ & force elements from a variety of units to build an Advisory Task Force to deploy to Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan. . Concentrate, train and prepare this Task Group for deployment over the period May to December. . Deploy the 2 CAV Regiment Task Force to Afghanistan . Temporarily integrate C SQN into 1st ARMD REGT for the purposes of the ACR trial. . Participate in the ACR Trial and the EX HAMEL series . Redeploy back to Darwin . Permanently move A and C SQN to 1st ARMD REGT to form 1st ACR . Prepare to form the second ACR & subsequently plan to the REGT to Townsville at some point in 2014. . Return the Task Group back to Australia and demount personnel into January 2014. Was this too much to do in one year? Was too much expected from the Unit? Time will tell - we are yet to finish the year and return all of our family safe from the perils of con ict. Nevertheless, I do know that the leadership and camaraderie shown by all Of cers and Soldiers has been the mechanism for our success in meeting all assigned missions. I am extremely proud of the efforts that all our ne men and women have made. They have embodied much of the martial stoicism and values that have been the backbone of our military efforts for decades. As we come to the end of our long combat force commitment in the Middle Eastern Area of Operations, I am extremely aware of the need to recognise all those who have contributed to the Units tireless and currently unsung commitment to Army's efforts in places as far ung as As-Sanmmwah, As-Salman, Chora and Derawud. To this list must also be added earlier operational areas and locations such as Dili, Same and Suai. 2 CAV Regiment's commitment to operations is pronounced, but far less understood in the wider Army and Defence Community than warranted. The Unit has deployed Regimental Headquarters leading battle group organisations to both Iraq and Afghanistan. It has continuously committed Squadrons to Troops to all operational theatres (less the Solomon Islands) since 1999. It has regularly provided troops to meet short notice contingency force preparations concurrent to Army's main operational set. All past and current members of the Cavalry Regiment should be aware that an application for a Meritorious Unit Citation is being developed for submission to higher Army Headquarters. It will aim to seek formal recognition for the literally countless hours of dedicated hard work, commitment, professionalism, personal and collective discipline, determination and “courage”, that was resident in the deployment of every Patrol, Troop, Squadron and Regimental Headquarters commitment since September 1999. The Regiment's move to Townsville marks the closing of one chapter and the commencement of another. Our connection to Darwin has been de ning for so many men and women, who have stood at one time or another and watched Courage proudly y across the front of the Parade Ground; endured the dust, sweat, grime and ies of Mount Bundy; or remember with great fondness the inter-unit rugby matches on the football ground behind RHQ between 2 CAV and 1 ARMD. Many will remember what Darwin was like back in the early years, especially 1993 to 1996 – a frontier town in many respects, but proud of and welcoming to “it”'s Regiment in the North”. I suspect that the residents of Darwin do not know what this directed move entails, or the living history and affiliation that will depart the Northern Territory throughout next year. The move does not mean the end of the Regiment, its soul or its approach to the hard and demanding requirements of soldiering. It will mean that 2 CAV is linked to what will become the most deployable part of the Army, given the decisions to link amphibious capability to Townsville and to experiment, once again, with restructuring Army's armoured capabilities. I wish to nish by expressing the hope that the uncertainty and turmoil that the Unit has been subject to will soon conclude. I also sincerely hope that the families that provide us with such great support continue to show the patience, good humour and indulgence that they have sel essly shown over the last 12 months. What has been achieved could not have been achieved without their efforts and the patient, nurturing support of families & loved ones.” “Courage” ***** One sad aspect of our day was that of missing the company of our much loved patron Betty Land, so in her absence, our Secretary/Treasurer Robert Stafford responded to the CO's message with a thank you to Borce and Nigel, and our best wishes for the future operations of the regiment. He spoke of how happy Shorty Corbett would be if he could be “looking down” to see the result of his handiwork towards promoting and strengthening our alliance. As a gesture of our appreciation, he presented 2 Cav. Via Nigel and Borce, with an original (and rare) hardback copy of the book: “To the Green Fields of Kastina” by Osie Stafford (VX529), father to both Susan and Robert. “This book is a chronological account of our Dad's” early life growing up, his war experiences in the 6th Australian Division Cavalry Regiment and then his life as a soldier settler in the Western District of Victoria. For anyone else who may be interested this book is available in electronic form, free of charge, from our website”. (Having read this beautiful and moving story myself, I recommend it to everyone who is able to go online to our website or to have it downloaded). Download it here but note that it will take awhile. ***** The sad task of reading the Vale was then undertaken by the Assistant Secretary Heather Stone: The Vale

19/11/2012 Isabel Jonson (widow of) VX13437 Kevin Jonson 28/11/2012 Harry Jack Hooker
………………. (JP) Pat Meredith TX600 12/03/13 Ernest George

26/03/2013 B (Mick) Reid TX14681 16/04/2013 John (Shorty) Corbett TX5600 18/04/2013
TX15936 6/08/2013 William James Gray VX93025 LEST WE FORGET Tribute to Fallen Comrades &nd
Stafford In World War 1 approximately 62,000 Australian military personnel lost their lives. The toll for World War 2 was
approximately 23,000 Australians. In other conflicts around the world, both past and present, Australian military
personnel have made the ultimate sacrifice so that we can continue to enjoy the life we do today. We are now at that
part of the service where we pay tribute to all fallen comrades. In a moment I will ask you to recite ‘The
Ode’ with me. This will be followed by the playing of the ‘Last Post’ and then a short period of
silence which will be broken by the words ‘Lest We Forget’. I will now ask you to be upstanding, if you are
able, and recite the Ode with me. They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old Age shall not weary them nor the
years condemn At the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them Would you please remain
standing for the playing of the ‘Last Post’ and a short period of silence. Lest We Forget ***** Our
President concluded with thanks to all concerned, and following a service in which nobody failed to be moved, the PLC
Piper piped us away and almost everyone present further enjoyed the conviviality and comradeship of our (very
extended) lunch at the Conservatory Caf  adjoining the Shrine, set in the lovely grounds of the Domain. We look forward
to seeing everybody next year, old friends and new faces alike.