

## Kevin Maloney addresses The Regiment August 2010

Colin Bartholomew and Kevin Maloney saluted by Sgt. Courage.

Presentation to 2 Cav Regt 21 Aug 10

By Kevin Maloney

Introduction

Maj Gen Chalmers & Mrs Chalmers, Honorary Colonel Brig Bryant, Commodore Stach & Mrs Stach, Commanding Officer 2nd Cavalry Regiment LtCol Johnstone – Ladies and gentlemen of the Cavalry. President Shorty, who is currently waging a few battles on his own on the health front has asked me to represent him tonight as one who has a foot in both camps 2/6 Cav Cdo Regt through my father – Spike™ Maloney, and 2 Cav Regt as a former RAAC officer to provide some background to 2/6, and our current Association.

History of 2/6 Cav Cdo Regt

2/6th was the first armoured unit raised in the 2nd AIF in November 1939.

It was first called the 6th Div Reconnaissance Regiment.

During the six years of the Second World War, the Regiment changed titles and roles four separate times.

The origin was important because in the Divisional Order of Battle, 6 Div Recon Regt was placed at the right of the line as the Senior Regiment of the AIF followed by Artillery Regiments and then Infantry Battalions.

The Regiment sailed for the Middle East on 10 Jan 40 (only 3 months after formation). B Sqn was the first AIF unit into action against land forces in the Second World War on 12 Dec 40 at Fort Garn el Grein. A Sqn joined O'Connor's 6th Div drive along the coast of North Africa through Bardia, Tobruk and onto Benghazi; actions which historians have called "The Benghazi Handicap". B and C Sqns moved inland to Fort Maddelina and Giarabub.

On completion of the first desert campaign, the Regiment was refitted in Egypt and returned as the reconnaissance screen for the British 7th Armoured Division in an attempt to relieve Tobruk, which was now under siege by Rommel. The Regiment was again on the move as Rommel by-passed Tobruk and pushed east towards the Suez Canal. At this time C Sqn, which had lost most of its armoured vehicles in heavy combat in Syria, converted to horse cavalry scouts on 'borrowed' French horses. They utilized their short life spotting enemy gun positions in the Merdajoun Sector.

In Dec 1941 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour and began their drive south through Burma, Malaya and Singapore to create their resource rich East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. 6 Div. were withdrawn from the Middle East essentially to provide troops for the defence of Singapore.

As we know, Singapore fell and the ships containing 6 Div returned to Australia to prepare for the Defence of our homeland.

The Regiment moved to the Northern Territory in June 1942 for some 15 months whilst politicians fought for armoured vehicles for the conduct of the Defence of Australia. These vehicles were withheld for the European Theatre. When arriving back in Australia 2/6 Cavalry Regiment had fought against the Germans, Italians and Vichy French on trucks, light and medium reconnaissance vehicles and on horseback. But it was now time to address the new threat of Japan in a new role and new organisation.

On 2 Dec 43 the Regiment was reformed and renamed 2/6 Cav Cdo Regt. A and B Sqn soldiers become 2/9 and 2/10 Sqns. HQ and C Sqn were disbanded. The Regiment moved to the Atherton Tablelands where they were reinforced with fit young volunteers from all over Australia. This included 7 Independent Company which had seen considerable action already in New Guinea as part of Kanga Force in the Mubo/Salamaua areas.

Thus the Regiment was again complete as 2/7, 2/9 and 2/10 Sqns.

A side bit of strategic history here. Having halted the Japanese on the Kokoda Track and then fought all the way to the coast at Buna and Gona, the New Guinea Campaign - according to MacArthur was over. He estimated that it would take some 12 Divisions to mop up and clear all of the South West Pacific Island of Japanese troops whilst he 'island hopped' towards Japan. 12 Divisions were not available so Blamey volunteered 12 Brigades to do the job. This in reality broke down to less than 12 Regiments or Battalions to clear New Guinea, the Solomons, Bougainville, and Borneo.

As part of the 'clearing of New Guinea' campaign the Regiment landed at Aitape in October 1944 and served with great distinction, operating independently as commandos in the Wewak - Maprik - Aitape areas, until repatriated to Australia in 1945.

Peace at last for the soldiers of 2/6th. Their Courage, Initiative and Fighting skill rewarded with Battle Honours from :

North Africa:

Bardia 1941

Capture of Tobruk

Derna

Giarabub

Syria 1941

Meejayun

Adlum,

Sidon

Battle Honours also from the South West Pacific, including;

## The Liberation of New Guinea

Abau-Malin

Anub River

Maprik

Wewak

Wirui Mission.

With the war over and a new Army facing a variety of different threats, Defence posture moved to one of Forward Defence that saw our Army (post Korea) fighting in the Malayan Emergency; confrontation with Indonesia and eventually Vietnam.

Equipment may have changed, but the need for well trained reconnaissance soldiers did not. With this in mind 2/6th ceremoniously handed their Battle Honours over to the Second Cavalry Regiment on 9th October 1971 " with the words " To you with failing hands we throw the Torch: Be it yours to carry high".

## History of 2 Cav Regt

FORMER MEMBERS OF 2/6TH Cav Cdo Regt and their families that initiated the 2/6 Cav Cdo Regt Assoc could not be more proud of our daughter regiment as it carves out its place in our military history with distinguished, and on going service in Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor.

## Association

The current status of the Association is as follows

" The original 2/6 Assoc has now been expanded with your endorsement as the 2/6 Cav Cdo Regt and 2 Cav Regt Assoc.

" The Constitution and Objectives of the Assoc have been ratified and

" The Assoc has been incorporated " in Victoria at least.

" We continue to work towards an umbrella National Association supporting the great work done by both the Victorian and NT Assoc.

" The web site is national and has received the endorsement of the Australian War memorial as a site of historical importance and significance. This will be linked to all state Assoc web sites.

" We will be seeking Government grants to further develop our Two Regiments' history.

" We are also engaged in some direct action to ensure the welfare of our current serving soldiers " be it letters to Ministers about the failure rate of GP boots to other letters direct to the Minister of defence and Chief of Army about the proposal to remove Black Berets " Shorty asked me to remind you that there is still plenty of fight in the dog " regardless of his size!!

" The Association is also proud to continue sponsoring the trophy and cash for the "Scout Section of the Year" TM. This will be a now more open competition emphasizing the importance of teamwork and initiative as well as individual skill. The CO will shortly advise the Competition criteria.

" We are also receiving and processing enquiries from all states from former members and families of both 2/6 and 2 Cav for membership.

" In addition we also endorse the initiatives of the very active NT Assoc.

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Some of these NT initiatives include:

" The new banner displaying the colour patches of both fine Regiments together with our battle honours. This will be a rallying point for ANZAC Day and other days of remembrance.

" The NT Assoc has also committed to paying for a number of 2 Cav Regt soldiers to fly to Melbourne (all expenses paid) each year to march with 2/6 Cav Cdo members on Anzac Day.

" Maintaining the Museum at RHQ that provides the living connection between the past and present Cavalry.

" The NT Assoc will also sponsor a new "Soldier of the Year" TM trophy and the competition will be open to both mounted and dismounted members of the Regiment " regardless of trade.

" The second last initiative is one that not only confirms the links with our past, but is also quite exciting. The NT Assoc will sponsor a series of battlefield tours for selected members of the Regiment. The first tour will visit Aitapi (the site of the 2/6 amphibious landing). Other tours will visit Wewak and perhaps Kokoda. The short term culmination of these awards will be a battlefield tour of Gallipoli to coincide with the centenary in 2015.

" All of these initiatives are proof positive of the ongoing support that the Regimental family provides and will continue to provide as we progress from strength to strength.

The final initiative is one much closer to all of us. Lance Corporal Webb, ARE YOU READY? The NT Assoc has graciously consented to put the sum of \$1000 over the bar to offset our costs in celebrating the inextricable link between 2/6 Cav Cdo Regt and 2 Cav Regt.

Cpl Webb: Do your Duty

Thank You.

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