

A BRIEF RESUME OF THE REGIMENT

A BRIEF RESUME OF 2/6 CAVALRY COMMANDO REGIMENTÂ (Cavalry News 75, June 2005)

The Regiment was the first armoured unit in the 2nd AIF, formed in 1939 as the 6 Division Reconnaissance Regiment. During the six years of the Second World War the Regiment had the following titles: -6 Division Reconnaissance Regiment 1939-40 6 Division Cavalry Regiment 1940-42 2/6 Cavalry Regiment 1942-43 2/6 Cavalry Commando Regiment 1943-46 In the Divisional Order of Battle the Regiment is placed on the right of the line as a senior unit followed by Artillery Regiments and then the Infantry Battalions.Â So, we were the senior unit of the senior Division of the 2nd AIF. The Regiment sailed to the Middle East on 10 January 1940, and 'B' Squadron was the first AIF unit into action against land forces on 12 December 1940 at Fort Gam el Grein. 'A' Squadron went with the 6 Division through Bardia and Tobruk to Benghazi, and 'B' and 'C' inland to Fort Maddelina and Giarabub.Â It was then we were granted the rare and signal honour of wearing the large rising sun hat badge on our berets to replace the small collar badges worn hitherto, and continued for other Cavalry Regiments. On completion of the first Desert Campaign, we refitted in Egypt and returned as the reconnaissance screen for the British 7 Armoured division, (the Desert Rats) in an attempt to relieve Tobruk, which by now was under siege by Rommel. We then moved to the Syrian Campaign and were heavily engaged there for its duration. 'C' Squadron, having lost most of its AFVs, quickly converted to horse cavalry with captured French horses and utilised their short life spotting enemy gun positions in the Merdjayoun sector. The Regiment then returned to Australia and moved to the Northern Territory in June 42 for 15Â months.Â We had by this time fought against the Germans, Italians and Vichy French, on trucks, AFVs and on horseback and now we prepared for the Japanese in a completely new role and organisation. On 2 December 1943 the unit became 2/6 Australian Cavalry (Commando) Regiment and the men of 'A' and 'B' Squadrons were distributed into two Squadrons, 3/9 and 2/10.Â 'C' and 'HQ' Squadrons were disbanded.Â The Regiment moved to the Atherton Tablelands and were there joined by young reinforcements arriving en masse from Jungle Training Centre at Canungra, where they had been thoroughly trained and toughened. Numbers of the older troops transferred to other units or were medically boarded from future ground operations, but those that remained with the newly joined Canungra Cannibals quickly brought 2/9 and 2/10 Squadrons up to full strength and our training began in earnest. In March, 7 Independent Company marched in.Â This was an integrated experienced unit which had been in action with Kanga Force in the Mubo/Salamaua areas with great success.Â Later they were with Bena Force in the Ramu Valley. This then made up the Regiment, 2/7, 2/9, 2/10 Squadrons that operated as distinctly separate formations in different areas.Â In October 1944 the Regiment landed at Aitape and served with distinction throughout the Wewak-Maprik-Aitape areas, until repatriated in December 1945. NX54544