

2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment

A Brief History

This site does not attempt to write the history of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (2 RAR) but aims to give a brief insight to the history and traditions earned by the service of those who have gone before.

South West Pacific 1945

2 RAR had its origins as 66 Aust Inf Bn, which was raised on 16 Oct 45 at Labuan in Borneo before joining 34 Aust Inf Bde on the island of Morotai in the Molluccas archipelago of Indonesia. Volunteers for the Battalion came mostly from men of the 9th Division, 2nd AIF.

Japan 1946-1948

The Battalion participated in the occupation of Japan as part of 34 Aust Inf Bde from Feb 46 to Dec 48. The 66th Battalion was stationed at Hiro during this time but was also temporarily garrisoned at Tokyo and Ebisu as part of its occupation duties.

On 23 Nov 48 the 66th Battalion became the 2nd Battalion, The Australian Regiment.

Australia 1948-1953

In Dec 48 the unit returned to Australia and was located at Puckapunyal in Victoria. The Battalion became the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment on 10 Mar 49 with approval being given to add the prefix 'Royal' to the existing title. 2 RAR remained at Puckapunyal until Mar 53 as part of 1 Independent Infantry Brigade Group. It was responsible for the training of recruits from the Southern States; and later, recruits for the Battalions fighting in Korea.

Korea 1953-1954

On 5 Mar 53 the Battalion embarked for Pusan, Korea on MV 'New Australia' and arrived on 17 Mar 53. A soldier named Private G Belville stowed away on board because he had been posted out of the unit a few days before. He was fined five pounds and taken back on strength. In 1957, on graduating from OCS, he served as an officer in the Battalion for a short period. He was killed in action in 1966 as a Captain serving with the Army Training Team in South Vietnam. On 21 Mar 53 detachments from 1 RAR, 2 RAR and 3 RAR paraded together on the 1 RAR parade ground at Camp Casey. This was the first occasion in which all the Battalions of The Royal Australian Regiment had paraded together and on this occasion all were on war service. In Apr 53 the Battalion moved into the line, as part of 28 BRITCOM Bde/1 COMWEL Div, relieving a French Battalion. It was noted that artillery and mortar reports became more timely and accurate from the rifle companies after mortar fire had damaged C Company's beer ration in early May 53.

The Hook

On 9 Jul 53 2 RAR relieved the 1st Battalion, The King's Regiment around 'The Hook' feature, the left flank of 1 COMWEL Div. The Battalion was subjected to intermittent artillery, mortar and infantry attacks leading up to the battle of 'The Hook' on 24, 25 and 26 Jul 53. Coinciding with attacks on 7 US Marine Regt, on the Battalions left, 2 RAR was heavily attacked with artillery concentrations and infantry during the night of the 24th and the early hours of the 25th Jul. The reserve company from 1 Durham Light Infantry (DLI) came under command 2 RAR at midnight. The enemy objectives were the feature 'Boulder City' in the US Marine Sector and 'POINT 121' in the 2 RAR Sector. All attacks were repulsed with heavy enemy casualties by the morning of

the 25th and the reserve company from 1 DLI was withdrawn.

The enemy resumed heavy attacks on the Marines and the 2 RAR sector during the night of the 25th. D Company, 3 RAR came under command at 0100 hours and again a company from 1 DLI was warned but did not move up. These attacks were again beaten back with severe enemy casualties and major attacks ceased by the morning of the 26th. For its performance under these attacks 2 RAR won the battle honour 'SAMICHON'.

Australian 1954-1955

The Battalion sailed for home on 6 Apr 54 on MV 'New Australia', arriving at Brisbane on 16 Apr 54 and moved into Enoggera Barracks. The Jungle Training Centre had recently been re-established at Canungra near Brisbane and 2 RAR was the first unit to pass through this reactivated centre.

The Governor-General Field Marshal Sir William Slim, GCB, GMG, GCVO, GBE, DSO, MC, KStJ presented colours to the Battalion at Victoria Park, Brisbane on 28 Sep 55. The Battalion then became the first regular unit in Australia to receive the Queens' and Regimental Colours. After receiving the Colours the Battalion marched through Brisbane, its last public appearance before proceeding overseas again.

Malaya - First Tour

The Battalion was the first Australian unit to serve in Malaya since World War II. It was also the first time for Australian troops to become members of an overseas, operational part of the British Commonwealth Far Eastern Strategic Reserve. 2 RAR embarked in Brisbane in Oct 55 and moved to Penang as part of 28 COMWEL Ind Inf Bde. It is noteworthy that the formation in which the Battalion served had the longest title in any Commonwealth Army: '28 British Commonwealth Independent Infantry Brigade Group' (North Malay Sub-District).

The Battalion entered operations on 3 Jan 56 in the Kulim area. B Company had the first successful contact with the Communist Terrorist (CT) enemy during 'Operation Deuce'. During this operation a party of Sarawak Rangers were attached as scouts and proved very valuable. This operation concluded for the Battalion on 30 Apr 56 when a Battalion of the Malay Regiment relieved it.

2 RAR immediately participated in a 28 COMWEL Indep Inf Bde operation called 'North Shark' at Kuala Kangsar in the state of Perak. Extensive use was made of Auster Aircraft from 1907 LL/AOP FLT dropping supplies and mail, recon and liaison. Operations were continued at Sungei Siput from 27 Oct to 2 Dec 56.

The unit was withdrawn from 'Operation North Shark' for rest and retraining at Minden Barracks and was based at Penang. On 4 Feb 57 the unit returned to 'Operation North Shark' relieving the 1st Battalion, Royal Lincolns. Again Auster aircraft provided support against 13/15 Indep PI (CT). The unit also participated in 'Operation Rubberlegs' from 7 Mar to 17 Mar 57. On 1 Aug 57 2 RAR moved back to Butterworth for rest and retraining and remained at Butterworth/Penang until late Oct 57.

During this tour official approval was received for the 2 RAR flag to be black, with the numbers to be in the upper hoist canton and The Regimental Crest in the centre. On 31 Oct 57 the Battalion returned to Australia and marched through Sydney to a ticker-tape welcome from 100,000 spectators.

2 RAR returned to barrack life at Holsworthy, again as part of 1 Indep Inf Bde Gp. In mid - 1960, after a major reorganisation of the Army, the Battalion became a Pentropic unit. It was reorganised on tropical establishment again in Jun 61 to prepare for its second tour of Malaya.

Malay - Second Tour

The Battalion was the first to serve two tours of Malaya. It joined 28 COMWEL Indep Inf Bde Gp at Terendak Camp near Malacca in Oct 61. During this tour it hunted the remnants of the communist terrorists on the Thailand/Malaysia border. The Battalion returned to Brisbane and Enoggera Barracks in August 1963 without suffering any loss of life. The unit then served as part of the 6th Task Force, 1 Div.

Vietnam - First Tour

2 RAR remained at Enoggera until it embarked for operational service in South Vietnam on 19 May 67. On that day the unit sailed on the troop carrier HMAS Sydney to relieve the 6th Battalion serving with the 1st Australian Task Force at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province. During this tour two companies of New Zealand Infantry were placed under command and 2 RAR became an ANZAC Battalion. Soldiers of 2 RAR/NZ (ANZAC) took part in 23 operations in Phuoc Tuy and Bien Hoa Provinces and maintained constant patrols and ambushes throughout their area of operations. Nine of these operations were conducted wholly by the ANZAC Battalion. Others were staged with 3 RAR, 7 RAR with armour, artillery, engineer, aviation and SASR support.

The Battalion's most successful operation was Operation 'Coburg' that took place in the area of the border between Bien Hoa Province and Long Khanh Province north west of Phuoc Tuy Province. This was a Task Force operation, the first in strength outside Phuoc Tuy Province. This Task Force relieved the 199th Inf Bde (US) with the aim of denying the Viet Cong (VC) access to the area and sites from which they could direct rocket fire into the huge American bases at Long Binh and Bien Hoa. During the operation the enemy launched the Tet Offensive.

The number of contacts with the enemy rose sharply and instead of local force VC the unit began to meet well trained main force troops of 274th VC Regiment. 91 VC or North Vietnamese were killed and over 80 weapons captured.

In this first tour the ANZAC Battalion killed 187 enemy, inflicted a further 60 confirmed WIA casualties, captured 12 prisoners and 190 weapons. The Australians and New Zealanders had 28 soldiers killed during the tour. 4 RAR relieved the Battalion 1 Jun 68. On its return from Vietnam on 13 Jun 68 the Battalion again occupied an area of Enoggera Barracks prior to establishing itself at Lavarack Barracks, Townsville in Jun 69.

Vietnam - Second Tour

On 15 May 70, 2 RAR officially relieved 6 RAR and resumed the title of ANZAC Battalion with New Zealanders again under command. In a successful twelve months of operations against the enemy, including D440 and D445 VC Battalions, the unit killed 110 enemy troops and captured 23 for the loss of 13 soldiers killed.

4 RAR/NZ (ANZAC) took over operational responsibility from 2 RAR in May 71. The Battalion returned to Lavarack Barracks where it linked with 4 RAR on 15 Aug 73.

Re-Raising of 2 RAR

As a result of the 1994 Defence White paper 2/4 RAR was unlinked on 1 Feb 95 to form 2 RAR and 4 RAR. The officers and soldiers of 2/4 RAR formed 2 RAR and remained part of 3 Brigade

in Samichon Lines.

United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR)

In 1994 the Australian Government approved the commitment of Australian troops to provide humanitarian support to the UN forces deployed in Rwanda. A Company was deployed to protect the Australian Medical Support Force and the Commanding Officer, Operations Officer and other key personnel were attached to the UN mission Headquarters. This deployment also drew on elements of Support Company, and Administration Company and the Battalion Headquarters.

A Company returned in Feb 95 and was replaced by B Company. During the second deployment there was serious unrest at the Kibeho Displaced Persons camp during Apr 95. Action by the Rwandan Peoples Army caused considerable loss of life amongst the local Rwandan population but fortunately no casualties to B Company.

B Company returned to Australia when the Australian commitment ended in Aug 95.

East Timor

In September 1999, Australia deployed a brigade-sized combat element to East Timor as part of the UN sanctioned International Force – East Timor. 2RAR was one of the first units deployed once the airfield at Dili had been secured by elements of the SASR. Arriving in Dili on 20 September 1999, they immediately started the process of restoring order to the capital so that it could be used as an operational base from which further operations could be launched in the surrounding countryside.

2RAR was deployed to the western border region on 1 October. Working closely with other units in the area from New Zealand and Britain, the northern border area was secured. On 6 October, 2 RAR, operating alongside elements from the SASR and the Gurkhas, came under attack from militia elements, resulting in two 2RAR soldiers being wounded.

On 10 October a clash occurred near the border at Mota'ain. As an Australian patrol from 'C' Company advanced towards the border, Indonesian military, police, and militia forces opened fire upon the lead platoon and the Australians returned fire, resulting in a number of Indonesian casualties. For his leadership under fire, Corporal Paul Teong, commander of the lead section in the forward platoon during the contact, was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

2RAR continued to conduct operations in the western border areas as slowly but surely security was restored to East Timor. On 3 January 2000, 2RAR was relieved by 5/7 RAR.

Timor became a recurring problem and the Battalion returned there in October 2001 and again three times after Timor was renamed Timor Leste. Two of these commitments were for periods of six months and commenced in April 2006, October 2007 and then for nine months in May 2009.

Solomon Islands

In 2003 and 2004 the Battalion provided elements to the Solomon Islands on three occasions for periods between four and six months. They were in July 2003, November 2003 and May 2004 but for the Battalion it was continuous for a 16-month period.

It is during these last two decades we see an unusual phenomenon occurring. There are numerous instances where the resources of the Battalion were split between two operational

areas simultaneously.

Iraq

2RAR was committed to Iraq four times. Twice between April 2003 and January 2004 while elements of the Battalion were in the Solomon Islands. And again in May to December 2006 and finally in May 2009 to February 2010 while the bulk of the Battalion was in Timor Leste.

Afghanistan

Elements of the Battalion have served in Afghanistan twice for six-month periods. Firstly in October 2007 while the bulk of the Battalion was in Timor Leste and the second period commenced June 2011 where the whole Battalion was committed as a Mentoring Task Force.

Current Operations

To be written

Appendixes:

1. 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment - Allied Regiment - The Coldstream Guards
2. 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment - Miscellaneous Information

APPENDIX 1

2ND BATTALION, THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT ALLIED REGIMENT - THE COLDSTREAM GUARDS

General

The Coldstream Guards is a part of the Guards Division,[1] Foot Guards regiments of the British Army. It is the oldest regiment in the Regular Army in continuous active service, originating in Coldstream, Scotland in 1650.

Origin

'Monck's Regiment of Foot' was raised by Cromwell as part of his 'New Model Army' in 1650. It took part in the defeat of the Royalists at the Battle of Dunbar in 1650. After the battle, Colonel George Monck and his Regiment, together with 5,000 other troops, remained to subjugate Scotland.

Upon Cromwell's death, General Monck and his troops marched south from the little border town of Coldstream, took up quarters in London and were employed in keeping order in the town. The intervention of Monck and his Coldstreamers was largely responsible for securing the free election of the Parliament, which restored Charles II to the throne.

When the Cromwellian Army was being disbanded serious civil disturbances were taking place, so the King decided to retain the Regiment. In order to comply with the disbandment order the Regiment was paraded at the Tower of London on 14th February 1661, and having laid down their arms in token of disbandment, they immediately took them up again as soldiers of the King and 'an extraordinary Guard to his Royal person'.

The Regiment was called the 'Lord General's Regiment of Foot Guards', until the death of Monck (the Lord General) in 1670, when it gradually became officially styled by the name it had already borne unofficially for a decade - The Coldstream Regiment of Foot Guards.

Role

Currently the most prominent role of the 1st Battalion and No. 7 Company is the performance of ceremonial duties in London and Windsor as part of the Household Division. No. 7 Company serves as an incremental Company in London and amongst other duties provides a Guard for the Queen's Birthday Parade. Duties include the State Opening of Parliament, Trooping the Colour, and the Remembrance Sunday parade. No. 7 Company is involved in the Changing of the Guard serving out of Wellington Barracks.

Companies that make up the Regiment are traditionally numbered – the 1st Battalion contains HQ Coy, plus No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4 (Support) Coys. The Coldstream Guards Band and the staff of RHQ constitute No. 15 Coy. New officers destined for the regiment that are at Sandhurst or at ATC Pirbright form No. 13 Coy, while Guardsmen under training at ITC Catterick make up No. 14 Coy.

Operationally, The Coldstream Guards currently perform the role of light infantry. The 1st Battalion is based in Windsor at Victoria Barracks as an operational light infantry battalion. The Corps of Drums, in addition to their ceremonial role, which has been primarily the musical accompaniment of Changing of the Guard for Windsor Castle, has the role of machine gun platoon. All Guardsmen for public duties wear the 'Home Service' Dress tunic in summer or

greatcoat in winter and bearskin with a red plume. The Coldstream Guards regimental band plays at Changing of The Guard, state visits and many other events.

Unlike the other four regiments of foot guards, which recruit from each of the four home nations, the Coldstream Guards has a specific recruiting area, which encompasses the counties that Monck's Regiment passed through on its march from Coldstream to London. The traditional recruiting area of the Coldstream Guards is the South West and North East of England.

The Coldstream Guards and other Guards Regiments have a long-standing connection to The Parachute Regiment. Guardsmen who have completed P company are transferred into the Guards Parachute Platoon who are currently attached to 3 PARA still keeping the tradition of the No 1 (Guards) Independent Parachute Company who were the original Pathfinder Group of 16th Parachute Brigade now renamed 16th Air Assault Brigade.

Battle Honours

The Coldstream Guards have earned 117 battle honours:

- Tangier 1680, Namur 1695, Gibraltar 1704–1705, Oudenarde, Malplaquet, Dettingen, Lincelles, Egypt, Talavera, Barrosa, Fuentes d'Onor, Salamanca, Nive, Peninsula, Waterloo, Alma, Inkerman, Sevastopol, Tel-el-Kebir, Egypt 1882, Suakin 1885, Modder River, South Africa 1899–1902
- *The Great War (5 battalions)*: Mons, Retreat from Mons, Marne 1914, Aisne 1914, Ypres 1914 '17, Langemarck 1914, Gheluvelt, Nonne Bosschen, Givenchy 1914, Neuve Chapelle, Aubers, Festubert 1915, Loos, Mount Sorrel, Somme 1916 '18, Flers-Courcelette, Morval, Pilckem, Menin Road, Poelcappelle, Passchendaele, Cambrai 1917 '18, St. Quentin, Bapaume 1918, Arras 1918, Lys, Hazebrouck, Albert 1918, Scarpe 1918, Drocourt-Quéant, Hindenburg Line, Havrincourt, Canal du Nord, Selle, Sambre, France and Flanders 1914–1918
- *The Second World War*: Dyle, Defence of Escaut, Dunkirk 1940, Cagny, Mont Pincon, Quarry Hill, Estry, Heppen, Nederrijn, Venraij, Meijel, Roer, Rhineland, Reichswald, Cleve, Goch, Moyland, Hochwald, Rhine, Lingen, Uelzen, North-West Europe 1940 '44–45, Egyptian Frontier 1940, Sidi Barrani, Halfaya 1941, Tobruk 1941-42, Msus, Knightsbridge, Defence of Alamein Line, Medenine, Mareth, Longstop Hill 1942, Sbiba, Steamroller Farm, Tunis, Hammam Lif, North Africa 1940–1943, Salerno, Battipaglia, Cappezano, Volturno Crossing, Monte Camino, Calabritto, Garigliano Crossing, Monte Ornito, Monte Piccolo, Capture of Perugia, Arezzo, Advance to Florence, Monte Domini, Catarelto Ridge, Argenta Gap, Italy 1943–1945
- Gulf 1991

APPENDIX 2

2ND BATTALION, THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Battalion 'Firsts'

2 RAR has the honour of being the:

- First to be presented with Queen's and Regimental Colours, 23 Sep 55;
- First Australian troops into Malaya since World War II (Oct 55 during The Emergency); and
- First to be amalgamated with two companies from 1 RNZIR for service in Vietnam - 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC).

Battalion Colour

The original identifying colour for the battalion was scarlet. 2 RAR took delivery of a set of drums on 6 Feb 52, the day of the death of HM King George VI, and in his memory the original black colour of the drums was retained instead of painting them scarlet.

Later in 1952 it had become the custom with 2 RAR to blacken gaiters (as opposed to scrubbing or blanching adopted by the two other battalions at the time). It was requested that the Battalion's colour be changed and during the tour in Malaya (1955-57), approval was received for the Battalion's flag to be black. Since that time the colour for all 'second' battalions in RA INF has been designated 'black'.

Battalion Music

Battalion marches are:

- Hoop Dee Doo
- Ringo
- Back in Black (Pipes and Drums)

Company marches are:

- A Coy: 'Mickey Mouse'.
- B Coy: 'When the Saints Come Marching In'.
- C Coy: 'Lost Patrol'.
- D Coy 'Hoop Dee Doo',
- Spt Coy/Admin Coy: 'The Old Contemptible'.

Battalion Association

2 RAR has been 'taken on strength' as a life member of the Old Coldstreamer's Association in Australia.

Freedom of the City of Townsville

On 15 Oct 71, 2 RAR was granted the Freedom of the City of Townsville as a result of the close association between the citizens of Townsville and members of the Battalion.

Linking/Delinking

On 15 Aug 73, 2 RAR was linked with 4 RAR to form 2/4 RAR. It was subsequently delinked on 1 Feb 95.