

Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

Brigadier Harold Edward COHEN, CMG, CBE, DSO, VD

(1881-1946)

Harold Cohen was born on 25 November 1881 at St Kilda, Victoria, the only child of Montague Cohen and Annie, nee Cohen. He attended Xavier College and Melbourne University and became a solicitor in the family firm.

In 1901, Cohen was commissioned in the Victorian Field Artillery Brigade. He was promoted to captain in 1905 and in 1909 transferred to the Australian Intelligence Corps and promoted major. In 1911, he returned to Artillery and was appointed to command the 7th Australian Field Artillery Brigade (FAB) in 1914. On joining the AIF, he was appointed Commanding Officer of the 6th Army FAB with the rank of lieutenant colonel, serving in the Middle East, England and France until June 1919. By October 1918, his brigade had gained 41 decorations and commissioned 13 NCOs. Twice wounded and twice mentioned in dispatches, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in 1917 and created CMG in 1918.

After his return to Australia in September 1919, Cohen resumed his practice in commercial and constitutional law, became a company director, and entered Victorian state politics.

He continued serving in the militia and in 1921–26 he was appointed CRA 4th Divisional Artillery, and in 1926–27 he commanded the 2nd Infantry Brigade before transferring to the Unattached List. In 1940–41, he went to the Middle East as honorary Red Cross Commissioner. Returning to Australia, he became Director of Amenities, Land Headquarters, in July 1942 and was appointed Adjutant General in 1943 with the rank of brigadier. Next year he was put on the reserve of officers with the rank of honorary brigadier.

Military history was a hobby and he cultivated physical fitness. He represented Victoria at Lacrosse, kept his horses in Malvern (he won the Caulfield Cup with Northwind in 1936), and played tennis and golf. The Harold and Freda Cohen prizes in education at the University of Melbourne were donated by him.

On 29 October 1946 in South Melbourne Cohen died from a brain tumour; he was survived by his wife Freda, two sons and two daughters. He was accorded a military funeral and he was buried in Melbourne general cemetery.

For more information follow the link below.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cohen-harold-edward-5712>

