

# Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

## Brigadier Sir Donald Mackinnon CLELAND, CBE

(1901-1975)

Don Cleland enlisted in the Militia in July 1919 and rose to captain in the 3rd Field Artillery Brigade, before resigning in 1928.

He enlisted in the 2nd AIF on 13 October 1939 and was appointed Staff Captain, 6th Division Artillery. Cleland arrived in the Middle East in February 1940 with the first convoy and was promoted temporary major in November. For his work as Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General I Corps during the campaigns in Libya, Greece and Syria in 1941, he was appointed MBE (1942) and mentioned in dispatches.

After a brief period in Australia early in 1942, Cleland was appointed temporary colonel and posted as DAQMG, Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit, Port Moresby. In October, he was promoted temporary brigadier, and from March 1943 held the additional position of chairman of the Australian New Guinea Production Control Board. Cleland was responsible for the day-by-day civil administration of Papua and New Guinea, for the running of the pre-war plantations and for ANGAU's operational commitments. The military administration raised standards of health care and labour supervision, and began a new education scheme. Again mentioned in dispatches, Cleland was elevated to CBE in 1945 and was transferred to the Reserve of Officers on 12 May. He was to be made Honorary Colonel of the Pacific Islands Regiment in 1958.

He was appointed assistant administrator of Papua New Guinea in 1951 and was administrator from 1953 to 1967 and was awarded Knight Bachelor in 1961.

He died on 27 August 1975 in Port Moresby; accorded a state funeral, he was buried in the cemetery at Bomana.

Sources: H. N. Nelson, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 13, pp.440-1. *The History of Melanesia*, Port Moresby, 1969; P. Hasluck, *A Time for Building*, Melbourne, 1976; I. Downs, *The Australian Trusteeship*, Canberra, 1980; R. Cleland, *Papua New Guinea*, Perth, 1983; *Pacific Islands Monthly*, June 1952, March 1953, February 1967; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 August 1945; personal papers (held by Dame Rachel Cleland, Perth).

For more information follow this link: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cleland-sir-donald-mackinnon-don-9762>