

# Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

## Brigadier Sir Thomas Charles EASTICK, KCMG, DSO, ED

(1900 – 1988)

Tom Eastick joined the 75th Senior Cadet Battalion of the AMF and on reaching the age of 18 enlisted in the Militia Field Artillery.

His career in the 13th Field Brigade (FAB) flourished following commissioning in 1922. He fostered two technical innovations which were to become common artillery procedures. The first was the use of survey procedures to predict gun data to engage targets without ranging. This was successfully demonstrated for the first time in Australia during the Brigade Annual Camp at Smithfield in 1926.

The second was the control of artillery fire from aircraft. In 1927, a RAAF pilot adjusted the fire of Eastick's battery during field firing at O'Halloran Hill. A month later Eastick was permitted to fly as an Observer for a similar shoot by the 48th Battery. Whilst the procedures were ad hoc and the firing slow, nevertheless the principles had been established. In 1938, the 50th Battery under his command was awarded the 'Mount Schanck' Trophy for being the most efficient Militia Field Battery in the AMF. In 1939, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and appointed Commanding Officer of the Brigade and awarded the ED.

On the outbreak of WWII, he embarked on a rigorous three month training regime with his brigade and soon afterwards, in April 1940, was selected to raise and command the 2/7th Army Field Regiment. His unit was ultimately allotted to the 9th Division and embarked for the Middle East in November 1940.

Deployment on operations followed from June to October 1941 after which the Regiment received the prestigious task of Depot Regiment at the British Army Middle East School of Artillery at Almaza near Cairo for three months. This was in recognition of the efficiency which Eastick had brought to his regiment and for which he was 'Mentioned in Despatches'. Thereafter the regiment moved to Palestine.

He commanded his regiment during the Battle of El Alamein in October 1942 for which he was awarded the DSO. This was probably the high point of his command. As his CRA, Brigadier Alan Ramsay said of the 2/7<sup>th</sup>, '*none was more efficient or more reliable. One characteristic of this fine Regiment was its dependability.*' On return to Australia in February 1943, he was promoted Temporary Brigadier and posted as CRA 7th Division in June and served in New Guinea from August 1943 to April 1944.

In June 1944, he was appointed CRA 9th Division, serving in Australia, Morotai and Borneo. He commanded Kuching Force from September to December 1945 during which he took the surrender of Japanese forces in that area and administered command of the 9th Division from

December 1945 until his discharge in February 1946 when he was transferred to the Reserve of Officers and granted the rank of Colonel (Honorary Brigadier). He was appointed a Companion of the Most Excellent Order of the Star of Sarawak in June 1946 and again 'Mentioned in Despatches'.

Back in civilian life he was active in the RSL, the Freemasons, and local politics and was a Justice of the Peace for 45 years. He saw further service in the CMF and was Colonel Commandant of the RAA 1955-60.

He died on 16 December 1988 at the Masonic Nursing Home at Somerton Park, Adelaide.

**Sources:** D.N.Brook, *Roundshot to Rapier* (Adel 1986); S.Cockburn, *The Patriarchs* (Adel 1983); D.Goodhart, *We of the Turning Tide* (Adel 1947); D.Goodhart, *The History of the 2/7 Australian Field Regiment* (Adel 1952); P. Roberts, *Tom Roberts' War Diaries... Will We Be Disappointed – After* (Adel 1995); *The Advertiser*, December 17, 1988; C.H. Brand, 'Notes of a talk over 5CL dated 11 September 1930'; Returned and Services League, South Australian Branch, Annual Reports 1969, 1988; *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 17, (MUP), 2007

For more information follow this link: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/eastick-sir-thomas-charles-tom-12451>