

Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

Brigadier Sir John Ernest PAGAN, CMG, MBE, KStJ, ED, FRGS

(1914-1986)

Jock Pagan was born at Killara, NSW, on 13 May 1914 and educated at Hay Public School and St Peters School Collegiate, Adelaide, where he was a boarder. It is not known how long he remained in this school leaving in 1931. His father was David Clark Pagan and mother, Hilda neé Rowe. On leaving school, he became a junior sales assistant with Grace Bros and in 1934 he joined P. Rowe Pty Ltd, a firm of soft goods importers owned by his uncle, Percy Rowe.

He joined the Militia in 1936 and was commissioned on 18 September 1939 when a member of the 5th Heavy Brigade RAA(M). He was allotted to the 1st AA Regiment 2nd AIF (later 2nd/1st) on 1st May 1940 and subsequently to the 2/4th LAA Regiment in the 9th Division which served in the desert battles of First and Second El Alamein. On his return to Australia, Pagan was later in action with the Port Moresby AA Group at Finschhafen and subsequently was posted as Senior Instructor at the LHQ School of Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) from 12th February until 15th September 1944. He commanded 2/3rd LAA Battery (Airborne) in 1942-44 and was admin commander of 2/4th LAA Regiment in 1943. He was awarded the MBE (Mil) for distinguished service in the South West Pacific theatre of operations.

He was discharged from the army on 21 November 1945 and placed on the Reserve of Officers in 2 MD. He returned to business life and ultimately he became Executive Chairman of P. Rowe Holdings Pty Ltd and continued his military career.

On the re-raising of the CMF in 1948, he was appointed Commanding Officer on the raising of 1st LAA Regiment (later renamed 17th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment) whose RHQ was at Mosman and later North Sydney, NSW. Subsequently he commanded 16th HAA Regiment from 1956 to 1957. This posting was followed by promotion to brigadier and command of 1 AGRA (AA) from 1957 to 1959. He retired from the army as a brigadier in 1959. Pagan was an Honorary ADC to the Governor of New South Wales for the period 1950-1955.

Following his retirement from the Army, Pagan was appointed Colonel Commandant in Eastern Command in 1974 and subsequently Representative Colonel Commandant from 1 January 1975 to 31 December 1978 and Honorary Colonel of the Australian Cadet Corps during 1970 and 1972.

Of independent means, he became immersed in community affairs, and offered his wise counsel, time and resources to NSW, Australian and overseas organizations of almost infinite variety. For these services which included politics, industry and the community, Pagan was awarded the CMG in January 1969. The New South Wales government appointed him their

Agent-General in London during 1970 and 1972 and he was created Knight Bachelor on 1st January 1971 'for distinguished and political service'.

Jock Pagan married Emily Marjorie Hoskins on 11 December 1948 and one son and two daughters were born of the marriage. He was a member of White's (London), Imperial Service, Royal Sydney Golf, and the Melbourne clubs. He was also made a Freeman of the City of London in 1973. He called 'Kennerton Green', Mittagong, home. He died on 26 June 1986 and is buried in All Saints Anglican Cemetery, Sutton Forest, NSW.

Sources: Army Lists; AWM Collections website; Cheryl Barnier (ed.-in-chief) Notable Australians p.836; Who's Who in Australia 1985; David Horner, The Gunners, pp. 362, 367; Biographical Notes by Sally Hoskins at www.hoskins.id.au/nextgen/index.php; Record of Service in the NAA; David Dexter, Australia in the War of 1939-1945, The New Guinea Offensives p. 464; St Peters School Collegiate records; Southern Highlands NSW Cemetery Register; NSW Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages; CAG No 54 of 15th March 1945 p. 649; CAG No 5 of 16th January 1969; CAG No 2 of 14th January 1971.