

# *Gunner of Renown*



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

## **Lieutenant General Edward Kenneth SMART, DSO, MC**

**(1891-1961)**

Ted Smart was the son of a lawyer and was born at Kew, Melbourne, on 23 May 1891. He was educated at Melbourne Church of England Grammar School. He began his army career as a Militia subaltern in the Melbourne Depot of the Corps of Australian Engineers in 1910. In December, he transferred to the Permanent Military Forces as a lieutenant in the Royal Australian Garrison Artillery (RAGA).

During the early months of WWI, the RAGA was heavily engaged in manning the forts around Australia, and members could not at that time enlist in the AIF. However, in early 1915 that policy changed allowing what became the 36<sup>th</sup> Heavy Artillery Group (HAG) to enlist permanent members of the RAA making it the only unit of the AIF comprised mainly of permanent troops. On 17 July 1915, the unit sailed from Melbourne and disembarked at Devonport in Devon on 29 August before proceeding to the Siege Artillery School at Lydd, Kent. It remained there until November before moving to Taunton, Somerset.

On 26 February 1916, HQ and 54th Siege Battery left for France, and was followed by 55th a week later. They supported British and Australian troops, first at Amiens, and as the year progressed at the battles of Pozieres, Mouquet Farm and Flers. It was recorded that these 8 inch and 9.2 inch howitzers fired up to 700 shells a day during these months. Lieutenant Smart's award of the Military Cross was promulgated in the London Gazette on 14 November 1916 'for conspicuous gallantry in action' while posted to 55th Battery. In December he was promoted captain and appointed adjutant of the HAG. During this time I Anzac Corps had extra siege batteries allotted to it commanded by the British 45th HAG consisted of 36th, 54th, 55th, 73rd, 94th, 108th and 137th Siege Batteries, equipped with 6inch, 8 inch, and 9.2 inch howitzers.

On 31 October 1917, Smart was transferred to HQRAA 4th Division under Brigadier Burgess (from 1926 Sinclair-Burgess). He occupied this posting until 28 April 1918 when he was briefly seconded to HQ Australian Corps. In June he resumed regimental duties with 10th FAB 4th Division until he was wounded again on 28 September effectively ending his war service. After the war he attended a short gunnery course at Woolwich and spent the remainder of 1919 studying at the Ordnance College embarking for Australia on 27 December. He had been promoted major in June and for his war service he was awarded the DSO and Mentioned in Despatches twice.

Smart's AIF service was terminated on 12 April 1920 and he resumed duty with RAGA. In 1923, he returned to the UK for three years, two of which were as an Instructor at the School of Artillery, now at Larkhill. He and a colleague (Harry Bundock) brought back survey, sound ranging and flash spotting techniques for transfer to the two Militia survey companies

in Sydney and Melbourne. Smart was appointed lieutenant colonel and Commander, Base Artillery in 1933. He was appointed a brevet colonel in July 1937.

In 1939, he returned to UK with Major General John Lavarack on staff matters, and they were on their way home when war was declared. In the various changes in appointments of senior Permanent Military Force officers at that time Smart was promoted major general and appointed Quartermaster General at AHQ. After the formation of a restructured Department of Defence, he was promoted to lieutenant general and appointed GOC Southern Command.

On 6 April 1942, he was made head of the Australian Military Mission to the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the High Commission in Washington, DC, for six months before crossing the Atlantic for a similar position in the United Kingdom, reporting to S. M. Bruce, MC, the High Commissioner. A member of his staff in London noted 'the relations between General Smart and the High Commissioner and the War Office were very good'. Here he was at the interface of supply, technical, personnel and policy decisions affecting the AIF. He relinquished this appointment in early 1946, and was placed on the Retired List on 3 July.

Ted Smart was tall and impressive in appearance. He had an alert mind; he could identify the essential elements of a problem, paying due regard to detail and consequences. Although his military interests were wide – included railways and their employment for military purposes as well as improvements in the theory and practice of gunnery and especially, in the methods of fire control in major artillery operations – they were largely of a technical nature. While his higher military education was not as full as others he was a good manager, smoothing the path when frictions arose.

Smart died on 2 May 1961 aged 70 years. His funeral with full military honours took place three days later after a service at Christ Church in South Yarra and Springvale Crematorium.

Sources: W. Perry, Lieutenant General Edward Kenneth Smart, DSO, MC, '*Cannonball*', *Journal of the RAA Historical Society*, July 1991, pp.13-18; loc. cit., No. 41, November, 2000, p.10. Also see David Horner, *Crisis in Command*, for insights into his WWII service.