

Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Lancelot RICKARD, DSO, MC, ED

(1895-1949)

Arthur Rickard was commissioned in the Militia in March 1915 and transferred to the AIF as a second lieutenant on 3 September. He embarked for Egypt that month and accompanied the 3rd Field Australian Artillery Brigade (FAB) to France in March 1916. For carrying out a hazardous reconnaissance on a Somme battlefield in November he was awarded the Military Cross. He was also mentioned in dispatches. In July 1917, he was promoted captain and transferred to the 12th (Army) FAB.

On 28 December, he was gassed and admitted to hospital, but returned to duty two months later. Briefly seconded to the 51st (Highland) Division in April 1918 he rejoined his unit and remained in action until a few days before WWI ended. He was promoted major and appointed Battery Commander of 45th Battery in October, and again mentioned in dispatches. Rickard returned to Sydney in April 1920 and his AIF appointment terminated in July.

In March 1939, Rickard was appointed to the 9th Field Brigade. On 1 May 1940 he transferred to the 2nd AIF. Given command of 8th Battery, 2/2nd Anti-Tank Regiment, he sailed for the Middle East in October. During the Syrian campaign (June – July 1941), Rickard's battery halted a Vichy French counter-attack at Merdjayoun on 15 June, losing four guns but destroying eight tanks. For his 'quickness and initiative' he was awarded the DSO.

Returning to Australia in March 1942, Rickard was promoted temporary lieutenant colonel and appointed to command 103rd Anti-Tank Regiment at Newcastle in June. The regiment was sent to the Northern Territory in December. In August 1944, Rickard took command 106th Tank-Attack Regiment, AIF, which was deployed at Scarlet Beach north of Finschhafen, New Guinea. Next month he was transferred to the 2/1st Tank-Attack Regiment at Helidon, Queensland. When that regiment moved to Aitape, New Guinea, in January 1945 its batteries were used as field artillery or infantry. On 28 May, Rickard was temporarily detached to command 2/6th Cavalry Commando Regiment and 'Farida' Force

In August, Rickard rejoined his anti-tank unit. He relinquished command in November and flew home to Australia. In May 1946, he was appointed officer commanding troops in a ship that was repatriating Japanese prisoners of war. Placed on the Reserve of Officers on 31 July, he was once more mentioned in dispatches, this time for his service in the South-West Pacific Area in April-August 1945.

He died from hypertensive-cerebrovascular disease on 9 March 1949 in the Repatriation General Hospital, Concord, and was cremated. His wife, their daughter and two sons survived him.

Source: L. Hindmarsh, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. M.U.P. Vol.16, p.87-88.

For more information follow this link:

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