

## AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

**Colin George Davies**

**(1918 – 2005)**

Adapted from a Vale article in  
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By Peter Bruce

Much of Colin Davies' early life was associated with the Army. An uncle was killed at Gallipoli and another was wounded in France. His father, a Captain, was area officer at Belmore where Col was born in 1918.

Col's military achievements are taken from a letter he wrote to a granddaughter who had sought information about his World War II experiences for a school project.

Col enlisted in the Militia in 1937 and when war was declared in September 1939, he like many other Citizen Military Force members was required to serve "full time duty". In May 1940 he was commissioned Second Lieutenant and posted to Newcastle. The following year he was promoted to Captain and in 1942 was promoted to Major and posted to Tomaree Battery at Port Stephens as Officer Commanding (OC). Col was apparently promised command of the first overseas unit to leave the area.

In August 1942, B Aust Heavy Battery was formed and he was appointed OC. His team consisted mainly of 18 to 19 year old gunners, a mixed bag from all states of Australia. Many of his team had a real 'larrikin' streak in them as well. At this stage, Col was 24 and was regarded as the 'old man' of his team even though two of his fellow officers were older.

His unit then moved to Bribie Island in South East Queensland and trained with 155mm guns and equipment. The 155's had been requisitioned from the United States by General Macarthur for the protection of ports throughout the Pacific Islands.

After training on the new equipment the unit was moved to Townsville to await relocation overseas. After months of delay owing to the Coral Sea Battle (May 1942) Col's unit finally landed in Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea, and relieved A Aust Heavy Battery.

In October 1943, Col was ordered to attend the School of Artillery at Middle Head in Sydney and took the opportunity to propose, marry and enjoy a honeymoon with Dorothy. He returned to his unit in Milne Bay and eventually relocated back to Australia in late 1944.

Col then attended an Army Air co-operation school in Canberra before being posted overseas with the 1<sup>st</sup> Aust PW Recovery and Inquiry Unit. He transited via Manila and then to Okinawa where as a Commonwealth representative he was attached to the 27<sup>th</sup> US (New York) Infantry Division. Later he would return to Manila and was employed debriefing the ex POWs. After the Hiroshima bomb, the Army devised a points system for priority of discharge and Col, well up on points, hitched a ride home to Sydney on HMS Slinger, a Liberty ship converted by the British into a Support Aircraft Carrier.

Col left the Army in 1945.

Col is survived by his daughter and son.