

The 7th Light Horse Regiment



1914-1919

THE HISTORY
OF
THE 7th LIGHT HORSE A.I.F.



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THE HISTORY
OF
THE
7th Light Horse Regiment A.I.F.

BY

Lieut.-Colonel J. D. RICHARDSON, D.S.O.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

Lieut.-General Sir HARRY CHAUVEL, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.



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DEDICATION.

TO the Heroic Dead of the Regiment—those true,
brave comrades, so many of whom lie sleeping
on far distant battlefields—this book is reverently dictated.

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!

There's none of these so lonely and poor of old

But, dying has made us rarer gifts than gold.

These laid the world away; poured out the red

Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be

Of work and joy, and that unhopéd serene

That men call age; and those who would have been,

Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

RUPERT BROOK, R.N.R.
(Died in Ægean, April, 1915.)

WITH THE AUTHOR'S COMPLIMENTS.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE.

Inspector General.

Army Headquarters,
MELBOURNE.

Introduction.

I have been greatly honoured by being asked to write a few words of introduction to the History of the 7th Australian Light Horse Regiment.

Raised in New South Wales in 1914, the Regiment was early in the field, and took a prominent part in all the important operations in the Egyptian Theatre of the War. It first came under my command on Gallipoli in November, 1915, and continued therein until the conclusion of the War. At the Battle of Romani it was largely due to its stubborn defence and spirited counter-attack, under the leadership of Lieut.-Colonel (now Brigadier-General) G. Macarthur Onslow, that the victory was so complete. At the first Battle of Gaza it was this Regiment that led the Anzac Mounted Division through the night to its position in rear of the city, and which captured the new Commander of the Gaza Defence, who was on his way to take up his command. During the Battle of Beersheba and the pursuit which followed, the Regiment sustained the fine traditions it had already established for dash and gallantry. In the raids across Jordan and throughout the long summer of 1918 in the Jordan Valley, it bore its share of the fighting and the hardships, from the bitter cold of Gilead in mid-winter to the scorching heat of Jericho in July. Under Lieut.-Colonel J. D. Richardson it played a brilliant part in the final victory, which destroyed three Turkish Armies and brought Germany's Allies out of the War.

The Regiment suffered many casualties, in battle and through the ravages of disease, and those of its numbers who are left are scattered throughout Australia, though many are still serving in the Militia Forces. I congratulate them all on their achievements during the War, and wish them every success in whatever spheres of life they are now engaged in.

Harry Chauvel

Lieut.-General.
late Commanding Desert Mounted Corps.

Abbreviations and Unusual Words.

R.H.Q.	Regimental Headquarters.
B.H.Q.	Brigade Headquarters.
D.H.Q.	Divisional Headquarters.
G.O.C.	General Officer Commanding.
C.O.	Commanding Officer.
C.M.F.	Commonwealth Military Forces.
A. & N.Z. T.C. & D.	Australian and New Zealand Training Centre and Details Camp.
O.R.	Other ranks.
Descorps	Desert Mounted Corps.
C. in C.	Commander-in-Chief.
B.G.C.	Brigadier-General Commanding
R.S.M.	Regimental Sergeant Major.
S.S.M.	Squadron Sergeant Major.
R.Q.M.S.	Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant.
S.Q.M.S.	Squadron Quartermaster-Sergeant
R.H.A.	Royal Horse Artillery.
Tell or Tel	A mound artificially built—sometimes the remains of an old fortress or village.
Wadi	A watercourse usually dry during most of the year.
I.C.C.	Imperial Camel Corps



*Colonel J. M. Arnott, C.M.G., V.D.,
C.O. 7th Light Horse, October, 1914, to August, 1915; temporarily commanded
10th L.H. in 1916; Commandant A. and N.Z. Forces at Tel-el-Kebir and Moascar,
1916 to 1919.*



Brig.-General G. M. Macarthur Onslow, C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D., Order of the Nile, 3rd Class, C.O. 7th Light Horse, August, 1915, to September, 1918.; Brig.-General commanding 5th Light Horse Brigade, September, 1918.

Foreword.

This history of the 7th Light Horse, A.I.F., has been written in accordance with instructions received before leaving Egypt—that every unit should endeavour to have its War History written up before returning to Australia. The first draft of this MS. was completed before Sydney was reached, but as this had been very hastily written it was revised, and a great deal was completely re-written. The MS. was then submitted to whatever officers were available, and these were asked to comment upon it. As a result many valuable corrections and suggestions have been made, and I sincerely believe that this little volume now gives a thoroughly accurate account of the operations of the 7th Light Horse Regiment during the Great War.

It should be explained that the data from which this History was compiled was extremely meagre as far as written records were concerned, for the war diaries of the Regiment gave practically no detailed stories of events, and could only be relied upon for dates. The memories of those who took part in the various operations were therefore taxed to clothe the skeleton history with more substantial matter, and in this the wisdom of having the History written as soon as possible, was shown. Many circumstances have affected the delay as regards publication, but the author makes no apologies for this, and feels convinced that if publication had been left to the critics, that the volume would never have been published at all.

It has been suggested that nominal rolls of original members of the Regiment, and also complete nominal rolls for the whole period of service should have been added as appendices, but, unfortunately, the cost was found to be prohibitive.

The author is well aware of, and sincerely regrets, the fact that many gallant deeds are not recorded. It was inevitable that many of these should escape notice in the turmoil of active operations, whilst others remembered for a while, were not entered in the war diaries or official records, and are therefore lost as far as this History is concerned.

It has also been found to be quite impossible to state just for what act of gallantry or piece of good work decorations were awarded, in many cases. That they were fully deserved in all cases can be taken as a matter of course, just as the fact that perhaps many equally deserving cases for some reason or another escaped notice.

As regards the cost of publication of this History, it must be borne in mind that volumes such as these, of a purely Regimental nature, can have no great appeal to any save ex-members of the Regiment or their next of kin. Consequently, sales must be limited, and therefore the cost of the volume is correspondingly greatly increased. It must be understood, therefore, that no profit can be hoped for in this direction, and, in fact, some loss is expected, which will be met, if necessary, from a private Trust Fund belonging to the Regiment.

As regards maps and photographs, the author has again had to consider the cost, and many excellent ones have had to be excluded. The maps have been simplified as much as possible, and in these, as in the book generally, technicalities have as far as possible been eliminated.

Only passing reference has been made to the splendid work of the Red Cross and of Dame Alice Chisholm and Miss Macphillamy at Kantara, but the author has been assured that adequate prominence is being given to this in the official history—prominence which could not be attempted in a purely Regimental History. But the Regiment does not forget.

In conclusion, I wish to express my thanks to those who have helped in any way to make the publication of this volume possible, either by suggestions, comments, photographs or maps, and especially Brigadier-General G. M. Macarthur Onslow, Colonel Arnott, Majors Windeyer, Bird, Barton, Willsallen, Easterbrook, Davies and Wikner, and Lieuts. Chapman, Donkin and Gibbs. Also to Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Chauvel and Mr. Harry Gullett for their practical interest and appreciation.

J. D. RICHARDSON, Lieut.-Colonel,
Lately Commanding 7th Light Horse, A.I.F.

"Leigh,"
Raymond Terrace,
1/11/23.

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