

## **EULOGY FOR MOSHE (MORRY) GOLDBERG**

### **GIVEN AT HIS FUNERAL ON SUNDAY 20 JANUARY 2013**

Morry Asher GOLDBERG was born at Jerusalem, Palestine on 12 APRIL, 1926 and originally enlisted and served in the Militia as N479345 prior to enlisting and serving as NX178973 PRIVATE Morry GOLDBERG in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/48<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion AIF at Cowra NSW on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1944, then just 18 years of age.

During his service with the Battalion, Morry was promoted to Corporal, taking part in its heavy fighting against the Japanese on Tarakan as part of Operation 'Oboe' in the South West Pacific Theatre. Morry was discharged on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1947.

The 2/48<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF was an infantry battalion of the Australian Army raised in August 1940 at the Wayville Showgrounds in Adelaide, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Victor Windeyer, (later Major General Sir Victor Windeyer, KBE, CB, DSO and Bar, PC KC) a former Militia officer and later a Judge of the high Court of Australia) who had previously commanded the Sydney University Regiment.

Together with the 2/23<sup>rd</sup> and 2/24<sup>th</sup> Battalions the 2/48<sup>th</sup> Battalion formed part of the 26<sup>th</sup> Brigade and was initially assigned to the 7<sup>th</sup> Division, although it was later transferred to the 9<sup>th</sup> Division in 1941 when it was deployed to the Middle East.

While there, it saw action during the siege of Tobruk where it suffered the loss of 38 men killed in action and another 18 who died of their wounds and the Second Battle of El Alamein before being returned to Australia in order to take part in the fighting in New Guinea following Japan's entry into the war. During the fighting at El Alamein, 3 posthumous Victoria Crosses were awarded to soldiers of the 2/48<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

Overall, the 2/48<sup>th</sup> suffered a further 344 casualties in the period 23 October to 5 November 1942 with 85 killed, 13 later dying of their wounds and 243 wounded.

On their return to Australia, from the Middle East, a period of leave followed and the Battalion began reforming near Ravenshoe, Queensland, on the Atherton Tablelands in April 1944. During this time the composition of the units of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division underwent significant changes as many men were discharged due to medical reasons or transferred to other units and young replacements were brought in.

#### **SOUTH WEST PACIFIC**

In July 1943 the Battalion moved to Cairns where they undertook amphibious training with the American 532<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Boat and Store Regiment as part of their final preparations before being committed to the fighting in New Guinea.

The Battalion took part in the Landing at Lae on 4 September 1943 which was the first large-scale amphibious landing by Australian Forces since Gallipoli in 1915. Following the defeat of the Japanese the 2/48<sup>th</sup> was withdrawn back to Australia with the 9<sup>th</sup> Australian Division, in February 1944. During the Battalion's service in New Guinea, it suffered 125 casualties of which 35 were killed in action, 3 died of wounds, 8 died of illness and 77 were wounded.

Finally, following more than a year training in Australia, the Battalion was committed to its final deployment of the war, moving to Morotai Island in April 1945 in order to take part in the landing on Tarakan in Borneo as part of Operation Oboe.

## TARAKAN

The entire 26<sup>th</sup> Brigade group was assigned the task of capturing Tarakan Island and destroying the Japanese garrison and the assault began on 1 May 1945.

Embarking on HMAT Manoora, the 2/48<sup>th</sup> was in the vanguard of the attack, leading the brigade in at 0715 hours, landing on Red Beach, on the left flank of the lodgement, 2 miles (3.2km) from Tarakan town on the western side of the island.

The preliminary bombardment had been successful, however, as the battalion came ashore they were unopposed and barely even got their feet wet. Pushing inland, the 2/48<sup>th</sup> had secured its primary objectives by 0838 hours. The right forward company took sporadic fire as it secured the oil tanks, while on the left they were able to capture the bridge over the Sibengkok and the high feature overlooking the landing beach without meeting any resistance.

Advancing inland, the Japanese pillboxes that had fired on the right forward company were secured after they were abandoned by the defenders and a company was then sent along the ANZAC Highway to secure Collins Highway ridge. By 1340 hours the western end of the ridge had been secured, however, the Battalion began taking fire from the east.

Forward momentum was maintained, although the 2/48<sup>th</sup> suffered a number of casualties, and by the end of the day a 2000yd (1800m) by 2800yd(2600m) beachhead had been established, and the Battalion had companies on Collins Highway ridge, one on the "Parks" feature and another at "Finch".

Over the course of the next couple of days, Japanese resistance to the Australian advance increased. Throughout May and into June as the Australians pressed towards the island's airfield, significant engagements took place in the mountain ranges surrounding Tarakan town. On 2 May the 2/48<sup>th</sup> captured Lyons Ridge before pressing on towards Tarakan Hill, where they assaulted the "Sykes" feature supported by Matilda tanks from the 2/9<sup>th</sup> Armoured Regiment.

Here they experienced their heaviest losses of the campaign, losing 6 killed and 26 wounded during three assaults up the steep slopes of the feature.

Their next major engagement came in late May when the 2/48<sup>th</sup> was engaged in fighting around Freda Ridge as part of the drive on Fukukaku.

A company level attack was put in and after stiff resistance the ridge was captured. The following morning, as the Battalion waited for a Japanese counterattack, Lieutenant Tom Derrick, VC, DCM, who had played a key role in capturing the position the previous day, was mortally wounded. He subsequently died of his wounds on 24 May 1945.

Shortly afterwards, in early June, major combat operations on the island ceased and the Australians began the mopping up phase of the campaign, however, this was not made official until the third week in June. These operations continued into July and during this time, the 2/48<sup>th</sup> was assigned a sector near the Pamusian River on the eastern coast, as well as Tarakan town and the centre of the island. During their involvement in the Borneo campaign, the Battalion had suffered 173 casualties.

## DISBANDMENT

Following the end of hostilities in August, the battalion remained on the island to undertake garrison duties. As the demobilization process began, its numbers dwindled as long-serving men were repatriated back to Australia, while others with only limited service were

transferred to other units for further service. Finally, on 25 October 1945, while still on Tarakan, the battalion was disbanded.

#### BATTLE HONOURS

The 2/48<sup>th</sup> Battalion was awarded 14 battle honours for its service during the war:

North Africa 1941-1942; Defence of Tobruk; El Adem Road; The Salient 1941; Defence of Alamein Line; Tel el Eisa; El Alamein; South-West Pacific 1943-1945; Lae-Nadzab; Finschhafen; Defence of Scarlet Beach; Sattelberg ; Borneo; Tarakan

The 2/48<sup>th</sup> Battalion's Motto was

“Nunquam Victus” (Never Defeated)

#### DECORATIONS

The highest decorated Battalion of the Second World War

Four members received the Victoria Cross – 3 posthumously

4 Distinguished Service Orders

12 Military Crosses

10 Distinguished Conduct Medals

24 Military Medals

36 Mentioned in Despatches