



Lieutenant Colonel R W CAMERON DSO, ED

[1916 - 2009]



Colonel Cameron was elected to Life Membership of the Club in 1993

Colonel Cameron was a Trustee of the Club from 1984 to 1996

Colonel Cameron was President of the Club in 1966-67

Richard William Cameron was born on 12 December 1916 to Stuart and Gertrude Cameron of Berry Street, Sherwood. His father was a solicitor who worked in the family real estate business that had been founded in 1864 by Richard's grandfather. Stuart Cameron had served in the Royal Australian Navy in World War 1 – chiefly in New Guinea.

Richard was the youngest of the Camerons' five sons. The eldest, Thomas, (known as "Ginger") was a commercial pilot who was killed in an aircraft accident at Archerfield in 1937. Waverley was the second son who became a career officer in the Royal Air Force. He was a Wing Commander in Coastal Command and was listed as Missing-in-Action in 1942. The third son, Alan, was a commercial pilot in Australia and Europe and also served in the Royal Air Force. He was killed in a training accident in 1942. Richard's older brother John (known as "Pinky") had followed his father into the family real estate business. He served in the Second AIF in the artillery in the Middle East, Greece and Crete.

We thank the History Interest Group and other volunteers who have researched and prepared these Notes. The series will be progressively expanded and developed. They are intended as casual reading for the benefit of Members, who are encouraged to advise of any inaccuracies in the material.

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Richard was educated at Sherwood State School and then at Brisbane Grammar School. In 1933 he left school and joined the Bank of Australasia where he worked until enlisting in the AIF in 1940. He studied part-time at university and qualified as an Accounting Associate of the University of Queensland (AAUQ) in 1937.

Richard enlisted on 8 Nov 1938 as No.121006 in the 61st Bn Queensland Cameron Highlanders – a militia battalion. He was promoted Lieutenant on 13 December 1939. On 10 June 1940, he enlisted in the AIF (No. QX6262) and was posted to 2/2 Machine Gun Battalion. His nickname in the battalion was “Darky”.

Originally intended to support the 7th Division, the 2/2nd Machine Gun Battalion was raised in Sydney on 2 May 1940 and largely composed of personnel from light horse units in New South Wales and Queensland. Those from New South Wales undertook their initial training at Cowra and from Queensland at Redbank. The battalion came together in Pymont in New South Wales at the end of the 1940, prior to embarking (RMS *Aquitania*) for overseas service.

The battalion sailed from Sydney to the Middle East in February 1941. It underwent further training at Khassa, near El Majdal in Palestine and towards the end of April moved to Mersa Matruh in Egypt. The battalion spent the next 12 months carrying out garrison duties in Egypt and from January 1942 in Syria, where it became attached to the 9th Division.

In the third week of June the 9th Division received urgent orders to return to Egypt to reinforce the British Eighth Army that had retreated to the Alamein "box". The 2/2nd played an important part during the subsequent battles, fighting alongside the infantry defending the Alamein line in July and during the counter-attack in October to November.

The action for which Lieutenant Cameron was awarded the Distinguished Service Order is recorded as follows:

Lt Cameron was commanding 3 Platoon, A Company on 22 July 1942. He was leading a section forward when it came under fire from an enemy machine gun. Lt Cameron crawled forward, identified the gunner's location and fired his pistol at him. He then charged the position under fire from the enemy and reached the bunker, when the enemy stood up and was shot by Cameron's section. Later Cameron's section was forced to withdraw but was unable to carry the tripod and rangefinder of one of its guns. Under heavy machine gun and artillery fire, Cameron returned 250 metres to the front and retrieved the rangefinder and tripod. He then reorganized his defensive position 500 metres to the front of the line and maintained both guns in action for 24 hours under heavy fire. Nine of the thirteen men in the platoon were killed or wounded in the action.



Captain Cameron receiving his DSO from General Morshead

His decoration was gazetted on 5 November 1942 and presented to the then Captain Cameron by Lieutenant General Sir Leslie Morshead.

The award of a DSO to a junior officer is very rare (only a couple to Australians in World War 2) and may signify that the original citation was for a more senior award for valour. In the same action Corporal McGregor was awarded the Military Medal, Sergeant Boyd was Mentioned-in-Dispatches, and six soldiers received C-in-C's Commendations.



On return to Australia, Cameron was posted as ADC to General Wootten at HQ 9 Division. He then returned to 2/2 Machine Gun Battalion as a Company Second-in-Command in PNG. He returned to HQ 9 Division in Lae and at Labuan, where he was Mentioned-in-Dispatches. He was discharged from the AIF on return to Australia on 20 October 1945.

After the war, Richard continued soldiering – joining the 9th Battalion, Moreton Regiment in Brisbane. He was promoted to Major in 1952, and Lieutenant Colonel and Commanding Officer from 1954 to 1957.

In 1953 he was selected as one of the *Queen's Commonwealth Mounted Escort* at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. He was appointed as an Honorary ADC to the Governor General (Viscount de Lisle) from 1962 to 1965. In 2002 he joined the *60th Anniversary of El Alamein Contingent* for commemorative visits and services.

Richard was active in the community and was a Life Member of the RSL and of Rotary (where he had been awarded the prestigious Paul Harris Fellowship).



While living at Tennyson and Indooroopilly, his post-war working life was spent as the principal of the old and respected family real estate firm of Cameron Brothers – which he joined in 1946, retired from in 1991, and remained a consultant to until 1999.

In 1944 after a short courtship, Richard married Jocelyn King Harmon – whom he had met as a VAD on the troopship returning from the Middle East. Jocelyn was from Sandgate, Brisbane, and together they had a son Alan (born 1949) and a daughter Margot (born 1950). Jocelyn tragically died in a motor accident in 1955 in which Richard was also severely injured.

In 1957 Richard remarried to Sydney-born Margaret Goldsmith. Together they had a son Scott (born 1958) and a daughter Sally (born 1960). Lieutenant Scott Cameron (RAA) joined the Club in 1977. As Captain Cameron he served on the Club Committee from 1979 to 1980. He subsequently became President of the Queensland Club in 2011-2013

Richard Cameron died in Brisbane on 20 August 2009, survived by his wife Margaret and his four children.



Colonel Richard and Mrs Margaret Cameron

Sources included:

- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports and sundry documents
- National Archives
- Australian War Memorial
- Australian Film Archive <http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/875-richard-cameron>
- Contributions from son, Captain Scott Cameron and wife Mrs Margaret Cameron