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978-0-521-19480-8 - *Armies of Empire: The 9th Australian and 50th British Divisions in Battle 1939-1945*

Allan Converse

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ARMIES OF EMPIRE
THE 9TH AUSTRALIAN AND
50TH BRITISH DIVISIONS IN BATTLE
1939-1945

Armies of Empire uniquely reflects upon the experience of two divisions from different armies facing similar challenges in the Second World War. The 9th Australian Division and the British 50th (Northumbrian) Division both saw long service and suffered heavy casualties, and both encountered morale, discipline and battlefield effectiveness problems.

In this illuminating, comparative study of Australian and British divisions at war, Allan Converse draws extensively on primary sources as well as recent scholarship on morale and combat efficiency. His fresh approach questions the popular mythology surrounding the Australian Digger and the British Tommy, and shows how it was a combination of leadership, loyalty and tactics, rather than intrinsic national qualities, which resulted in victory for Churchill's armies.

Allan Converse is Lecturer in the Department of History at Bentley University, USA.

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To the memory of Marine Warwick Nield-Siddall
of 41 RM Commando

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA	anti-aircraft
AA&QMG	Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General
AAMC	Australian Army Medical Corps
AASC	Australian Army Service Corps
Admin	Administration
ADMS	Assistant Director Medical Services
AGH	Australian General Hospital
AGPS	Australian Government Publishing Service
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
ANGAU	Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit
APM	Assistant Provost Marshal
A&Q	Adjutant and Quartermaster
A&Q, A&QMG	Adjutant General and Quartermaster General
A/Tk	anti-tank
AVRE	Assault Vehicle Royal Engineers
AWL	absent (or absence) without leave
AWM	Australian War Memorial
Bde	Brigade
BGH	British General Hospital
BLUECOAT	Assault by 50th Division and British 2nd Army in the Caumont–St Germain d’Ectot–Launay–Orbois sector, 30 July–4 August 1944
Bn	Battalion
Bty	Battery
BULIMBA	Raid by 2/15th Battalion on enemy lines during the battle of Alam Halfa, 1 September 1942
CANLOAN	Canadian Army program to lend junior officers to British infantry units in Europe, 1944–45
Capt	Captain
CGS	Chief of the General Staff (Australian)

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CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
CMP	Corps of Military Police
CO	Commanding Officer
Col.	Colonel
COS	Chief of Staff
Coy	Company
Cpl	Corporal
CRA	Commander Royal Artillery
CRAA	Commander Royal Australian Artillery
Crab	Mine-clearing Sherman tank
CRE	Commander Royal Engineers
Crocodile	Churchill flame-throwing tank
CSM	Company Sergeant Major
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DCIGS	Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff
DDMS	Deputy Director Medical Services
DG	Dragoon Guards
DIMINISH	Amphibious assault by 20th Brigade of 9th Australian Division on the Finschafen area of the Huon Peninsula, 22 September 1943
Div	Division
DJAG	Deputy Judge Advocate-General
DLI	Durham Light Infantry
DLO	Division Legal Officer
DMS	Director Medical Services
Dow	Died of Wounds
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
EY Rifle	Rifle adapted as a grenade launcher
Fd	Field
FREEBORN	Breakout from Gazala Line and retreat to Egyptian frontier by 50th Division, 14–15 June 1942
GHQ	General Headquarters
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GS	General Staff
GSC	General Service Corps
GSO 1	General Staff Officer, Grade 1
HAA	Heavy Anti-Aircraft
HAC	Honourable Artillery Company
HE	High Explosive
HMSO	Her/His Majesty's Stationery Office

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HQ	Headquarters
HUSKY	Allied invasion of Sicily, 10 July 1943
I Tank	Infantry Tank
Inf	Infantry
IO	Intelligence Officer
IWM	Imperial War Museum
JAG	Judge Advocate-General
K	Killed
KDG	King's Dragoon Guards
KITTEN	50th Division pursuit of the enemy from Normandy to Belgium, August–September 1944
KNIL	Netherlands East Indies Army
KRRC	King's Royal Rifle Corps
LAA	Light Anti-Aircraft
L/Cpl	Lance Corporal
LIGHTFOOT	Major offensive by 8th Army beginning the battle of Second Alamein, 23–24 October 1942
LILOP	Leave in Lieu of Python; scheme for home leave for veteran personnel of 21st Army Group, 1944
LOC, L of C	Lines of communication
LSO	Legal Staff Officer
L/Sgt	Lance Sergeant
Lt	Lieutenant
M	Missing
Maj	Major
MANHOOD	Joint attack by units of 9th Division and 50th Division on Ruin Ridge, 27th July 1942 (battle of First Alamein)
MAORI	Assaults by 50th Division on enemy lines in the Crauville–Bois St Germain sector (MAORI I, 8–9 July 1944) and at Hottot (MAORI II, 11–12 July)
MARKET-GARDEN	Joint airborne-ground force offensive by British 2nd Army from Belgian border to Arnhem, beginning 17 September 1944
MC	Military Cross
MCU	Malaria Control Unit
Med	Medium
MG	Machine-Gun

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MO	Medical Officer
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
NYD (N)	Not Yet Diagnosed (Nervous)
OBOE I	Assault on Tarakan by 26th Brigade of 9th Division, beginning 1 May 1945
OBOE II	Assault on Balikpapan, Borneo, by 7th Division, July 1945
OBOE VI	Assault on Labuan and Brunei Bay by 9th Division, beginning 10 June 1945
OC	Officer Commanding
OCTU	Officer Cadet Training Unit
Ops	Operations
OR	Other Rank
OVERLORD	Amphibious assault by Allied forces on the Normandy coast, 6 June 1944 (the actual seaborne landing was NEPTUNE)
OUP	Oxford University Press
PERCH	Flanking movement by 7th Armoured Division on Villers Bocage, Normandy, supported by 50th Division, 12–15 June 1944
PIAT	Projector Infantry Anti-Tank
Plat	Platoon
PMF	Permanent Military Forces
POSTERN	Amphibious assault on Huon Peninsula by 9th Division and subsequent advance on Lae, beginning 4 September 1943
Pte	Private
PUGILIST	Assault by 50th Division and 8th Army on the Mareth Line, 16–24 March 1943
PW	Prisoner of war
PYTHON	Plan for rotation back to UK of veteran personnel of 21st Army Group, 1944
QMG	Quarter-Master General
RA	Royal Artillery
RAA	Royal Australian Artillery
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAC	Royal Armoured Corps
RAE	Royal Australian Engineers
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps

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xviii ABBREVIATIONS

RASC	Royal Army Service Corps
RE	Royal Engineers
Recce, Recce Corps	Reconnaissance, Reconnaissance Corps
Regt	Regiment
RHA	Royal Horse Artillery
RM	Royal Marine
RMO	Regimental Medical Officer
RN	Royal Navy
RNF	Royal Northumberland Fusiliers
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major
RTR	Royal Tank Regiment
Scorpion	Mine-clearing Matilda tank
2nd Lt	Second Lieutenant
SIW	Self-inflicted wound
Sgt	Sergeant
Sqn	Squadron
SUPERCHARGE	Attack on enemy lines by 151st Brigade of 50th Division and elements of 2nd New Zealand and 51st (Highland) Divisions during battle of Second Alamein, 1–2 November 1942
SWB	South Wales Borderers
TA	Territorial Army
TEWT	Tactical Exercise Without Troops
Tk	Tank
Tps	Troops
US	United States
VC	Victoria Cross
VCIGS	Vice Chief of the Imperial General Staff
W	Wounded
WO	Warrant Officer