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978-0-521-51411-8 - The Proud 6th: An Illustrated History of the 6th Australian Division 1939-45

Mark Johnston

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THE PROUD 6TH

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE 6TH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION 1939–45

Following Mark Johnston's acclaimed illustrated histories of the 7th and 9th Divisions comes his long-awaited history of the 6th Australian Division: the first such history ever published.

The 6th was a household name during World War II. It was the first division raised in the Second AIF, the first division to go overseas and the first to fight. Its success in that fight, in Libya in 1941, indicated that the standard established in the Great War would be continued. In Greece, Syria and New Guinea, the Division made further significant contributions. Indeed, the 'Good Old Sixth', as General Blamey called it, was still fighting on the war's last day. Blamey and nearly every other officer who became wartime army, corps and divisional commanders were once members of the 6th Division.

Through photographs and an authoritative text, this book tells their story, and that of the proud, independent and tough troops they commanded.

Mark Johnston is one of this country's leading experts on the Australian Army in World War II. Described by the Australian War Memorial's *Wartime* magazine as 'the leading historian on the experience of Australian soldiers during the war', he is the author of six books on the subject, including two with Cambridge University Press, and of five booklets for the Department of Veterans' Affairs series 'Australians in the Pacific War'. Dr Johnston has undertaken research in Egypt, Greece, England and Germany. He is Head of History at Scotch College, Melbourne.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521514118

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First published 2008

Designed by Rob Cowpe Design

Typeset by Aptara Corp.

Printed in China by Printplus Limited

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

National Library of Australia Cataloguing in Publication data

Johnston, Mark, 1960–

The proud 6th: an illustrated history of the 6th Australian Division, 1939–1945 /

Mark Johnston.

9780521514118 (hbk.)

Australian Army History series

Includes index.

Bibliography.

Australia. Army. Division, 6th – History.

World War, 1939–1945 – Regimental histories – Australia.

940.541294

ISBN-13 978-0-521-51411-8 hardback

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From 30 May 1940, all transport of the 6th Division was required to carry this symbol of a white kangaroo over a horizontal boomerang, both in white on a square black background. The kangaroo was consequently identified with the 6th Division, just as the kookaburra, emu and platypus were identified with the 7th, 8th and 9th Divisions, respectively. In mid-1944 the 6th Division established a recreational 'Kangaroo Club' in Wondecla, Queensland.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I found it a great challenge to complete this book, and I take pleasure in thanking those people who helped me along the way. If Professor David Horner and Roger Lee had not backed this project it would almost certainly never have been completed, and I am deeply grateful to them. I also thank Roger and the Army History Unit for giving me an opportunity, through the Army History Research Grants Scheme, to travel to Canberra and examine important records at the Australian War Memorial.

I am grateful also to the staff of the AWM, whose work makes books such as this possible. In particular, my thanks go to Joanne Smedley, Mike Cecil, Peter Burness, Steve Bullard, Garth Pratten, Brad Manera and Peter Stanley.

It has been a pleasure to work with Pauline de Laveaux and Jodie Howell, of Cambridge University Press. I thank them for their efficiency and enthusiasm. I am also grateful to Helena Bond for her excellent copyediting. Andrew Richardson of the AHU and cartographer Kay Dancey contributed substantially too.

As in my previous divisional histories, I have sought the help of veterans. Sadly their numbers and their unit associations are declining rapidly, and I feel fortunate to have had the assistance of those still capable of helping. Foremost among them was Ivor White, of the 2/5th Battalion and 6th Division Associations. I obtained some of the best photographs in the book from him or as a result of his efforts to spread word of my project, which he endorsed enthusiastically. Les Bishop of the 2/3rd Field Regiment and Keith Johnston of the 6th Division Cavalry also made substantial contributions of photographs and information that added considerably to the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the book. Alwyn Shilton (2/5th Battalion) generously helped me on this book, as he has on several others. Other veterans

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x ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

who have made substantial contributions are Frank Atkins (2/11th Battalion), Sir David Hay (2/6th Battalion), John Hynes (2/1st Field Regiment), the late KT Johnson (2/11th Battalion), Douglas Margetts (6th Division Signals), Harry New (2/2nd Field Company), John Peart (2/5th Battalion), Brigadier Keith Rossi (2/2nd Field Regiment) and Alf Stone (2/2nd Battalion).

I also received considerable help from widows and descendants of veterans, including Terry Cole, Tony Creek, Jan Donohue, Sue Kirwood, Rex Langthorne, Lillian Manskie, Joan Mawson, Elizabeth Thurston and Lenore Vincent. A special thanks here to John Mole, who allowed me to read his excellent biography of his father Bryan and to borrow his wonderful wartime photographs. My thanks also to Geoffrey Dean, Winston Fairbrother, Major Paul Handel and Bruce Wilson for their help on various aspects of the book. I am also very grateful to the other veterans and relatives who offered material that I was unable to include because of lack of space.

My greatest thanks go to my family, and especially my dear wife Deborah, for their support and patience with me spending many hours pursuing this elusive and valuable subject.

CONVENTIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The main discussion of each photograph is in the body of the text, immediately after its number (e.g. 5.4) is printed in bold.

Abbreviations used in the text and footnotes:

AA&QMG	Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster-General
AASC	Australian Army Service Corps
AAV	Australian Archives (Victoria)
ADMS	Assistant Director Medical Services
AGH	Australian General Hospital
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
Amb	Ambulance
AT	Anti-Tank
AWM	Australian War Memorial
Bde	Brigade
Bdr	Bombardier
BEM	British Empire Medal
BGS	Brigadier General Staff
Bn	Battalion
Capt	Captain
CASC	Commander, Army Service Corps
Cav	Cavalry
Cdo	Commando
CO	Commanding Officer
Coy	Company
Cpl	Corporal
CRA	Commander, Royal Artillery (of the division)

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CRE	Commander, Royal Engineers (of the division)
CSM	Company Sergeant Major
DCM	Distinguished Conduct Medal
Div	Division
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
Fd	Field
FOO	Forward Observation Officer
GM	George Medal
Gnr	Gunner
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GSO1	General Staff Officer 1
HQ	Headquarters
Inf	Infantry
L/Cpl	Lance Corporal
LCT	Landing Craft, Tank
Lt	Lieutenant
Lt-Col	Lieutenant-Colonel
Maj	Major
MBE	Member of the British Empire
MC	Military Cross
MID	Mentioned in Despatches
MJC	Mark Johnston Collection (private)
MM	Military Medal
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
OBE	Order of the British Empire
OP	Observation Post
Pte	Private
RAP	Regimental Aid Post
RAR	Royal Australian Regiment
Regt	Regiment
RHQ	Regimental Headquarters
RMO	Regimental Medical Officer
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major

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S/Sgt	Staff Sergeant
Sgt	Sergeant
Sig	Signalman
Sigs	Signals
SLV	State Library of Victoria
Spr	Sapper
TSMG	Thompson submachine gun
VC	Victoria Cross
WOII	Warrant Officer, Class II