

# Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

## Lieutenant Edward William MATTNER, MC, DCM, MM

(1893-1977)

Mattner was born in South Australia in 1893 and graduated from the Teachers College and Adelaide University in 1915. He enlisted in the AIF as a gunner in the 18th Battery, 6th AFA Brigade, on 7 September 1915.

Ted Mattner sailed with his unit and part of the 2nd Division Artillery, to France via the Middle East. He first saw action on the Somme in 1916 at Pozieres, Bullecourt, and Messines. As the war dragged on, he added Ypres, Menin Road and Passchendaele to his record, as well as being promoted through the ranks to receive his commission in the field in 1917. Mattner had an exemplary service record. On 7 June 1917, he was one of five volunteers who extinguished fires in their battery position thus saving three 18 pounders and 15 000 rounds of ammunition. Despite being wounded he remained on duty and was awarded the Military Medal.

In the autumn of 1917, Sergeant Mattner was a detachment commander when 18th Battery came under heavy fire. Another detachment had become casualties and a gun pit set ablaze. Undeterred, he kept the battery in action and got the wounded away, all the time being exposed to counter bombardment fire. His award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal recognized the 'great determination and ability, he brought his beloved battery through a period of great difficulty'.

On 8 October 1917, Mattner was commissioned Second Lieutenant and in February 1918 was awarded the Military Cross *'for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty'*. On this occasion, an infantry company, sited near his battery, was heavily shelled for half an hour. Casualties mounted, and Mattner collected a party of four others, dressed all the wounded and removed them to a place of safety. He was wounded but again remained on duty. His final posting before repatriation was Adjutant, 6th AFA Brigade, from 7 February to 16 March 1919. After a period of 'Non Military Employment' studying stock management in England, Mattner returned to Australia on the troop ship *Prinz Ludwig* and disembarked on 3 July 1919. He was placed on the Reserve of Officers List in 4 MD following discharge on 27 October 1919.

Apart from brief periods of hospitalization and leave he had not missed one day of active service. Lieutenant Colonel H. E. Cohen, commander of 6th AFA Brigade, was one of the proudest brigade commanders in the AIF. By October 1918, the 18th Battery had been awarded 43 decorations and 8 Mentions in Despatches and commissioned 14 original members. Mattner was one of these but he was so modest that he eschewed the opportunity for his deeds to be recorded in the Official History.

When the bugle sounded again in 1939, Mattner was coaxed back into uniform, soon promoted temporary major in the AIF, and as a Voyage Only officer, took a draft of reinforcements to the Middle East. He embarked on HMT `CC' (probably the *Queen Mary*) at Fremantle on 5 July 1941 and was at sea for 43 days, returning to Sydney on HMT *Queen Mary* on 16 August 1941. On his return and following attendance at No 13 Course at the School of Artillery, he was appointed Second in Command of 13th Field Regiment in 1941/1942. It was a young man's war and he was found medically unfit after a month in New Guinea and placed on the Retired List in the rank of Lieutenant on 1 June vide CAG No 177 of 25 June 1942, thus relinquishing the temporary rank of Major.

He had been a farmer before WWII and became a Federal Senator thereafter.

For more information follow the link below.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mattner-edward-william-11088>

Note that some of the information here differs from or adds to the information contained in the ADB and can be verified from the sources listed below.

Sources: D N Brook, *Roundshot to Rapier*, pp. 57 and 134; *Adelaide Register* (date unknown); 6th AFA Bde War Diary; P.R.Wightman, *The Service Record of the 18<sup>th</sup> Battery Australian Field Artillery – Egypt, France, Flanders, Belgium, 1915-1919*, Raphael Tuck and Sons Ltd, 1919; J. Dyer, *The Story of the 18<sup>th</sup> Battery, 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade Field Artillery, 1<sup>st</sup> AIF 1915-1919*, unpublished manuscript, November 1965; CAG No 95 of 27 June 1918; CAG No 150 of 24 September 1918; Australian Dictionary of Biography vol 15 (MUP) 2000; War Diary 13th Australian Field Regiment (AIF) 1941 to 1946; CAG No 177 of 25 June 1942; Max Mattner, *The Mattners in Australia 1839-1980*; Mattner's WW2 Pay Records in the NAA, Adelaide; Combined Records of Service in the NAA, Canberra; *The Advertiser* 22 and 23 December 1977; Correspondence Dr Philip Mattner & Mrs M Crisp; Alan H Smith.