

= Edward Milford =

Major General Edward James Milford CB , CBE , DSO (10 December 1894 ? 10 June 1972) was an Australian Army officer who fought in the First and the Second World Wars .

Born in Melbourne , Milford graduated from the Royal Military College in 1915 . Commissioned as a lieutenant in the Australian Imperial Force , he served with the Field Artillery of the 2nd Division for most of the First World War . Remaining in the military for the interwar period , he held a number of postings in ordnance and artillery in Australia and England . During the early years of the Second World War , he served as master @-@ general of the ordnance . He later commanded the 5th and 7th Divisions during the New Guinea and Borneo campaigns . He accepted the surrender of Japanese forces in Dutch Borneo on 8 September 1945 . He retired from the army in 1948 , due to an illness which was later found to be a misdiagnosis , and died in 1972 at the age of 77 .

= = Early life = =

Milford was born to immigrants from England on 10 December 1894 in Melbourne . He attended Wesley College and then in 1913 , encouraged by his headmaster , entered the Royal Military College at Duntroon .

= = Military career = =

= = = First World War = = =

Following graduation from Duntroon in 1915 , Milford was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and was assigned to the 4th Field Artillery Brigade , 2nd Division . Serving initially in the Middle East , he was posted to the Western Front in March 1916 . He held regimental and staff positions until being wounded in September 1917 , by which time he had been promoted to major . His wounds were such that he was evacuated to England for treatment . Upon recovery , he returned to the 4th Field Artillery Brigade . In command of the 11th Battery from February 1918 , he was recommended and awarded the Distinguished Service Order as well as a mention in despatches for his efforts in controlling artillery support during operations on the Somme and the Battle of Amiens .

= = = Interwar period = = =

Milford opted to undertake training in ordnance in England after the war , and also became married at this time . He held a number of ordnance related postings in both England and Australia , and attended the British Army Staff College at Camberley . He served for a time as chairman of the Resource Committee dedicated to " hardware , general stores and clothing " (there were seven such committees , each dedicated to a specific area of defence resources) , which reported to the Defence Resources Board . At the time of the outbreak of the Second World War , he was director of artillery at Army headquarters in Melbourne , where he had been posted for four years .

= = = Second World War = = =

In March 1940 , Milford was assigned to the newly formed 7th Division as commander of the division 's artillery , one of a number of officers from the Staff Corps appointed to the division . He traveled to the Middle East in October but was destined to spend only a few weeks in his position before being recalled to Australia in January 1941 to take up the post of master @-@ general of the ordnance . He was also promoted to temporary major general , the first Duntroon graduate to reach the rank of general . In his new appointment , he was tasked with co @-@ ordination of private and government manufacturers and producers to provide logistic support for Australia 's soldiers , both

at home and overseas . He was also involved with a committee investigating the supply requirements of each of the services and the available resources , as well as the development of new weapons . When the Owen gun , an Australian designed and manufactured submachine gun , was brought to his attention , he initially favoured the use of the Sten , even though it proved to be less reliable than the Owen .

= = = = New Guinea campaign = = = =

In 1942 , Milford was commander of the 5th Division , then based in Queensland and intended for operations against the Japanese Empire . He landed with elements of his division at Milne Bay on the eastern tip of New Guinea on 14 January 1943 and began operations on nearby Goodenough Island . The island had recently been captured from the Japanese but only a small Australian garrison was present to guard against any attempt by the enemy to take it back . Dummy buildings and fortifications were built to give the Japanese the impression that the Australian presence on Goodenough was greater than it actually was , and may have deterred them from attempting to retake the island . By April the Japanese threat to Goodenough had receded and an air strip was under construction .

In late August 1943 , the 5th Division moved to the Morobe Province of New Guinea to replace the 3rd Division , which was then participating in the Salamaua ? Lae campaign . Milford was tasked with continuing offensive operations against the Japanese around Salamaua to divert resources away from the nearby Japanese base in the town of Lae . Once the neighbouring 9th Division commenced their attack to capture Lae on 4 September by landing east of the town to begin an encircling movement , the 5th Division moved to take Salamaua , which eventually fell to the Australians on 11 September .

Salamaua was intended to become a large base for the Allied forces in the region , but when Lieutenant General Edmund Herring inspected the area immediately following its capture it was deemed not suitable . Instead , Herring directed Milford to establish the base at newly captured Lae . Milford supervised the construction of roads and supply depots of the " Lae Fortress " until 3 November , when he was made general staff officer of the New Guinea Force (NGF) . He would be recommended for an appointment as a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for his leadership and service in Lae and with the NGF .

= = = = Borneo campaign = = = =

In July 1944 , he succeeded his friend (and fellow Duntroon classmate) Major General George Vasey as commander of the 7th Division . The division had been resting and refitting in Australia since its withdrawal in early 1944 from New Guinea following the Ramu Valley campaign , which had been conducted in the aftermath of the capture of Lae .

In early 1945 , planning was underway for Operation Oboe Two , an amphibious assault to capture Balikpapan , a seaport on Borneo . The 9th Division was originally designated for the operation , but in April it was decided to utilise the 7th Division instead , and it duly embarked from Cairns to Morotai , the staging post for the assault . Operation Oboe Two would transpire to be the largest amphibious operation mounted by the Australian military . Despite opposition from the American naval commanders providing support for the operation , Milford decided to land his forces at Klandasan , a southern suburb of Balikpapan which although heavily defended , had suitable beaches for landing troops . By landing at Klandasan , Milford hoped to achieve tactical surprise and anticipated fire support from the United States Navy would help counter the coastal defences of the Japanese . The battle of Balikpapan began on 1 July with a naval barrage of the landing area , supported by bombers of the Royal Australian Air Force , with the division landing relatively unopposed by mid morning . By 1pm , the beachhead was secure and Milford , together with Generals Douglas MacArthur and Leslie Morshead made an inspection of the area . At this late stage of the war it was clear that the war would soon end , and extensive use was made of divisional artillery (which Milford had raised during his earlier spell with the division in 1940) rather

than needlessly risk soldiers ' lives . By 21 July , Balikpapan was secure and the Japanese were retreating into Borneo . Milford ordered a halt to further offensive action and instructed his outlying forces to hold their position , thus concluding a successful operation .

The war was now rapidly drawing to a close and upon the surrender of the Japanese Empire in August , Milford was ordered to accept the surrender of the representative commander of the Japanese forces , which numbered around 8 @, @ 500 troops , in Dutch @-@ Borneo . On 8 September , Milford observed the surrender of the Japanese military governor of the area , Vice Admiral Michiaki Kamada , in a ceremony held aboard HMAS Burdekin which was anchored off the coast of Dutch Borneo .

= = Later life = =

Milford remained the commander of the 7th Division , as well as the Morotai occupation force , until March 1946 . He returned to Melbourne , replacing Major General John Chapman as Deputy Chief of General Staff on 11 March . An appointment as adjutant general followed in May . He retired on 23 April 1948 due to ill health but this was due to an incorrect diagnosis of prostate cancer . In 1946 , he had been recommended for appointment as a Companion of the Order of the Bath for his leadership during Operation Oboe Two , and was duly presented with the Order in 1949 .

Milford died in Macleod , Melbourne on 10 June 1972 , and was survived by his son (a 1944 graduate of the Royal Military College at Duntroon) .