



A story from the history of Australian Artillery:
Commemorating 150 years – 1871-2021

Sir Roden Cutler VC, AK, KCMG, KCVO, CBE
2/5th Field Regiment, RAA
'For Valour at Merdjayoun'



Arthur Roden Cutler remains one of the most distinguished of Australian Gunners, and the recipient of Australia's highest award for Gallantry – the Victoria Cross.

In May 1940, Cutler transferred from the citizen's militia to the Second AIF, commissioning into the 2/5th Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, Australian 7th Division. In 1941, Cutler served with the 2/5th in the Syria-Lebanon Campaign, fighting against Vichy French forces, including the tough, experienced French Foreign Legion units.

During the period between 19 June and 6 July, in the Merdjayoun-Damour area of Syria, Cutler's regiment was involved in the Battle of Merdjayoun. Lieutenant Cutler's exploits over two weeks included repairing a vital field telephone communications line under heavy fire, repulsing enemy tank attacks with an anti-tank rifle, setting up an outpost to bring artillery fire onto a road used by the enemy, and - employing a 25-pounder field gun - demolishing an anti-tank gun and post that was threatening the Australian advance.

Later, Cutler was seriously wounded during the Battle of Damour; when rescued 26 hours later, his leg was unable to be saved, and had to be amputated. Cutler received the Victoria Cross for his actions in the Merdjayoun-Damour area, and was medically discharged in 1942.

An extract from Lieutenant Arthur Roden Cutler's Victoria Cross Citation reads:

"For most conspicuous and sustained gallantry during the Syrian Campaign and for outstanding bravery during the bitter fighting at Merdjayoun when this artillery officer became a byword amongst the forward troops with whom he worked...

"Throughout the Campaign, this officer's courage was unparalleled, and his work was a big factor in the recapture of Merdjayoun."

Sources:

RAAHC, [Gunnery of Renown](#), accessed 18 Aug 2021

Australian War Memorial, [Collection](#), accessed 15 August 2021

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