

Geoffrey Neil Godsall

26 Nov 1916 Geoffrey Neil Godsall was born at Toowoomba in Queensland, the son of Arthur Richard and Ruth (*née* Marshall) Godsall.

For his junior schooling, he attended the East Toowoomba State School, and for his senior schooling the Toowoomba Grammar School.¹

1935-1939

01 Mar 1935 At the age of 18, he entered the Royal Military College which, because of the Depression, had been compelled in 1931 to move from Duntroon in the ACT to Victoria Barracks in Sydney.² Geoffrey was selected to be a student at the Military College by Sir John Lavarack, who was then the College's Commandant and was soon to be appointed Chief of the General Staff. Geoffrey Godsall was the only Queenslander selected for enrolment in the College in that year. His entry into the college also marked the beginning of his service in the Permanent Military Forces [PMF].

01 Dec 1938 At this time, he was editor of the *Journal of the Royal Military College of Australia*.³

13 Dec 1938 He graduated from the Royal Military College which by now had returned to Duntroon. In graduating, he won the Oswald Watt Prize, consisting of a pair of binoculars in a leather case. The prize was awarded annually for the best essay by a cadet on military aviation.

14 Dec 1938 He was allotted to the Australian Staff Corps with the rank of Lieutenant.

01 Feb 1939 He was attached to the 11th Mixed Brigade. Headquartered in Brisbane, this was a Militia unit that consisted of various infantry battalions and light horse regiments.

31 Jul 1939 His attachment to 11th Mixed Brigade came to an end.

01 Aug 1939 He was appointed Adjutant to the 15th Battalion, a Militia unit based in Brisbane.

01 Sep 1939 The Second World War broke out when Germany invaded Poland.

03 Sep 1939 As part of the British Empire, Australia was now at war with Germany.

24 Sep 1939 Geoffrey was assessed as Medical Class A1.

¹ Newspaper cutting, 'U.S. tribute to Toowoomba man', 1945, probably from the *Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs Gazette*.

² Colonel J.E. Lee, *Duntroon: The Royal Military College of Australia 1911 – 1946*, Canberra, 1952, p. 231.

³ *Journal of the Royal Military College of Australia*, vol. XXV, no. 32, December 1938.

1940

- 29 Apr 1940 His five years as a member of the Permanent Military Forces ceased as he was about to join – or actually be seconded to – the 2nd Australian Imperial Force [AIF].
- 30 Apr 1940 In Brisbane, he filled out the Attestation Form to enlist in the AIF and was given the Army Number of QX6159. The 'Q' element indicated that he had enlisted in Queensland, while the 'X' in the Army Number indicated that he was a member of the AIF and was liable for service overseas.
- 01 May 1940 He was appointed to the rank of Lieutenant in the AIF.
- 03 May 1940 In Northern Command in Queensland, he was appointed to the Australian Staff Corps of the 2nd AIF.
- 07 May 1940 He marched out on secondment to the 2/16th Infantry Battalion, part of the 21st Brigade of the 7th Australian Division, at Northam in Western Australia. The battalion had been raised in Perth on 20 April. Geoffrey was to be the battalion's Adjutant, with the rank of Lieutenant.
- 16 May 1940 He marched into and was taken on the strength of the 2/16th Battalion.
- 19 Jun 1940 Geoffrey married Joan Bale at St Mary's Cathedral, Perth.
- 08 Jul 1940 He was promoted to the rank of Temporary Captain.
- 06 Aug 1940 He entrained at Northam to attend a Tactical Exercise.
- 21 Aug 1940 He marched back into the 2/16th Battalion from the 21st Infantry Brigade.
- 27 Sep 1940 He had a week's pre-embarkation leave, until 4 October.
- 25 Oct 1940 Along with his unit, the 2/16th Battalion, he embarked at Fremantle on HMT *Aquitania* for service in the Middle East.
- 25 Nov 1940 Geoffrey and his unit disembarked in Egypt. The battalion moved immediately to Palestine to complete its training, which it had not had time to do before it departed from Australia.

1941

- 05 Apr 1941 He was promoted to the rank of Captain.
- Feb-Mar 1941 With the arrival of German forces in North Africa, the 21st Brigade including the 2/16th Battalion was sent to occupy positions along the Egypt-Libya border as a defence against a German attack.

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The 2/16th Battalion was transferred back to Palestine to take part in the impending "operations against Vichy French forces there and in Syria and Lebanon.

- 08 Jun 1941 Australian, Indian and Free French troops commenced operations against Vichy French forces by launching an invasion of Syria and Lebanon from Palestine and Transjordan. On this day, Geoffrey was initially reported as having been wounded in action, but he actually suffered an accidental injury to the inner side of his left ankle. According to the family, he sustained the injury when the blast of a bomb, shell or other kind of explosive device flung him off the motorcycle he was riding at the time. In coming off the motorcycle, some part of it pierced his ankle.
- 09 Jun 1941 He was evacuated to the 2/7th Australian General Hospital [AGH] near Rehovot in Palestine and was marked off the strength of his battalion.
- 05 Jul 1941 On discharge from the 2/7th AGH, he was transferred into the 21st Australian Infantry Training Battalion.
- 12 Jul 1941 The Vichy French forces in Syria and Lebanon had capitulated. Thereafter, the 2/6th Battalion remained in Lebanon as part of a garrison force.
- 13 Jul 1941 Geoffrey marched out to rejoin the 2/16th Battalion and was taken back on its strength the following day.
- 22 Nov 1941 He was promoted to the rank of Major.
- 25 Nov 1941 On this date, he commenced a course at the Middle East Combined Training Centre at Kabret on the Little Bitter Lake north of Suez. The role of the Centre was to provide practical training to Royal Navy personnel and members of allied armies in amphibious landings. This would have been where Geoffrey gained his initial knowledge of and experience in operations of this kind.
- 07 Dec 1941 He completed the course at the Combined Training Centre.
- 08 Dec 1941 The war against Japan broke out when Japanese ships shelled Kota Bharu in northern British Malaya. Ninety minutes later, Japanese aircraft attacked Pearl Harbor.

1942

- 30 Jan 1942 The 2/16th Battalion sailed from Egypt to return to Australia, but Geoffrey remained behind.
- 02 Feb 1942 While remaining seconded to the 2/16th Battalion, he commenced attendance at the No. 6 Junior War Staff Course at the Middle East Staff College at Haifa on the coast of Palestine.

- 30 May 1942 On completing the No. 6 War Course, he qualified and was awarded a certificate.
- 14 Jun 1942 He embarked on the *Clan Macauley* at Suez to return to Australia.
- 17 Jul 1942 He disembarked in Sydney and was temporarily transferred to the General Details Depot in the 2nd Military District, NSW.
- 20 Aug 1942 From the 2/16th Battalion, he marched into the Joint Overseas Operational Training School at Port Stephens NSW and was taken on the unit's strength. The School's purpose was to provide training in amphibious landings.
- 17 Oct 1942 He was detached for unspecified Special Duty.
- 23 Oct 1942 He rejoined the Joint Overseas Operational Training School from Special Duty.

1943

- 12 Feb 1943 He was detached to the Royal Military College and Staff School in Canberra.
- 17 Feb 1943 He rejoined his unit from the Royal Military College and Staff School.
- 26 Feb 1943 While remaining seconded to the 2/16th Battalion, he was allotted for duty to conduct Amphibious Training and Schools at Port Stephens. In this month, the Amphibious Training Centre was combined with an American Amphibious Training Group, and the whole organisation was placed under the command of Rear Admiral Daniel E. Barbey of the US Navy who was commander of the US Seventh Amphibious Force. For the next seven months, Geoffrey was an Instructor in amphibious warfare to the US Army's 1st Cavalry Division at Port Stephens.
- 20 Apr 1943 His daughter, Shirley Kay Godsall, was born.
- 14 May 1943 He was promoted to Temporary Lieutenant Colonel.
- Oct 1943 The Amphibious Training Centre at Port Stephens closed down, with all training in amphibious warfare henceforth to be conducted at a similar Training Centre at Toorbul Point on the mainland facing Bribie Island in Queensland.
- 08 Oct 1943 From the NSW Line of Communication Area, Geoffrey marched out on transfer to the Amphibious Training Centre at Toorbul Point, Queensland.
- 15 Oct 1943 He marched into the Amphibious Training Centre.
- 29 Oct 1943 He marched out to Headquarters, 6th Australian Division.
- 31 Oct 1943 From his position as Instructor at the Amphibious Training Centre, he was allotted for duty as General Staff Officer [GSO] I (Combined Operations) at Headquarters, 6th Australian Division, at Wondecla on the Atherton Tablelands. He yet still remained seconded to the 2/16th Battalion.

Late 1943 In the Regimental Seniority of the 2/16th Battalion, he was ranked as a Major next in seniority after WX1587 Major William Charles Joseph Gavan Duffy.

1944

22 Feb 1944 He emplaned at Cairns to fly to Brisbane.

03 Apr 1944 He relinquished his position as GSO 1 (Combined Operations) at Headquarters, 6th Australian Division, and was allotted for duty to the Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General [AA and QMG] Combined Operations Section at Advanced Land Headquarters.

04 Apr 1944 His wife's new address was 'Adare', Gatton, Queensland.

04 Apr 1944 From Headquarters, 6th Australian Division, he marched into the 1st Australian Combined Operations Section which had just been formed at Taylor's Point, Cairns. The Section's function was to train staffs of formations in amphibious operations and to supervise and coordinate the amphibious training of Army corps.

11 May 1944 He marched out from the 1st Australian Combined Operations Section on detachment to New Guinea Force, emplaning at Townsville on the same day to fly to Port Moresby.

28 May 1944 He was detached for duty to Advanced Land Headquarters and departed the same day from Port Moresby for Townsville.

30 May 1944 His detachment to New Guinea Force came to an end.

28 Aug 1944 He marched out on detachment to Advanced Land Headquarters.

30 Aug 1944 He marched into Advanced Land Headquarters from Land Headquarters.

14 Sep 1944 He relinquished his position at the AA and QMG Combined Operations Section and was reallocated for duty as General Staff Officer I (Combined Operations) at Forward Echelon Land Headquarters at Hollandia in Dutch New Guinea, on the northern coast of the island.

17 Sep 1944 He emplaned at Brisbane and deplaned the next day at Hollandia. On that day, he marched into Forward Echelon Land Headquarters from Combined Operations Section at Advanced Land Headquarters.

11 Nov 1944 His appointment was redesignated from GSO I (Combined Operations) at Forward Echelon Land Headquarters to GSO I (Combined Operations) Headquarters Advanced Land Headquarters, while still remaining seconded to the 2/16th Battalion.

25 Nov 1944 He emplaned at Hollandia and flew to Cairns.

- 26 Nov 1944 His detachment for duty at Advanced Land Headquarters came to an end.
- 06 Dec 1944 He marched out to Forward Echelon Land Headquarters.
- 07 Dec 1944 He emplaned at Townsville and deplaned at Hollandia.
- 10 Dec 1944 He was admitted to the 2/7th Australian General Hospital [AGH] at Lae for investigation.
- 24 Dec 1944 He was discharged to his unit from the 2/7th AGH, with a discharge diagnosis of chronic tonsillitis.

1945

- 02 Jan 1945 He marched out on detachment for Special Duty. This was when he was sent to the Philippines to observe and report on the American and Australian operations in the Lingayen Gulf.
- 06 Jan 1945 US aircraft and American and Australian ships began to bombard suspected Japanese positions around Lingayen on the island of Luzon.
- 09 Jan 1945 Some 68,000 American troops carried out an amphibious assault around Lingayen, encountering no Japanese resistance. Further landings occurred over the next few days, eventually putting more than 200,000 US troops ashore.
- 31 Jan 1945 US forces began to move on Manila to free it from Japanese occupation.
- 01 Feb 1945 By now Geoffrey had left the Philippines, as he emplaned at Hollandia to return to Australia. He landed at Brisbane and the same day marched out to Grade 1 Wing Staff School.
- 02 Feb 1945 He deplaned in Sydney from Brisbane.
- 14 Feb 1945 His detachment for Special Duty ceased.
- 21 Feb 1945 He relinquished his appointment as GSO I (Combined Operations) and was reallocated for duty at Staff School Australia at Cabarlah just north of Toowoomba. Here, he was appointed an Instructor at Grade 1 Wing Staff School.
- 26 Feb 1945 He marched into Staff School Australia from Advanced Land Headquarters.
- 13 Apr 1945 The Governor-General approved the recommendation to him of the award of 'Mentioned in Despatches' for 'Distinguished Services South-West Pacific Area'.⁴

⁴ AWM192, item 301 [Box 6]: Governor-General's Office – Index to recommendations for honours and awards

NAME	GODSALL, Geoffrey Neil		
Award	M.I.D.	Reg.No. QX 6159	Rank LT/COL. Service A.M.F.
Recommended by Governor-General on			13/4/45.
Promulgated in <i>London Gazette</i> on			19/7/45.
Promulgated in <i>Commonwealth of Australia Gazette</i> on			19/7/45.
Citation (G. H. File AMF O/A 24)	Distinguished services South-West Pacific Area		
Insignia received from London			G. H. File
Insignia presented by			
At		On	G. H. File
Address of recipient on presentation date			
Remarks			
Other Awards			

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- 07 May 1945 He was admitted to the 1st Australian Orthopaedic Hospital in Toowoomba and was diagnosed as suffering from duodenitis.
- 14 May 1945 He was discharged from hospital to his unit, with a discharge diagnosis of hypochlorhydria.
- 08 Jul 1945 Major-General William C. Chase, Commander of the US Army's 1st Cavalry Division, wrote to Geoffrey from Tokyo thanking and warmly commending him for the training he gave the Division in amphibious operations. The General stated *inter alia*.⁵
- 'I remember your instruction very well and I feel that the 1st Cavalry Division is deeply indebted to you for your presentation of amphibious doctrine, which we used so successfully all the way to Tokio. Please accept the thanks of the 1st Cavalry Division for your job in training, which was very well done.'
- As a token of his appreciation, the General forwarded to Geoffrey a special silk-bound gift copy of the history of the 1st Cavalry Division in World War 2.
- 19 Jul 1945 Geoffrey's award of a 'Mentioned in Despatches' was promulgated in both the *London Gazette* and the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*.
- 08 Aug 1945 He was again admitted to the 1st Australian Orthopaedic Hospital with a query diagnosis of dyspepsia, but which turned out to be a recurrence of hypochlorhydria.
- 15 Aug 1945 The Japanese Emperor announced the surrender of Japan.

⁵ Newspaper cutting, 'U.S. tribute to Toowoomba man', 1945, probably from the *Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs Gazette*.

- 09 Aug 1945 Geoffrey was transferred to the 112th Australian General Hospital at Greenslopes in Brisbane. On the same day, his long-term secondment to the 2/16th Battalion came to an end and he also relinquished his appointment as an Instructor at the Grade 1 Wing Staff School. He was placed on the Regimental Supernumerary List for officers because of his medical condition.
- 27 Sep 1945 He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel.
- 13 Nov 1945 He was medically boarded and, as a result, his Medical Classification was downgraded to Medical Class D on account of a duodenal ulcer from which he was suffering.
- 29 Dec 1945 He was discharged from the 112th AGH to the Leave and Transit Depot of the Demobilisation Section.

1946

- 28 Mar 1946 He marched into the Queensland Leave and Transit Depot from the 112th AGH, and marched out the same day to the Queensland Line of Communication Discharge Depot.
- 29 Mar 1946 He ceased full-time duty and was granted three months pay in lieu of furlough. At the time of the termination of his appointment as an officer, he was assessed as having a 20 percent degree of disability because of his duodenal ulcer.
- 30 Mar 1946 He was placed on the Retired List.

1951-1956

- 15 Feb 1951 1/54766 Lieutenant-Colonel G.N. Godsall was appointed from the Retired List to the command of the 2/14th Queensland Mounted Infantry.⁶
- 01 Jun 1953 Along with many other recipients, he was awarded a Coronation Medal on the occasion of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.⁷
- 02 Jun 1953 The 2/14th Queensland Mounted Infantry won back the Prince of Wales Cup from 7/21 Australian Horse Regiment from NSW to whom it had lost the trophy the previous year. The cup was awarded annually to the best light horse regiment, even though they had now transitioned to riding in armoured vehicles.⁸

⁶ *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, 16 August 1951 [Issue No. 61], p. 2097.

⁷ *Morning Bulletin* [Rockhampton], 2 June 1953, p. 5

⁸ *Cairns Post*, 25 June 1953, p. 4.

- 27 Oct 1953 He and fellow officers flew to Victoria to attend a Royal Australian Armoured Corps conference at Puckapunyal.⁹
- c1 May 1954 The 2/14th Queensland Mounted Infantry moved into Greenbank Army camp at the start of its annual 14-day training. The unit was equipped with Staghound armoured cars, scout cars and tracked armoured personnel carriers, while unit members wore distinctive black berets. The troops were to undergo intensive training in manoeuvres and tactics in the first week. They were then to take part in a firing exercise in the Wyaralong area, south of the camp, where the unit would be competing for the Lord Forster Cup. Similar units in South Australia and Western Australia would also be competing for the trophy.¹⁰
- 31 Dec 1955 He relinquished command of the 2/14th Queensland Mounted Infantry and next day was transferred to the Reserve of Officers (Royal Australian Armoured Corps) (Northern Command).¹¹

⁹ *Brisbane Telegraph*, 27 October 1953, p. 10.

¹⁰ *Brisbane Telegraph*, 4 May 1954, p. 2.

¹¹ *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, 1 March 1956 [Issue No. 10], p. 631.