

**12TH/40TH BATTALION, THE ROYAL TASMANIA REGIMENT
TRANSFER OF COMMAND FROM 9TH BRIGADE TO 4TH BRIGADE
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC,
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
BALLROOM TUESDAY 26 JULY 2022**

[VICE-REGAL SALUTE IS PLAYED]

Good evening. I have great pleasure to welcome you all here to mark the transfer of command of the 12th/40th Battalion, the Royal Tasmania Regiment and other Tasmanian based 9th Brigade elements, to the 4th Brigade.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

I also acknowledge:

- Major General David Thomae, Commander 2nd Division
- Major General Douglas Laidlaw, Head of Joint Support Services Division
- Major General Steve Smith, former Commander 2nd Division, 9th Brigade and 12th/40th Battalion
- Brigadier Matt Burr, Commander 4th Brigade
- Brigadier Graham Goodwin, Commander 9th Brigade
- Members of the 12th/40th Battalion, past and present

The transfer of the 12th/40th Battalion to the command of the 4th Brigade is the largest change since the Battalion was raised in its current form, in 1987, by then Commanding Officer Dennis Townsend. As Representative Colonel of the Royal Tasmania Regiment, I am very pleased to be able to host this ceremony to mark the change of command.

The 12th/40th Battalion has a proud history. Its lineage can be traced as far back as 1878, when the Tasmanian Volunteer Rifle Regiment was formed.

During the Second Boer War 1899-1902, two men of the 1st Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen had the distinction of earning the first Victoria Crosses (VC) to be awarded to Australian infantrymen.

During World War I, the 12th and 40th Battalions were raised as part of the Australian Imperial Force. These units went on to serve with considerable distinction overseas. After World War I, the two Battalions were demobilised and reformed as Militia units.

At the outbreak of World War II, the 2nd Australian Imperial Force was formed. As part of this Force, the 2nd/12th and 2nd/40th Battalions were raised and deployed for overseas service. Of note, the 2nd/12th Battalion fought during the Defence of Tobruk, and later at Milne Bay in Papua New Guinea.

The 12th/50th Battalion was the direct descendant of the 12th Battalion, AIF. During WWII, it served as part of York Force and on garrison duties in the Northern Territory. On 2 May 1945, the 12th/50th Battalion was amalgamated with the 40th Battalion to become the 12th/40th Battalion. This Battalion formed the bulk of the Timor Force that accepted the surrender of the Japanese forces at Koepang on 3 October 1945. The 12th/40th Battalion was subsequently disbanded on 29 May 1946.

On 1 July 1948, the 12th/40th Battalion was raised again as part of the Citizen Military Forces. On 30 June 1951, this Battalion was separated and became the 1st and 2nd Battalions, The Tasmania Regiment. Later on, on 1 July 1960, The Tasmania Regiment was granted the Royal prefix and became The Royal Tasmania Regiment.

Further reorganisations were undertaken in the following years. The Unit was raised in its current form on 1 December 1987. The 12th and 40th Independent Rifle Companies amalgamated and were joined by soldiers from disbanded units to form the 12th/40th Battalion, The Royal Tasmania Regiment.

The Unit is proud of its history within the 9th Brigade and 2nd Division and for performing at a consistently high standard. Today the soldiers and officers of the 12th/40th Battalion have served overseas in the Solomon Islands under Operation Anode, Timor Leste under Operation Astute, Iraq and the Middle East under Operation Catalyst and Afghanistan under Operation Slipper as part of larger contingents.

The Unit has also provided support to the State during bushfire and COVID responses.

Despite the transfer of command to the 4th Brigade, I am pleased to be informed that there is no plan to change the structure, role or mission of the Battalion.

The Royal Tasmania Regiment will continue to maintain its traditions and historical identity.

May I conclude with my personal thanks for the support of the Battalion and the 9th Brigade to Tasmania during the Covid pandemic. While the pandemic is not over, operations have reduced significantly. The focus of the local headquarters is on preparation for Domestic Security and Domestic Support contingency plans.

Like all Tasmanians, I am proud of the history of our 12th/40th Battalion. I am also pleased to maintain the association with this Vice-Regal office, as the Unit transitions to 4th Brigade.

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