BOOK REVIEW:

An Australian band of brothers: Don Company, Second 43rd Battalion, 9th Division: Tobruk, Alamein, New Guinea, Borneo

by Mark Johnston

NewSouth Publishing: Sydney; 2018; 464 pp.; ISBN 9781742235721 (paperback); RRP $34.99


The book follows, in particular, three Australian front-line soldiers from their enlistment in the 2nd Australian Imperial Force in 1940 to the end of World War II. All three were posted to Don Company, 2/43rd Battalion (a South Australian battalion), 24th Brigade, 9th Australian Division. They fought in the defence of Tobruk (1941), the battle of El Alamein (1942), the liberation of Australian New Guinea (1943), and the re-capture of Labuan, British North Borneo (1945).

The book uses letters, diaries and memoirs of the three infantrymen to develop an account of their war, including: night patrols at Tobruk; advancing steadily through German barrages at El Alamein; charging enemy machine guns in New Guinea; and repelling Japanese counter-attacks on Borneo. It is an entertaining read which would appeal to new or experienced readers of Australian military history.

Marcus Fielding