

**Jump TO Article**



The article on the pages below is reprinted by permission from *United Service* (the journal of the Royal United Services Institute of New South Wales), which seeks to inform the defence and security debate in Australia and to bring an Australian perspective to that debate internationally.

The Royal United Services Institute of New South Wales (RUSI NSW) has been promoting informed debate on defence and security issues since 1888. To receive quarterly copies of *United Service* and to obtain other significant benefits of RUSI NSW membership, please see our online Membership page:

[www.rusinsw.org.au/Membership](http://www.rusinsw.org.au/Membership)



**Jump TO Article**

## **BOOK REVIEW**

# ***The name's still Charlie: a biography of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Green, DSO***

by Olwyn Green

*Australian Military History Publications: Loftus, New South Wales; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2010;*

*ISBN 978-0-9805674-3-4; 323 pp.; RRP \$ 45.00 (hardback);*

*Ursula Davidson Library cal no. 501.2 GREE 2010*



Charles Hercules Green, born on 26 December 1919, was raised on a dairy farm near Grafton, New South Wales. A tall, handsome man, he received little formal education but was a natural leader. He served in 41<sup>st</sup> Militia Battalion before World War II and, on the outbreak of war, volunteered for 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Imperial Force. He served with 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion in the Middle East, Greece, Syria, Ceylon and briefly in Papua – before injury forced his return to Australia. He married Olwyn Warner (his biographer) on 30 January 1943 and served as a tactics instructor before being posted back to 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion training in north Queensland. He was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and appointed to command 2/11<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion for the liberation of New Guinea. For his distinguished leadership of the battalion during the capture of Wewak in 1945, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

Following the war, Green found it difficult to fit back into civilian life. Without the finance to go farming (the only occupation, other than soldiering, for which he was trained), he worked in the agricultural service industry at Grafton and when the Citizen Military Forces were re-raised in July 1948, he was appointed to command the Lismore-based 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Byron Scottish Regiment. A year later, he transferred to the Australian Regular Army, became a tactics instructor at Seymour and, in 1950, a student at Staff College, Queenscliff.

Following the outbreak of war in Korea in July 1950, Green was appointed to command 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, which was to deploy to Korea. In four brief weeks in Japan, he integrated K Force volunteers into

the battalion and forged it into a fighting force. He successfully led the battalion in its first three battles in Korea (Apple Orchard on 21 October – its “blooding”, Broken Bridge on 25 October and Chongju on 29 October). After Chongju, the battalion was rested. Green was asleep in his tent when shrapnel from harassing artillery fire struck him in the lower abdomen and he died of this wound within 24 hours – he was not yet 31-years-old.

This somewhat idiosyncratic book is mainly a biography of Charlie Green; but partly an autobiography of Olwyn Green, focusing on struggles she had in coping with life as the wife of a soldier on active service. Olwyn Green is an excellent writer with a clear grasp of military strategy. The first edition (1993) was written after 12 years of research, commencing 30 years after Charlie's death, based primarily on interviews with soldiers who had served with Charlie. The tactical picture is painted well, but is difficult to follow in places due to the absence of maps. This second edition is a reprint of the first with the addition of an epilogue covering material which had come to light since the first edition was published. Printing quality is poor in places, but the copy I reviewed was always legible.

This book will appeal to those interested in Charlie Green's place in Australian military history and to those who wish to view soldiering from a wife's perspective.

**David Leece**

---

<sup>1</sup>This is an edited version of a Department of Defence media release dated 3 June 2010.