



On 17 May, the former Pheasants Nest Hume Motorway signage of Edward Kenna VC will be presented to the Edward Kenna VC Other Ranks Mess in the Edward Kenna VC courtyard at the headquarters of the 4th/3rd Battalion of the Royal New South Wales Regiment at Sutherland. This will mark the eightieth anniversary, almost to the day, of Kenna's heroics on 14 May 1945 in the capture by the 2nd/4th Australian Infantry Battalion of Wirui Mission near Wewak, for which he would receive the Victoria Cross.

Following the capture of Salamaua, Lae and Finschhafen, the 6th Australian Division was deployed to New Guinea in early 1945 to relieve the Americans, who General MacArthur preferred to utilise elsewhere. Its brigades – the 16th, 17th and 19th – included, in the 16th, three battalions of New South Wales origin – the 2/1st, 2/2nd and 2/3rd; and in the 19th, another – the 2/4th.

Between late April and early July 1945, the 6th Australian Division advanced from the Hawain River eastwards along the New Guinea Coast to Wewak – the last sea-based fortress of the Japanese in Papua New Guinea, with long prepared extensive defences, on terrain which dictated that the attack had to be entrusted to a single battalion. This would be the 2/4th.

Drawing on the work of former society patron Major General Gordon Maitland, and the 2nd/4th Battalion's history *White over Green*, this lecture describes the feats of a New South Wales infantry battalion, which had already distinguished itself in 1941 in North Africa, Greece and Crete, in these concluding battles of the campaign, in which it earned the battle honours 'Wewak', 'Wirui Mission', and 'Mount Shiburango-Mount Tazaki', and the theatre honour 'Liberation of Australian New Guinea'.

Of the heritage and battle honours of the 2/4th Battalion, today's 4th/3rd Battalion of the Royal New South Wales Regiment is the custodian.

LECTURE TIME AND VENUE: 10:30AM Saturday 7 June 2025 at The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial Hyde Park, Hyde Park South, corner Elizabeth and Liverpool Streets, Sydney CBD. Admission is free of charge but a donation would be appreciated. For information call 0419 698 783 or email: president@militaryhistorynsw.com.au



Biography – The Hon Paul Brereton AM RFD SC

Paul Brereton was born in Sydney and practised as a solicitor from 1982 to 1987 and as a barrister from 1987 to 2005. He was appointed Senior Counsel in 1998. In 2005 he was sworn in as a Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales and joined the NSW Court of Appeal in August 2018. He is an Army Reservist who holds the rank of Major General. He enlisted in the Army Reserve in Sydney University Regiment in 1975, and was commissioned in the Royal Australian Infantry in 1979. He has served as Second-in-Command Sydney University Regiment (1994-6), Commanding Officer 4th/3rd Battalion, the Royal New South Wales Regiment (1997-99), Chief of Staff 5th Brigade (2004-5), Assistant Chief of Staff Land Headquarters (2006-7), and Commander 5th Brigade (2008-10). From 2011 to 2013 he was Head of Cadet, Reserve and Employer Support Division. He holds honorary appointments as Colonel Commandant of the Royal NSW Regiment and the University of NSW Regiment. He also sat as a member of the Defence Force Discipline Appeals Tribunal and acted as Assistant Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force. Paul was honoured with membership of the Order of Australia (Military Division) in 2010 and received the Reserve Force Decoration in 1995. He led an Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force investigation into alleged criminal misconduct on the battlefield by Australian Special forces in Afghanistan, issuing the *Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Afghanistan Inquiry Report* in November 2020. In 2023 he was appointed the first commissioner of the federal National Anti-Corruption Commission. He is Patron of the Military History Society of New South Wales.

The venue for The Military History Society of NSW lecture program is the Auditorium on the lower level of Anzac Memorial Hyde Park, corner of Elizabeth and Liverpool Streets, Sydney CBD. Numerous bus services stop at the location and Museum railway station is only 160 metres away. The venue opens its doors at around 10:00AM.

