



Artillery WA

Official Newsletter of Royal Australian Artillery Association of WA (Inc), 2/3 Fd Regt RAA, 2/7 Fd Regt, 3 Fd Regt Associations and RAA Historical Society of WA (INC).

WebSite: <http://www.artillerywa.org.au>

Edition 2/ 05

June 2005



Colonel Don Rae AM.RFD.EM leading the Gunner Contingent Anzac day 2005



*Artillery Memorial
HAF
Anzac Day 2005*



Notice Board

Mark this dates in your calendars

Saturday 9 July 2005

**Corps Dinner – Battery Birthday
Ladies Dining-in Night
At HAP – See attached Flyer**

Gunners Day

**Sunday 6 November
St. Matthew's Garrison Church - Guildford**

RAAHS BUSY BEES

The next busy bees at Irwin Barracks are scheduled for:

25 JUNE 30 JULY 27 AUGUST

LEIGHTON BATTERY OPEN DAYS

The Leighton Battery Heritage Site is open on a regular basis on the first Sunday of every month from 10 AM to 3:30 PM with tours of the tunnels every half hour.

COVER

Anzac Day 2005 – More pictures on Page 11 - 13

Inside this Issue – Main points

President's Message	3
Welfare Officer Contact	3
Book Review	4
From the 2/7	5
Take Post	
President's Message	6
3FRRAAA AGM Report	7
Arty around the world	8
7 Fd Bty News	9
Arty around the world	10
Anzac Day Photos	11

Aiming Post	
President's Message	14
RAAHS AGM Photos	15
A word from the workshop	16
The Hobbs Australian Artillery Memorial Foundation	17
Onslow Fuel Tanks	18
Darwin's Doctors Gully Gun	19
The Merredin BL 6 in	
26 cwt Howitzer	21
Last Post	22
Arty Snapshots	23

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Subs to your Association or Society are now due – RAAA / 3 FRAAA - \$ 15 RAAHS - \$ 25
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The Editor gratefully acknowledges the contributions to the newsletter by the members, whose names appear with the corresponding articles. Articles, editorial comment or book reviews for publication should be submitted to the editor, Gabriel D'Uva at: Royal Australian Artillery Association of WA (Inc) PO Box 881, Claremont WA 6910. Phone: 93836544 Fax: 93836370 or E-mail the Editor at info@artillerywa.org.au

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION WA (INC)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Associations Annual General Meeting was held at Hobbs Artillery Park on Sunday 13th March 2005 with Colonel Commandant Brigadier Richard Lawler and our Patron Brigadier Doug Collins present.

The meeting was given an update on the current arrangements with 3rd Field Regiment RAA Association and the process towards formation of a proposal for presentation at the AGM 2006 to combine for administration purposes, these bodies. However separate accounting systems will be maintained.

On Anzac day by arrangement with 7 Battery the dawn service was conducted and was well attended with over 140 present. The Service was conducted by the Battery Padre and wreaths were laid. This was followed by a Gunfire breakfast and then the majority departed for Perth to take part in the March and the Artillery contingent was led by Colonel Don Rae. Afterwards many returned to Karrakatta to renew acquaintances with their Service Comrades.

Once again the Association is in debt to Major Andrew Dunje and 7 Field Battery for their continuing co-operation in organising this important occasion. Many thanks to the members of 7 Field Battery.

Our next event will be Gunners Day on Sunday November 6th, 2005 at Guildford and an invitation to all to attend is extended.

Bruce G. Campbell

President

ADVERTISING

ANYBODY INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING THEIR BUSINESS IN **ARTILLERY WA** FOR A DONATION OF \$ 10 (TEN) PER YEAR, (FOUR ISSUES), BOTH IN PRINTED AND WEB SITE EDITIONS, PLEASE MAIL OR EMAIL THE EDITOR AT THE ADDRESSES SHOWN FOR THE ASSOCIATION TO DISCUSS OPTIONS.

News Flash

WELFARE OFFICER

John Walsh has generously donated his services to be the Association's Welfare Officer. Anybody that needs to discuss any Welfare Funding can contact John via email at info@artillerywa.org.au or jfxwalsh@bigpond.com.au or by phone on 93836544, Wednesday mornings.

The following was sent in by Maj Gen John Whitelaw.

The book "*The Fragile Forts*" was written by Peter Oppenheim and launched on 23 March 2005 by the Hon Tony Abbott MP at the National Artillery Museum at North Fort, Manly, at the memorable gathering to mark the unveiling of the Sir Roden Cutler VC exhibit in the Artillery Hall of the Museum by Her Excellency The Governor of NSW, Professor Marie Bashie, AC.

The following review was done by Colonel Terry McCullagh, CSC, President of the RAA Association (ACT). The book is a significant contribution to the recording of the Gunner heritage of Australia.

The Fragile Forts: The Fixed Defences of Sydney Harbour 1788-1963, by Peter Oppenheim, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, NSW, 2005, 180 x 250mm (landscape), pps xxvi/326, hardcover, 35 b&w drawings, 26 b&w photographs, 6 maps, appendices, biblio, index, chapter end notes. \$59.00 (RRP), \$49.00 (through AMPH – tel: 02-9542 6771 or www.warbooks.com.au)

The Fragile Forts is a joint venture between the Australian Army History Unit and Australian Military History Publications and makes a valuable contribution to the rich history of the Sydney Harbour fixed defences. Peter Oppenheim traces this history from the arrival of the first fleet and the early days of this fledgling outpost of the British Empire. He tracks their development through the colony's fears of foreign invasion to the point at which Australia became responsible for her own defences, describing the impact of the Great War and the threat of Japanese invasion during the War in the Pacific. Oppenheim concludes with the dismantling of the great guns which protected the harbour.

The book is meticulously researched, abundantly illustrated with drawings, photographs and maps, and features a comprehensive index. Oppenheim's descriptions are generous in their detail of ordnance and fort design. The author provides more than a technical description of the forts and guns of Sydney Harbour—he unfolds the complex military, political, social and economic factors which shaped the establishment of the defences, retelling the story behind the countless schemes, reports, inquiries, appreciations and commissions relating to the defences of Port Jackson. It is an intriguing account of colonial fear and isolation, technology, and independence, with hints of intrigue and early colonial jealousy told fluently and stylishly, making the book compelling reading.

The Fragile Forts caters for a broad readership, including military historians; those inspired by the architecture of the fixed defences such as the Martello tower on Fort Denison; those gunners fascinated by the vast array of ordnance; and others who simply have an abiding interest in the spectacular heritage of Sydney harbour.

An architect by profession, Peter Oppenheim taught at the University of NSW School of Architecture, and spent ten years researching and writing his book, working closely with a number of key heritage organisations including the National Artillery Museum at North Head, and the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company.

The Fragile Forts is a major contribution to the literature which describes the rich heritage of the Sydney harbour defences. This book makes a significant contribution to the history of Australian artillery in particular and Australia's military history in general. It is a book that is long overdue, is readable, and comes thoroughly recommended.

Reviewed by Colonel Terry McCullagh, CSC, President, Royal Australian Artillery Association (ACT)

From the 2/7th

THE 2/7 AUSTRALIAN FIELD REGIMENT

The 2/7 Australian Field Regiment came into being in April 1940 and comprised Regimental Headquarters and 13 Battery from South Australia and 14 Battery from West Australia. The Regiment wrote its own small slice of history in Palestine, Egypt and North Africa, Syria, Lebanon and Borneo before disbanding in January 1946. Now, in 2005, its remaining members are of seriously thinning ranks. Of the West Australian 14 Battery only 12 members attend the monthly meetings, many of our survivors while still taking an interest in the Ex-members Association are either too sick or otherwise incapacitated to attend. It is clear that, before long we must merge into the “umbrella” body, the RAA Association as so many who served the Regiment from W.A. have passed on.

The personalities such as Arthur Darnell, Bill Holder, Stan West and Harry Poole, to mention but a few, left an indelible imprint on our activities. Perhaps to mention anyone in particular, as I have done, is unfair because, on recollection, every man who served in the Battery ranks has left his own particular imprint.

It is easy to recall the various groups who formed our original ranks. There were those who came from the Fortress Artillery; permanent forces who were already well trained in Artillery practices. Another group came to us from Kalgoorlie; hard-rock miners teaching us how to dig, to run 2-up, to control the betting ring and rig races at sporting events. Members of the Militia who signed up for the “real” army provided the core of the officers and NCOs in the new Battery.

Our members respond well to current military style functions such as Anzac Day, Remembrance and Gunners` Day.

In 1992 a group of about 50 members and spouses from both W.A. and S.A. paid a visit to El Alamein to celebrate the 50th anniversary of that famous battle in which the Regiment took a significant part. And in 2002 Ken Beamish, one of our members was selected in a party of 20 from all Australian ex-service men and women, to visit El Alamein for the 60th anniversary. Members are awaiting advice of a selection of 15 to 18 to visit France for a VE Anniversary service in May of this year.

The local Association is thankful for the efforts of Jim Quilliam of Adelaide who keeps us informed of the activities of all the remaining Regimental members throughout Australia by producing a quarterly publication “Dial Sight”. Jim and his wife came over West recently and, at one of our meetings, produced a list of the attendees at a Battery Dinner 45 years ago. 160 members were listed. Our last Annual luncheon had 7 members plus spouses and friends - a total of 18. TEMPUS FUGIT.

P.StJ Kennedy



TAKE POST

3 Field Regiment RAA Association

President's Message:

June already, this year is disappearing faster than last, I'm not sure if it's due to the change to metric measurements or old age, if you know the answer please advise.

Our AGM was conducted on Sunday 13 March and was conducted in conjunction with the RAA Association and the Historical Society. This format proved successful as it gave our members the opportunity to mix with other Gunners that they may not see regularly. At this meeting a motion was passed for our Association to become a sub-association of the RAA Association. This is now possible due to the incorporation of RAA Association and completes a long held plan of ours. Our Association will continue as before with our own Committee and financial structure, but this action will further help to strengthen the role of the RAA Association.

Anzac Day was again a resounding success with over 100 at our dawn service and Gunfire breakfast, and a good number marching in Perth. The function at HAP was well attended and conducted in the normal high standard by the Battery. Thanks again to the BC Major Andrew Dunjey and the unit personnel that ran the day.

If you know of any Gunner Mates please encourage them to join up.

Our next activity is the Corp Dinner on Saturday 9 July. I encourage you and your partner to make up a group of Gunner friends and attend as it is a good opportunity to meet some old and new faces and catch up with what's happening in the world of Gunnery.

So if your year is fast disappearing make a point to PARTICIPATE.

Ubique Peter Rowles



*Peter Rowles with
Don Rae and Doug Collins
Gunnery Day 2004*

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead

3 Field Regiment RAA Association **Presidents Report AGM March 2005**

Mr Bruce Campbell President of The Royal Artillery Association, members and guests good morning and welcome to our AGM.

As you may be aware, today for the first time the three Artillery Associations are conducting their AGM's on the same day and at the same venue. This is evidence of the work you Committee has done over the past year in bringing our organizations together. Later during this meeting I will asking for your approval to make these ties even closer by incorporating the 3 Field Regiment Association as a sub unit of the Royal Australian Artillery Association of WA. This option is now available to us now, as the incorporation of the Association has finally been accomplished. We have been operating under this structure for the last year and as the Committee positions are the same in both Associations this arrangement has been most satisfactory.

The combined Gunner magazine, Artillery WA, has been successful and with the recent appointment of an editorial committee the quality will continue to improve.

Over the last year we have again been involved in the organization of Anzac Day, the Corp Dinner and Gunners Day. Attendances at all these functions have been good but can always be better. I strongly urge you attend the Corp Dinner this year on 9 July to not only show your support to your Association but also to the current Gunners.

On to this year, with our next major event being Anzac Day. There again will be a dawn service at HAP followed by a gunfire breakfast. This event was well attended last year and I encourage all members to make the effort as it is a good start to the day and you don't have to fight the traffic at Kings Park. We will be marching in Perth with the other Gunner Associations behind the new Royal Australian Artillery Association banner, so I encourage as many as possible join us.

Our web site (www.artillerywa.org.au) continues to grow and now has some very interesting links to Gunner publications and web sites

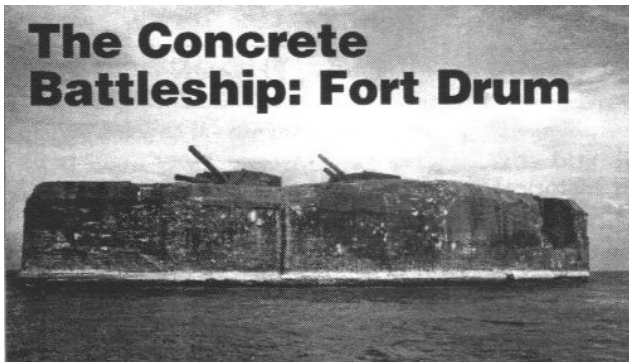
In closing would like to like to thank the Committee for their hard work and support during the year, and also the out going BC Major Scott Sullivan and his staff for their unstinting help and cooperation over the last year.

Ubique
Peter Rowles
President



*Some of the crowd at the
Dawn Service
Anzac Day 2005*

Artillery from around the world

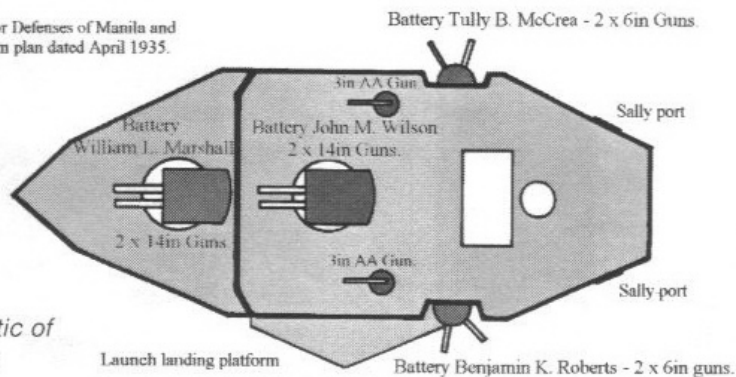


The Concrete Battleship: Fort Drum

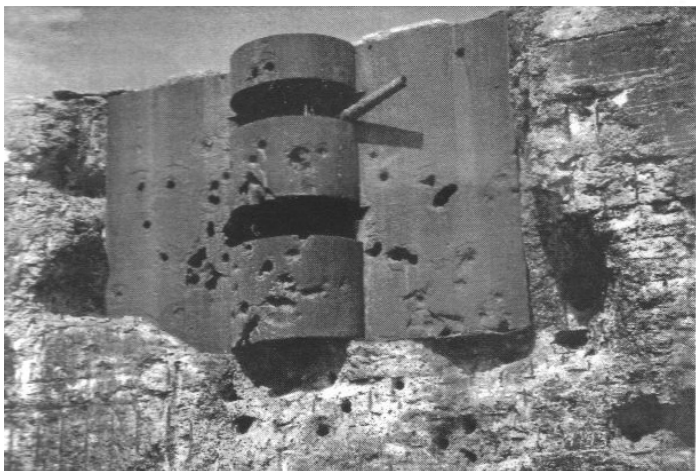


The entrance to Manila Bay showing the locations of the US-fortified islands.

Fort Drum, Harbor Defenses of Manila and Subic Bays. From plan dated April 1935.



A schematic of Fort Drum.



One of the casemated secondary batteries.

CHRIS BRISTON

To defend Manila from warships the US Army built fortifications between 1904 and 1921 on four of the five islands that are in the mouth of Manila Bay. Fort Drum was built in the island of el Fraile in 1909. Construction took nearly nine years.

Gun data for Fort Drum		
	<u>14-inch</u>	<u>6-inch</u>
Model	1909	1908MII
Length	48 ft 3 in	25 ft 0 in
Weight	69.8 tons	10.2 tons
AP projectile weight	1666 lbs	108 lbs
length	62.72 in	??
Standard charge	435 lbs	45 lbs
Muzzle velocity	2,350 ft/s	2,600 ft/s
Max range	19,200 yds	13,000 yds
Date of Manufacture	1911-1912	1911-1914

Part Article from the
Forts and Works
Magazine
June 2001



7 Field Battery SMIG's Report



Mar- Apr 05

7 Fd Bty have kicked the year off running conducting a number of courses in preparation for a busy training year.

To date, we have conducted the mandatory Safety Course qualifying 16 personnel as both Safety Officers and Acks, completed a Mod 2 OPCP Cse qualifying five students and conducted a combined MR2/C2 Drivers course which has given licenses to 12 personnel in the unit.

The Bty has recently commenced a gun course block consisting of an ICT Gun Course, and M2A2 Conversion Course and a Mod 3 Gun Course in the next month. At present we have 17 personnel that will complete the above nominated courses and whilst the drain on unit resources is quite high during the running of the courses, the long term gain is worth the effort.

VISITORS

The unit has welcomed the following visitors in the past month.

RSM-A	WO1 Kevin Woods
Representing the CLCA	Maj Lachlan Burg
MG Land Command	WO1 Phil Matthysen

SUPPORT

Nine personnel have recently returned to the Bty from a deployment with 48 Bty, firing a year's allocation of ammunition at Cultana. Opportunities for reserve gunners to fire real rates are somewhat limited these days and all gained a great deal from the activity. Our thanks go to the staff of 48 Bty for the hospitality that was extended to us.

RECRUITING

Recruiting remains a high priority, with the Bty successfully enlisting 8 since January. With 6 Bty personnel electing to transfer to the ARA over next few months, it is necessary to maintain a high focus on generating new recruits, in order to sustain and grow current Bty strength.

LOOKING AHEAD

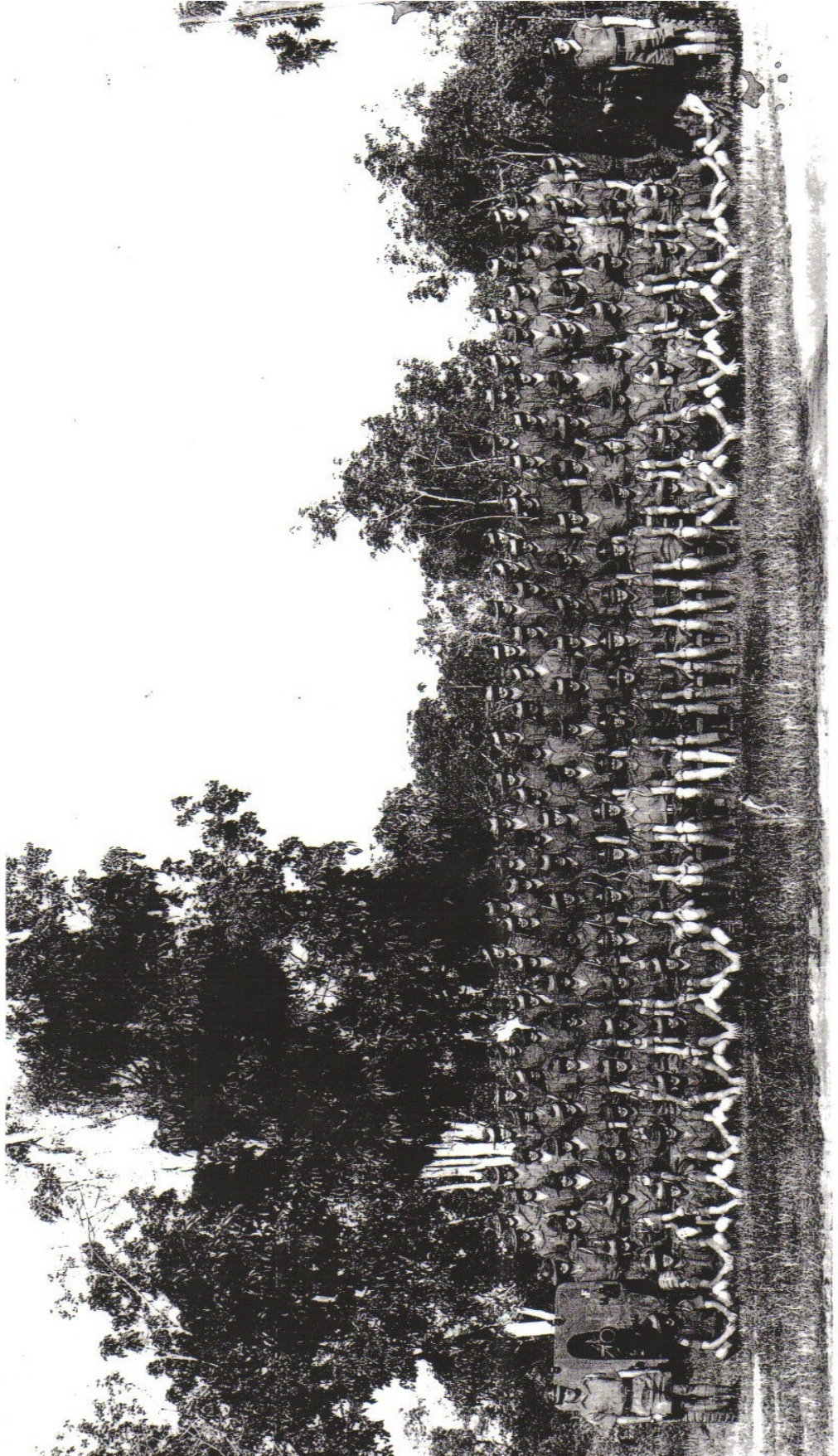
The Bty is again experiencing a very busy year, providing a JOST 13 Bde Force Protection Company Group, which will deploy on Ex Talisman Sabre and the continual provision of 9 personnel to the 13 Bde Reserve Response Force. Live Fire Exercises in June and September, will be followed up with an 8 day LFX in October at the Lancelin Training Area. This activity will culminate with an ARTEP.

CONCLUSION

With new staff in all key appointments the unit is working hard to settle everybody into their new job roles. The attitude and commitment of all personnel in the unit is healthy and we look forward to the continual challenges that lay ahead.

Artillery from around the world

A FIELD BATTERY RAA
TERENDAK CAMP, MALACCA, MALAYSIA.
JULY 1966



ANZAC DAY 2005
DAWN SERVICE - HAP

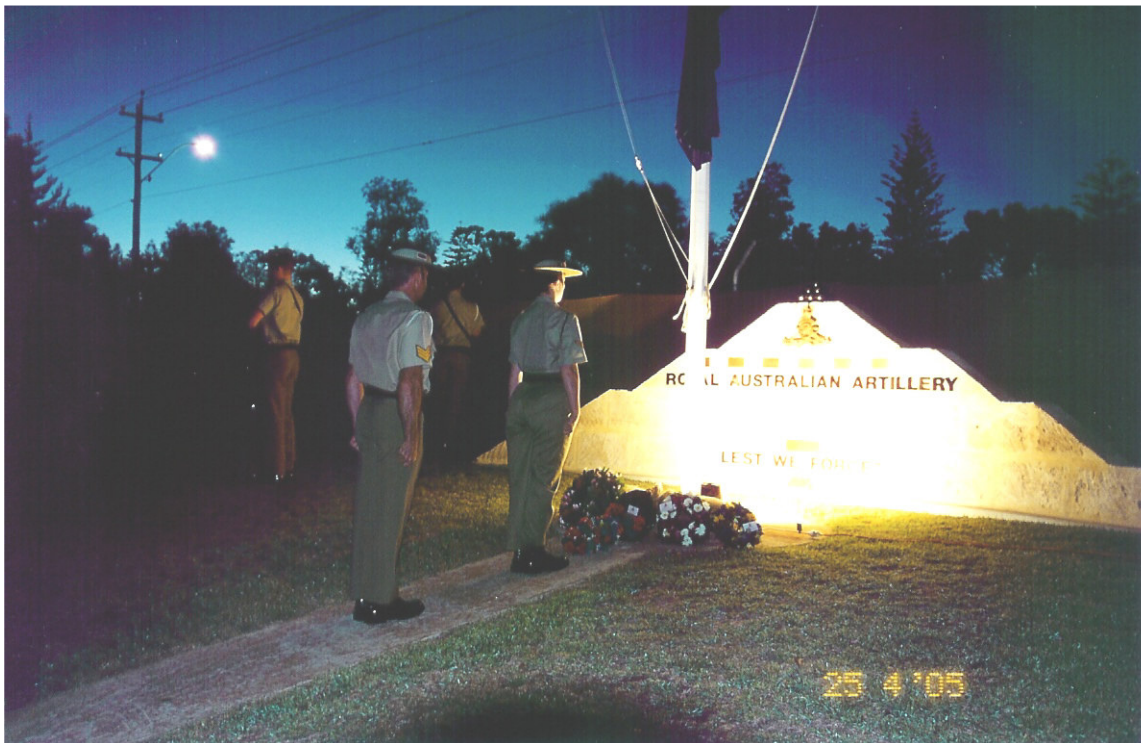


Catafalque Party

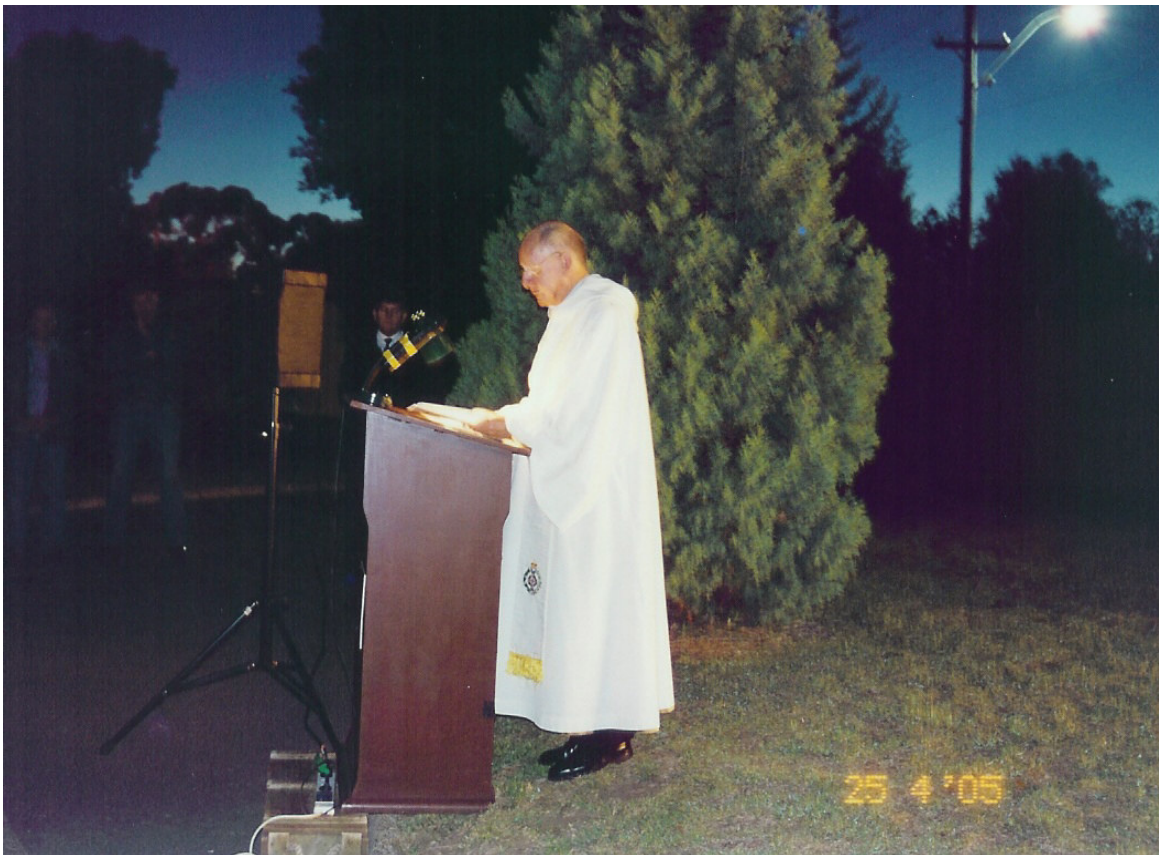


In Position around Memorial

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead



Flag at Half Mast for the Last Post



Battery Padre - Captain Ian Johnson conducting the Service



Gunners on Anzac Day March 2005



*Anzac Day Dawn Service 2005 Hobbs Artillery Park,
Greg Frey, Wendy Mahoney, Maureen & Ron Jager, Fred Morrell,
Gabby D'Uva, Peter Rowles*



THE AIMING POST

The Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society Of Western Australia (Inc) Newsletter

President's Report:

The Societies Annual General meeting was held at Hobbs Artillery Park on Sunday 13th March 2005 and was well attended including the Colonel Commandant Richard Lawler.

On this occasion the Society took the opportunity of making the following presentations;

To Major Scott Sullivan a mounted photograph of the 25 Pounder Howitzer now located at Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club when on behalf of the Officers of 7 Battery the presentation was made to the Commodore John Anderson of the Club with our Curator Don Rae supervising the event.

To our members acknowledging Fifteen Year Membership: M. Shurman, F&E Cahill, P&W Mahoney, J. Blylevens, R. Lawler, P. Perrin and A. Rae.

To our members acknowledging Ten Year Membership: H. Everett, J. Sinclair, and W. Henderson.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to the following: C. Turner, M. Coley, T. Martin, M. Vivoda, J. Drummond, B. Ellis, N. Lodge, M. Adams, J.O'Brien, J. Sanders and also our Curator Don Rae.

The Society also received by courtesy of Major General John Whitelaw a Royal Artillery Pattern Sword and on behalf of the Society we appreciate this generous gift. The decision by the Committee was to make this Sword available to the Battery Commander of the Day of 7 Battery for use on appropriate occasions during his term of appointment. Then it will be officially handed over to the incoming Battery Commander. Our Curator, Don Rae on behalf of the Society presented the Sword to Major Andrew Dunjey.

It is with regret we report the retirement of our Treasurer Alan Raynor and the incoming Treasurer is John Walsh read out a letter of appreciation received from the Honorary Auditor Geoff Palmer. However Alan is continuing his association by reallocating time to another section.

For the record the Committee members for the current year are:

President:	Bruce Campbell	Committee:	Barry Ellis
Vice President:	David Carter	Committee:	Neil Lodge
Secretary:	Tom Arnautovic	Curator:	Don Rae
Treasurer:	John Walsh	Publicity:	Gabby D'Uva
Assist Sec/Treasurer:	Ron Jager	Hon Auditor:	Geoff Palmer

Bruce G. Campbell
President



President Bruce Campbell presenting a mounted photograph of the 25 pound Howitzer that now resides at the Royal Freshwater Yacht Club, to the BC's of 7 Fd Bty, past and present, Major Scot Sullivan and Maj Andrew Dunjey. AGM 2005



President Bruce Campbell presenting Certificate of Appreciation To Curator Don Rae AGM 2005



And presenting a 15 year membership badge to Mrs. A Rae.



Don Rae presenting current 7 Fd Bty BC, Major Andrew Dunjey with the Royal Artillery Pattern Sword received from Major General John Whitelaw.

A WORD FROM THE WORKSHOP:

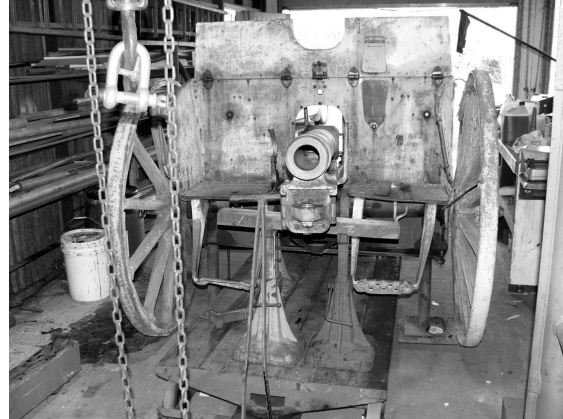
Workshop Volunteers are busily meeting the demands for their expertise in the restoration process of a number of widely differing pieces of Ordnance.

As a carry-over from 2004, the City of South Perth's WW1 Commonwealth War Trophy, a 170mm Rheinmetall German Mortar, is now fully restored and will shortly be available for installation at the original War Memorial Plinth on the corner of Angelo Street and Labouchere Road. The Mortar was completely stripped, sandblasted and epoxy primed prior to reassembly and finish coating in "Feld Grey". Once reinstalled, the Mortar will be a classic example of the skill and professionalism of the principal members of the Restoration Team, Harvey Everett, Kevin Hamilton, Don Boneham, assisted by Ken Thurston and Barry Eather.

Also carried over from 2004, restoration of two 1881 3 inch Rifled Breech Loading Armstrong Guns on Naval Carriage and Mounting is proceeding slowly. These Guns are the property of the Navy League WA and for many years have been displayed outside the Headquarters of Naval Cadet Training Ship Perth in Riverside Road East Fremantle. Due to the patience and dedication of Honorary Member John Drummond, the stripping of these two Guns was achieved with a minimum of damage to the components. Remarkably, the breech block assemblies were eventually removed from the breech rings with great assistance from Members of Fremantle Ports' Maritime Services. All components have been sandblasted and epoxy primed. Reassembly is scheduled to commence later this year.

News of the prowess of the Restoration Team has spread far and wide! An approach by the City of Kalgoorlie – Boulder seeking our interest in undertaking the restoration of the Goldfields War Museum 77mm Rheinmetall Field Gun came as a pleasant surprise. Having indicated our willingness to become involved, the Gun was delivered to the Workshop on 25th February and, after close inspection, stripping of components was commenced late March and continues at the moment. Captured by the 16th Battalion on

18th September 1918 near Villers-Bretonneux, the Gun was allotted to the 16th Battalion Militia Unit which had strong links with the Goldfields Region. Whilst most of the metal components are in remarkably good condition, the wheel assemblies have seen better days and will have to be completely rebuilt. Yet another challenge to the resourcefulness of the Workshop Team!



Restoration of the 1897 15pr Rifled Breech Loading MK1 Field Gun is slowly approaching completion. Members may recall that this Gun was, for many years, displayed in front of the main entrance to Swan Barracks in Francis Street Perth. It was deficient in many components, not the least of which was the Elevating Gear and Breech Block. Replication of the elevating gear is "still on the drawing board". Our colleagues at the National Artillery Museum Manly generously loaned the Society a 12pr Breech Block (interchangeable with the 15pr) to enable a suitable replica to be fabricated by the Workshop Team. Once again, the trade skills of Harvey Everett overcame the enormity of this task and, assisted by Don Boneham and Ken Thurston, the finished product so closely resembles the original that only an expert can tell the difference!

Once the elevating gears are machined and assembled and the travelling seat supports and footrests fitted, this Gun will be the centre of attraction in the Colonel J. O. Clough Ordnance Collection held by 7 Field Battery at Hobbs Artillery Park.

The Society is indebted to all members of the Workshop Restoration Team.



One of the workshops many challenges!

THE HOBBS AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION:

This impressive title is the “new name” for the 7 Field Battery RAA Official Collection housed at Hobbs Artillery Park Irwin Barracks Karrakatta. The Battery Collection has been part of Army History Unit’s National Network of Corps and Regional Museums and Official Unit Collections since 1988 and is highly regarded for its professional presentation.

As a means of providing “protection” for the Museums and Collections and their voluntary staff and to provide a tax deductible capacity for donations and bequeaths, Army History Unit recommended that each entity become a Company Limited by Guarantee and that the Company comprise a Board of Directors as required by the Australian Securities and Investment Corporation, complying with the regulations issued by the Australian Tax Office. Army History Unit and Defence Legal undertook all of the applications and Defence paid the associated fees.

Under the terms of the Constitution, Associate Membership of the Foundation is offered, without fee, to all financial members of Royal Australian Artillery Association WA, 3 Field Regiment Association and Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society of WA. RAAHS has made application on behalf of its members and it can be anticipated that the other organisations will shortly follow suit.

It is hoped that the influx of Associate Members will provide a stimulus for expansion of the Collection and attract active participation by persons who are interested in collection and display of memorabilia and who can bring special skills and enthusiasm to enhance the techniques currently employed. For further information, please contact the Editor who will pass your message to the Board.

The Secret Potshot (Exmouth) Base – The Onslow Fuel Tanks

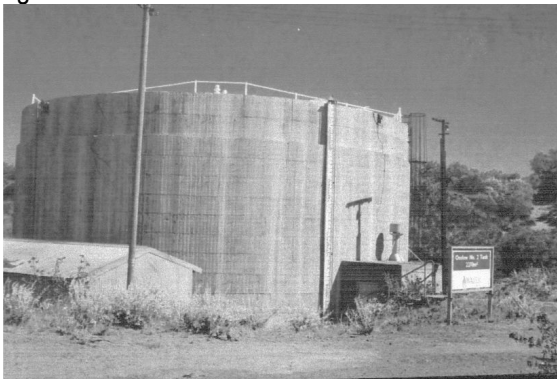
By Bob Glyde

Several issues ago of "Aiming Post" the subject of the artillery presence at the base was covered.

What is possibly not so well known was that in order to supply the Potshot base with marine fuel oil, marine distillate and aviation fuel, four 2000 ton welded steel tanks were constructed at the port of Onslow. The tank for distillate for the submarines, was in service mid 1943. It may be recalled the tanker my "Ondina" served as floating storage until the Onslow tank was complete. Thenceforth the US Navy provided a 500 ton barge to collect the distillate and pump it ashore into shore tanks at Potshot..

A PWD engineer, Ken Kelsall, who was sent to Onslow to supervise the construction of the tanks, states the task was completed in 1944. The work was carried out by members of the Allied Works Council. The steel for the tanks had to be transported by sea from Perth, the lower section being plate of half inch thickness and thinning out to quarter inch plate at the higher levels. The cement, sand and metal for the tank bases, buildings was barged from Perth whilst the blast walls were of rammed earth construction using local clay/sand and gravel mixed with cement.

All tanks were set well down in the dunes, the two fuel oil tanks being situated close to the shore with a large pumping station between them, whilst the distillate tank was further back and further inland again was the aviation fuel tank.

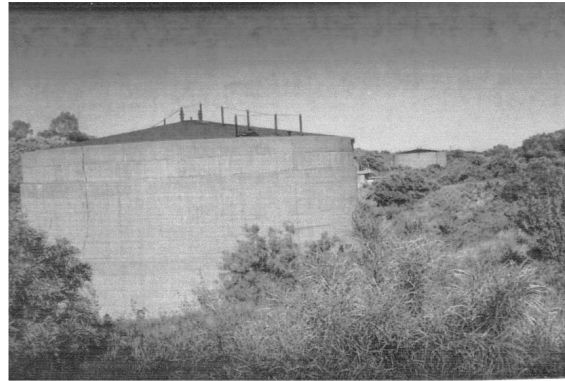


Onslow – Naval Fuel Storage 1943 – 45
Distillate tank now used for town water supply
Photo by Glen Potter - 2004

The jetty extended out for three quarters of a kilometre, large vessels, were not able to tie up to the jetty and the tankage was used primarily to

bunker vessels, such as corvettes and destroyers. Some units of British Eastern Fleet were believed to have refuelled at Onslow followed by a raid by them on Japanese facilities in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) in May 1944.

The aviation fuel tank possibly was to supply filled drums for use at the air force facilities at Exmouth, Yanrey and Onslow. It may also have provided drummed fuel for the secret air base at Corunna Downs, near Marble Bar. The latter would have been transhipped to Port Hedland and sent out on the tramline which then existed between Port Hedland and Marble Bar.



Onslow – Fuel Oil Storage 1943 – 45
The two Marine Fuel Oil tanks with the pump house in between
Photo by Glen Potter - 2004

On 15th September 1943, Onslow was bombed and according to an article in the "West Australian" 2nd March 2004, eight high explosive and eight incendiary bombs were dropped, mostly in the vicinity of the airstrip which was closer in towards Onslow than the present day airfield. It is of interest that this incident did not even warrant a mention in the 3rd Aust Corps War Diaries of that date even though unidentified aircraft from time to time over Derby and Wyndham appeared to justify recording. The raid made Onslow as the furthest point south to be attacked by Japanese aircraft. Following this raid, the US Navy provided a number of AA weapons to protect the tank area and remained there until November 1944. Prior to this, during the operation of the Potshot base, the 2/3rd Aust LAA Regiment provided a battery of 40 mm Bofor guns at Onslow. Primarily they were situated to protect the fighter airstrip.

At the end of World War 2, the Shell Company of Australia took over the operation of the fuel depot

which supplied fuel to the State Shipping Service, the Blue Funnel Line vessels Charon and Gorgon and naval units involved in the atomic tests at Barrow Island. In 1961 a cyclone destroyed a 300 metre section the jetty and the Government decided the jetty would not be rebuilt. The facility was offered up for tender won by Tom Snyder of Rockingham. He and four others were killed in 1963 when their light aircraft crashed near Marilla Station, west of Onslow whilst flying to Onslow and the second tenderer Midalia and Benn were awarded the tender.

They constructed an underwater pipeline from the end of the jetty and a flexible pipe was winched out of the sea so the remaining oil in the tanks could be pumped from the tanks into a ship standing offshore.. Most of the 12,000 tons of fuel remaining in the tanks was thus recovered however on the second last load a ship fouled the

pipeline with its anchor and so damaged it that it was deemed too costly to recover the last remaining 150 tons of fuel oil.

Many of the facilities still exist today. The marine diesel tank was cleaned out and is used for the town water storage, the aviation gasoline tank is used for storage and as a cyclone shelter. The northern most fuel oil tank is used for storage and the remaining fuel oil tank still contains the fuel oil left in it after the recovery programme ceased.

I am indebted to Glenn Potter, a member of the RAAHNSWA, for the resume of what he found out about the facility when he visited the Exmouth/Onslow area in 2004 and for the photos, which accompany the article. He was good enough to give me access to information he obtained from the Onslow Information Centre.

Information Sources:

Glenn Potters – Notes on the Onslow Naval Storage Facility.

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Darwin's Doctors Gully Gun

By Bob Glyde

Visitors taking an early morning stroll along the foreshore overlooking the Darwin Harbour in the vicinity of Doctor's Gully, most likely would have noticed a grey well kept gun pointing out across the harbour waters. A closer inspection would identify the weapon as an American 4-inch naval gun.



This gun is of great historical value for a further reading of the plaque records that it was recovered from the USS “Peary” (DD226) sunk during the first air raid on Darwin by the Japanese on 19th February 1942.

The “Peary” was a unit of the American Asiatic Fleet based at Subic Bay in the Philippines in 1941. She was laid down during the Great War and completed in 1920, being one of sixty one ships of the type built for the US Navy at that time. They were known as “four-stackers” by virtue of the four funnels. The “Peary” was of 1090 tons displacement, capable of 35 knots and equipped with 4 – 4-inch (101.6 mm) 50 calibre Mark 9, Model 5 guns, 1 – 3 inch (76.2 mm) gun and 12 – 21 inch (53.3 cm) torpedo tubes. The 4-inch guns were low angle capacity and had a maximum

range of 14560 metres. They were not suitable for anti-aircraft protection.

In the early days of the war with Japan, the "Peary" had remained at Subic Bay with her sister ship USS "Pillsbury", both ships under repair as the result of a collision. In the meantime, the remainder of the surface vessels of the Asiatic Fleet had sailed for Balikpapan, thence to Singapore. On the 15th February, the vessel assisted in the escort of four transports to Timor from Darwin however the convoy returned to Darwin as it had been detected by the Japanese and came under heavy air attack. There were also reports of strong Japanese naval forces in the area. The "Peary" left Darwin soon after returning with the transports but was soon after involved in the hunting of the Japanese submarine I-124 which was subsequently sunk by Australian corvettes. The fuel used by the "Peary" in this action forced her return to Darwin to refuel. The vessel arrived back in Darwin Harbour at about the same time as a Japanese carrier force commenced flying off their aircraft for the first raid on Darwin. She anchored and the crew commenced carrying out maintenance.

Immediately upon the alarm being sounded the "Peary" got underway, as did all the other vessels able to do so. Within minutes of the commencement of the raid, the vessel received a direct hit on the stern, which destroyed her steering gear followed by another bomb hit amidships. Within moments the ship was on fire and sinking, taking about 80 of her crew with her. Only one officer survived.

For fourteen years the whereabouts of the wreck of the "Peary" remained a mystery, despite searches by the RAN and divers from the US War Graves Unit, which apparently spent a considerable time searching.

Commercial divers were also interested as it was rumoured the vessel had a quantity of gold on board, some saying it was from the Philippines, others that it was of Dutch origin.

In 1956, the HMAS "Quadrant" was leaving harbour and apparently testing her sonar equipment, when the sonar operator reported an unidentified object in the main harbour anchorage. Naval divers went down to investigate and reported the object was the wreck of the "Peary" lying with a

two degree list in a thirty metre deep hole in silt up to the main deck level, almost directly out from the Atrium Hotel on the Darwin Esplanade. The vessel was declared not to be a navigational hazard and no further action was taken but the wreck was declared a War Grave. Tom Lewis, the author of "Wrecks in Darwin Waters" makes the comment that in view of the location of the wreck it must be assumed the ship was moving when struck or at least had enough buoyancy to allow the tides to move her from the area in which she was seen to have sunk.

In 1959 a Japanese salvage team won the right to salvage the wrecks still lying in Darwin Harbour. At this point in time the harbour master decided there could be some risk to vessels anchoring in the quarantine area of the anchorage and demanded the vessel be stripped down to the level of the main deck. This drew protests from the US War Graves Commission and the Japanese salvage company. The latter protesting because it meant searching for and removing ammunition, torpedoes, etc, before work reducing the superstructure could commence.

Eventually one of the 4 inch guns was presented to Darwin for a memorial. It was possibly the gun on the forecastle. Whether the two guns on the starboard and port sides were landed is not known. The gun on the stern section has not been recovered as when the bomb burst on the stern it must have caused the stern section to break away and that piece of wreckage, as far as is known, has never been found.

Today the gun No.1080 (or 1090, the paint was too thick to record precisely) as indicated is mounted on a concrete plinth at Doctor's Gully and is pointed in the general direction of the wreck. The gun is in remarkable condition considering it lay for 14 years under the sea. It was manufactured in 1918 by the Root Van Der Voort Engineering Company

This information would be of considerable interest to researchers of the WA Coast Defences 1942 – 45 as four such guns were emplaced in Western Australia; two at Geraldton in 1942 and two at Beacon Battery-Garden Island in 1943. These were the only such guns used in the coastal defence role in Australia, For years the myth was circulated that they were guns salvaged from the

“Peary” but research has shown quite definitely that this was not so. This is further confirmed by an examination of the gun which reveals it is a Mk 12 Model 5 weapon whereas the guns in the Western Australian batteries were Mk 9, Models 5

and 6. What is of interest is the publication “Naval Weapons of World War Two” does not show that Mk 12 guns were built or formed part of the American Naval ordnance inventory.

Information Sources

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“Naval Weapons of World War Two” by John Campbell. Published by Conway Maritime Press Ltd, London. UK

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Ordnance Equipment Audit Beacon Battery 30th June 1943.

The Merredin BL 6 in 26 cwt Howitzer

by Bob Glyde

Society members passing through the eastern wheatbelt town of Merredin along the Great Eastern Highway would possibly have noticed an unusual heavy gun displayed outside the Military Museum.



It is an incomplete BL 6 in 26 cwt howitzer and is one of two such type of gun on display in this State. Unfortunately like all the Australian guns displayed in the State, little is known of its history whilst in service in the Australian Army.

When the weapon first came to the notice of the Society it was in a dismantled form comprising the barrel, recuperator system and the trail, the latter having a piece cut out of it. It was held for some time at the Society Workshop at Karrakatta, the thought being it would be cleaned up, reassembled and restored for display. When it appeared this was not likely to eventuate, it was returned to Bob Endersby who was deeply involved in the Military Museum at Merredin.

Details of the howitzer are:

BL 6 in Howitzer 26 cwt Mk I, No.6821
(Only the Mk I was ever produced), Built by the Coventry Ordnance Works in 1918.

Carriage No. C32838 built by Vickers Ltd in January 1918. Originally fitted with wooden wheels and later modified during WW2 and fitted with pneumatic tyres.



The BL 6 in Howitzer formed part of the equipment of a 1942 artillery Medium Regiment which comprised two batteries normally one battery equipped with 8 - 6 in howitzers and the

second battery equipped with 8 - BL 60 prs. In 1942 Australia held 18 – 6 in howitzers but by 1945 this number had increased to 90 with 20 being forwarded direct from the UK the balance of stock being sent from stocks held on the British Middle East ordnance depots. By then they had been declared obsolete in the British Army.



It is possible the Merredin howitzer had served with the 2nd Aust Medium Regiment which arrived in Western Australia in March 1943 and was under the command of the Corps Commander, Royal Australian Artillery (CCRAA) 3rd Aust Corps.

The 2nd Aust Medium Regiment, comprising the 5th and 6th batteries, was stationed in Western Australia until October 1943 when it returned to the Eastern States and was posted to Queensland, where it re-equipped with 5,5 in gun howitzers and 155mm American M1A1 howitzers. The unit, on leaving Western Australia, was under instruction to return its weapons as well as the 6x4 gun tractors to Ordnance before leaving the State in view of the fact it was to be re-equipped.

There is a more complete example of this weapon on display at the Big Gun Toyota vehicle sales yard on the Great Eastern Highway, Bellevue. It is fitted with non standard wooden spoked wheels.

The RAAHNSWA Photographic Library has a shot of a pre 1939 militia unit on exercises with the gun being towed by a Cletrac tractor the typical gun tractor for such equipment at that time..

Information Sources

Australian Army War Effort Feb 1942. Australian National Archives.

Australian Army, Order of Battle and Allotment of Unit Serial Numbers, October 1942. Australian National Archives

"British and American Artillery of World War Two", Ivan V Hogg, Published by Arms and Armour Press.

"Guns of the Regiment", S N Gower, Published by the AWM Canberra.

3rd Aust Corps Unit Location Statements March – October 1943.

Conversation with K Glyde, Military Historian, Claremont, Tasmania



LAST POST

BEATRICE (Bea) INGRAM

It is with some sadness to advise the demise of Beatrice (Bea) Ingram on 2 May 2005, aged 92 years. Bea, together with her late husband Fred, was a Foundation Member of the Society and a dedicated contributor to our Objects. For the past three years Bea was confined to a Nursing Home but retained her charm and dignity for which she was renowned.

Perhaps best known among the WAGS for the Tea and Coffee Service, she will be fondly remembered by all Members. The Funeral Service on 5 May was attended by Ronnie Roach and Don Rae.

Arty Snapshots



Artillery Memorial – Stirling Square, Guildford.

Memorial Gates – Stirling Square, Guildford



St. Matthew's Altar

St. Matthew's Garrison Church – Stirling Square, Guildford

