



A NEW ADDITION TO THE ARTILLERY FAMILY: THE HANWAH AS9 HUNTSMAN SELF PROPELLED HOWITZER (SPH)



Australian, US and Japanese personnel at Exercise Southern Jackaroo at the Townsville Training Area with an AS9 Huntsman SPH in the background.

Photo courtesy of Linda Bone and Army News.

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Items for inclusion, and which are regularly needed, should be submitted for the next issue by 10 September 2026 to the Editor Pat Bell at pbell35@hotmail.com

RAAHSWA MEMBERSHIP FEES

Annual Membership Fees become due and payable on 1st January each year.

Single Membership is \$25.00 per annum

Joint Membership is \$35.00 per annum

Payment may be made direct to the Treasurer – by post :
18-50 Samichon Road, Irwin Barracks, KARRAKATTA.6010

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(Don't forget to include your name on the deposit so we can keep our records up to date)

WELFARE FUND OFFICER

John Blylevens is the Association's Welfare Officer. Anybody that needs to discuss any welfare funding can contact John via email info@artillerywa.org.au or telephone 043 869 5711. Access to funds can be made by applying in writing using the Welfare Fund Application Form which is available on request from the Treasurer. The Association reminds members that access to the Fund to help Gunners financially at a time of need is strictly confidential and all applications are treated as such.

RAAHS BUSY BEES FOR 2026**Last Saturday of each month**

LEIGHTON BATTERY OPEN DAYS**Sunday 10am-3pm****Adults \$10.00 Children \$4.00**



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION (WA) PRESIDENT'S REPORT MARCH 2026



Dear Fellow Gunners,

I attended the Indian Ocean Defence Security conference at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre in May. Although the conference was Maritime focussed, there was sufficient cross over into the Land domain. With over 200 exhibitors, the conference featured an array of the latest technology and equipment being used and/or offered to the ADF.

The most professionally interesting aspect of the exhibits to me as a Gunner was the range of UAVs and UAS. As we know, the effective use at an operational level has transformed the battlespace into a highly contested kill zone spanning depths of 50-100km. The systems offered at the conference were advanced and impressive, as was the size range and supporting systems that interface with an Army's relevant Battle Management System. Some were manufactured in Australia (fantastic to see), whilst most were manufactured out of the US or Europe. When embedded with the latest artificial intelligence, these UAV's will continue to gain enhanced Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capability and lethality.

This brings to home even more (not that anyone should require reminder), of the important work that 3 Light Battery is doing in its UAS role.

Again as I mentioned in the last issue, it would be terrific to see a growth in numbers within the RAA Association of WA (and the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society) over 2026. To this end, I am making it a personal goal to encourage serving personnel to join the RAA Association and thus keep the Gunner spirit and history alive into the future.

Ubique.

Andrew Dunjey

LTCOL

President, RAA Association of Western Australia



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESIDENT'S REPORT MARCH 2026



My March Report mentioned the Society was hosting the Commander 13th Brigade, BRIG Damien Bushell, and his RSM WO 1 Stephen Ion, to morning tea at our Annexe on 22nd April to discuss the impact of the Divestment Plan to close Irwin Barracks and the move “elsewhere”. The Commander could not more clearly define a time-line for the proposed relocation and invited the Society to nominate a Committee Member to attend his Staff conferences to remain up to date on future developments. I am encouraged that the Commander appreciates the Society’s maintenance of the History of the Regiment in the Western Region and is sponsored by 3 BTY 9 REGT RAA for our accommodation at Irwin Barracks.

The Commander’s interest in Leighton Battery Heritage Site prompted an invitation for he and his Staff to attend a special tour of the facility on Wednesday 24th June 2026. This was hosted by V/President Graham McKenzie-Smith, assisted by Tour Coordinator David Carter and Curator Don Rae. The Commander commended the Society for the professional restoration of the facility and its presentation as a tourist destination.

Another morning tea was hosted on Wednesday, 13th May, when the Commanding Officer 9 Regiment RAA, Lt Colonel Raymond Brin, and his RSM, WO1 Matthew Craig, included a visit to the Society during a routine conference with 3 Battery. Naturally the major topic of discussion centred on the disposal of Irwin Barracks and, it was gratifying that 9 Regiment also considers the Society as an important link in the RAA presence in the Western Region.

9 Regiment RAA has been transferred to 1 Division (Regular Army) as part of 10 FIRES BRIGADE RAA, recognising the Army Reserve Batteries’ skills in their new role in operations involving Unmanned Aerial Systems. Commander 10 Fires Brigade, Brigadier Corey Shillabeer, and his RSM, WO1 Anthony Hortle, invited me and Don Rae to attend 3 Battery on 26th May to discuss the Society’s role as Custodian of the extensive collection of CORPS Memorabilia held within Irwin Barracks. I found this significant gesture by the Brigadier most gratifying.

On Thursday 11th June, Major Brett Fowler invited Society representatives to attend a Community Information Session conducted by Federal Finance Department, chaired by The Hon Matt Keogh MP and titled “DELIVERING THE FUTURE ESTATE – IRWIN BARRACKS”. Designed principally for the benefit of residents and “stake holders”, it was reasonably well attended and attracted numerous comments – some strong – by those attending. Society representatives were Graham McKenzie-Smith and David Carter. Included also was the Commander 13 Brigade and other uniformed persons – purely in “an interested” capacity.

I must apologise that the bulk of my report has dealt with the Government’s Divestment Plan, the impact of which will have an enormous impact on the Society’s future. To address this I have requested a panel of three Committee persons to study and recommend methods of disposal of our considerable assets when the need arises. You will be kept informed.

Fortunately our other activities are not affected by divestment! Leighton Battery Heritage Site continues to flourish and I am grateful for the dedication of the Guides and Cashiers who make this possible – particularly catering for the increase in mid-week tours.

My kind regards to all.

Jim Archibald



RAAHSWA visitors shed light on Movement Plans



Recent visits by senior military members to the RAAHSWA Annex at Irwin Barracks Karrakatta have done much to alleviate the Society's fears surrounding the Government's announcements regarding the divestment of military establishments around the country.

The RAAHSWA President Jim Archibald, along with many of the RAAHSWA Management Committee, hosted The Commander 13 Brigade, Brigadier - Damian Bushell & Brigade RSM - WO1 Simon Ion at a morning tea at the annex on Wednesday, April 22nd.

Brig. Bushell advised that a senior public servant from Canberra, tasked within the divestment project, visited Palmer Barracks Guildford with the Brigade Command Group and this highlighted the many limitations and challenges of moving the Irwin Barracks based units to Guildford.

Particularly focussing on the challenges faced by 3 BTY. RAA, is the fact that occupying a site where UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) operation is banned (due to its proximity to Perth Airport) creates a real difficulty in moving the Battery from Irwin Barracks.

Furthermore, the commanding officer 9 REGT. RAA, Lt. Colonel Raymond Brin and RSM 9 REGT. RAA, WO1 Matthew Craig, visited the Society on Wednesday, May 13th. The considerable difficulties of moving 3 BTY. 9 REGT. RAA to Palmer Barracks were described as "Almost Insurmountable" and therefore we can expect both 3 BTY. 9 REGT. RAA and RAAHSWA (Inc) to remain insitu at Irwin Barracks Karrakatta for the foreseeable future.

Whilst we cannot afford to bury our heads in the sand and ignore the potential future of being moved out of the Karrakatta office we have occupied for more than 30 years, this means that the move now can be regarded by the Society as possible rather than probable or worst still, imminent.



Lt Col Brin, WO1 Craig, Capt. Rutherford, Don Rae, Derrick Paternoster, Phil Angwin, David Carter and Graham McKenzie-Smith



3 BATTERY 9 REGIMENT ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY



This year we celebrate the 78th Anniversary of the formation of 3 Field Regiment Royal Australian Artillery. The first parade was held in Hobbs Artillery Park, on 6th July 1948. The Regiment comprised a Regimental Headquarters and one Gun Battery.

Since that time, Artillery in Western Australia has undergone more changes in its 78 years than is possible to record here. Some of the more significant events include:

National Servicemen allotted from the First Scheme in 1951 saw the expansion of the Regiment to a second Gun Battery in 1952 with 16 x 25 Pounder Gun Howitzers. With the introduction of the Pentropic Division in 1960 3 FD REGT was designated "Army Troops" severing its previous role of direct fire support to 13th INF BDE (this title was shortly changed to 2 Aust Task Force).

The original NS Scheme concluded in 1960, to be replaced in 1965 with the second scheme aimed to boost the Regular Army's commitment to the South Vietnam & Borneo Confrontation Campaigns. 3 FD REGT continued to prosper until 1975 when the sweeping effects of the 'MILLAR Report' saw it and numerous other Reserve Units relegated to company sized sub-units. Re-designated as 7 Field Independent Battery RAA it was approved in 1982 to add 3 FD REGT to its title. Under the guidance of a succession of dedicated Battery Commanders and ARA Staff the Battery "punched above its weight", culminating in the final live firing practice of M2A2 Howitzers 28th June 2009 and 81mm Mortars were introduced to all ARES Gunner Units as the GS Close Support Weapon System.

January 2013 saw the renaming of 7 BTY to 3 Light BTY when it was transferred under command of 11/28 Battalion Royal West Australian Battalion Battle Group – an arrangement that lasted until January 2018 when 9 Regiment RAA was established to command all ARES Gunner Sub Units in Australia. The title "LIGHT" was dropped.

Today 3 BTY is a highly efficient element of 9 Regiment RAA – now equipped with Unmanned Aerial Systems (Drones) - posted strength continues to expand and skill levels are at an all time high.

UBIQUE





The Australian Artillery Calendar
Some Dates of Historical Significance
May 2026: by Anniversary & Day

156		1870	In May 1870, the British Government announces it would shortly be withdrawing all Imperial troops from Australia. The last British troops departed in September 1870. As the Sydney Morning Herald commented at the time, it was 'Australia's first step toward nationality'.
85		1941	In May 1941, the WW2 German siege of the Tobruk fortress in North Africa continued with daily close quarter fighting. Effective but costly innovative tactical cooperation between RAA anti-tank gunners and infantry featured while attacking the German salient or defending against German attacks. Meanwhile RAA field and anti-aircraft gunners fought tirelessly. RAA gunners were also proud to be known as 'Rats of Tobruk'.
111	1-May	1915	1 May: At Gallipoli, on the night of 1 May two guns of Major Bessell-Browne's 8th Battery are hauled by 160 men to a point below the crest of the 400 plateau. In the first two days in action there were twenty-two gunner casualties.
141	12-May	1885	12 May: Gunner Edward Lewis became the first Australian gunner to die on active service. He was a member of the field battery in the NSW Contingent that was deployed to the Sudan. He died of an illness and was buried in Sudan.
58	13-May	1968	12-16 May: The 1968 battle of Coral-Balmoral in Vietnam included attacks on Fire Support and Patrol Base Coral. In the early hours of 13 May, a North Vietnamese Army battalion attacked through the 102nd battery position and the adjacent 1RAR Mortar Platoon. The mortar platoon lost five killed and eleven wounded. The 102nd Battery gunners courageously fought off the assault including fighting to reclaim one of its guns that had been overrun; it had two wounded. Over the course of the battle the nearby 12th Field Regiment headquarters had two killed and three wounded. In 2008, 102 Battery was granted the Honour Title 'Coral' for the dedicated service and sacrifice made by its members at the Battle of Coral.

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85	20-May	1941	20 May: The German airborne invasion of Heraklion on the island of Crete began at dawn on 20 May. Major Hipworth, commanding the 7th LAA Battery described the battle: "In those five hours of hell the AA gunners stuck to their guns while four hundred enemy machines dived and swooped, spraying deadly bullets and bombs. Late in the afternoon there was a short lull, which was soon broken by the sonorous roar of aeroplane engines. Suddenly out of the haze hanging low over the Mediterranean more than one hundred and fifty German troop-carriers flew slowly into view . . . Every gun opened fire just as the parachutists started to jump, and within five minutes sixteen huge machines . . . were blazing furiously and rapidly losing height."
111	21-May	1915	21 May: An Australian Siege Artillery Brigade (Heavy) consisting of a HQ and two Siege Batteries is raised from members of the Royal Australian Garrison Artillery who volunteered for service abroad with the Australian Imperial Force. The initial contingent also included some volunteers from the Royal Australian Field Artillery. It departed to Lydd, Kent, in July 1915 for training and equipping with guns. The Brigade was reinforced during the war with volunteers drawn equally from the permanent Royal Australian Garrison Artillery and the Australian Garrison Artillery of the Citizen Military Forces.
71	24-May	1955	24 May: The 105th Field Battery is raised.
62	24-May	1964	24 May: A rotating operational deployment of a light anti-aircraft battery to RAAF Butterworth in Malaysia during Confrontation with Indonesia commences with 111th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery RAA in 1964 and ends five years later with the return to Australia on 6 May 1969 of 110th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery RAA.
77	25-May	1949	25 May: The first regular Army field branch regiment, the 1st Field Regiment RAA, is raised.
20	25-May	2006	25 May: 108 Field Battery (G Company), 4th Field Regiment (operating as infantry) deploy in 2006 as part of the International Stabilisation Force in East Timor and the deployment of the ANZAC Timor Leste Battle Group to which RAA batteries on occasion provided an infantry company. This commitment continued for seven years until April 2013.



The AS9 Huntsman—the Weapon in brief



The Australian Defence Force has acquired the licencing to build the South Korean K9 Thunder Self propelled howitzer. With the ADF it will be known as the AS9 huntsman. It is now a core part of the Australian Defence Force's protected mobile fires capability under LAND 8116 Phase 1. In total, 30 AS9 Self Propelled guns and 15 AS10 Armoured Ammunition Resupply Vehicles will be built at the Hanwha Defence Australia's Armoured Vehicle Centre of Excellence (H-ACE) in Geelong, Victoria. Ammunition for the AS9 will be available through the Rheinmetall Nioa Munitions facility located at Maryborough, Queensland. The first three units arrived in December 2024 and the first AS9 was delivered to the ADF on 31st January 2025.

Key Capabilities

- Range: ~30 km with standard rounds; up to 40 km with extended range ammunition; up to 60 km with specialised rounds.
- Rate of fire: Up to 6 rounds/minute; supports multiple round simultaneous impact (MRSI).
- Crew: 5 (commander, gunner, assistant gunner, driver, loader).
- Protection: Full NBC protection, armoured chassis.
- Mobility: Tracked platform designed to move with armoured formations.
- Automation: Automatic gun laying and loading systems reduce crew workload and speed up fire missions.



Left to Right: AS-10 Armoured Ammunition Resupply Vehicle (AARV) and AS-9 Huntsman Self Propelled Howitzer (SPH)



9 REGIMENT, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY



A BRIEF HISTORY

The 9th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery is an Artillery Regiment of the Australian Army. Originally raised at Victoria Barracks, Sydney, on 1st July 1903, it became a substantial part of 1 Field Artillery Brigade in the First World War. It was the senior Field Artillery Brigade of 2nd Division Artillery from 1921. Between 1939 and 1941 it carried out the home training for the Sydney University Regiment Field Battery, of which Sir Roden Cutler VC was a member. At the end of 1940 it was reorganised as 9th Field Regiment for the defence of Australia. In the early stages of WW2, 9th Field Regiment was responsible for the artillery positions deployed in the defence of the Manly-Barrenjoey beach front conducting exercises that involved seaward live firing.

The regiment draws its lineage from the 4th Artillery Brigade that was formed on 1 July 1903 at Victoria Barracks in Sydney. During the First World War, a large number of the Unit's personnel joined the volunteer Australian Imperial Force and in 1914 a large cadre of trained personnel were provided to the 1st Field Artillery Brigade, which was assigned to the 1st Division. This unit went on to serve at Gallipoli and on the Western Front. The 9th Field Artillery Brigade, consisting of the 33rd, 34th and 35th Field Batteries, and the 118th Field Howitzer Battery, were raised in 1916 for service on the Western Front, as part of the 3rd Division. The current Regiment claims lineage with this unit. The 3rd Division undertook training in the United Kingdom in mid-to late 1916, before deploying to the Western Front in December 1916, resulting in missing the fighting on the Somme. Shortly after the Division's arrival, the 9th Field Artillery Brigade was disbanded in mid-January 1917 when the decision was made to consolidate the number of guns within each Battery and reduce the number of Artillery Brigades in each of the Divisions.

In 1921 Australia's part-time military forces were reorganised. The 9th Field Brigade was raised at Paddington, assigned to the 2nd Division, and served between the Wars as part of the Militia.



Troops from the 2/9th on parade at Wondecla, Queensland, February 1945



9 REGIMENT, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY



A BRIEF HISTORY (continued)

During the Second World War, the 2/9th Field Regiment was raised as part of the volunteer Second Australian Imperial Force. This unit undertook active service in the Middle East and Garrison duties while in Australia. Meanwhile, the separate 9th Field Brigade was reorganised as the 9th Field Regiment in February 1941, initially consisting of the 19th and 20th Batteries. It was mobilised for defensive duties in December 1941 after Japan's entry into the War, and assigned to the 1st Division. Initially, the two Batteries were deployed to support the 28th Brigade around Wollongong and the 9th Brigade defending the northern Sydney beaches. The 21st Battery was raised in January 1942, and after the Regiment was relieved of its defensive positions, it concentrated at Wallgrove and undertook training under the command of the 2nd Division.

Upon completion of training, the regiment was returned to the 1st Division, and the defensive plan changed, resulting in the Regimental Headquarters moving to St Ives, and the Batteries deployed to support the 9th Brigade. The Regiment was moved several times during the final months of 1942, firstly to Pymble and then Largs, and early the following year the 19th Battery supported amphibious warfare training at Port Stephens. A number of personnel were transferred at this time to the 1st Field Regiment and the 2nd Mountain Battery for service in New Guinea. Meanwhile, the regiment continued home service, providing training to underage soldiers before they were posted to operational Units. The 20th Battery was detached and converted into a Depot Battery for the School of Artillery at Holsworthy, and in December 1943 the regiment moved to Dapto. They remained there until May 1944 when they moved to Narellan. The regiment was disbanded in April 1944, while the 20th Battery was disbanded at Holsworthy after being relieved by the 53rd Battery.

The Regiment was re-raised on 15 January 2018 to provide a regimental headquarters for all Australian Army Reserve mortar-equipped light batteries assigned to the 2nd Division. On 14 April 2018 the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General AJ Campbell, was the reviewing officer at the parade at Victoria Barracks Sydney, which formally raised the new Artillery Regimental Headquarters 9th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery. The new Head Quarters, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Lachlan Searle, commanded the 2nd/10th, 3rd, 5th/11th, 6/13th, 7th and 23rd Army Reserve Batteries. These Batteries are spread around the various Australian States at various depots around the country where they support local 2nd Division units.



Raising the Regiment, Victoria Barracks, 14 April 2018, courtesy of Phill Easton

