

## LOCKDOWN UPDATE 3

From Lieutenant General Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB



**Artillery House  
Royal Artillery Barracks  
Larkhill  
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United Kingdom**

To All Ranks Serving and Retired:

The Royal Australian Artillery  
The Royal Canadian Artillery  
The Royal New Zealand Artillery

26 May 2020

As the Master Gunner St James's Park, it is a privilege to send best wishes to all ranks, serving and retired, across the Royal Artilleries of the Commonwealth on the occasion today of the 304th anniversary of the founding of our parent Regiment.

I am acutely conscious that the world has changed much since I last wrote to you on St Barbara's Day in December 2019. Then, I declared our intentions to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> May; our plans to commemorate in Borneo, on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VJ Day, particularly those prisoners of war who were murdered around and indeed after 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945; and we were looking forward to greeting a detachment from The Royal Canadian Artillery in Edinburgh in June as they fired a Royal Salute on the anniversary of the Coronation of Her Majesty The Queen, our Captain General. Covid-19 has unfortunately put paid to all of the above and more.

Since December, we have all had to adjust very rapidly to meet this new, invisible enemy and one that, '10 rounds fire for effect' simply does not recognise. All of our Nations have suffered significant restrictions, hardships and a number have lost loved ones, including amongst retired Gunners and their families. Particularly for the older generations, it has certainly caused isolation, confusion and concern.

For the Royal Artillery family here in the United Kingdom, today's date has another significance; one hundred years ago today, on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 1920, the Royal Artillery Association was formed. Its objectives then remain the foundation of its activities today, namely to embrace and support anybody who is or has been part of our Regimental family; that includes those who are currently serving, veterans, families, widows and widowers, dependants and more. Amongst its services, the Association is proud to provide comradeship and welfare support and advice. It is a fundamental aspect of what makes the Royal Regiment of Artillery a proper 'family' and gives substance to the cry, 'Once a Gunner, Always a Gunner'.

You all have similar Associations that look after the Regimental families around the world; their importance today is as great as ever, for they can reduce isolation and loneliness and also ensure welfare reaches those in need. I commend all who give their time so generously within them to look after fellow Gunners, keeping in touch with them and making sure they are not unduly in need. Our collective strength, unity and sense of being a family will be critical for the remainder of this year and the years ahead.

I wish you all well in these unusual times and I look forward to the day when we can get together again in person.

{Original signed}

## ONE OF THE BEST GUNS OF WW 11

Article from QUORA by Willard Foxton updated by Lee Hames and Mike Venon

**M**ost nations in WW2 had pretty good cannons & field guns, but if I had to pick one that clearly outshone the others, it would be the British 25pdr field gun. How I hear Quora cry? IT'S LOWER CALIBRE THAN THE OTHERS, HOW CAN IT BE BETTER?

**The TLDR of this is the 25pdr was a better because it was a better holistic gun system than its competitors.**



The British had gone through WW1 with a decent field gun and a decent howitzer, but when the time came to replace them, the British wanted a two in one - a gun that combined the high velocity of a field gun with the high angle fire and multiple shell type capabilities of a true howitzer.

**Among other things, this halved the number of artillery crew you needed in your army; the four-man crew of the 25pdr was also smaller than the six-man crews common to its competitors.**

Lots of work was done on a very low budget, and while other nations largely adopted 105mm guns for their main artillery piece, the British couldn't afford that, so essentially the

25pdr was a WW1 gun (the 18pdr) with the barrel liner removed to raise the calibre from 77 to 87.6mm on a very well designed new carriage with modern shells.

The new carriage was a brilliant design; it added a turntable, so the gun didn't have to be physically moved to be relaid on target, and made the gun much more effective in the direct fire role; a combination towing limber/ammunition stowage box enabled the gun to be moved, deployed and redeployed remarkably quickly, and meant ammunition was closely and safely stored; the carriage was also light and manoeuvred well off road (a constant problem for the German 105mm as it was horse drawn and thus terribly slow to manoeuvre.)

So, the 25pdr was light and manoeuvrable compared to its direct competitors; smaller pieces like 75mms - like the US pack howitzer or the Soviet ZIS3 - were no more mobile but packed much less HE punch.

The 25pdr was also designed from the off to be road and off road transportable and part of a mechanised army; part of the reason costs had to be cut was every gun was bought with its own 4wd transport vehicle (a Morris Quad for most of WW2).



*25pdr, limber and Quad advancing in Italy in 1944.*

**This goes to the “better gun system” thing** - it sounds obvious, but was actually very uncommon - plenty of armies (the French, Russian and Italians) did not have anything like organic transport for every gun, preferring to spend money on the boastable number of “how many cannons do you have?” rather than the effectiveness of those pieces. The Italian army suffered the worst from this syndrome, with roughly one truck for every ten guns.

The Germans planned for the bulk of their artillery to be horse drawn, and had enough horses to do that, but this proved logistically complex (with huge amounts of animal fodder needed) and proved disastrous on the eastern front, especially in the retreat from Moscow in 1941.

The shells were well designed too, with **side by side tests in 1943 showing the standard 25pdr shell was twice as effective as the German 105mm shell and 50% more effective than the US 105mm shell.** This was largely because the British shell splintered much more effectively than the thicker walled American and German rounds.

The barrel life - bearing in mind the barrels had started life as WW1 guns - was remarkably long, with a quoted service life of 12,000 shots before replacing the barrel (compared to say, 900 for the German 88m). This is part of the reason 25pdrs are so often used as ceremonial guns these days. Finally, in 1941, the British used the then-unusual qualities of the 25pdr - the ability to both use very high angle shots alongside flat trajectory rounds with differing charges - to create a wholly new



*German 105, horses and limber retreating in Italy 1944.*

In terms of the killing power of the gun itself, the 25pdr gun shield and elevation mechanism was designed to allow very high angle fire,

**giving the gun a remarkable range for its size (20% more than the bigger American and German 105mm guns).**

This meant it could often engage in counter-battery fire without effective retaliation.

kind of artillery fire, the time on target barrage, where batteries in different positions would time their shells to all arrive at the same time.

This technique was partly developed off the British observation that the bulk of the damage from artillery strikes was done by the first few rounds before opponents had time to take cover; with the 25pdr with good crews, you could do this even with several rounds from the same gun. Essentially, when a target is well within range, you can loft several shells, have the first one fired on a very high trajectory, last one fired on a quite flat trajectory,

and if you've done the maths right, 4 or 5 shells from the same gun will hit the same target simultaneously (in 1941 terms 'within 10 seconds' was counted as 'simultaneous'). A 4-gun battery landing 15-20 shells within 10 seconds was devastatingly effective, to the point one of the most common things German prisoners asked of the British in the desert and in Italy was to see the secret "artillery machine gun" they'd been fired on with!

Now, while this became a standard technique for the allies by 1944, and with all militaries post war, it was invented by the British in the desert in 1941 and relied on then-novel features of the 25pdr field gun. The 25 pdr was one of the best guns of WWII, what do you think?"

*(With Thanks to Stan Davies)*

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### **STAIRWELL ENCLOSURE PROJECT**



It had been hoped to include a photo of work in progress on the enclosure of the Stairwell Entrance to the 5.25 Gun Emplacement but work has not yet commenced!

The selected contractor is required to obtain a Work Permit from the Town of Mosman Park but, as the Town owns the facility, the plans and specifications have to be signed off by a suitably qualified third party. The Society's Structural Engineer has offered to assist the Town in this regard so hopefully we will have something more tangible to report should COVID require the publication of a fourth "Lockdown"!

### **MOVING WITH THE TIMES**

Following the success of the inaugural ZOOM Committee Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May, your Committee plans its second such meeting on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June – unless Irwin Barracks restrictions are lifted and we are able to resume normal "in house" gatherings.

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### **JOONDALUP HEALTH CAMPUS**

Craig is a Member of our Busy Bee Volunteer Group. He is a Medical Orderly at the Joondalup Health Campus.

Not really that much to report, been busy at work, as you are probably aware through the media we had quite a few of the Covid cases from the cruise ship 'Artania'. But as we had plenty of education on the do's and don'ts of dealing with the virus and with the use of PPE all went well. The hospital was very well organised and we had regular updates.

My hands though became quite dry and irritated with the constant use of hand sanitiser. Only real change to routine was changing at work and going to and from without any detours to the shops etc and social distancing.

Have been extra cautious at home to make sure the old girl was kept in good health. Really just been going to work as normal, so not really that exciting.

*Craig.Machin.*

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

**S**uddenly it's June!

I am now drafting the Roster for the third quarter for Guides and Cashiers (June-July-August) , just in case we get the all clear to re-start at the Battery for tours.

A busy bee will occur a week prior to kick-off.

I wish to thank Wendy, Mary, Ian and Peter for taking the time to entertain us all with their family events at this time.

COAST DEFENCE QUIZ Q.3.

This turret remains in situ today.

It was called 'PIER TURRET'.

It was armed with a pair of 81 ton R.M.L.'s.

Each shell weighed 1,700 lbs propelled by 420 lbs of gun powder.

Works commenced in 1886 and finished four years later.

The turret sat 33' above s.l. and was steam powered.

Reports of the day stated that the full garrison of 1,000 men was needed to man the guide ropes, blocks and other equipments to ensure the barrels and turret mechanisms were properly positioned.

I AM FOUND AT \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ HARBOUR (U.K.)

COAST DEFENCE QUIZ Q.4.

There were 2 guns in this mount, in a single cradle.

Each barrel recoiled separately.

Ammunition consisted of Q.F.( fixed) rounds.

The breeches were semi-auto sliding block type.

Independent loading meant that a left hander was preferred for the left barrel.

A proficient loader could feed 40 rounds through his barrel in 60 seconds.

So a crack gun crew could deal out 80-90 rounds /minute!

Today you can view the gun's concrete emplacement in front of the green lighthouse at Fremantle Harbour. The second mount was before the other lighthouse but it was demolished in the late 1970's.

I AM THE Q.F. \_ POUNDER \_ CWT MARK I MOUNT.

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*As I erroneously listed the wrong number of letters in each answer of the quiz from the last issue it is repeated for those who may have been confused. My apologies, Editor*

Coast Defence Quiz Question 1.

I was a military fortification.

\_ I was originally an island.

\_ U.S. army engineers cut me down to bedrock, just above sea-level.

\_ Onto that base was poured thousands of tonnes of reinforced concrete.

\_ My offensive weaponry comprised a pair of superfiring 14" turrets.

\_ My coast artillery gunners called me the "Concrete Battleship".

\_ My ruined remains are still to be seen in Manila Bay.

I am Fort - - - -

Coast Defence Quiz Question 2.

\_ I was a fort built by the Norwegian government.

\_ In 1940 my 11" guns engaged units of Hitler's Kreigsmarine at Oslo.

\_ I targeted and sank the heavy cruiser "Blucher".

\_ As she foundered, my gunners heard the strains of "Deutschland Uber Alles" being played by the ship's band!

\_ The delay caused by this fort- and others- allowed the King of Norway and his nation's gold reserves, to escape to G.B.

I am Fort - - - - -

**Answers next issue.**

## CAFFEINE AND COVID 19



**T**hank you for the opportunity to speak about Brewhub and our current situation. Brewhub is a national service provider in the corporate coffee provision sector. We supply equipment, consumables and staff to keep corporate Australia caffeinated. Look at any big building in Perth and there is a better than even chance that our equipment is in there.

We are part of a global supply chain, importing coffee machines from Switzerland and Denmark and coffee beans from almost every market on the planet. Add to this, all the other things you find in an average corporate break out space and there is a good chance we have a hand in getting it there. The effect of people working from home and staying out of the office has, for many companies servicing the city's work force, been nothing short of catastrophic.

Brewhub's business model has seen a continuation of steady revenue flow into the company coffers due to our equipment leasing arrangements with some of WA biggest employers. Where we have taken the biggest hit in in the sale of consumables like coffee beans etc. As an example; for April last year Brewhub sold almost 4 Tonnes of coffee beans Australia wide. This April we sold just over 180Kg into the same market. We usually distribute several thousand liters of milk each week. Currently we are down by more than 99%. An average of about half a million dollars of fruit annually, including two pallets of bananas weekly has stopped completely. So, our cash flow has certainly taken a big hit and as a result almost all of our full time staff are working reduced hours to lessen the wage burden and almost all of our casual staff are on Job Keeper. Thanks to this initiative from the Federal Government,

Brewhub has been able to retain all staff, without a single loss.

Being in the service industry, like the rest of the world, we have also had to completely rethink our hygiene and safe distancing procedures,. We are committed to not only demonstrating best practice cleaning regimes but also fitting in with the myriad staffing arrangements to ensure we are in lockstep with our clients.

To give some perspective to our industry; Hands up who thinks 4 Tonnes of coffee a month is a lot?

An average cup of coffee uses about 20g of ground coffee, which equates to roughly 50 coffees per 1 Kilogram bag.

Rabobank estimates that global reductions in annual coffee consumption will equal One Million 60Kg bags of coffee beans, which amounts to about 0,8% of the usual consumption of around 164 Million 60Kg Bags.

Our business has been able to continue on but it has been anything but "business as usual!"

Phil Rowson

### COVID19 @ Landgate

It took a bit longer than other government departments to get as many people working from home as possible as the situation deteriorated in March.

As transacting land is an essential government service, Landgate's doors remained opened and we trialed self lodgement (instead of counter lodgement) of land dealings at the front counter in Midland. This trial is still ongoing as we go to print and as we transition into Phase 3 of recovery.

My part of Landgate - Imagery - is used to working anywhere. So, we transitioned into working from home rather effortlessly. The greatest "imposition" was the need to have a morning meeting at 0830 with myself and my team leaders every working week day until we wound it up on Friday, 29 May. The morning meeting was found very useful by all and will continue in some form in June. It certainly ensured a regimented start to each morning, which probably helped provide certainty in a time of uncertainty.

For me personally, it was rather intense. If I wasn't managing the bureaucracy in terms of allowing for my staff to work from home, I was frantically trying to get the work done in an environment some aspects of the work weren't really designed to be done in!

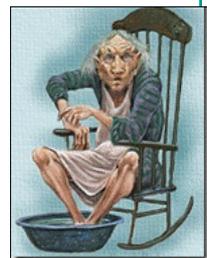
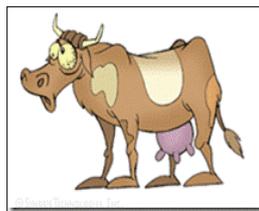
As of 2 June, the general expectation is that all staff are back in the office. The risk is community transmission is very low, and nearly all staff are optimistically guarded in terms of how things will develop. But, at this point, it's now end of financial year and time to shift some chairs as we relocate within the Midland building. So, from one sense of urgency to another. Situation normal!

Of the 20 staff that work under me, about 5 of them continued to attend Midland

Matthew Adams

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A cow, an ant and an old joker are debating on who is the greatest of the three of them.

The cow said, "I give 20 quarts of milk every day and that's why I am the greatest!"

The ant said, "I work day and night, summer and winter, I can carry 52 times my own weight and that's why I am the greatest!"

What's your claim to fame?

Articles etc for further issues to:  
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