



# THE AIMING POST

## The Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society Of Western Australia Newsletter

Issue 3/99

August 1999

### Foundation Members Honoured



The vision and commitment to artillery heritage of Foundation Members of the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society of Western Australia has been commemorated with the installation of an Honour Board in the Command Post of the Leighton Battery Heritage Site.

The names of the 57 members who joined the Society in 1988 are listed. The Honour Board was fabricated from recycled jarrah to a traditional design by Society member Bill Hepton.

All current members of the Society join Society President, Ray Bird in extending our appreciation to the Foundation Members, remembering in particular those since departed.

## **Rottnest Island Fortress : Bickley Battery**

*(Article by Robert Glyde – Part 2 of a 4 part series)*

The construction of Bickley Battery continued at the same time as other developments involving the fortification of Rottnest. Bickley Point was chosen as the site for the 6-in gun battery, which was intended to deny access to Gage Roads via the South Passage. This channel, south of the island, would permit vessels of shallow draught to enter the anchorage. The battery was, as explained in Part 1, equipped with 6-in guns, which in conjunction with the 9.2-in battery at Oliver Hill, could assist in the counter bombardment (CB) task.

A contract for the construction of the battery was prepared, calling for two gun emplacements, three magazines consisting of those for No.1 and No.2 guns and a reserve building in the battery area. Two gun shelters were to be constructed as well as the Battery Observation Post (BOP), the Close Defence Observation Post (CDBOP) and an artillery store. All this was estimated to cost 11,600 pounds. The Battery Plotting Room (BPR) was added at a later date. It was originally planned to consist of the BPR and the Fortress Plotting Room (FPR). The building plan was modified to provide for the BPR only and the FPR was constructed in the Oliver Hill Battery area.

The original plan for the battery had called for three guns. The layout was such that the CDBOP alongside the guns, and the main lighthouse, obstructed the arc of fire in some sectors and the third gun, which was described as a reserve gun, would have overcome some of the obstruction problem. There were probably three factors that prevented the installation of the third gun. The site at Bickley was very limited in area and it would have been difficult to place the third unit. There was shortage of the long range 6-in guns for coast defence purposes. There were also the economic difficulties in providing the facilities for the third gun during a period of severe financial restrictions.

The BOP was situated at Lookout Hill about three quarters of a mile west of the battery position. This facility was required to enable the battery to meet the CB requirements, as was the BPR also to the west of the battery.

One might ask why the two Observation Posts. The CDBOP was manned at night by the Gun Position Officer, who fought the guns from this point because the range of the guns was limited by the distance a target could be illuminated at night by the coast defence searchlights. Dependant on many factors, the searchlights probably had a range of not more than 8000 yards. The CDBOP was equipped with two instrument pillars which were fitted with Depression Rangefinders enabling the coverage of 360 degrees.

Initially the battery was equipped with two 6-in Mk XI guns No.s 2286 and 2290. These had previously been installed on temporary mountings at Fort Swanbourne pending the completion of that facility to take the 6-in MK VII guns, which had become available from Fort Forrest. They were shipped to Rottneest in September 1938. The two guns were mounted on temporary mountings at Rottneest pending the completion of the permanent emplacements.

At some later stage these guns were replaced by Mk XI guns No.s 2328 and 2309. It was reported that the original two guns were worn and were only suitable for sites of less importance than Fremantle, which at the time of World War Two had the same classification as Sydney. The replacement guns had both been re-tubed between the wars and therefore could operate to their full potential. They were amongst some 25 naval guns released for use in the coast defence role. Most of them were on modified naval mountings which permitted 20 degrees of elevation, giving a range of 18600 yards. A myth grew up that at least one of the guns was from the HMAS "Sydney" of "Emden" fame however Admiralty records show this was not true.

Unlike most of the 6-in batteries around Australia, Bickley Battery had a 360 degree capability. Following experience in Singapore the guns were fitted with a lightly armoured shield attached to the rear of the main shield. This moved around as the guns traversed providing the gun crews with some protection from low flying strafing aircraft. They did interfere to some extent with the gun movement. It was not known to what extent this problem was overcome following an examination by RAEME personnel who made certain recommendations. Most batteries, being on the mainland with a task of less than 360 degrees, were bunded at the rear and had some overhead cover.

The searchlight arc at Philip Point was obstructed by Philip Rock so the Fortress Engineers blew away the rock to almost water level. In the early stages of World War 2 Bickley Battery was not manned on a 24 hour basis. It was only when troop convoys or large transports such as the “Queen Mary” were in Gage Roads that the battery was on watch continuously. This changed when the Japanese entered the war.

Together with the other batteries forming part of the defences of the Fremantle area, regular shoots were undertaken. Mostly these were sub-calibre or reduced charge shoots in order to reduce the barrel wear. It is believed that the Mk XI gun liners only had a life of the equivalent of 300 full charge firings. To reduce the wear, often only half or two thirds charges were used in practice. In the main however special sub-calibre equipments were provided which fitted internally, enabled small calibre shot to be fired which caused no wear at all on the gun liner. For the 6-in guns the normal sub-calibre weapon was the Elswick Aiming Rifle which fired a 1-in projectile. This equipment screwed into the breech of the main gun and there was a collar at the muzzle end which fitted up against the rifling of the tube of the main gun, to stabilised the barrel of the sub-calibre weapon. This enabled the gun crews and OP personnel to be practiced in the different aspects of operation without incurring wear on the liner of the main gun.

The point which had to be remembered was that once the gun liner was at the end of its life, the barrel had to be withdrawn from the mounting cradle and sent to the United Kingdom to be relined. Not a very good prospect when spare barrels were almost non existent in Australia and there was always the danger of the barrel being lost through enemy action either on the way to or during its return from the UK.

Dummy guns were built north of the main battery position during the war. An aerial photograph held in the Society’s Photograph Library clearly shows the dummy positions. Re-supply of the island was not without its dramas. 150 6-in shells were amongst material lost when the schooner “Iribes” went aground near Philip Rock during a storm in the winter of 1942. Personnel from Bickley Battery were able to recover most of the items on the vessel over the next few weeks.

Bickley Battery remained operational until 1946 when it was placed in “long term storage”. This term generally meant that the barrel was withdrawn from the mounting cradle and placed on blocks alongside the mounting, after the breech block and other moveable equipment was removed and placed in secured storage. In 1963, as with all the other coast artillery facilities, Bickley Battery was dismantled and the equipment sold off to the scrap merchants. The gun barrels proved too much for the scrap merchants to handle and after cutting gun No. 2309 in half, the two barrels were buried on site and abandoned.

In 1980 an Army team recovered the barrels and sent them to 5 Base Ordnance Depot at Midland for restoration and preservation. Gun No. 2309 was welded together and was handed over to the Rottnest Island Authority. It is now on display at the Kingstown Barracks complex. Gun No. 2328, which was still complete, was handed to the Army Museum then at “Dilhorn” Mt Lawley. It was displayed at the site until the Army Museum moved to the Fremantle Artillery Barracks.

Following negotiations with the RAA Historical Society of WA, the piece was handed over to the Society for display at the Leighton Battery Heritage Site. The barrel was fitted to a concrete pedestal and today it looks out over the waters it helped to protect all those years ago.



**6” Mk 11 barrel No. 2309 at Kingston Barracks, Rottnest Island**

## National Archives of Australia : Personnel Records: WW1

There may be members of the Society researching their family's history and not be aware of the documentation available covering the service records of family members who served in World War 1.

There is a record of service, attestation papers, casualty details, medical reports and a multitude of other documents. These can provide details of previous military service prior to joining the AIF, promotions, units to which he was appointed after joining the AIF, courses undertaken, the troopship on which he sailed to overseas and if fortunate, the ship on which he returned home and when. If wounded, details of the wound, the ADS and CCS through which he passed, if evacuated to England, the hospital ship and to where he was sent for hospitalisation. If the soldier was killed or missing, statements from personnel during enquiries held.

The information is quite detailed and in my case with an uncle who served in the 28th Battalion at Gallipoli, later in France and was wounded four times, there was a mass of paper and information.

All this is available from the National Archives of Australia, Access and Information Services, PO Box 7425, Canberra Mail Centre, Canberra ACT 2610. They need to know as much as possible to help them identify the individual ie **2862 Gunner Arthur William Porter, 8 Field Battery 3 Field Brigade, AFA**. Naturally the more detailed information you can give the Archives personnel the better chance you will receive the details for the person you are seeking.

There is a cost for this service which at \$15 is very reasonable and should be forwarded with your request. It includes postage.

## **The South African War Memorial – Kings Park**

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the departure of the initial Western Australian Contingent to the South African War occurs on 7 November this year. The following article, is drawn from the files of the National Trust of Australia (WA). The Monuments and Memorials Committee of the National Trust has placed the Memorial on its list of classified heritage places.

In 1899 war was declared on the Boers in South Africa. "The war began following an ultimatum by President Kruger of the Transvaal, to Britain to remove its troops from his frontiers. The ultimatum was issued on the 9th October, 1899. On the 11th October, war was declared and troops from Australia, Canada and New Zealand joined British troops in the fight to protect Queen and Empire.... The war continued for over two and a half years before hostilities ceased on the 31st May, 1902 with the signing of the Treaty of Vereenging."<sup>1</sup> Western Australia, being a self-governing colony, its troops initially operated under its own flag. The WA volunteers comprised one infantry and nine mounted infantry units. "A total of 923 West Australians served in South Africa, of whom 5 Officers and 23 Other Ranks were killed or Died of Wounds and another 86 wounded."<sup>2</sup>

A citizens committee was later formed to collect funds for a memorial to the Western Australian soldiers who lost their lives. According to a contemporary newspaper account, the monument was to have been in marble.<sup>3</sup> Competitive designs were invited with James White, a sculptor of New South Wales, being the successful competitor with his submission titled, "In Defence of the Flag". The prize was £20. In 1902 White won the Wynne Prize in Sydney when he entered the marquette for the memorial. This was the first sculpture to win the prestigious award.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sweetman, J., "The South African War Memorial", in *Museum News*, Vol. 1, July, 1987, p.10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Various accounts have different numbers for those killed and wounded. The memorial lists 41 officers and men killed.

<sup>3</sup> *The Western Mail*, July 27, 1901.

<sup>4</sup> The Wynne Prize, which begun in 1897, is the longest running art prize in Australia.

During 1904-6 White also undertook a bronze equestrian group for the South African War Memorial in Ballarat. White operated his own bronze foundry in Petersham, NSW, and during the early 1900s was reputed to be one of the leading bronze casters in Australia.<sup>5</sup>

The foundation stone for what was then called the 'Fallen Soldiers' Memorial', was laid by HRH the Duke of Cornwall and York on the 23rd July, 1901 during his visit to Australia to open the Parliament of the Commonwealth. The memorial was the first to be erected in Kings Park.<sup>6</sup> On the same occasion, the Duke renamed Perth Park to Kings Park, in honour of his father King Edward VII. Princess May Drive was named after his bride, the Duchess of Cornwall and York.



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<sup>5</sup> Scarlett, K., *Australian Sculpture*, Thomas Nelson, Australia, 1980, p.687.

<sup>6</sup> Sweetman, op.cit., p.9.

The completed memorial was unveiled in September, 1902, by His Excellency Sir Edward Stone, Chief Justice and Acting Governor of Western Australia. In 1906 the Krupp 75mm field gun was added to the memorial. The gun had been captured at Bothaville on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1900 by soldiers from the West Australian Mounted Infantry. It was placed near the memorial and dedicated to Brigadier A. J. Bessell Brown, a veteran of the war. According to WA historian Tom Stannage, the memorial was 'one of the largest and most impressive erected in Australia', and, "Until the Great War of 1914-1918 it was Perth's most important symbol of sacrifice for community and Empire".<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, the bronze casting of the sculptural group was apparently so badly executed that in 1909 it was recommended that it be taken down and overhauled.<sup>8</sup> According to Lt. Col. Hobbs, who had been asked to report on the statue to the Kings Park Board, he believed no lasting repair could be effected.<sup>9</sup> In 1914 the South African Soldiers' Association requested "permission to replace the present Statue by a new one of Laminated copper."<sup>10</sup> This request was approved, and a copy was undertaken by Wunderlich Industries East Perth factory in hammered and built bronze.<sup>11</sup>

The Perth branch of Wunderlich's had been established in May 1909, and had soon achieved notable success in its production of wrought and hammered bronze statuary. Another example was the AMP group in St George's Terrace designed by the local sculptor Pietro Porcelli. The original statue was then relocated to the Perth Library, and the new group was duly erected the following day on 23rd June, 1915.<sup>12</sup> In 1982 the statue of the standing soldier was vandalised with the hand and a section of the rifle having to be replaced.

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<sup>7</sup> Stannage, C. T., *People of Perth*, Perth City Council, Perth, WA, 1979, p.330.

<sup>8</sup> Kings Park Board Minutes, 19th January, 1909.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 16th April, 1909.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 20th November, 1914.

<sup>11</sup> See *Forty Years of Wunderlich Industry 1887-1927*, Wunderlich Industries, 1927, page 70.

<sup>12</sup> Details provided by Margaret Smythe, Kings Park guide, from her research on the memorial. Exact reference source to be supplied.

In preparation for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary further restoration work on the Memorial is being undertaken by the Kings Park Board with the support of the Western Australian Branch of the Returned and Services League. No information has come to light of the fate of the original sculpture which was removed in 1915 and placed in the Perth Library. It may not have survived various relocations since that time or played its own war role in a WW II scrap metal drive. Anyone with information or recollections of what may have happened to this statute is invited to contact the Society.

## REFERENCES/SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Erickson, D., "A Thematic History of Kings Park", CAMS, 1997.

*Forty Years of Wunderlich Industry 1887-1927*, Wunderlich Industries, 1927  
Kings Park Minute Books.

Scarlett, K., *Australian Sculpture*, Thomas Nelson, Australia, 1980

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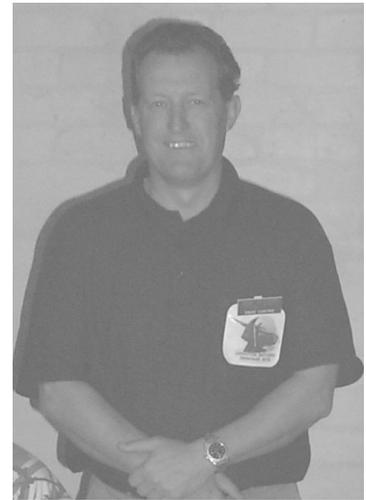
Taylor, R. and Jean, M., 'Survey of Sculpture, Monuments and Outdoor Cultural Material: Kings Park and Botanic Garden', report prepared for CAMS and Kings Park, January 1998.

*The Western Mail*, July 27, 1901.



One of the four plaques on the base of the Memorial – Royal Naval Brigade manning 4.7 inch guns on improvised field carriages (See April 1999 Issue of *Aiming Post*)

## New Look for Buckland Hill Guides



Uniforms were visible everywhere on Sunday 1 August at the Leighton Battery Heritage Site. Guides were wearing their new navy blue shirts with the unique 6" Mk VII logo and site name. Chief Guide Coordinator, David Carter followed through the recommendation of executive that we adopt a distinctive uniform for guides. The shirt is complimented with grey trousers for a pleasing professional effect. The pocket badge replicates the photo on the cover of the new site brochure. The feedback from guides and visitors was universally positive.

The other uniformed visitors were Cub Scouts from 1<sup>st</sup> Cottesloe Scout Group. As part of the requirement for the "Their Service: Our Heritage Badge", they were visiting the Leighton Battery to gain an appreciation of military service in defence of Australia and the practical obligations of citizenship in a democracy. Through funding support from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the WA Branch of Scouts Australia has initiated the "Their Service; Our Heritage" badge to promote a wider understanding of the obligations of citizenship and the sacrifice undertaken by those who had to defend freedom in time of war. In addition to touring the tunnels, the Cubs received a talk from a veteran in the Memorial Chamber explaining the significance of the Honour Boards and the concept of Remembrance.

"Lest We Forget"

## **RAAHS of WA Breakfast and Brochure Launch**

Over 30 members of the Society with family and partners gathered at Fraser's Restaurant in Kings Park on 27 June for our annual breakfast outing. Society President, Ray Bird, used the occasion to officially launch the new Leighton Battery Heritage Site brochure. In his comments, Ray thanked all of those who had contributed to the new publication.

The new brochure is a completely new product which includes research undertaken since the original brochure was produced seven years ago. Additional photographs have been included to illustrate the full range of military activities undertaken at the site. Various helpful suggestions from guides and visitors on design, layout and content have also been incorporated. The new brochure has been used for the past two months and has been very well received by visitors. The revised numbering of the map features has enabled visitors more clearly to follow their underground route and to orient themselves to the features being described.

## **The Amiens Gun - Part 2**

*(Article by Robert Glyde)*

Does it not nearly always happen? After finishing a task some new information comes to hand when it is too late to include in the first try. Some people possibly would be cruel enough to suggest inadequate research in the first place. Having got that off my chest, since the story on the Amiens Gun appeared in the "Aiming Post", I have seen at least three other versions, each with snippets of information not covered in the other.

The gun was captured in the Third Battle of the Somme, 8th August - 6th October 1918. The Germans had been using the 28cm gun to shell Amiens. The rapid advance by the Australian forces appears to have caught the Germans with a damaged locomotive and nowhere to go. There are photographs of the German gun detachment around the gun, which some source suggests were taken by the Australians, but more likely the photos were part of a series which were in a camera "liberated" from a German officer. The unit which captured the gun was the 31st Battalion, not the 59th Battalion as suggested in the first article.

One of the latest references “War Trophies from the First World War 1914 - 18” by Major R S Billett, states that the gun train was boarded by Lt G Brown of Sydney and Sappers L J Strahan from Arrino (WA) and J H Palmer from Booval (Qld). They were from 8th Field Company RAE. The locomotive was said to have been damaged by a bomb, so presumably the Engineers patched up the locomotive enough to be able to raise steam and move the unit into captivity. Where it would have been relocated one can only guess. Having seen photographs of some of the battlefields in France, it would have been difficult to find somewhere to step in between the shell holes, let alone have an intact railway line between the opposing lines. Anyway capture it and relocate it, they did. The Lieutenant was awarded a Bar to his MC and the two Sappers received MM’s because it was recovered under hostile fire.

The British claimed it as their prize, everything captured on the battlefield was theirs, until Billy Hughes laid down the law and claimed all the equipment which had been captured by the Australian Corps. The gun was displayed in the station yard of the Champs de Mars in Paris, then moved to Australia. The complete unit was never displayed at the Australian War Memorial complex. From 1923 until 1943 it was positioned at the Canberra Railway Station

If you are looking for Arrino on the Western Australian map today, you will find it on some. It was never a large town and today the only sign on the ground that habitation had existed there at some stage, are a few concrete slabs and other rubbish associated with a long abandoned town.

### **Gingin Outing - Uniforms of the World Museum**

As part of the ongoing social and professional interest program of the Society, the President, Ray Bird has followed up on suggestions from members for a visit to Gingin to the Uniforms of the World Museum. The plan is to depart Perth from the Scitech car park in West Perth at 09:00 on Sunday 24 October. Morning tea, museum entry, lunch (two course buffet meal) and a wine tasting at Chittering Estate Wines are all included in the fee of \$40 per person. Please see the accompanying flyer and return it with your payment as soon as possible.

## **Web Sites of Interest**

As part of our ongoing series to alert members to websites of artillery interest, you might like to browse the following:

- [www.wobbleweb.com.au/albany/](http://www.wobbleweb.com.au/albany/) has information about things to see and do in Albany including the Princess Royal Fortress.
- [www.westernaustralia.net](http://www.westernaustralia.net) the Web site of the Western Australian Tourist Commission described as a “cool site” and the preferred choice for anyone searching for information about Western Australian tourism.
- [www.gibraltar.gi/tourism/](http://www.gibraltar.gi/tourism/) contains tourism information about Gibraltar including several sections on the guns, sieges and military history.
- [www.spiderweb.com.au/~frasbett/artillery/](http://www.spiderweb.com.au/~frasbett/artillery/) a site with lots of artillery photographs from Vietnam.
- [www.geocities.com/Pentagon/Barracks/3050/guns.html](http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/Barracks/3050/guns.html) a site authored by Society member John O’Brien with a listing of memorial and display guns.
- [www.rotnest.wa.gov.au](http://www.rotnest.wa.gov.au) the official Rottnest island Authority site with a virtual bike tour including the Oliver Hill Battery.

## **Centennial of Women’s Suffrage Grant**

The Society was selected to share a grant of \$7,000 with the Rottnest Island Authority as part of the commemoration of the Centennial of Women Suffrage in Western Australia. Our project proposal to show service women in non-traditional and leadership roles from 1899 – 1999 was similar in intent to the Rottnest Island proposal to commemorate the WW II service of the Australian Women’s Army Service. Under the combined project proposal the following are planned:

- Text and photo displays at the Leighton battery relating to general AWAS service in Coast Defence
- More extensive text and photo displays at Rottnest relating to AWAS service on Rottnest Island
- An Honour Board or similar memorial commemorating AWAS service on Rottnest
- A project unveiling/opening at the Leighton Battery
- Dedication of the AWAS Honour Board/memorial on Rottnest Island.

The project is well underway and several planning meetings have been held. Oral histories and data collection activity is also underway under the co-ordination of Peggy Webb of the Rottnest Island Authority staff.

It is tentatively planned to have the Official Unveiling of the Project at the Leighton Battery in early December 1999. This will permit maximum attendance by AWAS members and friends who would find it difficult to cope with a visit to Rottnest Island. Because of planned conservation work at the Oliver Hill Battery on Rottnest, the final location of the AWAS Honour Board and the timing of the dedication ceremony can not be determined at this time. Subject to further development, it is planned to have an AWAS exhibition in Lomas Cottage on Rottnest Island pending final decisions on the permanent site.

### **Australian Women's Army Service**

*(Article by Robert Glyde)*

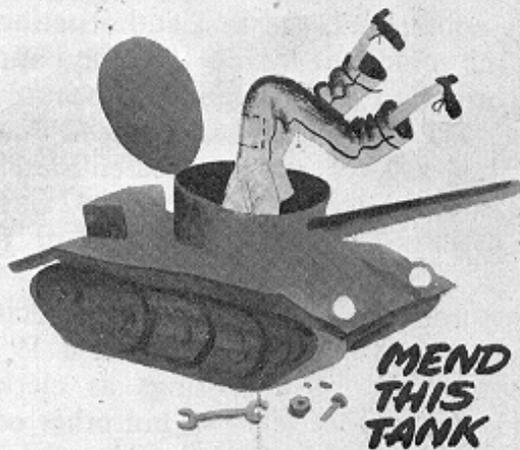
As a number of our Society members belonged to this service 1941 - 45, perhaps they might be interested what went on behind the scenes in the early days of the Service. On 30 April 1941, a draft of the Australian Women's Army Service Regulations was prepared by the Adjutant General and handed to the Secretary, Military Board for submission to the minister for the Army.

On 29 July 1941, War Cabinet Agendum No. 257/41, "formation of an Australian Women's Army Service" was submitted to Cabinet and approved on 13 August 1941 subject to the following conditions:

- (a) No woman enlisted in this organisation are to be sent overseas without the approval of War Cabinet.
- (b) The draft regulations to govern condition of service and rates of pay are to be referred to the Treasury Finance Committee for examination and report.
- (c) The proposed establishment is to be furnished as soon as details are worked out."

The object of the Service is to release men from certain military duties for employment with fighting units."

# HELP ME



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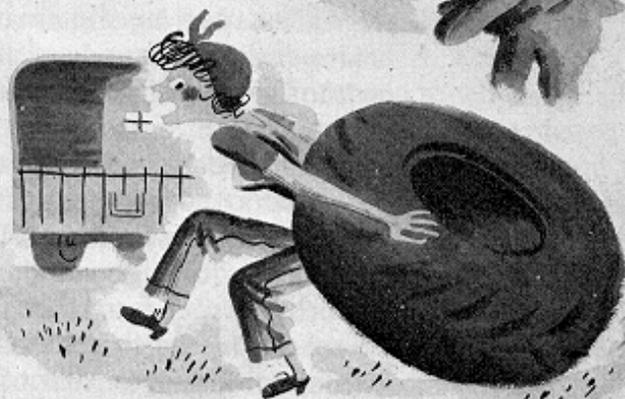
**NURSE THIS  
WOUNDED  
SOLDIER**



**COOK THIS MEAL**



**FLASH  
THIS  
SIGNAL**



**CHANGE THIS WHEEL**

*in the* **A WAS** *or the* **A AM WS**

*Hanna*

On 29 September 1941 the Army Minister approved the appointment of Miss Sybil Irving, MBE as Controller, Australian Women's Army Service. She immediately visited all Commands to confer with HQ Commands regarding recommendations for first officer appointments. As a result of her visits the Army Minister approved of the appointment of six Assistant Controllers, thirteen Commandants and six Assistant Commandants.

All the appointed officers attended a Training School of three weeks duration commencing 24 November 1941. It was held at Guide House, Yarra Junction, Victoria. At the conclusion of the School all officers returned to their Commands and Military Districts to commence recruiting of their quota of personnel and prepare for training.

During the duration of the School - on 8 December 1941 - War Cabinet approved of the recruitment of 1,600 as the first complement of the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS). Each Command and Military District established an Interviewing Committee to deal with prospective recruits and to select suitable types for the various categories. In accordance with information previously obtained the following categories were required:- Transport Drivers, Cooks, Typistes, Orderlies, Assistants, Telephonists, Canteen Attendants, Draughtswomen, Photographers, Photowriters, W/T Operators, Driver/Mechanics, Tailoresses, Waitresses, Textile Refitters, Equipment Repairers, Intelligence duties and Cypher duties.

By the middle of January 1942, Recruit Training Schools had been commenced in all Commands and Military Districts and arrangements were made for the Schools to continue until all the numbers authorised had been absorbed. At the time the Army War Effort Report dated 15 February 1942 had been submitted a total of 414 AWAS had been posted to duty in military establishments on the conclusion of the first Training Schools. At that time it was expected that the 1600 personnel authorised would have been absorbed by March 1942. The Report stated that it was to be expected that ultimately 5000 to 6000 personnel would be required.

The rates of pay were of particular interest and had been approved as follows:

Controller (Lt Colonel)	20/8d (\$2-08)	per day		
Assistant Controller (Major)	18/2d (\$1-81)		“	“
Commandant (Captain)	15/8d (\$1-58)		“	“
Assistant Commandant (Lieutenant)	10/8d (\$1-08)		“	“
Group Leader (Sergeant)	7/8d (\$0.78)		“	“
Section Leader (Corporal)	6/8d (\$0.68)		“	“
Privates				

<u>Group</u>	<u>Adult</u>	<u>Minor</u>		
I	6/4d (\$0-64)	5/0d (\$0-50)	“	“
II	5/8d (\$0-58)	4/6d (\$0-45)	“	“
III	4/8d (\$0-48)	4/-d (\$0-40)	“	“
IV	4/-d (\$0-40)	3/6d (\$0-35)	“	“

The groupings were as follow:-

- Group 1 W/T Operator, Draughtswoman, Photographer, Photowriter.
- Group II Clerk (Grade II), Cook, Stenographer, Seamstress, Transport and Motor Driver, Tailoress.
- Group III Typiste, Clerical Assistant (Clerk Grade I), Textile Refitter, Equipment Repairer.
- Group IV Telephonist, Waitress, Orderly, Canteen Attendant.

The principal condition governing the appointment of members of the AWAS was that they were to replace men, not to be used in addition to them. Another condition was that there was to be no change in the status of existing civilian staff without the prior approval of the War Cabinet.

#### Information Source

The Army War Effort and Supplement, 18 February 1942.

## **Australian Army Colour Patches - 1915 to 1951**

Still arguing with your mates about what colour patches were worn or should have been worn by this unit or that? Well now a very well researched reference guide has been published which should end the doubt.

**“Distinguishing Colour Patches of the Australian Military Forces, 1915 - 1951, A Reference Guide”** forms a guide to cover 1500 colour patches known to exist in collections, or to which reference is made in archival records. In addition to providing a brief overview of the history of the colour patch and information as to how it was worn, the prime purpose is to provide the collector with a source with which to identify the colour patches he is likely to encounter regardless that these may never have been officially approved or never worn.

Each colour patch is identified by unit or type of unit wherever possible, with additional information relating to period of wear, the official authority of reference, manufacturer, type of cloth and other relevant details on variations or the unit. Patches which appear in official records but were almost certainly never manufactured are included as they often form the basis of reproductions.

The guide is an A4 format publication, hard covered, 254 pages plus 68 colour plates.

Copies are available in Western Australia from John Burridge Military Antiques, 915 Shenton Road, Swanbourne, 6010. Phone (08) 9384 1218, Australian Army Museum Bookshop, Burt St, Fremantle 6160 Phone (08) 9335 2077 or the author, K Glyde, 6 Perry Street, Claremont, Tasmania, 7011. Phone (03) 62 492 950.

Individual price is \$59.95 plus \$8.00 Express postage, if required.

## **Boer War Commemoration**

The National Trust of Australia (WA) will hold an “Edwardian Drawing Room” on Saturday 16 October from 2:00 – 4:30 pm at the Old Observatory, 4 Havelock Street, West Perth.. The program will include a series of short talks about the Western Australian contribution to the Boer War complimented by patriotic music, poetry and refreshments of the period. The cost is \$10 for Trust members and \$12 for non-members. Bookings can be made by forwarding your cheque to the National Trust, PO Box 1162, West Perth 6872

A commemorative service and march with DVA support is also planned for early October. Details are not available at this time. Please consult “Western Veteran” or the RSL “Listening Post” for details when published.

## **Madras Horse Artillery**

Through the courtesy of Society member Bob Eggleston, permission has been received to publish a letter written by his great-great-grandfather’s brother, William Eggleston to his half sister Betty. The letter was written on 14 August 1846 from India where William Eggleston was serving as a Gunner in the Madras Horse Artillery. It was received on 10 November 1846. The letter gives a glimpse of their life and conditions of soldiering in India a just over a decade before the Mutiny. [Modern punctuation has been inserted where required to assist with comprehension. Original spellings have been retained.]

Camp Shalapoor  
August 14<sup>th</sup> 1846

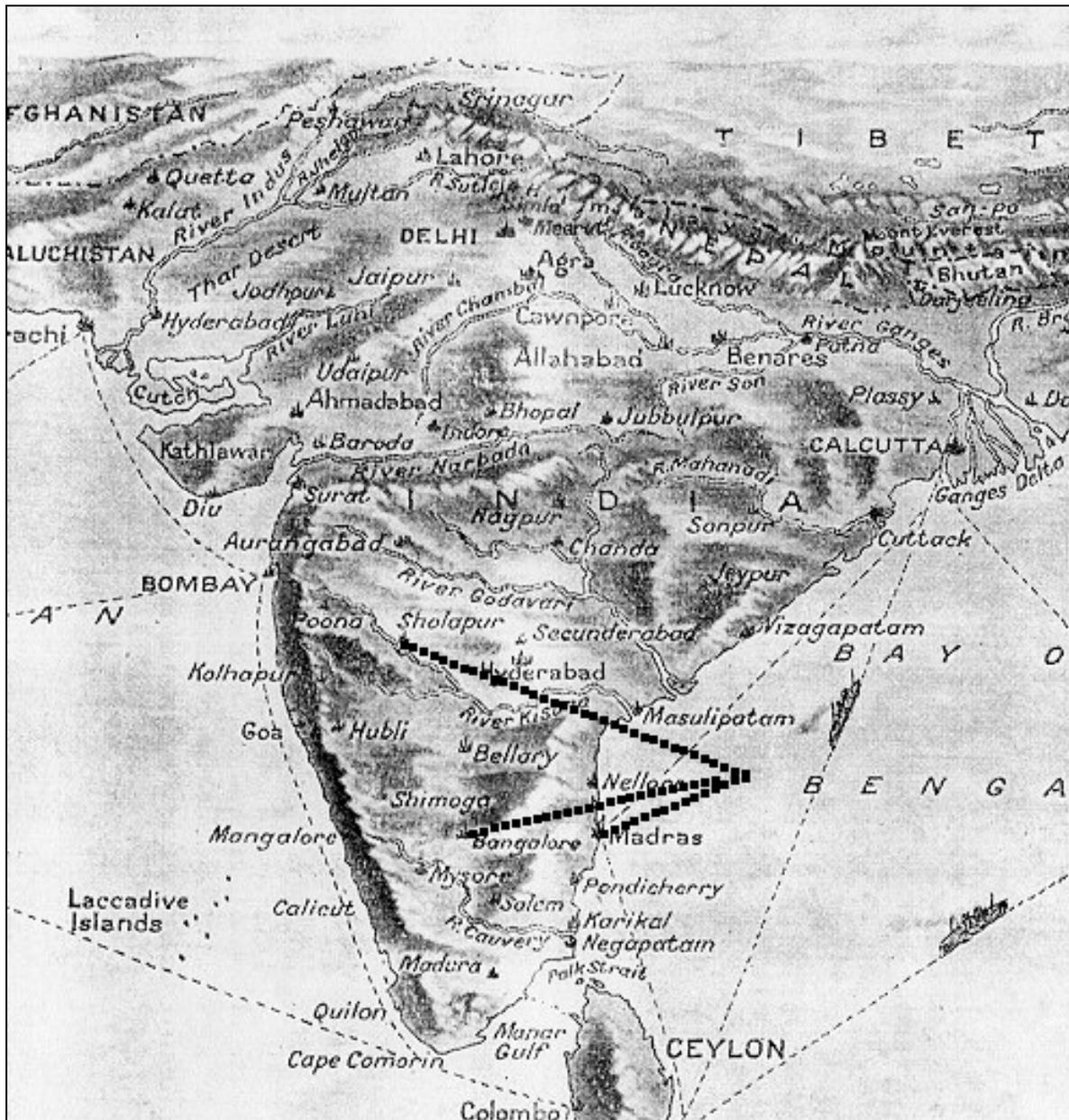
My Dear Sister

I was very glad to receive a letter from you at last particularly as you there so kindly express your continued love for your absent and runaway brother. I was afraid that I was forgotten altogether but I assure you I am very happy to find it to the contrary. I am very glad to hear that all of you are getting (along) well and hope I shall continue to hear so and often.

Remember me to all the Lanes if you please, and to Mrs Eggleston and tell her, my dear Betsy, that I should be very happy to receive a letter from her particularly if it contained her forgiveness for all of my foolish freaks, many of which I know, was at one time very annoying to her: and I am sure until I was considered an outcast of the family, gave her much uneasiness. As it is more than a thousand chances to one if I ever seen any of you again, I should feel more comfortable in my exile, if I knew that I was at least remembered by the family in which I spent so many happy years. I shall look anxiously for a return of post.

My dear Betsy, things are not carried on here as they are in England. If 100 men were ordered to march from one end of England to the other they would most likely everyone arrive safe were as in India particularly in the Maharattas were I am if the same number were to march 200 miles the chances would be that one third would never know a sword again and yet we are continually marching about the country, sometimes 700 Or 800 miles at once over mountains and through almost impassable jungles often in an enemy's country where we have to force the natives to give us food sometimes to shoot 7 or 8 of them before we can get it, so that you can guess the mortality is fearful. Nine of us left Bangalore to join the Troop in 1843. I and 2 more survived; we buried the other 6 on the road. When I joined the Troop there was 109 men in it. It is now equally strong but only 27 of the same men remain. One seasoned man is worth 12 recruits so you can guess my value.

I perceive that you have had a very hot summer. It is now winter here and I have watched the thermometer and it has never been lower in the shade than 2 degrees short of your hottest day. During the last hot weather, Sholapoor had a terrible visitation of Cholera. Out of 11,000 inhabitants, the daily death was 300 for about a week and it got less very gradually. The place is almost deserted. All business stopped but we could not move to a more healthy station without orders so here we remained. The Troop is now pretty healthy; I am very well myself but it is doubtful how long I may continue so, as we expect to go next month to Canapsee about 500 miles off through the large Cannonore jungle. I could send you a young tiger to play with or any of the following if you wished, big cheetah, hyenah, wolf, wild boar or if you prefer a few cobra or capello snakes of which there are thousands here.



With respect to the ladies as you call them, I can only give a general account of them. The native ladies' dress consists of a piece of cloth about 1 yard wide and 8 yards long. This is twisted about them to form both a bonnet and a gown. They are all put on in the same way and the only difference between rich and poor is in the size and quality. Some are as long as 15 or 16 yards (and) others not more than 2 or 3 yards. The whole dress of the poor of the other sex is simply a cotton handkerchief about a yard square. The European ladies dress much the same as the ladies at home with this difference – their dresses are so thin as to be almost transparent.

With respect to the whitey-browns, they are of course a mixture of the other two. Their average colour is about light brown but they vary in shades from dark mahogany to light bamboo. The one I was about to engage was about the average. Their manners are mixed as well as their colour and very few will eat at the same table as their husbands or use knives and forks but whether soup or solids, they eat it with their fingers. Some can talk English; some cannot. Those which cannot, their husbands must talk their language or else talk to them by signs.

The manner of courting a whitey-brown here is very simple. They are fit for marriage at 12 years old and then if anybody fancys them all the man has to do is to go and ask her father for his daughter and if he says yes, the job is settled. To give you an idea of the age they marry, I put a tombstone over a woman the other day who was 28 years old and had two grandchildren of her own, the eldest 2 years and 4 months old when the old woman died.

My dear sister, I must now conclude and hope for a speedy answer. I have no chance of ever seeing you anymore unless I have the good luck to get a leg or an arm broke and then I should be discharged. I have escaped so far although knocked about a good deal in skirmishes. (We had to leave our guns behind and act as dragoons galloping helter skelter through the jungles of the back fellows) and twice in action. I was at the storming of Samingpur and likewise at Pannello. I can say no more but that I have a splendid moustache.

Your affectionate brother, W Eggleston

P.S. I was a long time in hospital on account of hurting my shoulder but am now quite well. I was driving the centre of six horses when the front horses reared up and fell over backwards crushing me and my horses under them. Being at a smart pace, the pole driver could not stop his horses but went right over us. I was dragged out with my shoulder dislocated. But I am sorry to say, the front driver was so injured about the hear that he had to be discharged insane.

Gunner W Eggleston General Number 1869  
A Troop Madras Horse Artillery, Sholapoor or elsewhere

**Historical Footnote:** On 9 July 1847, just under a year after writing this letter, Gunner William Eggleston died in Madras from sickness.



Portrait of Lieutenant Colonel John Noble, responsible for the formation of the Madras Horse Artillery and in 1805 selected to command it. The Horse Artillery of the three Indian Presidencies, all wore “Roman” style helmets with long flowing manes. The red mane of the Madras Horse Artillery was shorter than the similar red mane worn by the Bengal Horse Artillery. The black mane of the Bombay Horse Artillery Helmet extended below the waist of the wearer. In the Madras Horse Artillery, Battle Honours were worn on the white cross belt.

After the Indian Mutiny in 1857, the Horse Artillery Troops of the East India Company Presidency Armies were absorbed into the Royal Artillery. A Troop of the Madras Horse Artillery is perpetuated today as J (Sidi Rezgh) Battery, Royal Horse Artillery.

### **OBITUARY – JOHN L.T. RIPP**

Member John Ripp passed away on 6 July 1999 following a long illness. John joined the Society in March 1991. He was an original member of the 2/3 Australian Field Regiment RAA – his Regimental Number was WX105. In civilian life, he attained the appointment of Assistant Chief Mechanical Engineer with Westrail. John was an active member of his Regimental Association, the T&PI Association and Perth Legacy. The Society was represented at the cremation Service at Karrakatta.

## Long Tan Anniversary – August 1966

On the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the battle of Long Tan, the Society would like to recognise the role played by 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment. The Regiment continued to provide fire support to D Company, 6 RAR while fighting the counter fire battle. The role played by 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment from 16 –18 August 1966 fulfilled the defined role of the artillery – to establish such fire superiority on the battlefield that the enemy can neither mount successful operations nor interfere with our own. The story is best told in the words of the time, as recorded in a message to the Regiment from the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Richmond Cubis.

1 Fd Regt RAA  
NUI DAT  
20 Aug 66

### COMMANDING OFFICER'S MESSAGE

I would like to take this opportunity of passing my congratulations to all members of the Regiment and the Task Force Artillery on their performance and behaviour over the last two days.

On 16<sup>th</sup> August, the enemy began mortaring and shelling of the area for the first time on a heavy scale. This occurred without warning and at a time carefully and skilfully chosen. The artillery reaction was fast and effective. There is reason to suppose not only, that our reaction suppressed the fire of the enemy artillery and caused him to stop before he intended to do so, but also that a subsequent target caught the enemy, either when he was assembling for an action or, possibly, infantry elements forming up for an attack. Signs of hasty withdrawal, abandonment of equipment and casualties were detected by patrols.

On 18<sup>th</sup> August, D Coy 6RAR was heavily attacked by an estimated two North Vietnamese battalions. This action, the most serious that the Task Force has yet faced, was most efficiently resisted by the company concerned in a classic action of infantry combat. It is no discredit to the company in its most gallant action, to observe, that it would never have been successful without an effective employment of artillery in support.

As is to be expected the majority of the enemy casualties were inflicted by our artillery. In the course of this action we fired over 3,000 rounds many directed to fall within 100 yards of our own soldiers.

While it is invidious to invite comparison, I would like to record my special appreciation of the following particular aspects:

- a. The members of HQ Bty and 131 Div Loc Bty who assisted the gun batteries in ammunition handling and thus ensured a continuous supply of ammunition to the guns.
- b. A Btry 2/35 US Arty, whose speedy response to fire enabled us to suppress enemy mortars at an early stage (to the extent that they never subsequently opened fire).
- c. To Captain STANLEY RNZA and his OP party from 161 Bty RNZA (with D Coy 6 RAR) who so skilfully directed fire in the D Coy 6 RAR battle.
- d. To the gun detachments, particularly the layers, whose attention to duty under most difficult conditions, ensured accurate laying so that of the very large amount of shells fired, all hurt the enemy and none ourselves. This represents laying and gun drill of a high order and is to be heartily commended.
- e. The wireless operators who kept the Net opened and ensured that imperative fire orders were passed.
- f. To the members of 103 Fd Bty who, receiving most of the enemy fire on 16<sup>th</sup> August, stood to their guns and, there is reason to suppose, drove the enemy from his.

These incidents are credible but we must be warned that the enemy is out to “get us”. It is imperative to be alert, to strive for efficiency and care, and to improve our skills. Our training has been justified by this response but we cannot afford to sit back and assume we have nothing to learn. Those incidents should be regarded as nothing more than confirming our training methods. We must continue to be alert.

(signed Rich Cubis)  
Lieutenant Colonel  
Commanding Officer



161 Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery during a fire mission,  
South Vietnam 1966  
RAAHS Photo 1609/B1

### **Where was the Logic?**

*(Submitted by Robert Glyde)*

In the late 19th century, the forerunners of the modern submarine were being designed and in due course the British Admiralty was approached to build a vessel. The Lords of the Admiralty were outraged, describing the thought of waging war under the surface of the sea as being "Underhand, unfair and damned un-British". It was not until a number of foreign countries, especially the French, started to equip their navies with these vessels, that the Royal Navy decided it would be at a disadvantage if they neglected to operate such vessels. The first five boats were ordered in 1901 and by 1909, had 58 units either under construction or operational.



# NOTICE BOARD

## **BUSY BEES**

**The next busy bees at Buckland Hill are scheduled for:**

**28 August      25 September      30 October      27 November**

## **TRIP TO GINGIN**

Please see the article in the newsletter and the accompanying flyer for details. Book Sunday 24 October on your calendars now.

## **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.

## **ARTILLERY PORT**

Limited supplies of Artillery Port are available at the special pre-winter price of \$8 per bottle. Place your order at the Society's Annex at Hobbs Artillery Park any Wednesday. Phone 9383 6544.

## **HISTORY OF LOCATING ARTILLERY IN AUSTRALIA**

Research is currently being undertaken for a book on "History of Locating Artillery in Australia". If you have any information that may be relevant please contact John Posener on (02) 9982 4471 or Keith Ayliffe on (07) 5443 7102 or write c/- North Fort Museum, PO Box 1042, Manly NSW 1655.

The Editor gratefully acknowledges the support of RK Glyde, the Society's Librarian and research Officer who has authored many of the historical articles appearing in this issue. Comments on the articles or additional material relating to the topics covered are always welcome.

The Aiming Post is published by the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society of WA (Inc) as a service to its members. It has an additional role of making information and material relating to Australia's artillery and defence heritage available to individuals and groups who share the Society's objectives. Articles, editorial comment or book reviews for publication should be submitted to the Editor, Robert Mitchell at:

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