



Artillery WA

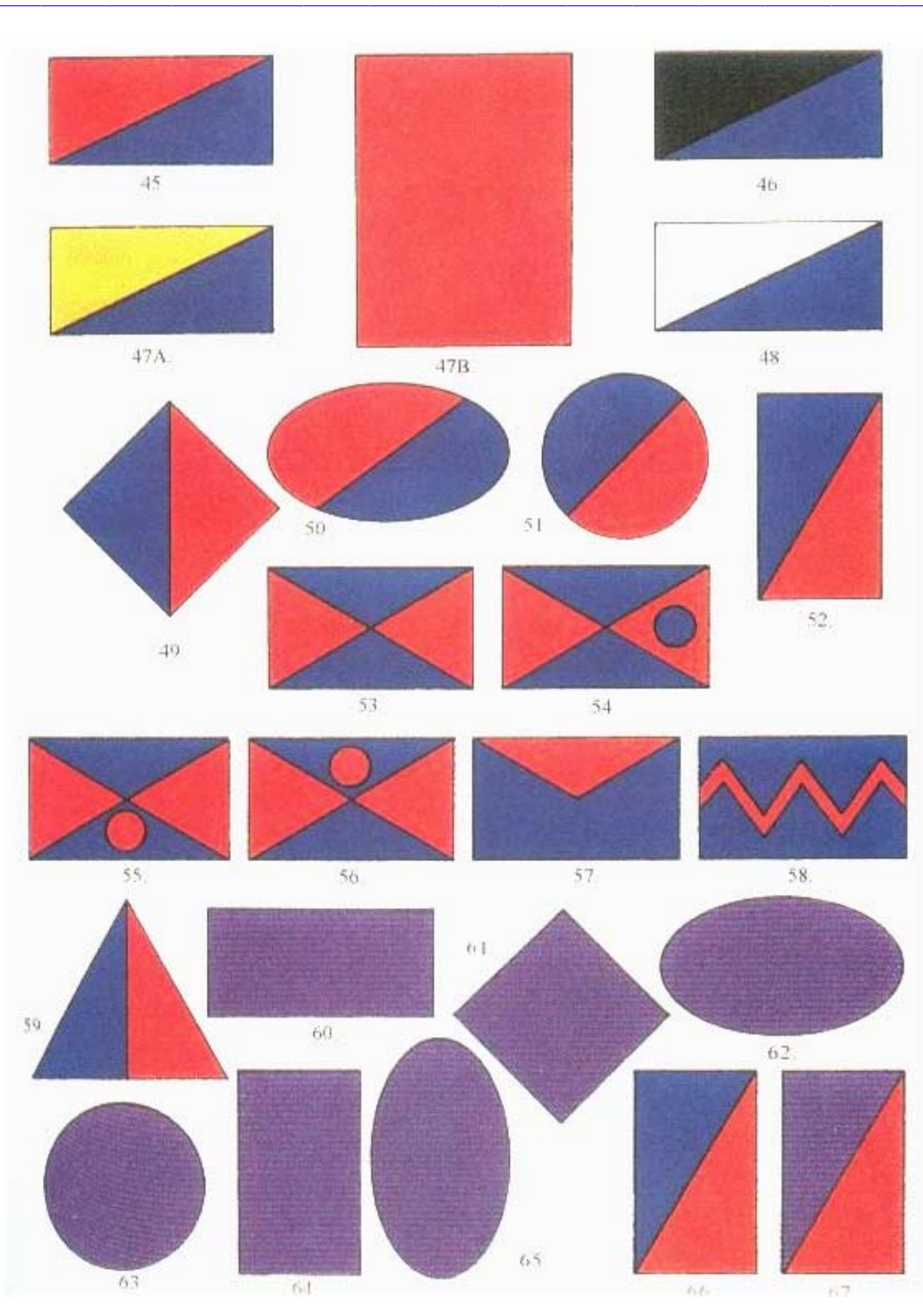


Official Newsletter of RAA (WA), 2/3, 2/7, 3Fd Regt Associations and RAA Historical Society Inc(WA)



INAUGURAL ISSUE

OCTOBER 2003





Notice Board

Gunners Day 2003

Being the 75th anniversary of Gunners Day a change in timings is in place for 2003 to provide for a special anniversary luncheon.
Sunday - 2/11/2003

Venue - Stirling Park, Bassendean

New Timings

- Form up 1030 – 1045
- VIP & Guest 1045
- March Past 1100
- Wreath Laying 1110
- Service in St Mathews Church 1130
- Luncheon in Church Hall 1215

RAHS BUSY BEES

The next busy bees at Irwin Barracks are scheduled for:

**27 September,
25 October &
29 November**

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.

*Except January



LAST POST

JOHN ATHOL TALBOT HOBBS



COVER

Artillery Colour Patches

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Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead

This Inaugural Issue of ArtilleryWA marks one of the steps to unite all of the Artillery Associations within Western Australia. Each of the Associations has been spending inordinate amounts of time producing and mailing newsletters, at great, cost to its members. In many instances these members are also members of other gunner organisations, By pooling our resources and mailing lists and producing one Magazine all gunners will, we trust, be aware of all the activities that involve gunners. In addition we trust that we will preserve and pass on gunner history.

Not all Associations have contributed to this issue but will we hope do so for future issues. In the first instance it has been suggested that each Association should have its own section commencing on a new page. This has implications for the size, and postage costs, of each issue particularly if only a small portion of a page is used. Alternatively each section can be clearly labelled with the Association name before articles pertaining to it.

Many articles, however should be of interest to all gunners regardless of association so the question is do we necessarily have to divide the magazine into clearly sections other than for notices for particular associations? We welcome your suggestions and contributions.

Finally please understand that many hours go into formatting and producing a magazine so please get material to the editor by cut off dates.

Editor

RAA ASSOCIATION WA—AGM 2003—PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Firstly, I wish to record how much of an honour to serve in the role as President. Unfortunately, with some of the pressures of the commercial world, it was necessary for me to be away from Perth more often than I would like to have been. Resulting in being less active in the role, than I would have liked. However, I feel that as an Association (The Peak Gunner Group) we have made some real progress, due to the tireless efforts of your Committee.

The vision that I outlined some 3 years ago, (then in the capacity as Colonel Commandant) to have all Gunner Groups united under a single banner, has not quite yet come to fruition. However, there has been a great deal of progress in this regard, and I am confident that realisation is very close.

One of the major problems, and one for the incoming committee to address, is that of providing services and activities to suit the wide range of age groups that make up the Gunner fraternity. On the positive side, is the progress in developing a combined Newsletter. Also the construction of the Artillery WA website is a real plus and my thanks go to John O'Brien for his efforts in that project.

The Artillery memorial to be erected in front of Hobbs Artillery Park, is a most exciting project and whilst we will receive a status report shortly, I wish to congratulate Gabby D'uva for his determination and on-going commitment to progressing this project.

Another positive, is the overall response that we have in the attendance at the Gunners, Anzac Day Dawn Service at Karrakatta. On behalf of the Association, I wish to thank all those associated with the staging and planning of the Dawn Service, and for the same group of dedicated people for planning and conduct of the Gunners Day Parade and Service at Guildford.

When elected to this position 2 years ago, I indicated that I would accept the role, for a two year period and on that basis will not be seeking re-election at this AGM.

In thanking you all for your support, I especially wish to record thanks to your Vice President, Peter Rowles and especially to the engine room of the association, Secretary Tom Arnautovic and our Treasurer Gabby D'uva, thank you Gentlemen.

I conclude, by wishing the Association continued success and again thank you for allowing me to serve in this capacity.

UBIQUE
Ray Bird RFD ED
President

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The Annual General Meeting held at Anzac House Monday 25th August saw the "Changing of the Guard" with Ray Bird retiring and Bruce Campbell becoming President. Over the past two years, Ray has contributed to the ongoing success of the Association and the writer hopes to continue the work.

Your Committee is:

Vice President Peter Rowles

Secretary Tom Anautovic

Treasurer Gabby D'Uva

Honorary Auditor Geoff Palmer

Committee Members Ron Jager, John O'Brien and Ken Hepworth

There are two major items currently being dealt with:

- Firstly the finalisation of the Constitution so the Association can be Incorporated, and
- Secondly the arrangements for the 75th Anniversary of Gunners Day 2003 (*with a change of time to 11 am*) on Sunday 2nd November with a light luncheon afterwards.

On this occasion, we have arranged for Major General John Whitelaw to be the Reviewing Officer.

The details will be distributed in due course.

Future Directions under Review with the Aim of Strengthening the Gunner Fraternity.

Over the next few months, the Committees' direction is to endeavour to consolidate under the 'one umbrella' the Gunner Fraternity by providing the opportunity to have one "Combined Newsletter" with each Gunner Association contributing under the Bi line of that Association. This will reduce the overall Publication and Postage costs particularly as *many* members belong to more than One Gunner Body.

It is hoped the individual Gunner Associations will continue in their own right under their own Constitutions for many years.

However, with the 2/3 Regiment in Sydney closing down the question as to the action taken to facilitate the continuation of the aims of Associations in the future must be dealt with.

One of the suggestions will be to encourage these Associations to be affiliated with RAAA.

In the future and only at the sole decision of that Association, they may at some

stage opt to become a full member of RAAA who in turn would be available to service that Associations' Members. At the same time to act as repository for their flags and records.

Bruce G Campbell

President RAA Association

ANZAC DAY 2003

Many members of the Gunner fraternity with spouses, sons and daughters and some with grandchildren together with Officers, NCO's and soldiers of 7 Field Battery participated in a Gunners Dawn Service at Hobbs Artillery Park on Anzac Day 2003.

This is the 2nd year in succession that the Battery has hosted a Gunner Dawn Service. Last year's inaugural Gunner Dawn Service attracted in the order of 110 to the Service and this year in the order of 140 attended. The service included the Brigade Padre leading prayers and speakers including the Colonel Commandant Brigadier Richard Lawler, and speakers from the Battery to commemorate our fallen Gunners.

The setting for the Gunner Dawn Service is in front of Hobbs Artillery Park Building around the flag station which was lit up and looked spectacular in the early morn and sun rising directly behind the flag station. . The Battery provided a Catafalque Party who were very professional and smartly turned out in their role and provided a ceremonial formality to the proceedings.

Wreaths were laid by the Colonel Commandant together with Ray Bird, President of the Royal Australian Artillery Association WA, Peter Rowles President 3 Field Regiment RAA Association and the Battery

Commander Maj Scott Sullivan.

For a donation of a gold coin a hearty breakfast was provided with coffee and rum for those needing an early morning starter. The drill hall was magnificently presented with sandbagged areas including a game area and stools and tables for the festive afternoon. Post March saw some 350-400 serving and past members of the Corps, family, friends and visitors partake in an afternoon of great camaraderie.

Next year will see the Dawn Service with a new limestone Memorial around the flag station. Members are urged to join fellow Gunners serving and non serving together with family members and friends at next years Anzac Day Dawn Service.

HIGH RISK LOW CONFIDENCE

Reproduced from Bytown Gunner Volume V 1, Issue 1

The 30th Field Regiment RCA based in Ottawa are known as the Bytown Gunners

By Sgt Koshman

An area where there is extensive use of land mines, such as Bosnia, is referred to as High Risk, Low Confidence. This makes a deployment of a gun battery with its echelon a very difficult task. It also takes a lot of time and manpower to clear an area for us to deploy in the manner we are use to. Certain techniques and trains of thought have to be incorporated when deploying in these areas.

First, the engineers have to clear a complete route (both in and out routes) for the battery to travel on. They do this by driving along the route in a vehicle called a Mamba. The Mamba is a heavy truck with two hulls. During regular road travel the gap between the two hulls is empty. On preparation to clear a trail, the engineers fill the vehicle hull with water. The water not only provides additional protection from mines but weighs the vehicle down to activate the most stubborn anti-tank mines. Once they have rolled over the road, the risk to the battery is reduced and we can deploy directly on that cleared path.

Since we can't jockey vehicles around into their positions, the order of march must be exactly the same as how the battery must deploy on the narrow road The first is the TSM's vehicle followed by the first troop of guns with their limber vehicles (ammo carriers) in between each gun. Next came the command post so it could be located in the centre of the two gun troops. After the command post, the second gun troop with the technical aspects of the echelon trailed behind (i.e. Pronto, mechanics, etc).

The ideal position for recce to set up the director was on a bend on the road that was perpendicular to the rest of the battery. If they deployed to the flanks, none of the guns would be able to record because of all of the vehicles would be in the way. Occasionally the roads in Bosnia were wide enough that we could "shift" our vehicles over so we could pass parallel line. When ever recce, the GPO, or anyone else wanted to check the lay of our barrels, they not simply could walk out in front of the guns to shot a compass bearing. That would leave them twenty to fifty meters in the middle of an active minefield. The solution was to set up a second "safety" director for us to do our check bearings with. The gun commanders would have no way of knowing the angle to the safety director.

One member of our detachment had forgotten to remove the muzzle cover off the gun when we deployed. The barrel was over the mined area essentially from the wheels out words. To remove it he had to climb on to the gun, along the barrel, and remove the muzzle cover with out touching the ground. Though the threat was vary real we were able to work around the problem and bring down fire on time and on target.

7 FIED BTY 3 FIELD REGIMENT

SMIG's Review

Suddenly, again we find ourselves at the half way mark in the training year. With some much achieved and yet so much more still to be achieved. The Battery had set out to achieve so many objectives in so many areas with its two-year plan. In fact the Battery did achieve the vast majority of its objectives and goals for

2002 and had a very fast paced training year. This has left us in good stead and good morale as we tackle the critical issues of technical gunnery leading into the culminating of the Battery's main objective, to be competitive for the Mt Schank Trophy.

We stand together as a Battery poised, united and quietly determined to achieve this final objective during Exercise Wewak (AFX) which will culminate in an Artillery Evaluation Program (ARTEP) assessment before we again consolidate looking for further challenges and bench marks in 2004.

Before we get there though we still have a full (some may argue over committed three months ahead). The tempo of the Battery and the Brigade is arguably as busy and full as it has ever been with no immediate respite in view.

Before I go into that however I will take the opportunity to welcome some new members to the again growing Battery Over the past three months we have seen the following postings in to the unit:

BDR Melton Bosworth joins the Battery from 8/12 Mdm Regt as an FO Ack,

GNR Clinton Baker joins the Battery as a gun number,

GNR Michael Ball joins the Battery as a gun number,

PTE Heather Brown joins the Battery as a driver,

GNR Garry Field joins the Battery as a signaller,

GNR Thomas Heal joins the Battery as a gun number,

GNR Thomas Kos joins the Battery from 8/12 Mdm Regt as an OPCP, and

GNR Glen Wardlow joins the Battery as a gun number.

We welcome these new members to the Battery.

Artillery Exercises. The Battery has already completed a Dry Fire Exercise and two Live Fire Exercises during the last three months. These exercises have concentrated firstly on the implementation and development of Battery Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's). Secondly, the Battery has been focused on the development of passage of information, orders, the development of enemy scenarios in line with current regional and world developments. Finally, as all would expect the continued development of technical gunnery in all areas. The obvious culmination of all this training will be the AFX when again the Battery welcomes the opportunity to be externally evaluated in its primary trade of serving the guns. The ARTEP assessment team will be drawn from Land Command Artillery staff. The ARTEP evaluation will form the basis of determining the Battery's competitiveness for the Mt Schank Trophy.

Recruiting. The Battery recruiting team lead by SGT Rob Aitken and PTE Karen Wishart have been outstanding in their development and implementation of the Battery's recruiting plan for 2003. Their efforts and continued support from all members of the Battery have seen the Battery well on the way to achieving its recruiting goals. The recruiting team are now shifting its focus slightly to capture and develop a recruiting strategy for the new Multi User Depot (MUD) which is being raised at Rockingham in the second half of the year. The Battery intends to raise a new Gun Troop at the Rockingham MUD consisting of two guns and a CP. This 'new troop' will not see an increase in the Battery's current establishment manning but rather will complement the current Battery structure. In the longer term (2/3 years) this development may see a change in 7 Field Battery's establishment figures.

Artillery Gun Salutes. The Battery has continued its support to the wider Artillery Corps by providing personnel, the GPO, BG and 4 detachment commanders to Australia's Federation Guard for the Queens Birthday Salute in Canberra on Sat 7 Jun 03. Coming up in the end of Jun or early Jul the Battery has again been asked to provide personnel for a salute in Canberra. This salute will see the GPO, BG and six-detachment commanders again assisting Australia's Federation Guard. This continued support gives the Battery's personnel the opportunity to mix with personnel in the all corps environment and the Army in general.

As you can see the Battery is standing in good stead for the remainder of training year 2003 and into 2004. With a mix of new challenges coupled with the age old issues of the Battery and the Corps in general.

"Jamais Arriera" (Always to the Fore)

Matthew Sullivan

Warrant Officer Class Two

Sergeant Major Instructor Gunnery

7Fd Bty (AFX) ANNUAL FIELD EXERCISE

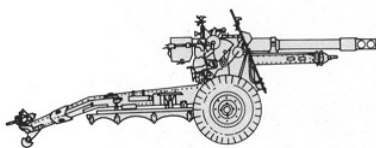
The Annual Field Exercise (AFX) for the Bty in 2003 was titled Operation Wewak, after the notable WWII campaign. The capture of Wewak by the Sixth Division, which included the 2/7th Field Regiment, marked the beginning of the end of the Aitape Wewak campaign, the last major campaign on mainland New Guinea in the Second World War. For 7 Field Batter, Operation Wewak was the culmination of 18 months training and build-up.

The scenario that was used to drive the AFX had been progressively released throughout the year and involved a fictional enemy force conducting preliminary destabilisation actions followed by an Expeditionary Army being dispatched to seize Perth. As the scenario developed, the training was focused on our preparation for deployment in support of 13 Bde and the defence of Australia. The members of the Bty were regularly briefed on the progress of the enemy force and, some weeks prior to the AFX, arrived at Hobbs Artillery Park to find the perimeter fence had been covered in hessian, to deny enemy agents ability to view our activities, and with sentries on the gate.

When the AFX began, the Bty deployed to firstly to Northam and then to Muchea Training Areas, to complete work up training as well as small arms practices. The Expeditionary Army was steaming closer and we were waiting orders to move into the Area of Operations (AO) to meet this threat. When that order came, the Bty deployed to Lancelin Training Area and began a series of deployments within that AO. Our movements were conducted mostly at night and used back roads rather than the main highways, to deny the enemy information on our location and intentions. Once in Lancelin, the members of the JOST (the FO party is now called a JOST or Joint Offensive Support Team) were able to view guns of the Royal Australian Navy in action before deploying into an OP. The weather was cold and wet and it only became worse. The Bty continued deployments while two storm fronts converged over Lancelin.

One meteorologist that we contacted for a weather report described the satellite picture for Lancelin at this time of year as the worst he had ever seen! We had winds at over 100km per hour, combined with constant rain and occasional hail, thunder and lightning – and the forecast was for these conditions to continue for the next three days, and even grow worse. We could not have asked for better conditions to train in! Unfortunately, however, the wind had amazing effects on our fall of shot and the adjustment procedure became a sight to see. At one stage the Command Post tent conducted its own air mobility training before being recovered and tied down more securely than it ever has been in the past! We persevered for another day but the weather remained appalling. The scenario, not surprisingly, quickly changed and now showed that the Expeditionary Army had steamed past Lancelin and was headed for Perth. The Bty quickly deployed to Bindoon for further deployment training and CPX activities while we awaited new orders to deploy to Perth to meet the enemy. When these came, the Bty moved back to Hobbs where the members were later informed that the enemy had been repulsed and the remnants of this force were now headed away from our coast – but likely to return in a year or two.

Operation Wewak used five training areas and saw the Bty cover more ground than in any AFX in the last decade. As well as exercising the guns, we conducted some very good driver training, completed small arms training and practices, trained in and conducted several Distribution Point activities and developed our orders procedures to a higher level than they have been for some time. The Bty was able to identify a number of areas that require more work and this will be incorporated into next years training programme, to ensure we continue to improve. Operation Wewak proved to be an innovative and worthwhile activity – and we even ensured the Bty members received a Wewak T-Shirt to prove they were there! Now, we look forward to the next major training activity in the first half of 2004.



Gunners Day 2003

75th Anniversary

11 am Sunday 2 November

Light Luncheon to follow

Note new time 1100hrs

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead

MEMBERS ENJOY VISIT TO THE FIELD TO OBSERVE LIVE FIRING EXERCISE (LFX)

In mid 2002 President Peter Rowles discussed with the Battery Commander, Major Scott Sullivan whether it was possible for members of 3 Fd Regt RAA Association to visit the Battery during live firing and observe the latest gunnery procedures and hi-tech equipment.

On June 14, 2003 17 members and 4 son's and one son-in-law on a chilly 1.6 degree morning met at the RV in Lancelin at 0730 to be greeted by the BSM/SMIG WO2 Mat Sullivan and proceeded into the range on the back of two open back Unimogs. It did not take long bouncing across the cap rock with wind chill factor at zero to recall the days gone by at the Lancelin range.

For those not aware lobbying by greenies, native flower lovers, bee hive industry, local fishermen and local shire councils has forced the Commonwealth to restrict live firing impact area to the Navy Firing range, right on the coast north of Wedge Island to an area of approx 3 x 3 kilometres. Whilst this restricts the opportunity for Forward observer training within a small area, the guns can still deploy within the broader area to utilise a range of gun positions, however restricted in distance to achieve the impact area. Range sentries were civilians which allows the Battery to maximise use of its soldiers for live firing duties.

On this LFX the Battery deployed 2 x M2A2 Guns and one FO party. Whilst some of the visiting members recall going into the field with 6 gun Battery others recalled firing in Lancelin as 3 Fd Regt with 2 x 6 Gun Battery's.

Members Tom Arnautovic, Ken Hepworth, Jim Green, Peter Frey, Greg Frey, Stewart Davies, Ross Knapp, Lou Grime, Brian Mofflin all ex Gun No 1's. Ron Cutten ex BC and Graeme Missen ex GPO and John O'Brien ex CP Sgt after an hour of listening to the fire orders were ready to man Guns 3-6 and like 'riding a bike' the Fire discipline has never been forgotten and all were ready to take up duties again.

The Guns were of old but the new equipment was a sight to behold with, new hearing protection that allows magnification of voice sounds to hear fire orders but blocks gunfire noise, new directors with GPS and each gun having GPS capability which assists with having non traditional chevron gun displacement as the command post computer adjusts fall of shot for each gun to provide the required displacement for rounds on the ground. New Austeyer rifles and Mini mi light machine gun, Night vision equipment and hand held communication units and of course the latest use of laptop computers in the command post. However GPO still uses his check map for gross area check (thank goodness we don't entirely trust the computers). The good old plotting on the Safety Board has not changed for the past 100 years. At the OP end Forward observers use GPS, laser range finders and target designator equipment.

On behalf of the members from the RAA WA Association, RAA Historical Society WA (Inc) and 3 Fd Regt RAA Association many thanks to the BC, Maj Scott Sullivan, Capt. Mike Hartas the Training Officer, Capt. Paul Sofield the BK and the BSM, WO2 Mat Sullivan for their support in inviting ex members to visit the Battery during a Live firing exercise and hosting us at the Gun position and at the OP. We wish the Battery well in their Artillery skills assessment later this year.

Tom Arnautovic OAM
Hon Secretary

ORIGINS OF THE LANYARD

By The Royal Artillery Institution

There has long been a tale about the Gunners wearing a white lanyard for cowardice, allegedly for deserting their guns, but the story is nothing more than a piece of leg pulling. However, it is time to put this particular story to rest.

Lanyards came into use in the late 19th century when Field Gunners manned the 12 and 15 Pounder equipments, ammunition for which had a fuze set with a fuze key. The key was a simple device, and every man had one, attached to a lanyard worn around the neck. The key itself tended to be kept in the breast pocket until needed. The lanyard was simply a piece of strong cord, but in time it was a typical soldier's reaction to

turn it into something a bit more decorative. It was smartened up with white ink or even blanco, and braided, gradually taking its present form.

Prior to the South African War, Gunners were issued with steel folding hoof picks, carried on the saddle or in the jacket. In about 1903 these were withdrawn and replaced with jack-knives, which were carried in the left breast pocket of the Service Dress attached to the lanyard over the left shoulder.

During the two World Wars, the lanyard could be used as an emergency firing lanyard for many of the guns, because they had a firing mechanism which operated like a trigger. The lanyard could be attached to the trigger mechanism and allowed the Gunner to stand clear of the gun's recoil.

The question of which shoulder bore the lanyard depends on the date. There is no certainty about this, but the change from the left shoulder to the right probably took place at about the time of the Great War, when the bandoleer was introduced, because it was worn over the left shoulder. But there are some who insist that 1924 was the date of change, when the sloping of rifles over the left shoulder would soil the white lanyard.

Eventually in 1933, the end of the lanyard was simply tucked into the breast pocket without the jack-knife, though many will remember that it often was kept in place with the soldier's pay-book! On the demise of Battledress, the lanyard disappeared for a short time, but returned as part of the dress of the Royal Regiment of Artillery in 1973.

For those still plagued by jokers, the simplest answer to any leg-pulling is to invite the joker to produce evidence; no change can take place to any Army's dress regulations without an appropriate order, and since no such evidence exists, the joker's story falls flat on its face.

ORIGIN AND TRADITION OF "GUNNERS" DAY" AT GUILDFORD

From 3 Fd Regt NEWS SHEET Edition 6 Oct 1973

BANNER. About September 1914, Mr. James Fredericks presented to Military headquarters, a silk Australian Ensign with a request that it should be handed to one of the Commanding Officers proceeding overseas.

The Commandant of the day, Colonel Kyngdon, presented the Banner to the Commanding Officer of the 8th Battery A.I.F., Major A.J. BESSELL-BROWNE, D.S.O. It was gratefully accepted and became the Battery Banner.

The Banner was first flown at Blackboy Camp during preliminary training. Then at Mena Camp, Egypt, during intensive training, in the Field at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli, and later taken to France and flown on the Somme in 1916 and early 1917 in Ypres Salient. It was then put away until the termination of the War.

After demobilisation it was decided to deposit the Banner in St. Matthews Church Guildford, for safekeeping. The sentiment behind depositing the Banner in the Church was to follow the custom in Garrison Churches in England.

Artillery Headquarters both prior to and after the Great War 1914/18, were situated at Guildford, and the Banner was unveiled on Sunday the 21st September 1919, by the 8th Battery's first Commanding Officer, Brigadier-General A.J. Bessell-Browne, C.B. C.M.G. D.S.O. V.D.

GUNNERS' DAY. In 1928 the Artillery Comrades' Association decided with the co-operation of the Church and the Municipality of Guildford, to hold the first ceremony of "Gunners' Day". After discussion it was decided to hold the ceremony on the, nearest Sunday to the 8th August. The factor in arriving at this date was that it was considered that the Artillery Units in France had reached the zenith of their training when Australian Forces broke the line at Villiers Brettoneaux on the 8th August, 1918.

On the day of the first ceremony, about 60 Ex-Gunners marched from the Railway Station headed by the R. S.L. Band, to the Church where a short service was held, and at the termination of this service they formed up round the Guildford War Memorial. Wreaths were placed, the 'Last Post' sounded, and the column marched back to the Guildford Railway Station and dismissed.

This Procedure has been carried out every year since.

MEMORY GATES. In 1932 the Municipality of Guildford erected Gates on the West boundary of the Church Square to the memory of the men who trained in the district in 1914. In addition to the Gunners, in

1914 the 10th Light Horse trained in the district, and they were invited to join in the Ceremony of "Gunners" Day", and have attended ever since that day,

On "Gunners! Day" the 14th August 1932, the Gates were named "The Memory Gates" and were opened and the tablet unveiled, by Brigadier-General A.J. Bessell-Browne.

MEMORIAL PLAQUES On the 21st April 1938, our beloved Chief, Lieut. General Sir J.J. Talbot Hobbs K.C.B., K.C.M.G., V.D., died, and it was decided by the Artillery Comrades' Association, with the co-operation of the Rector of the Diocese, to erect a memorial plaque. in St. Matthews' Church, Guildford., to perpetuate his memory.

In the early 1920s the 112 Howitzer Bty was formed and also the 8th Bty Assoc

In 1928 the 112 How Battery and the many members of other units combined to form the Artillery Comrades Association (the 8th Battery was not included in this amalgamation) and gunners from other states all joined the Association.

Over a period of years by means of weekly entertainments and bequests a trust fund was developed and invested as a means of producing interest to enable the Assoc to render assistance to gunners who were in need. This fund is still - in existence and is greatly assisted by annual donation from the Anzac Day Trust Fund.

After World. War 2 through the agency of Major General L.M. Whitelaw the Artillery Comrades Assoc became affiliated with the Royal Artillery Association of Woolwich. England and is one of the only two active branches in Australia.



Aiming Post

EULOGY—JOHN ATHOL HOBBS

15 JULY 1922 – 21 AUGUST 2003

Eulogy delivered by Colonel Don Rae at the Memorial Service for John Tally Hobbs, at St. Matthew's Garrison Church, Guildford, on Wednesday 27 August 2003.

Some months ago, John told me of his funeral arrangements and that he wished me to deliver a eulogy covering his military service.

I was flattered and honoured but I assured him that it would be a long time before the need arose. Regrettably, it happened much sooner than I had hoped.

I believe that John's military "service" commenced on 15 July 1922, the day he was born into the Hobbs family. His famous grandfather, his father Athol and his uncle Mervyn provided an obvious setting. Due to the tragic demise of his mother six weeks after his birth, John was brought up in his grandparents' home "The Bungalow" where the general's influence and the love of John's grandmother together provided a wonderful foundation for John's development.

John was briefly exposed to the Australian School Cadet scheme whilst attending Guildford Grammar School but did not seem particularly enthusiastic about military service. Later, in June 1940, he enlisted in the Militia and proceeded to Narrogin to join an Artillery Training School commanded by Lt Col J. O. Clough, or Cluffy as he was more commonly referred. Colonel Clough was a distinguished WWI gunner who had served with General Hobbs.

As was the habit at the time, militiamen only served continuously for periods of three months, returning to their respective civilian jobs until recalled. In mid 1941, having turned 18, John joined 103 Howitzer Battery and, back at Narrogin, was advised by Colonel Clough that he should join the Officer Cadet Training unit as it would be expected that he should receive a commission.

John recalled his grandfather's disgust at "ready made commissions" and resolved that he did not wish to become an officer overnight. He was saved any embarrassment when, in September 1941, he received his father's permission to join the AIF. This he did with great haste and in mid November 1941 he embarked

for the Middle East on the Queen Mary as a reinforcement for the 2/3 Australian Field Regiment Royal Australian Artillery – the unit that his father had commanded when it left for overseas service in May 1941. No matter where John went, he was identified as the General's grandson by officers who had served with his grandfather in WWI. This embarrassed him and firmed his resolve to "do his own thing".

His Middle East training started in earnest in Palestine. Perhaps unfortunately, the 2/3 Fd Regt had returned to Australia and John was earmarked as a reinforcement for the 2/1 Fd Regt. Again he was to be disappointed as an illness saw him hospitalised and by the time he was discharged that unit had also left for Australia. Eventually, after much coming and going, John was allotted to 2/8 Fd Regt and joined that unit in August at El Alamein. To his amazement he learned that he was the only West Australian in the Unit!

At last John's war had commenced.

But it was not all training during the long spell he had in Palestine prior to joining his unit. John had a cultural and historical interest in the centuries old land and his frequent periods of leave were spent exploring the mysteries of the east. In particular, he enjoyed meeting and mixing with the local population and joined a riding academy where he honed his skills obtained as a young man back at the bungalow. One habit he displayed was to dress in civilian clothing on these excursions so as to be more readily accepted by the locals. He was always careful to have his slouch hat handy in case he needed to identify himself to military authorities.

John's baptism of fire in the months leading to the famous battle of El Alamein saw him bombed, strafed and shot at and on an occasion when sheltering in his slit trench or "slitty" he contemplated his future and wondered if he would survive to be reunited with family and friends back in Australia.

Survive he did, and following the success at El Alamein, the Australian 9th Division was returned to Australia.

Because he was the only West Aussie in the 2/8th, he was transferred to the 2/7th Fd Regt on return to Australia to ensure he would receive his leave in Perth.

He was reunited with his family on 18 February 1943 and commenced 3 weeks glorious leave. At the conclusion of this memorable period of partying and sailing and more partying he eventually travelled laboriously by train to the Atherton tablelands to begin an awfully boring 12 months of training and yet more training to prepare the division for active service in the Pacific jungle environment.

There was much leave to be had and John joined the Cairns Golf Club where he "found" a piano and developed his skill as a jazz pianist. It was during this period that he was informed that his dear gran, lady Hobbs had passed away.

In May 1944 he enjoyed home state leave back in Perth where he was reunited with his father Athol. Athol encouraged John to attend classes at Perth Technical College to study navigation. Athol presented John with a bound edition of navigation tables that he then carried with him for the remainder of the war.

John had become restless with the lack of active service prospects and, when the opportunity presented itself he successfully applied to transfer to the 42nd Assault Landing Craft Company. He no doubt thought that his sailing skills and newly acquired navigation expertise would ensure promotion and possibly command of a landing craft.

He was to be disappointed! In its usual efficient manner, the army had just disbanded the 2/8th Armoured Regiment and dispersed its members to the various assault landing craft units, believing that there was not a great deal of difference between driving a twin screw landing craft and a twin tracked tank. You can imagine John's extreme disappointment that his sailing skills were being ignored. He opted for the alternative of becoming an anti aircraft gunner to protect the craft from air and surface attack by the enemy.

Again, during his leave periods he maintained his contacts with the Cairns Golf Club and spent much time improving his jazz pianist skill!

At last the unit sailed for Bougainville in January 1945. John's Pacific war had commenced.

Whilst at Toro Kina, he "inherited" a sailing craft from an American – all for the price of a couple of cartons of Aussie beer! This entrepreneurial flair continued later when John also inherited an American jeep and a German luger. He became the envy of his mates and the cause of some consternation for his officers.

John saw much activity at sea, delivering men and supplies to invasion beaches and all the while subjected to incursions by the enemy. He took part in the significant battle of Porton Plantation where the assaulting Australian forces were badly mauled. It was in this action that he met John Whitelaw, a Captain forward

observer from 4 Fd Regt who later rose to the rank of Major General and with whom John maintained contact after WW2.

Another “high” in John’s activity in this region was to transport Generals Blamey, Savige and Steele who wished to observe the battle from offshore.

The atom bomb brought the war to a swift conclusion in August 1945 and the tasking for the assault craft was now the collection of enemy prisoners and their confinement in the many POW cages established in the area.

Shortly after, John was notified that his father had successfully applied for his early discharge and return to Australia so that he could rejoin the architectural firm bearing the family name.

He returned to his home now a civilian.

His military involvement lived on in the years to follow and his support to the gunner fraternity is legend.

John, we salute you and our memory of you will be everlasting.

UBIQUE, DEAR JOHN.

THE DAVID AND GOLIATH NAVAL BATTLE-1942

By Bob Glyde

It is a not well-known fact that the Japanese operated eleven merchant cruisers preying on Allied merchant vessels in a similar manner to the German commerce raiders in both the Indian and Pacific Oceans. This article tells of two of them, which operated as a pair and how one of them met a fiery end with little to show for it.

The “Hokoku Maru” and “Aikoku Maru” were sister ships of 10,500 tons (gross), completed in 1940 and converted to armed merchant cruisers in 1941. They were equipped with a formidable armament of 2-139 mm, 4-76 mm dual-purpose guns and 2 torpedo tubes.

On 4th November 1942, the Royal Dutch Shell tanker “Ondina” (6200 tons) sailed from Fremantle escorted by the corvette HMIS “Bengal” (650 ton). The “Ondina” was in ballast except for a quantity of fuel oil to refuel the “Bengal” at Diego Garcia before the tanker then proceeded to Abadan in the Persian Gulf and the corvette left for Colombo.



Aikoku Maru

In Singapore
July 1942

HMIS “Bengal” was of interest as it was the fourth and last of the Bathurst Class corvettes built in Australia for the Indian Navy. The vessel had only recently completed her commissioning trials. She was equipped with 1-76 mm gun and several machine guns and for the purpose of the voyage had been issued with 40 rounds of ammunition for her main gun. “Ondina” was equipped with 1-102 mm gun mounted at the stern for defence and a restricted amount of ammunition.

Late in the morning of 11th November the Naval Officer in Charge at Fremantle received a message from the “Bengal” to advise they were being shelled. At that stage they were about 1500 kms north west of Fremantle. The last message for the day from “Bengal” received about 1900 hours reported their ship was holed fore and aft, the tanker was believed to have been sunk and one of the raiders was also believed to have been sunk.

Around the 14th November a message was received from the “Ondina” requesting urgent medical attention. As all their codebooks etc had been destroyed, when the raiders first engaged the ship, to prevent them falling into enemy hands, it was a plain language message and although asked for their position they were unable to send it without giving their position away to the Japanese. On 17th November the same day as “Bengal” arrived in Colombo, a Catalina aircraft operating out of Matilda Bay in the Swan River, reported

having seen “Ondina” 350 kms northwest of Fremantle.

It transpired that when ordered by the corvette to steer away from the enemy vessels whilst the smaller ship engaged the two raiders, the captain of the



Post War Photo
of
Ondina

“Ondina” probably believing that there was little chance of his ship escaping, joined the battle. The fifth round from the “Ondina” hit the stern of the “Hokoku Maru” causing a fire and large explosion. The latter blowing part of the stern into the sea. The “Ondina” gunners also claimed hits on the raider’s bridge and amidships. The “Bengal” having fired off all its ammunition, made smoke and left the scene.

The “Hokoku Maru” then scored a number of hits on the “Ondina” one of which killed her Dutch Captain. The “Hokoku Maru” was sinking and the other raider “Aikoku Maru” shelled the tanker and fired two torpedoes into her starboard side. The crew of the tanker had by then abandoned ship. The “Aikoku Maru” in the usual display of Japanese inhumanity then proceeded to machine gun the lifeboats before moving off to pick up the crew from the sunken raider. This action cost the lives of the Chief Engineer and three Chinese crewmen. Twenty minutes later the raider returned and fired a third torpedo at the port side of the ship. This torpedo missed and the raider then left the battle area believing no doubt that the “Ondina”, which by then was on fire and listing badly, would not survive.

The “Ondina” was listing with the No.2 and 3 tanks exposed to the sea and appeared to be in danger of sinking. The remaining ship officers and some of the crew reboarded her to see if the vessel could be got underway. They found the engines were intact and by 2100 hours on the night of the battle, the ship was underway, heading back to Fremantle.

On arrival in Fremantle, Les Fowlie the Shell Shipping Manager could not understand how the ship had managed to stay afloat. He commented at the time that the damage to the starboard side was such that two buses could have driven through the ship’s side. Able Seaman Bert Hammond RANR was a member of the gun detachment and he received the DSM and the Netherlands Bronze Cross for his work on the gun during the action, as well his subsequent work in helping to stabilise the ship including dousing the fire and getting it underway. The Dutch gun layer was awarded a Dutch award. After the war he settled in Western Australia. Another member of the gun detachment, Bob Boyce, also lives in Western Australia.

Looking in retrospect the two Allied ships could not hope to have escaped. Both of the Japanese ships were modern cargo liner type vessels, one source quoting a maximum speed of 21 knots. The “Bengal’s” designed speed was 15.5 knots and the “Ondina”, 10 knots. The main armament of the Japanese ships dependent, on the calibre of the gun, would have ranged between 16000 and 19700 metres firing a projectile of 38 kgs. The “Bengal” 12 pr gun had a range of 7300 metres firing a 5.5 kg projectile whilst the “Ondina” was equipped with a American 102 mm gun which at the very best could range out to about 8900 metres and fired a 16 kg projectile. Thus the Japanese ships need not have closed into gun range of the smaller ships; they could have stood off and shelled the two until they were beaten into submission. There is no doubt the bravery of the Dutch Captain and the gun crew of his ship, save the “Ondina” and Bengal” both to live and fight another day.

Temporary repairs were then carried out on the “Ondina” at Fremantle and the vessel went to the newly established submarine base at Exmouth Gulf. Here she acted as a floating storage facility whilst shore tanks etc, were erected ashore. The ship was equipped with anti aircraft guns and eight DEMS ratings were allotted to the vessel. Petty Officer Neil Gow RANR, who took over as the Gun Captain whilst the ship was at Exmouth, told the writer that the gunners used to fish through one of the cargo hatches. The American submariners thought the Australians were mad. The submarines pulled alongside the portside of the “Ondina” to refuel and did not realise that two of the tanks were open to the sea on the other side.

On 1st September 1943, the “Ondina” supplied fuel and water to the SRD vessel “Krait” which was enroute to Singapore where it carried out a very successful attack on Japanese shipping.

By the end of 1943 oil tankers were in short supply. It was decided to send the “Ondina” to the United States for major repairs. Firstly the ship went to Melbourne where work was carried out to strengthen it for the trip across the Pacific. A crew of Dutch officers and Chinese crew manned the vessel. Just before leav-

ing Melbourne, all the Chinese with two exceptions, deserted ship. It was decided to continue the voyage with two of the DEMS gunners acting as helmsmen whilst the other six kept their normal watches on the guns. It was a slow boring voyage of 94 days to the Panama Canal and once through the Canal she went to Galveston where it had been planned to carry out the necessary repairs. A change of plan necessitated a short voyage to Tampa in Florida.

It is believed the vessel was still operational in 1956 and called at Fremantle around that time.

The “Aikoku Maru” was later converted to transport duties and was sunk on 14th February 1944 at Truk by American aircraft.

This article was prepared for the Cambrai Chronicle by Bob Glyde.

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Discussion by the writer with Neil Gow.

Discussion by the writer with Bob Boyce.

SOCIAL OUTING—RAA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In beautiful surroundings on a brilliantly sunny morning, some 39 Members and Partners attended Breakfast at The Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club on Sunday, 17th August. In what has become a very popular annual winter event, the weather and the location ensured a successful social gathering. The opportunity was taken to invite Ray Bird to address the gathering on important changes for the Gunner Fraternity that are to be introduced in the near future. Ray has retired as President of the RAA Association WA and his contribution was recognised in an address by Brigadier Richard Lawler AM, Colonel Commandant Western Region. A toast to the Society was proposed by Don Rae and celebrated with champagne.

DON RAE

BEACON BATTERY AND THE US 4-INCH NAVAL GUNS

By Bob Glyde

Fremantle was the only port on the western seaboard of Western Australia of any significance during the WW 2 period. The loss to the British Royal Navy of Singapore and to the American Asiatic Fleet of Subic Bay in the Philippines left the allied navies with no secure bases from which to cover the southern half of the Indian Ocean and northeast into what was then the Netherlands East Indies, up as far as the South China Sea. Already by February 1942, Fremantle had become a major base for American submarines operating into those areas. Space within the harbour was restricted and the authorities were looking to make better utilisation of Cockburn Sound, an anchorage lying between Garden Island, south of Fremantle and the mainland. There was some restriction in that a rocky bar lay between the north of Garden Island and Woodman’s Point on the mainland, however a passage had been dredged through the bar over the years, allowing ships of quite deep draft to enter the Sound.

The original defence planning for the Fremantle area in the 1930 had called for a second 234 mm counter bombardment battery to be emplaced on Garden Island to protect shipping sheltering in the Sound. The battery was to compliment the coverage by the Rottneest batteries, particularly bombardment from the sea, south of Garden Island. The Second World War had commenced before any work could start on this battery

and the priorities for the supply of guns and mounting for the project were directed to what were then, more pressing locations. Such a decision would have been made by the Imperial Defence Committee, who believed in the impregnability of Singapore, in the event of a Japanese attack.

In May 1942 a committee comprising MGRAA Major General Whitelaw, Commander Buchanan RAN and Commander Hay USN, met to examine what was needed to upgrade the defence of the area and to submit



Beacon Battery—Garden Island (1943)
USS 4 inch 50 calibre Mk IX Model 5 or 6 Naval Gun
Photo Source Major Primrose

to Land HQ Melbourne, a list of equipment required through the Lend/Lease agreement. By the time a final proposal had been agreed in November, the British Admiralty had requested a further development of the Sound so the British Far East Fleet could operate from the Fremantle area. It was agreed to go ahead with the emplacement of a 234 mm counter bombardment battery and two 133 mm CA/AA batteries on Garden Island together with a 133 mm CA/AA battery at Cape Peron on the mainland, to the south of Garden Island. Another 133 mm CA/AA battery was to be established at Coogee in the vicinity of Woodman Point. This could not take place overnight, so the recommendation was that temporary coastal defences would be established with equipment available from American sources. These would be re-

placed as the permanent equipment became available and was emplaced.

Included in the emergency armament was a recommendation to emplace a US Naval 102 mm two-gun battery at Beacon Point at the northeast tip of Garden Island. The purpose was to protect the anti submarine boom net, which was to be constructed from Garden Island to Woodman's Point on the mainland. Midway along the boom a gate would be constructed allowing access to the Parmelia Channel enabling shipping to enter Cockburn Sound. This unit to come under the command of a 155 mm battery, which was to be constructed at the north west tip of the island at Challenger Point.

On Boxing Day 26 December 1942, a group under the command of Major Primrose, moved to Garden Island to commence the construction of a camp site, gun emplacements, observation posts, etc, for both batteries.

By 8th February 1943 the Beacon gun blocks were finished and the following day two 102 mm guns were floated ashore from an old self-propelled barge and transported to the battery site. Mid March saw the completion of the gun floors and on 24th March, 330 rounds of ammunition arrived. The arrival of ammunition enabled the guns to be proof fired on 29th March. Three rounds were fired from each gun at maximum, minimum and zero degrees elevation. The purpose of this procedure, which was normally undertaken with guns on fixed mountings, was to ensure the guns were settled down in their emplacements.

The first live shoot at a moving target was conducted in May 1943, followed by a second shoot on 12th June. This latter shoot was noted in the records as being very satisfactory. Being a close defence battery, the only fire control instrument in the observation post was a depression rangefinder. Ranges were transmitted to the guns by telephone.

Although searchlight equipment was landed late in April 1943, it was not fully operational until September. This delay was due to awaiting the completion of the 155 mm Challenger Battery permanent gun emplacements. It does not mean the searchlights were not available to the Beacon Battery but simply they were not put in permanent positions until Challenger Battery was completed so they could be placed in the best positions to serve both batteries.

The campsite for both units was established just south of Beacon Point and would have enjoyed the protection of AA gun site 454 constructed in April 1943. This unit was equipped with 4 – 94 mm guns. Also in May, a 40mm Bofors gun was specifically allotted for the protection of Beacon Battery against low flying

attacking aircraft.

For some reason the 102 mm guns were not very satisfactory for the role they were allotted. The Navy pressed for a battery of 94 mm AA guns to be emplaced on Carnac Island in a joint CA/AA role or for pylons to be built close handy to the boom gate with 75 mm or 18 pr guns to be mounted on them. None of these requests were actioned however an Army paper dated August 1944, indicated that two British 102 mm Mk VII guns were held in ordnance to replace the American weapons.

The American guns are of some interest. Beacon Battery and Geraldton Battery were the only coast defence sites in Australia equipped with this type of weapon. They were Mk IX naval guns with elevation limits from 15° depression to 20° elevation, of 50 calibres and firing fixed ammunition. They came in a number of models: the guns at Beacon were one Model 5, the most common model available, the other a Model 6. The standard projectile weighed approximately 17 kgs and the range was 14800 metres at maximum elevation, however the ideal fighting range was 7000 metres. The Americans had many old destroyers built at the end of the Great War and most of these ships mounted four of these guns. During the 1939 – 45 periods many of these ships were allotted tasks not requiring four of the guns and the armament was reduced. Some 424 Mk IX guns were made available to British and Commonwealth countries under the Lease/Lend arrangements. They were used extensively to equip merchant ships with defensive armament against submarine attack. The two Geraldton guns were emplaced in May 1942 and made available from US Army ordnance stocks in Western Australia. It is presumed the Beacon guns would have come from the same source.

Over the years, historical sources commented that the four guns were recovered from the USS “Peary” a four-stack destroyer sunk during the first Japanese attack on Darwin 19th February 1942. This was not supported by documentation and the writer could not match up the statement with anything authentic. A subsequent check of material held in the National Archives revealed the wreck of the USS “Peary” was not located until 1956 despite an extensive search post war by Australian and American recovery teams. It was found in the main harbour anchorage area. When a Japanese salvage team arrived in 1959 to clear Darwin harbour of wartime wreckage, the Harbour Master insisted that the wreck be reduced to deck level on grounds of safety. The vessel, which was sitting on an almost even keel, was buried in silt to deck level. Correspondence indicated the main deck guns and torpedo tubes were removed. One of the guns is now displayed in Bicentennial Park. The fourth gun still lies buried in the harbour as the stern on which it was mounted was severed from the main body of the ship at the time of the sinking and had not been found.

In May 1943, only 137 rounds remained in the State for the four guns. An order was placed for a further 1000 rounds to permit an annual practice expenditure of 100 rounds per gun.

Beacon Battery was decommissioned in November 1944 and like all equipment obtained through Lease/Lend arrangements would have had to be returned to US government stores for disposal. This was provided the government using the equipment was not prepared to purchase it. The guns would have been returned to US ordnance stores.

This article was prepared by Bob Glyde.

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Naval Weapons of World War Two by John Campbell.

By Gabby D'Uva

Gunner Harry Peck Incident and Tales

The regiment departed Australia for Palestine and following the voyage settled in at Deir Suneid Camp. One night an almighty fracas broke out amongst the gunners. Whilst investigating the incident the sergeant of the guard inquired who had started the trouble. Gunner Harry Peck was again identified as the culprit. The poor unfortunate sergeant dashed off and prepared a charge report in the vain attempt to have Gunner Peck confined to the camp for 14 days.

The regiment moved down to Mersa Matruh and here the "Peck Racket" started in earnest. A nearby British Army ordnance store began to supply vast quantities of war material and supplies to an Australian Unit. The goods in question ranged from motor vehicles to pistols and binoculars. It was not until the British began to check the issue vouchers that it was discovered that all the goods were signed for by ostensibly the same person – Harry Peck – although the signatures were in a dozen different hands and many different ranks ranging from bombardier to major.

In a twist of fate there was an officer named Peck in another unit at Mersa Matruh. The authorities viewed him with a great deal of suspicion in relation to the racket. The Harry Peck ruse continued throughout the war. A Jewish sports dealer in Tel Aviv sold numerous pairs of football boots to an Australian Officer with a very Jewish appearance. The docket was signed by Heinrich Pfeck, however the invoice for the boots remained unpaid.

In Syria, the exploits of Gunner Harry Peck became even more notorious. In one incident ten tons of building stone was carted away by Australian military vehicles and the bill was received by Headquarters AIF. It referred to the 'goods taken away by the Henri Peque of the 31st Anchovy Division Army Australienne'.

Many other incidents of this nature occurred in Syria, and continued in the Pacific region after the 2/5th Field Regiment arrived back in Australia. One such incident relates to wharfies loading stores for New Guinea finding cartons of Bulimba Beer in a stack bearing the 2/5th Field Regiment sign, authorised by LTCOL Harry Peck, AIF HQASC. These stores were duly delivered to the Regiment at Port Moresby compliments of Harry Peck.

Adapted from: Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery – Customs and Traditions, compiled and edited by WO1 Christopher Jobson, 1997.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

With this new venture to strengthen the Gunner fraternity in Western Australia and to at the same time cut down on work and postage this is the first issue combining newsletters. In this first issue "Take Post" and "Aiming Post" have been combined. In future editions it is hoped that we will have contributions from all of the other Gunner Associations.

We trust that the adoption of a standardised format for the text and a different layout meets with your approval. Hopefully this combination will keep all Gunners informed of gunner matters not only in WA but elsewhere as well. For it to succeed however we urgently require contributions and articles for each issue. Old photographs of camps, training etc would also be appreciated.

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, Artillery WA, PO Box 881, Claremont WA 6910. Phone: 93836544 Fax: 93836370 or E-mail the Editor at info@artillerywa.org.au. Electronic format is perfectly acceptable preferably in Word with Times New Roman font 11 point. This requires less formatting in before publication.



Dawn Service Hobbs Artillery Park



Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead