



# Artillery WA

Official Newsletter of Royal Australian Artillery Association of WA (Inc), 2/3 Fd Regt RAA, 2/7 Fd Regt, 3Fd Regt Associations and RAA Historical Society of WA (INC).  
WebSite: <http://www.artillerywa.org.au>

Edition 4 – 3/04

October 2004

## GUNNERS DAY



TO ALL OUR FALLEN GUNNERS

- LEST WE FORGET -



# Notice Board

## GUNNERS DAY

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2004

St. Matthew's Garrison Church  
Russell Square, Guildford

March steps off at 2.30pm  
Followed by Church Service

Everybody is invited to join in for light refreshments in the Church Hall  
after the Service

### RAAHS BUSY BEES

The next busy bees at Irwin Barracks are  
scheduled for:

**30 OCTOBER**

**27 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.

### COVER

*Gunners Day – Guildford – 1989.*

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 Subs to your Association or Society are now due – RAAA / 3 FRAAA - \$ 15      RAAHS - \$ 25  
 .....

The Editor gratefully acknowledges the contributions to the newsletter by the members, whose names appear with the corresponding articles. Articles, editorial comment or book reviews for publication should be submitted to the editor, Gabriel D'Uva at: Royal Australian Artillery Association of WA PO Box 881, Claremont WA 6910. Phone: 93836544 Fax: 93836370 or E-mail the Editor at [info@artillerywa.org.au](mailto:info@artillerywa.org.au)

# **ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION (WA)**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Since the dedication of the Memorial at Karrakatta all other Artillery organisations became involved, namely 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Fd Regt, 2/7<sup>th</sup> Fd Regt, Heavy AA and 116 Light AA Associations.

Accordingly brass plaques, which will compliment those already mounted, are being incorporated on the Wall to recognise their support.

On Saturday 3 July 7<sup>th</sup> Field Battery in conjunction with the Royal Australian Artillery and 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Regiment Associations, held a combined mixed Dining in Night for all Ranks Artillery Corps at Hobbs Artillery Park.

The organisation and work done by the 7 Fd Bty ensured this was a very successful event, however the support by the members of the associations was low and must be improved for this annual event.

Our congratulations to all of 7<sup>th</sup> Field Battery.

As we are all aware Gunners Day is not far away and already planning and arrangements are almost finalised.

The decision has been taken to revert to the afternoon format and details are promulgated in this newsletter.

Remember the date – Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November at Guildford. All Members and their Partners are invited to take part.

The Association has organised for an RAA Banner based on a similar design used in Canberra for use on Gunners and Anzac Day Marches.

It is timely to report that the Incorporation of the RAA Association is about two weeks away from approval and is great news for all those that worked hard to achieve it.

As soon as this is completed the Association's Annual General Meeting will be called.

Bruce G. Campbell  
**President**

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### ADVERTISING

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

**STOP PRESS!!!!!!!!!!**

**Incorporation has been granted and we managed to get the Certificate in time to print the newsletter.**

**Great News!!**



Department of Consumer & Employment Protection  
Government of Western Australia

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**  
*Associations Incorporation Act 1987*  
(Section 9(1))

Registered No: A1011841Z

**Certificate of Incorporation**

This is to certify that

**ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (INC)**

was on the twenty-seventh day of September 2004  
incorporated under the  
*Associations Incorporation Act 1987.*

Dated this twenty-seventh day of September 2004

Commissioner for Fair Trading

CERTIFICATE

**WELFARE OFFICER REQUIRED**

We would like to hear from any member across the Associations that would be interested in officiating as a Welfare Liaison Officer, on a voluntary basis across all the Artillery Associations. This person will liaise with any member that requires help through the Welfare Fund, which is managed by the RAA Association of WA, and make the application on the member's behalf to the Management Committee for approval.

## **3 Field Regiment RAA Association**

### **President's Message:**

The inaugural Corp Dinner held on Saturday 3 July was a success due to the energetic and obliging efforts of 7 Fd Battery.



Commander 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Brigadier Geoff Hand, RFD addresses the Dinner.

The attendance of non-serving Gunners was dismal. Your Committee works hard during the year to hold together and promote the interests of the Gunner community in WA, and provide functions for all to mix on a social basis. We have in the past tried several ideas with mixed results and as a consequence we now conduct three major events a year, Anzac Day, The Corp Dinner and Gunners Day.

They are all important, but the Corp Dinner gives the members the opportunity, with our partners, to mix and support the serving members and to ensure the fine traditions of the Corp continue.



Mr. Ron Jager Vice President of 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Regiment Association, presenting the Association's award to Gunner Fowler, this year's recipient.

On to the future, Gunners Day Sunday 7 November, we are back to the afternoon format and if numbers are similar to last year it will be a great day so please attend.

The more our membership is involved in either functions or through feed back to the committee the stronger our Association will become so please participate.

**Peter Rowles**  
**President**



## SMIG's Review

### **7 Field Battery 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Regiment** **RAA**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

7 Field Battery is continuing to maintain its commitment to the Brigades' main focus of RRF, recruiting, AIRN compliance and maintaining Rank and Trade. Administratively it has also been a busy time with the Rank & Trade Audit and forecasting taking some time to complete.

#### **RANK & TRADE COURSES**

During the Jul - Aug period, several non-continuous courses were completed; the Supervisor Offensive Support General Leg being amongst these. The unit has now commenced an OPCP Mod 1 Course along with an SCCC (Sig Course). This will mean we have been able to qualify 35 personnel this year in Rank and Trade proficiency's. The busy training environment has been beneficial to the unit, in qualifying personnel and to the individuals involved through the variety of training. The units NCO's have also benefited due to the instructional workload.

#### **DEPLOYMENT**

Exercise Return to Amiens was conducted at the start of the period with the manning at its highest point in 6 years. Three fully manned guns were taken to the field with the fourth gun being very close to deployment. The Rockingham troop has certainly contributed to this and with recruiting continuing strongly in this area it is expected this growth will continue.

The unit is now gearing up for our next LFX activity, being Exercise Crete at the start of September. This exercise is an event-based scenario, which will test the unit in all areas. This has been made possible by the two years of lead up training that we have conducted in order to restore the Corps skills that have dwindled away over some time period. The activity was named CRETE due to the heroic last stand of the acting CO 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Field Regiment Maj Victor Burston during the withdrawal from Crete, thereby paralleling the final LFX for the BC Maj Sullivan.

#### **SUPPORT**

The Battery continues to maintain its efforts in support of Brigade tasks and other Unit support as requested. Battery members have been keen to support task requirements from SASR. The Sergeants have also assisted the AFG in Canberra yet again and are fast becoming saluting Guru's. 7 Fd Bty has also assisted 48 BTY in this period by providing a Safety Party for their July LFX at Murray Bridge in South Australia.

## **FAREWELLS**

The battery was also able to farewell the SMIG WO2 Dion McRae from the army at the Battery Birthday dinner that occurred at the start of July. The unit wishes Dion and his family well as they adjust to their new lifestyle and involvement in the family business in NSW.



Battery Commander Major Scott Sullivan, presenting a cartridge case to WO2 Dion McRae on his retirement.

## **CONCLUSION**

7 Field Battery continues to maintain high enthusiasm and energy toward achieving the objectives of the 2004 training schedule. The Battery is gearing up for its second Annual Field Exercise for the year, in Sep 04 and is looking forward to the high tempo September-October period. Our thoughts also go out to Col and Jenni Turner as Col continues with his battle. We all wish Col a quick and speedy recovery.

'UBIQUE'

Ian Hodgkins  
Warrant Officer Class Two  
Sergeant Major Instructor Gunnery

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**Quick Snap!**



Anzac Day '04

(L to R) Brig. Hand, Comd 13 Bde  
Mr Les Herbert  
Mr. Peter Rowles, Pres. 3 Fd Regt RAAA.

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead

## 2/7 AUST FD REGT (W.A.) EX - MEMBERS` ASSN (Inc)

At the monthly meeting held at Anzac House on Tuesday 13th July there were 12 members present with 3 apologies. This may seem a rather small number but when it is realised that all members, if they are not 80 years of age must be very close, and many who would be there, but for the various ailments that come with age, we feel this is a fair showing.

On opening the meeting the President, Peter Kennedy asked members to rise and pay their respects to WX 3165 Hugh Strain I.S.M. Hon Life Member, who passed away on 10th July Age 93.

During his service with 2/7 Aust Fd Regt Hugh was a member of the Survey party and earned the respect of all who came in touch with him. Much of his life was spent in the bush and he was an excellent bushman with an unerring sense of direction. His knowledge of geography and survey earned him a reputation of a soldier to be relied on.

After the war Hugh continued his survey work with the Water Supply Department and for his work on the various dams around the South West and the pipelines he was awarded the Imperial Service Medal on 12th July 1977.

At the funeral conducted at Fremantle Cemetery on 16th July the Ex-Members` Assn was represented by 4 members.

### **Ubique Alf Richards**

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**Fort Point, San Francisco** Ian Maxwell

Beneath the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco lies Fort Point. The Fort was built between 1853 and 1861 by the US Army to prevent entrance of a hostile fleet into San Francisco Bay. The Fort itself is built of brick and was designed to mount 126 muzzle loading smooth bore cannon.

She was first garrisoned in early 1861 and was occupied throughout the US Civil War. However in the advent of more powerful rifled ordnance made brick forts such as Fort Point obsolete. In 1886 the troops were withdrawn, and the last cannon was removed in 1900.

Fort Point was replaced in its coastal defence role by gun (and later missile) batteries located within the Presidio, an adjacent US Army base with a long military history dating back to 1776 when the Spanish first erected a wooden fort.

Today Fort Point is a National Historic Site while the Presidio is a National Park. Both contain displays that are worth visiting.

Displays at Fort Point include:

- Model 1858 8 inch and 10 inch seacoast Columbiads smoothbore cannon, each mounted on wooden centre pintle, barbette carriages.
- A model 1861 10 inch Rodman



A model 1861 10 inch Rodman at Fort Point San Francisco mounted on a wrought iron, centre pintle, barbette carriage is displayed.

- A model 1857 12 pounder bronze field gun, or Napoleon.

Each of these weapons were widely used during the US Civil War. Columbiads for example were mounted at Fort Sumter when it was attacked in April 1861 by the Confederates to open the war. The Napoleon design field gun was widely used by both the Federal and Confederate forces.

Within the Presidio complex is a small museum. Outside is mounted a M1917 155 mm gun. Ten of these served with New Zealand forces during World War

Two - two in a coastal defence role at New Plymouth and eight in a field role in the Pacific.

FAW

#### Historic Trivia

Fort Point – San Fransisco.

Originally built as a coastal defence base against the Spanish in 1776.



# **THE AIMING POST**

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

### **President's Report:**

The public's interest in the Leighton Battery Tunnels is going from strength to strength and it is pleasing to note the favourable comments relative to the Audio System now commissioned.

This presents a change, which is always welcomed by the public and their continuing interest in the Complex and its progress.

The Society continues to enjoy strong support by its volunteers to enable its commitments to be met and developed.

To each and every one of you many thanks as a society is only as strong as the Membership Support.

Bruce G. Campbell  
**President**

### **In this Issue**

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## A SOUND DECISION

Mention was made in the June 2004 Edition of Artillery WA that a "Launching Ceremony" was planned to officially open the newly installed Audio System in the Tunnel Complex at Leighton Battery Heritage Site.

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, the Mayor of Mosman Park, Dr. Bruce Moore JP, declared the system operative in the presence of the Sponsors – Fremantle Ports and Bruce G Campbell, - David Jenkins of PIVoD Sound Technology (System Design), Rick Mason SIAM New Media (Audio Production), Members of National Trust WA and several special guests with long association in the development of the Heritage Site.

Vice President David Carter hosted the function and following refreshments, invited the Guests to tour the Tunnel Complex and listen to the Audio Presentation. Reaction from the Guests was most complimentary.



Dr. Bruce Moore - Mayor of Town of Mosman Park, Mr. Bruce Campbell – President RAAHS and Sponsor, Mr. David Carter – V/President RAAHS and Mrs. Kerry Anderson – CEO Fremantle Ports and Sponsor.

Included with this Edition of Artillery WA is a Flyer inviting Society Members and their families to visit the Heritage Site on Sunday, 21 November 2004 at 11.00 hours to inspect and listen to the Audio System. A "Sausage Sizzle" BBQ Lunch will be available for the modest charge of \$5.00 per head. Be sure to respond by the RSVP date 12 November 2004.

**Don Rae**

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead

## The Potshot (Exmouth) Secret Base: The Artillery Presence.

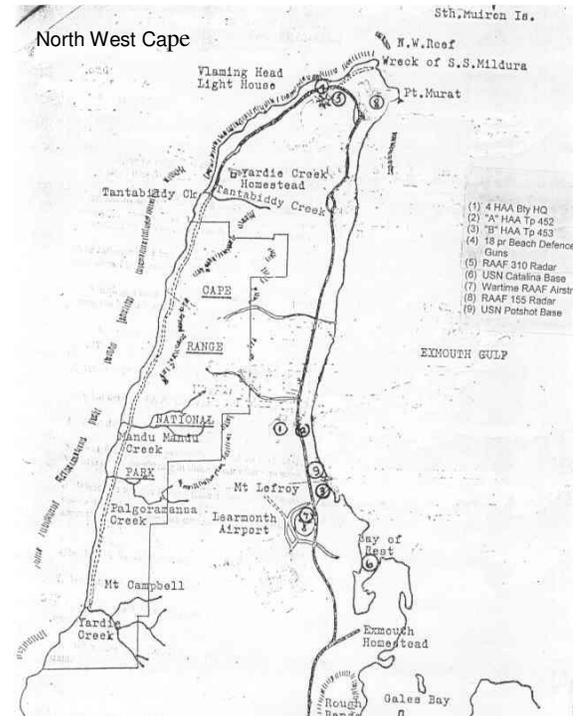
By Bob Glyde

February/March 1942 was a time of much apprehension for most Australians, particularly those in Western Australia. Firstly the 15<sup>th</sup> February brought the news of the fall of Singapore, then on the 19<sup>th</sup> February, the bombing of Darwin. It seemed as if the relentless movement southward of the Japanese was unstoppable. Then, as the Philippines were isolated, the submarines of the United States Asiatic Fleet were forced to leave their peacetime base at Subic Bay, taking refuge at the Dutch naval base at Surabaya before that base too, became untenable

Senior officers from the US Navy were examining possible bases from where the submarines would be able to carry out their attacks on Japanese shipping. There were no ports between Darwin and Fremantle on the western coast of Australia with the backup facilities for the operation of these units. Darwin was already under attack and the submarine depot ships were too valuable to expose to damage or sinking. Fremantle was so far south that Rear Admiral Purnell, USN decided to examine the possibility of developing a base near North West Cape in the waters of Exmouth Gulf. There were no facilities whatsoever in the area, however he felt that by establishing a submarine tender with its attendant auxiliary vessels at the site, he could save the long haul down to Fremantle. Not only were there no facilities, the only available anchorage gave no protection from the cyclones which frequently swept through the area during the October/April cyclone season. The idea was not proceeded with at the time.

Early in March 1942, Rear Admiral Carpenter USN, who had been appointed Commander, US Forces for the SW Pacific Area, notified the Australian Government of his intention to base twenty five Asiatic Fleet submarines at Fremantle, together with their depot ships "Holland" and "Otus" as well as auxiliary vessels. The USS "Otus" was replaced by the USS "Pelias" in July, to enable the former to return to the US to complete its outfitting as a submarine depot ship. It returned to Fremantle early in 1943.

A further reconnaissance was undertaken in April after which Rear Admiral C S Lockwood, the task force commander, signified his intention to establish an advanced base in the Exmouth Gulf. The code name for the base was "Potshot".



The plan for the development of the base provided for the construction of a landing strip, maintenance facilities for fighter aircraft and shore based patrol planes, a radar station, roads, water storage, a pontoon pier and moorings for a submarine tender with A/S defences and underwater detection gear. Accommodation was to cater for up to five hundred personnel. Anti-aircraft defences were also to be provided. Bulk fuel storage tanks were to be built at the small port of Onslow, situated about 150 kms away on the northeast shores of the Gulf.

Early in July 1942, the situation existed where there were twenty large submarines operating from Fremantle, serviced by the USS "Otus" and five at Albany together with the USS "Holland". Due to the congested nature of Fremantle and the possibility of a Japanese attack, it had been decided in March to move some of the units to Albany. They were accompanied by the

submarine tender USS "Holland" and the seaplane tender USS "Childs" with a number of Catalina flying boats to carry out seaward patrols from the port. The seaplane tender and 3 PB5 (Catalina) aircraft left Albany on 19<sup>th</sup> May and went to the Bay of Rest on the southern side of Exmouth Gulf, where an anchorage was established.

The home porting of submarines at Albany continued until August 1942, when the base was closed down.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1942, when a 500-ton oil lighter arrived from Darwin, the Fremantle based submarines were able to top up their fuel tanks before setting off on their patrols, which took them as far north as the South China Sea. On their return they were able to top up with fuel to reach Fremantle, if this were necessary. This effectively increased their range by a further 2400 kilometres.

It was not until November 1942 that the plan submitted by the Advance Base Planning Committee was approved and the planned shore works were put immediately under construction. The plan called for a USN HFDF station, a landing strip, a RAAF radar station, a 1.8 km concrete airstrip for an RAAF fighter squadron and an Australian heavy anti-aircraft battery.

On 11<sup>th</sup> December, LHQ Melbourne issued an instruction to raise the AA units required. A AA Battery HQ was to be transferred from the Victorian L of C area. The unit eventually chosen was the 4<sup>th</sup> Aust Heavy AA Battery. Two Gun Stations, Nos 452 and 453 were to be manned by personnel from the Melbourne AA Defence establishment. The CASL Sections were to be manned by personnel posted from the Coast Defence Fortress Engineer units in the WA L of C area. They were known as the 166<sup>th</sup> (2 moving lights) and the 167<sup>th</sup> (2 moving lights) Aust. CASL Sections. The equipment for the HAA Battery was to be provided from stocks held in the Victorian L of C area whilst the equipment for the CASL sections was to be provided by the WA L of C area from existing sources..

On Boxing Day 1942, Lt F Ingram and a group from the 5<sup>th</sup> Aust. HAA Battery, left Fremantle for Exmouth on the fleet oiler USS "Trinity" together with an advance party from the 4<sup>th</sup> Aust. AA Battery under the command of Major Jones. Lt

Ingram's party was responsible for the assembly of the eight 3.7 inch (94 mm) mobile HAA guns and two 40-mm Bofors guns. His report, dated the 11<sup>th</sup> January, noted gross neglect during the handling at Fremantle with essential equipment missing or damaged from the 3.7inch guns, preventing them from being brought into action immediately. One set of forward area sights was missing from one of the 40-mm guns. Both were set up for immediate action with ammunition at the landing point and the gun assembly area.

The assembly group returned to Fremantle on the vessels "Koolinda" and USS "Gulf Star", which had delivered the main party of the 4<sup>th</sup> Aust. HAA Battery to the site on the 30<sup>th</sup> December and had completed unloading on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 1943.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Aust HAA Battery was a Victorian unit. It had its origins in the 4<sup>th</sup> AA Cadre, which was authorised and formed in 1938 as a Victorian militia unit. Its officers were initially from the 23<sup>rd</sup> /21<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion. With the outbreak of the war, it became a training battery and formed the nucleus of the 2<sup>nd</sup> AA Regiment (AIF). Initially it was responsible for the AA defence of the port at Melbourne.



Exmouth – North West Cape – 3.7in Gun and Crew in Coast/AA Mode.  
4<sup>th</sup> HAA Battery 1943  
AWM Photo. (058324)

When transferred to Exmouth, it consisted of two troops namely the 452<sup>nd</sup> and 453<sup>rd</sup> Aust HAA Troops, each with four 3.7 in HAA guns and a 40 mm Bofors gun, the latter for the defence of the gun stations, as they were known, against low level attacks. Initially the unit came under the control of HQ 8<sup>th</sup> Aust AA group at Fremantle. It would appear the guns were installed in temporary emplacements whilst permanent facilities were built, with the guns being able to operate in the dual role of AA and coast defence. The battery

operated two AA Radar Mk II sets, which was also capable of assisting in the coast defence role. Two searchlight sections, the 166<sup>th</sup> and 167<sup>th</sup> Aust CASL Section, were attached. 4600 rounds of 40 mm ammunition, six 3 ton trucks and a Wiles Cooker accompanied the main party, as well as the radar sets.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Aust Corps Operations Instruction No.42 dated the 24<sup>th</sup> February listed the following artillery and associated units as being on site at Exmouth.

- HQ 4 Aust AA Battery
- 452 Aust Tp AA gun stn (Class A)
- 453 Aust Tp AA gun stn (Class A)
- 166 Aust CASL Sec (3 moving lights)
- 167 Aust CASL Sec (2 moving lights)
- 4 Aust AA Bty Sig Detachment
- 6 Aust Hy AA Workshop Section

In addition, a section of two 18 prs, with two Army NCOs, to act as permanent gun detachment commanders, were allocated for the protection of the RAAF radar equipment at North West Cape in the vicinity of the Vlaming Head lighthouse.. The two Army personnel came under the command of the OC, RAAF Station, and North West Cape. The 4<sup>th</sup> Aust AA Battery was responsible for the training of the RAAF personnel allotted to the manning of the guns. Each gun was allocated 300 rounds fitted with Fuze 119 and 60 rounds of armour piecing shot. A further 100 rounds of HE were provided for training purposes. These latter details formed part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corp Operational Instruction No. 44 dated the 4<sup>th</sup> March 1943.

In March, two troops of 40mm Bofors guns of the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Aust LAA Regiment with support units, moved from the fighter airstrip at Onslow to cover the new airstrip built at Exmouth for the RAAF. An exercise involving the AA defence facilities in the area was undertaken with reported satisfactory results. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Aust Radar Detachment was raised on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 1943 and did not become operational until the 5<sup>th</sup> May. They conducted a number of training exercises with other units soon after. The unit was equipped with coast artillery radar equipment.

There must have been some concern that the facility might attract an assault from the sea of Japanese forces, as a detailed instruction was issued on the 18<sup>th</sup> March concerning the removal and disposal of equipment in the event of such an attack occurring.

Potshot had been developed in great secrecy, however at 2309 hours on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 1943, two Japanese aircraft flying at 5000 metres dropped a number of bombs in the area, six of which dropped near the RAAF radar site. They landed in a metre of water and no damage occurred. The following night at 0036 hours, a single aircraft flying at 5200 metres released nine bombs, which caused no damage. The authorities were apparently aware the security of the base had been compromised previously as on the 8<sup>th</sup> May, an instruction was issued changing the code word for the facility at North West Cape from "Potshot" to "Erosion".

Following the two air raids, the Americans decided to withdraw their submarine depot ship back to Fremantle and maintain the facility at Exmouth purely as an advanced refuelling base. That the secrecy of the base had been compromised meant that the depot ship could come under attack and the loss of such a vessel would seriously affect the operation of the submarine units.

The scheme had proved to be a failure from the start. The north westerly winds produced a heavy swell in the Gulf waters and except in the most favourable conditions, the servicing and maintenance of the units alongside the USS "Pelias" could not be safely carried out. Weather was also a factor. Already in February, a cyclone had affected the area causing havoc and damage. The USS "Pelias" returned to Fremantle on the 27<sup>th</sup> May after only being in the Gulf for approximately one month. To supplement the fuel barge, the oil tanker mv "Ondina" was stationed in the Gulf from the 22<sup>nd</sup> June and the submarines were able to come alongside the tanker and refuel direct from the ship's tanks.

The "Ondina" had an interesting history. The ship had been badly damaged during an attack by two Japanese raiders in November 1942 during which the tanker and its small escort had sunk one of the enemy ships. The "Ondina" had been able to return to Fremantle under its own power and was held at the port, there being no facilities to repair the heavy damage suffered. The ship was requisitioned by the Navy to provide additional storage at Exmouth. After it returned to Fremantle when the oil storage tanks were commissioned at Onslow towards the end of 1943, it was sent to the East Coast of the US to be rebuilt.

In June 1943, following discussions between the army and air force hierarchy at Land HQ, Melbourne, Composite AA Regiments were formed for the express purpose of defending advance air bases such as the one at Exmouth. These units were of two types, namely Higher Establishment (HE) equipped with two 3.7 in gun batteries, each of four guns and two 40 mm gun batteries, each of twelve guns and Lower Establishment (LE) units comprised one 3.7 in gun battery and one 40 mm gun battery.

In June, the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Aust LAA Regiment was withdrawn from the Order of Battle pending the unit moving to the Eastern States where it was disbanded. A Troop of guns from the 151<sup>st</sup> Aust LAA Battery replacing "P" Battery of the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Aust LAA Regiment.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1943 the War Diary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Aust Radar Detachment recorded an Air Raid Warning, Red at 0005 hours. The aircraft flew off without dropping any bombs but the War Diary recorded that the HAA guns engaged the aircraft, firing 27 rounds.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 4<sup>th</sup> Aust HAA Battery was disbanded, becoming the HQ 102<sup>nd</sup> Aust Composite AA Regiment (HE) based at Guildford. It then comprising 140<sup>th</sup> Aust HAA Battery responsible for the 452<sup>nd</sup> and 453<sup>rd</sup> HAA Gun stations with the troops renamed "A" and "B" at Exmouth. The light AA units, 151<sup>st</sup> and 152<sup>nd</sup> Aust LAA Batteries were originally units of the 109<sup>th</sup> Aust LAA Regiment. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Aust Corps Location Statement 21<sup>st</sup> August, Regimental HQ at Guildford, the 151<sup>st</sup> Battery (less one troop), Redcliffe, "R" Battery (one troop 151<sup>st</sup> Battery) at Exmouth, 152<sup>nd</sup> Battery (less one troop) at Geraldton, one troop of 152<sup>nd</sup> Battery at Pearce.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Aust Corps Location Statement 31<sup>st</sup> August, the Regimental HQ was shown as Guildford, it is thought that the HQ unit reverted to 109<sup>th</sup> Aust AA Training Battery stationed at Mt Lawley and soon after left for the Eastern States.

The 138<sup>th</sup> HAA Battery, although allocated to the 102<sup>nd</sup> Aust Regiment, was not raised at this stage. Already on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September, USN Admiral Christie had suggested the withdrawal of the

Australian AA batteries and the RAAF fighter aircraft from the area.

The regiment was redeployed to provide AA defences at the RAAF advanced operational base at Corunna Downs on the 5<sup>th</sup> November. Battery HQ, 140<sup>th</sup> Aust HAA Battery plus "B" Troop with Battery HQ, 151<sup>st</sup> Aust LAA Battery plus "A" Troop were assigned to this task. Battery HQ 152<sup>nd</sup> and the two Troops were assigned to the defence of Pearce Air Base. Rear Regimental HQ 102<sup>nd</sup> was established in the metropolitan area. The remainders of the units were moved back to Fremantle in November 1943. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Aust Radar Detachment was posted to Garden Island to provide radar surveillance for the coast batteries. When those batteries were disbanded at the end of 1944, it was posted to Rottnest to replace the 5<sup>th</sup> Aust Radar Detachment, which was then disbanded.

The RAAF AOB was established at Noonkanbah on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1943, however AA defences were not provided until early in 1944 when sub units of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Aust Composite AA Regiment ("A" Troop of 140<sup>th</sup> Aust HAA Battery and Battery HQ, 152<sup>nd</sup> Aust LAA Battery plus "B" Troop), moved from Exmouth. The HQ, 138<sup>th</sup> Aust HAA Battery was raised on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1944 thus anti aircraft defence at this base was made up of eight 3.7 inch and six 40 mm Bofor guns. The guns of the new unit had been emplaced and proof fired by the 11<sup>th</sup> July. A number of practice shoots were conducted over the next two months. On the 20<sup>th</sup> October, the unit received the warning order to return to Perth. The movement was by road to Meekatharra where it arrived on the 13<sup>th</sup> November, reaching Perth on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 1944.

The USN undertook the defence of the facilities remaining at the Exmouth refuelling base, manning four 40 mm and other smaller AA guns.

The 18 pr beach defence guns were removed in November 1944 and in February 1945 a cyclone destroyed the radar station 315, for which the guns had been positioned to defend. The station was quickly replaced and was operational again by the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1945.

The 102<sup>nd</sup> Aust Composite AA Regiment was disbanded in January/February 1945.



Sergeant H. W. Hardman of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Special Radio Detachment, checking on aircraft warning devices – Exmouth Gulf 1943.  
AWM Photo (058313)

When the costs and effort involved in the Potshot/Erosion project are considered and that the original exercise only lasted for approximately one month, one would have to question the study

that must have been done, firstly putting the project forward and finally the knowledge of those people approving the implementation of the project.

#### Information Sources

3 Aust Corps War Diaries and Appendices.  
Unidentified Photocopied History of the "Potshot" Project. Held by RAA Historical Soc of WA  
Operations of the Fremantle Submarine Base 1942-1945 by David Creed.  
Fremantle Secret Fleets by Lynne Cairns.  
Material from Australian National Archives.  
Extracts from Unit War Diaries held by the Australian War Memorial.  
Notes on 4<sup>th</sup> Aust HAA Battery and 102<sup>nd</sup> Aust Composite Regiment provided by K Glyde – Hobart.

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## RESTORING "RELICS"

Two major restoration tasks have been undertaken by the Workshop Team in recent months:

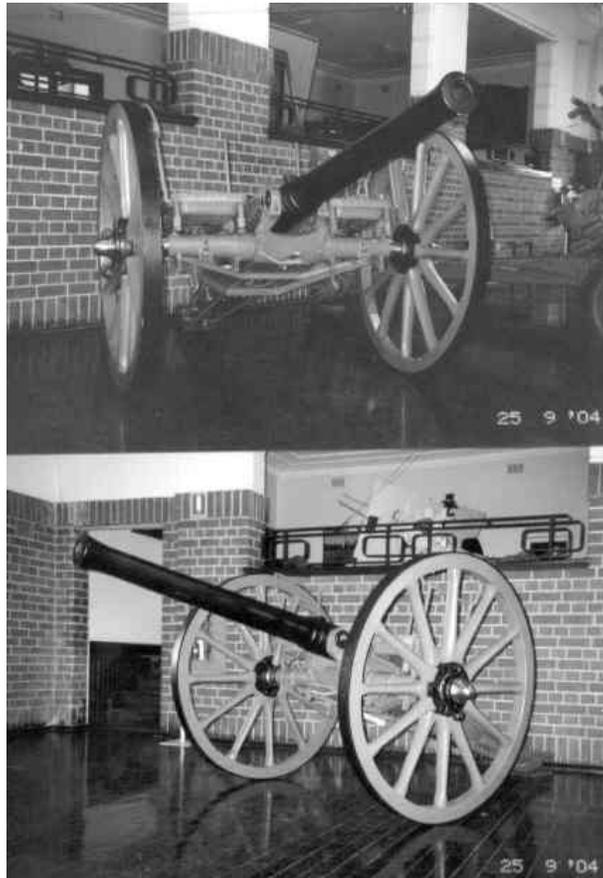
The City of South Perth requested our assistance in the restoration of their WW1 Trophy of War – a 170mm German Minenwerfer – presented to the then Roads Board by the Commonwealth in 1920. The Mortar was captured by the 16<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion near Villers-Bretonneux in 1918 proudly displayed on the corner of Labouchere Road and Angelo Street in South Perth. In reasonable condition considering its age, the Mortar has been completely reworked and is currently being sand blasted and treated to prevent further degradation.



At about the same time that the City of South Perth approached us with their request, Navy League of WA on behalf of the Naval Cadet Training Ship Perth called on our expertise to totally restore two 1881 Sir W. G. Armstrong 3 inch Rifled Breech Loading Naval Mount Guns. In remarkable condition considering their age, these guns have been completely dismantled and the components sand

blasted and treated prior to reassembly. Herein lies a challenge! Numerous items have disintegrated due to age and exposure and will need to be replicated for authenticity – a task well within the expertise of the Restoration Team comprising Don Boneham, John Drummond, Harvey Everett and Kevin Hamilton ably assisted by Tony Arrigo and Jack McRoberts.

A Krupp Gun restored by the Team on display at the HAP Drill Hall



Working quietly in the “background” Ken Thurston is putting the finishing touches to the 1896 15pr Rifled Breech Loading Gun transferred to the Society on Permanent Loan from Army Museum of WA Foundation. This Gun has undergone a transformation since received by the Society and it is planned to display it on the Mezzanine Floor in the Hobbs Artillery Park Drill Hall alongside the 18pr Gun and Limber.

With assistance from the National Artillery Museum at Manly NSW, it is hoped to obtain Drawings to enable the fabrication of a Breech Block and Elevating Gear to return the Gun to its former glory – yet another challenge for the Restoration Team!

Well done Team!



## **LAST POST**

**Maj. IAN BESSELL- BROWNE MBE**

**Brig. ROBERT M. DAVIS ED**

### **Maj. IAN BESSELL BROWNE MBE**

MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY WILL BE SADDENED TO LEARN THAT FOUNDATION MEMBER AND PAST PATRON IAN BESSELL-BROWNE MBE, PASSED AWAY AT HOLLIWOOD HOSPITAL ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2004 AGED 93 YEARS.

IAN WAS A DISTINGUISHED SOLDIER. SON OF BRIGADIER GENERAL A. J. BESSELL-BROWNE, IAN WAS COMMISSIONED IN THE 3<sup>RD</sup> FIELD BRIGADE AFA IN THE 1930'S AND APPOINTED BATTERY COMMANDER 6<sup>TH</sup> BATTERY, 2/3 AUSTRALIAN FIELD REGIMENT RAA IN OCTOBER 1939.

HE SERVED WITH DISTINCTION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, NOTRH AFRICA, GREECE AND CRETE. CAPTURED IN CRETE, IAN SPENT THE REMAINING YEARS OF THE WW2 AS A PRISONER OF WAR IN GERMANY. IAN'S SERVICE WAS REWARDED WITH THE AWARD OF THE MBE.

HIS MILITARY SERVICE DID NOT END POST WAR. HE COMMANDED THE 24<sup>TH</sup> HEAVY ANTI AIRCRAFT REGIMENT RAA THAT WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCOMMODATE THE INFLUX OF NATIONAL SERVICEMEN IN THE 1950'S.

A TRUE OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN, IAN WILL BE MISSED BY HIS WIDE CIRCLE OF GUNNER COLLEAGUES.

SINCERE CONDOLENCES TO IAN'S FAMILY, SUSANNA, GUY AND ANNE.

### **Brig. ROBERT M. DAVIS ED**

BRIGADIER ROBERT M DAVIS, ED, PASSED AWAY PEACEFULLY ON 27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2004 AGED 90 YEARS. A DISTINGUISHED SOLDIER, BRIGADIER DAVIS WAS COMMISSIONED IN THE 3<sup>RD</sup> FIELD BRIGADE IN MID 1930 AND VOLUNTEERED FOR ACTIVE SERVICE IN THE 2/3<sup>RD</sup> FIELD REGIMENT RAA AT THE OUTBREAK OF WW2. HE WAS ALLOTTED THE SERVICE NUMBER WX25.

AFTER SERVICE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, NORTH AFRICA AND THE GREECE/CRETE CAMPAIGNS HE RETURNED TO AUSTRALIA AND SUBSEQUENTLY SAW SERVICE IN NEW GUINEA. WITH THE REFORMATION OF THE CITIZEN MILITARY FORCES IN 1948 HE WAS APPOINTED BATTERY COMMANDER "P" BTY 3<sup>RD</sup> FIELD REGIMENT RAA LATER COMMANDING THE REGIMENT FROM 1954 TO 1956. SHORTLY AFTERWARDS HE WAS APPOINTED COMMANDING OFFICER 16<sup>TH</sup> BATTALION THE CAMERON HIGHLANDERS FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.

SERVICE CONTINUED IN STAFF APPOINTMENTS CULMINATING IN HIS PROMOTION TO BRIGADIER AS COMMANDER, HEADQUARTERS GROUP 13<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY BRIGADE. UPON RETIREMENT, BRIGADIER DAVIS MAINTAINED CLOSE CONNECTIONS WITH HIS WARTIME UNIT ASSOCIATION AND WAS PATRON ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION WA.

HE WAS A MEMBER OF 3<sup>RD</sup> FIELD REGIMENT ASSOCIATION AND AN HONORARY MEMBER OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WA (INC).

HE WAS CREMATED ON 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2004. CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY FROM ALL THE GUNNER FRATERNITY.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The following was received from Mr. Keith Glyde in Tasmania, to augment our article about mottos in the previous newsletter.

Dear Gabriel,

I read with interest the article on Mottos of the Regiment in Edition 3 of Artillery and have some comments which may be of interest to your readers.

The first is that 'A' Field Battery RAA would be entirely correct in adopting the motto *Semper Paratus* as that was the motto of the NSW Artillery (Permanent) and its successor, the NSW Regiment of Royal Australian Artillery, until 1902/1903. The motto *Semper Fidelis* was that of the partially-paid field batteries and garrison companies of the NSW Artillery. I don't know when these were adopted but certainly they are shown as such in the NSW Army and Navy Lists of 1898 and 1901.

Other mottos in use in the post-Federation period included *Worane*, adopted about 1915 by Victorian units of the Australian Field Artillery, and *Adjuturus*, used unofficially by No. 1 Tasmanian Battery AFA prior to the Great War. All the mottos other than *Consensu Stabiles* appear to have lapsed about 1921.

Prior to Federation the following mottos were used by artillery units of the Australian colonial defence forces:

Queensland Regiment of RAA	- <i>Consensu Stabiles</i> (Strong in Agreement)
Queensland Artillery	- <i>Pro aris et focis</i> (For Altars and Hearths)
Brisbane Garrison Battery	- <i>Non sibi sed patriae</i>
New South Wales Regiment of RAA	- <i>Semper Paratus</i> (Always Ready)
New South Wales Artillery	- <i>Semper Fidelis</i> (Always Faithful)
Victoria	- <i>Aut pace aut bello</i> (In Peace and In War), superseded on 1st August 1892 by <i>Pro Deo et Patria</i> (For God and Country)
South Australia	- <i>Aut pace aut bello</i> (In Peace and In War)
Western Australia	- <i>Aut pace aut bello</i> (In Peace and In War)
Tasmania	- <i>Pro aris et focis</i> (For Altars and Hearths)

early as 1919 with the granting of an alliance between the Australian artillery and the Royal Artillery in that year by King George V. The motto *Quo fas et gloria ducunt* and permission to adopt the badge of the Royal Artillery bearing both this motto and *Ubique* was granted by King George VI in 1949.\* It might be of interest to note that the motto *Quo fas et gloria ducunt* was worn at various times prior to the Great War by officers of both the Royal Australian Artillery and the permanent artillery of the colonies on their badges and accoutrements, quite in conformation with dress regulations of the period which only disallowed the bearing of the battle-honour *Ubique* which was then specific to the regular elements of the Royal Artillery only.

Hopefully you may be able to publish this in a future edition of Artillery WA without too much controversy. The information is based on Army Lists and Dress Regulations of the period as well as a file on the adoption of the RA motto dated 1949/1950 held in National Archives of Australia and I can provide these references if you require it. \*\*