



# Artillery WA



Official Newsletter of the Royal Australian Artillery Association of WA (Inc), RAA Historical Society of WA (Inc)

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Web Site: <http://www.artillerywa.org.au>

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**150 AUSTRALIAN**  
Years **ARTILLERY**

**1871 -2021**

**Head of Regiment**

**Order of the Day**

**Saint Barbara's Day, 04 December 2021**

Fellow Gunners,

This year's Saint Barbara's Day holds great significance, as it presents for us the opportunity to reflect on our own circumstances today, commemorate the achievements of our forebears, and look forward with anticipation towards a future prospect that is both exhilarating and exacting.

We take this opportunity to come together and enjoy the company of all fellow Gunners across Australia - serving and former - and with our comrade Gunners in the Royal Regiments of Artillery across the Commonwealth, as well as our counterparts in the United States Army and Marine Corps Artillery.

In this year, our 150th Anniversary of the Australian Artillery - a milestone mirrored by our Canadian Gunner comrades we look back with pride and appreciation of those Australian Gunners who rose to each challenge over those fifteen decades. Those Gunners served, strove and sacrificed in every theatre of conflict, and in their duties to their compatriots and to their nation. Our National Salute on 01 August this year, fired across the continent in six jurisdictions, brought home both the diversity and the unity of effort within our Royal Regiment.

Despite the difficulties and setbacks this past year has presented, I am immensely proud of the fortitude, the professionalism and the grit that each Gunner has demonstrated. 'Together, home', we have brought about the operational, training, engagement, modernisation and ceremonial outcomes that were set. Each of you should be justly confident that your efforts have successfully set the conditions needed for those who follow us to continue on - where right and glory lead.

As we look forward, the commemoration of our first 150 years continues, with the presentation of our new Sovereign's Banner, planned for later in 2022, at the close of our Anniversary year.

Beyond, we see the unfolding of perhaps the greatest periods of modernisation and expansion of Australian artillery since the Second World War - across all RAA roles and functions. As we embark on the Artillery Modernisation Plan to 2040, we can be confident that the future ready RAA will be more potent, more pervasive and more lethal, with unprecedented reach to sense, acquire and strike across multiple domains.

To all Gunners of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, and to the wider Australian Gunner community, on whose support we rely, I congratulate you for all that you have achieved in this 150th Anniversary year, and offer best wishes to all of you for the years ahead.

Ubique,

***RA Vagg DSC***

Brigadier Head of Regiment



**NOTICE BOARD**

**Web Site: <http://www.artillerywa.org.au>**

**ITEMS FOR PUBLICATION IN ARTY WA**

Items for inclusion, and which are regularly needed, should be submitted to the Editor Bob Arnold at [anold353@bigpond.com](mailto:anold353@bigpond.com)

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**WELFARE FUND OFFICER**

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

**RAAHS BUSY BEES**

**Last Saturday of each month excluding December**

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**LEIGHTON BATTERY OPEN DAYS**

Sunday 10am-3pm  
Adults \$10, Children \$4.  
Adults \$10, Children

**OFFICE BEARERS**

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Bob Farrelly

**Vice President**

Peter Mahoney

**Secretary**

John Blylevens

**Treasurer**

StanDavies

**Committee Persons**

Wendy Mahoney

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Robert Coales

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James Archibald

**IT Consultant**

Stan Davies

**Curator**

Don Rae

For those who need a reminder – subs are due on the First of January each year and may be paid directly to the treasurer or may be made direct to the Bank Accounts:  
RAA Historical Society – BSB 066 103 Account No 0090 3744

## THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

2021 was the 150th anniversary of artillery in Australia.

The National gunfire salute was interrupted by Covid in some States but 3 BTY successfully fired the Salute at King's Park on a wild and wintery day here in Perth. 2022 will be the 150th anniversary of Artillery in Western Australia.

We had hoped to have the Queen's Banner here for Gunner's Day but I have been advised this will not be possible as the Regiment is being presented the new Queen's Banner the day before. Discussions with the Head of Regiment suggest we may well be able to secure the Banner for the Feast of Saint Barbara next year which would be fitting.

The end of the year has been a busy one with Gunner's Day and the Feast of Saint Barbara.

### **Gunners Day 2020**

Gunners Day 2020, was held on Sunday, 7th of November and we had great weather.

The parade was led by Ken Hepworth with the salute taken by BRIG Gerry Warner AM LVO, our Patron. Reverend Katrina Holgate conducted the Memorial wreath laying service. Led by the Pipes & Drums from the Australian Army Band - Perth, Gunners past and present, serving Officers and Soldiers of 3 Battery RAA and members of the 56 Australian Cadet Unit (Fremantle) marched along Stirling Street turning into the footpath parallel to Meadow Street where BRIG Warner took the salute. The parade then moved into position around the War Memorial for the wreath laying service. Also in attendance was RSM 13 BDE, Jo Downes.

I would like to thank MAJ John Blylevens and the cadets from 56 ACU for their continued support for Gunner's Day and also thank the Pipes & Drums from The Australian Army Band - Perth for their support.

Following refreshments in the Church Hall the camaraderie was continued at the Rose & Crown hotel.

Put Sunday 6th of November 2022 in your diary when we will celebrate the 150 years of service by artillery in WA.

### **Feast of Saint Barbara**

The dinner with some 105 people was a great success. See Stan Davies report in this edition for more detail on the dinner.

It was a magnificent night with music provided by the 51 ACU Pipes and Drums and the Australian Army Band Perth. Food provided by Prestige Caterers was again of a high standard.

This year the Association's award for the "Most Outstanding Soldier" was presented to GNR Kyia Deimos. Great to see a woman receive the award.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of our Functions Sub Committee, Stan Davies, Tom Arnautovic, Peter Rowles and Brad Pearce for planning and organising the dinner.

Put a place holder in your diaries for Friday 2nd of December 2022 where we will again celebrate the 150 years of service by artillery in WA.

I would like to thank the RAA Association Committee for all their work during the year. It is greatly appreciated.

Congratulations to LTCOL Rob Coales who will become CO of WAUR from next year. We wish you every success in your command appointment.

To all and your families, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May it be a peaceful and safe one to enjoy with family and friends.

I look forward to seeing you in 2022.

**Ubique,**

Bob Farrelly LTCOL

President, RAA Association

## THE AIMING POST

### Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society

#### PRESIDENT'S REPORT HEADING INTO SUMMER 2021.

Dear Members,

To open with, a travel story.

In August I travelled with members of the Military History Association of W.A. to the former Base Ordnance Depot - W.W.2- at Nungarin. Today a substantial original building remains on site which houses a range of recovered wartime equipment. Nungarin is north of Merredin. The base stored huge amounts of munitions, ordnance, vehicles, clothing and rations. It was sited there in 1942 to be beyond the expected range of Japanese naval aircraft. The landscape features of the eastern wheatbelt at that time of year are beautiful!

In September members of the RAAHS committee had the pleasure of hosting the Federal Member for Curtin, Ms Celia Hammond MP, for a tour of the Leighton tunnel complex. The visit was to introduce her to our operations and thank her for supplying details regarding possible sources of future funding. We also reminded her on the day of the link between her electorate name and our former wartime P.M. John Curtin. She presented us with a blue ensign.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of October I was invited to attend the formal unveiling of a replica 155mm field gun on its war-time site at Point Peron. This area was occupied by two weapons of that calibre in WW2 to secure the Southern Passage (Pt. Peron to Garden Is.) against Axis naval vessels attempting to interfere with our shipping operations. Restoration work has also been done to the brick foundations that formed the Panama Mount used by this weapon. Member Phil Rowson was M.C. and gave an interesting address to the assembled guests. The replica builder is also building our 5.25" turret and barrel.

Also in October we received a complimentary letter from Celia Hammond the Federal Member for Curtin. (She toured our tunnel complex earlier in the month hosted by members of the Committee.)

The Committee will also now be amassing the estimated number of volunteer hours put into Society activities to date. That sizeable figure will be offered to any source of future funding that requests it.

Our energetic Busy- Bee members have now completed the labourious re-furbishment of the 5.25" threaded hold downs atop the central barbette. Matching nuts will be sourced and secured to them.

All steps throughout the Battery site have now been painted anti- slip safety yellow.

Above ground we have replaced components on many of the Society's public information panels which have weath-ered over the years. While on this theme- I note that our 3.7" HAA gun is in need of some tlc. This will be attended to. The salty local does it few favours!

Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> saw another Gunner's Day commemorative service at Guildford. Anyone with an interest in W.A. history can attend the outside event. Please consider that for the first Sunday in November 2022. It is at Stirling Square at 10 AM.

My thanks to every member who has helped the workings of our Society during the past year. So much of it goes on behind the scenes. That allows us to continue to present our key asset to the public safely and attractively.

As another Festive Season rapidly approaches, I would like to wish all RAAHS members and their families a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

*Kind regards,*

*David*

## Leighton Battery's 5.25in Primary Mission – Coast Defence or Anti-Aircraft?

The Society is in the process of having a replica 5.25in turret installed at Leighton Battery Heritage Site to enhance a visitor's experience with the surface elements of the site. I thought it useful to detail a brief history on the 5.25-inch weapon itself. As many will know, it was both a coast defence weapon and an anti-aircraft weapon. In both Australia and the UK, there was always a primary role for the weapon. So, to get you thinking, what was the primary role of the 5.25in CD/AA Leighton Battery – Coast Defence? Or Anti Aircraft?

The 5.25in gun was designed as a secondary weapon in the King George V class of battleships. Because of the restrictions placed on battleship displacement due to the London Naval Treaty, the King George V class could not accommodate both antiship guns of 6in calibre and anti-aircraft guns of roughly 4 to 4.5 inch calibre. In the end, the Royal Navy settled in a dual purpose weapon (similar to choices France had made with contemporary battleships) with a shell of 80 pounds equating to a bore size of 5.25 inches. The guns were to be mounted in twin turrets.

As a dual purpose weapon on both battleships and cruisers, it was a failure. Ship's companies rarely achieved the desired fire rates in an antiship role due to a very crowded turret and at the time ships were commissioned the speed of attacking aircraft was frequently beyond the ability of the gun to traverse. In addition, compromises that had to be made to keep cruiser weights down meant that a turret frequently jammed in heavy seas in the Dido class.



Figure 1. HMS King George 5 - Includes crew on deck, twin 5.25 guns and view of the ship at dock (<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/448662>)

However, we are more interested in the land based application of the 5.25in gun. As the imminent invasion of Britain began to fade in Oct 1940, Britain's AA Command was learning of the possibility that German aircraft would begin to operate regularly above 30,000 ft altitude. This was the maximum effective range of the existing 3.7in and 4.5 inch AA guns, and above what the predictors could work with.

AA Command was commanded by Lieutenant General Frederick Pile and he was clearly a person who took his role seriously and advocated for his men and women strongly at the highest levels. In March 1941 General Pile had a conversation with General McNaughton

(McNaughton was commander of Canadian Corps at the time and also had close relations with the first two Chiefs of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Edmund Ironside and Field Marshal John Dill). McNaughton advised Pile that the Navy had a few 5.25in twin AA guns available and that he should go see Bruce Fraser, Controller at the Admiralty to verify the information.

So, Pile went and visited Fraser who advised that indeed the production of guns was ahead of the cruisers and that perhaps half a dozen mountings might be available.

However, Fraser advised that any transfer could only be authorised by the First Lord of the Admiralty (Albert Alexander) and suggested that Pile ask everyone to dinner to see what could be done over brandy.

Not being shy, that is what Pile did. In Pile's recollections of the evening, the discussions over brandy appeared to be going well when Alexander turned to the First Sea Lord (Dudley Pound) and stated "Don't we want a lot more Bofors for our ships?" The First Sea Lord said "Yes, we can do with a large number." "Very well," Alexander said. "You can have the 5.25in guns in exchange for 300 Bofors."

A member of Pile's staff, who was accompanying him, scribbled a note encouraging Pile to accept as "the PM has already ordered us to give up about 200 Bofors, and we are certain to be milked of the other 100." So, the deal was done.

In the end, only three equipments were transferred to the Army from the Navy. One equipment was sent to the US, while it isn't clear what happened to the other two.

Conversations around future requirements were very active between March and July 1941, as well as the conversation between dual and single mountings.

At the 16 April 1941 meeting of Chiefs of Staff Committee, it was agreed that the Navy would release 50 twin mountings and 100 guns and look to supply 500 twin mountings and 1000 guns to meet the needs of the Air Defences of Great Britain). But by 7 May, the Chiefs of Staff had had a change of heart and suggested that a single gun mounting appeared to be the best way to go forward (There is likely to be more of a story on how the twin 5.25in gun mountings became a single gun mounting, but it appears Fraser was influential in supporting the production of single 5.25in guns in place of the dual, which apparently took much longer to manufacture).

Further conversations involving the Ministry of Supply and War Office resulted in a proposal on 13 July by the VIGS to use 5.25in single guns as replacements for 150 dual role 4.5in, 200 x 6in/ 45 degree coast defence guns and 500 x 5.25in guns in single mountings in an anti-aircraft role. The compromises were deemed acceptable and it was easier to produce hundreds of the same gun and mounting than three different ones.

easier to produce hundreds of the same gun and mounting than three different ones.

The proposal was agreed on 16 July with a firm order of 100 x 5.25in single guns and mountings placed.

How the 5.25in gun comes to Australia is uncertain. The earliest reference to the 5.25in gun I have come across in the relevant files is an AAS Letter from London forwarding information relative to the 5.25in gun on 23 May 1942. This is nine months after the decision had been reached in the UK

But the first recommendations to procure the 5.25in gun come from a report of an Inter-Service Sub-Committee on Coast and Anti-Aircraft Defences. It met on 13 August 1942 by direction of the Chiefs of Staff to look at future requirements of coast and anti-aircraft defences. The prompt to create this committee is not documented. Looking through decisions of War Cabinet it appears to be an interaction between War Cabinet trying to get control and a better handle on its financial commitments with respect to mobilisation early on in the war and working through the impacts of the creation of the SouthWest Pacific Area under the command of General MacArthur.

The report the Report of Inter-Service Sub-Committee on Coast and Anti-Aircraft Defences was completed by early September and submitted to the Defence Committee on 14 Oct 1942.

In the section on Anti-Aircraft defences, the Sub-Committee recommended the 5.25in gun to protect 15 vulnerable points with an AA role is primary and a CD role as secondary. It could shoot higher and further than the standard 3.7in gun. Seven localities were identified for batteries (2 in Sydney, 2 in Fremantle (Garden Island, 1 each in Moresby, Kembla, Newcastle, Whyalla and Adelaide).

War Cabinet approved the purchase of 27 x 5.25in equipments on 5 Jan 1943 (Minute no. 2605) under Agenda 30/43 as suggested by the Defence Committee. However, the funds required to construct the batteries were NOT included in agenda due to the long lead time for delivery of the equipments (originally projected to be late 1943, which eventually became early 1944).

By the time the guns were due to arrive, the war position had improved considerably to the point that only four batteries were requested to be constructed via Supplement No. 3 to Agenda 30/43 (which was approved under Minute 3281, 21 Jan 1944): Moresby (\$20k funding had been authorised already by the Ministers , 2 batteries in Fremantle and one battery in Sydney).

In due course Moresby was built, Sydney was built, but

guns not mounted in Christison Park. The original placement of the 5.25in batteries on Garden Island was replaced with one at Point Peron (cancelled in Sept 1944 before any concrete work could commence), one near South Beach (visible along the road called Emplacement Circle), and the last one at Leighton. So, what was the primary role of the 5.25 inch CD/AA Leighton Battery intended to be – Coast Defence? Or Anti Aircraft? The answer is “Anti Aircraft”. It was simply a bonus that the placement of the 5.25in guns at Leighton with a secondary coast defence role allowed for the decommissioning of the 6 inch gun battery with a corresponding decrease in manpower requirements. And providing manpower to fight at the front was a key concern for War Cabinet.

There is another layer to the story that commences in 1947/48, but I'll leave that for another time. What also might be interesting is to explore further at another time is why were the 5.25in batteries moved from Garden Island to the mainland.



*With thanks to Mathew Adams*

### SAI NT BARBERAS DAY DINNER 2021



TABLES SET UP FOR THE ST BARBARAS DAY DINNER



BRIG G Warner AM LVO presenting Officer Commission Framed document to LT B. Czyrkowski



BC MAJ D Anderson presenting LBDR O Perey with the Australian Defence Medal and Australia Day Award



BC MAJ D Anderson and BSM WO2 R Toase Presenting 30 years service to WO2 S. Parker



LT COL R Farrelly RFD presenting Most Outstanding Soldier citation to GNR K Demios

## GUNNER'S DAY 2021



President David Carter and  
CDT WO2 India Webster



The Rev Katrina Holgate – Vicar St. Mathews  
Garrison Church



3Bty 9 Regt RAA on Parade



The Regimental Cake



BRIG Warner reading the Lesson



The Congregation

RAAHS ANNUAL VOLUNTEERS LUNCHEON

Volunteer cashiers, guides, busy bee workers and those who complete the many tasks which arise each Wednesday, attended the volunteers luncheon on Saturday 11th December at the Alf Adams Pavilion Mosman Park.



Rona, Fay, Ann and Derek



Sharon , Don, Robert and Craig

R  
A  
A  
H  
S



Robert , Peter, Shaun and Mathew



David thanked everyone for their work during the and encouraged them to enjoy themselves. The most remarked topic of conversation was to

## THE LUNCHEON CONTINUES



Matthew Making up his mind



Popular Pavlovas



Bob, Ron, Mary, Neil, Krystina, Robert and Ian



Graham, Roy and Jim



## THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (INC)

THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION - WESTERN AUSTRALIA (INC)

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS 2022

The Annual General Meetings of the two Organisations will be held at the Alf Adams Pavilion, Solomon Street Mosman Park on **Saturday 5th March 2022**:

RAA A WA members register at **0900 for 0930** hrs meeting

RAAHS-WA members register at **0945 for 1015** hrs meeting.

All Members are urged to attend.

Agenda for the Meetings will include:

Reports - President, Treasurer

Notices of Motion (where submitted)

Long service recognition - RAAHS Members

General Business

Election of Office Bearers

Notices of motion must be signed by the Proposer and the Seconder, and are to be lodged with the Secretary prior to the meeting.

Nominations for election to the Management Committee shall be submitted on the enclosed form and lodged with the Secretary before the Meeting is declared open. Each nomination shall be endorsed with the signatures of the Nominee, Proposer and Seconder.

## UNDERSTANDING ARMY STRUCTURE

*The Army at a glance. This came from a Golden West Nasho*



A friend once told me he didn't understand the military system. Dumb civilian, I said to myself, but openly I said, "The system is really quite simple."

You see all people in the Army are soldiers, all Privates are soldiers, but not all soldiers are Privates. Some are Officers who are commissioned, but some are Officers who are not commissioned. Obviously if every Private was called Private it would be confusing, so some Privates are called things like Trooper, Driver, Gunner, Craftsman, Sapper or Signaller. Not all of the Drivers actually drive because some of them cook, but we don't call them Cooks, for that matter not all drivers are called Drivers – some of them are Privates or Gunners. Gunners as I'm sure you know are the blokes that fire guns, unless of course they are Drivers or Signallers, in which case we call them Gunners rather than Drivers or Signallers just to make it clearer. All Gunners belong to the Artillery, except that in the Infantry we have Gunners who are called Privates, because they fire a different sort of gun, for the same reason we call our drivers and Signallers Privates as well.

Lance Corporal is called Corporal; unless he is a Lance Bombardier then we call him Bombardier to distinguish him from a full Bombardier, who is just like a Corporal. All the ranks are called by their rank for the sake of simplicity except that Staff Sergeants are called Staff, but they are not on the staff, some Warrant Officers, who are not Officers, are called Sergeant Major although they are not Sergeant s or Majors. Some Warrant Officers are called Mister which is the same thing that we call some Officers. A Lieutenant is also called Mister because they are Subalterns, but we always write their rank as Lieutenant or Second Lieutenant, and second comes before first.

When we talk about groups of soldiers there obviously has to be a clear distinction. We call them Officers and Soldiers, although we know that Officers are Soldiers too, sometimes we talk about Officers and other ranks which is the same as calling them Soldiers. I guess it is easiest when we talk about rank and file, which is all the troops on parade except the Officers and some of the NCOs – and a few of the Privates and the term is used whether everyone is on parade or not.

A large unit is call a Battalion, unless it is a Regiment but sometimes a regiment is much bigger than a battalion and then it has nothing to do with the other sort of regime nt. Sub units are called Companies unless they are Squadrons or Troops or Batteries for that matter. That is not radio batteries and don't confuse this type of troop with the type who are soldiers but not officers.

Mostly the army is divided into Corps as well as Units, not the sort of corps that is in a couple of divisions but the sort that tells you straight away what trade each man performs, whether he is a tradesman or not. The Infantry Corps has all the infantrymen for example and the Artillery Corps has all the gunners. Both these Corps also have signallers and drivers, except those who are in the Signals or Transport Corps. In fact the Signals Corps is not a service at all because it is an Arm. Arms do all the fighting, although Signals don't have to fight too much, rather like the Engineer s who are also an Arm but they don't have to fight too much either.

So you see it is really quite simple.

We could even add to this a little. "When the Army collected National Serviceman, they went into the Regular Army Supplement and not the Army Reserve, until they were no longer soldiers but civilians, and then they were called Reservists. They were never called Supplementalists, but lots of other things. They were also conscripts, unless they were volunteers. They were in the "draft" but they were never called "draftees". That was something that came under the door of the hut.

To keep it simple for the civilian we have ignored the other labels we were given by NCO'S

*(With thanks to Peter Rowles)*