

CHAIR RAAHC REPORT TO RAAHC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

20 NOVEMBER 2021



GENERAL

This Chair Report will outline the activities of the RAAHC since the last AGM in November 2020. Detailed information including plans and finance can be found on RAAHC electronic media. The RAAHC Corporate Plan 2021-2024 has been published and is also on the web site. During the last 12 months we have focussed on supporting the Regimental Committee in the celebration of 150 years of Australian Artillery (Ubique 150).

The Board has continued to meet regularly but COVID 19 has restricted us to remote electronic meetings. I have included some detailed follow up to some of the activities referred to in the last report to the AGM.

Brian Hall and Frank Colley have resigned from the Board for personal reasons, and we thank them for sterling service and wish them all the best for the future. Nick Floyd has resigned from the Board after assuming the responsibility for co-ordinating the planning of Ubique 150 although he will likely rejoin after the event has been completed.

We have welcomed Craig Furini to the Board. Craig has filled the appointment of Head of Regiment and has recently retired from the Army. Craig's biographical details are on the web site under "your Directors".

After 10 years as our Patron, Major General (Retd) Steve Gower has handed the baton over to Lieutenant General Greg Bilton. Steve has been an active supporter of the RAAHC in his role as patron and will continue his support in the future. Greg is still serving and we look forward to his involvement as Patron.

The Board now comprises:

- Chair Ian Ahearn
- Honourary Secretary Rob Crawford
- Honourary Treasurer Peter Lawrence
- Directors –John Cox, Schon Condon, Craig Furini, Ron West, Bill Foxall and James Eling

ACTIVITIES

ANZAC Centennial Gun (ACG)

The ACG has been located at the Temora Aviation Museum which has embraced the display of the ACG with open arms. The photographs below show the ACG in its display location within the main

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display centre at the Museum. Note the TV display in the first photograph containing video and photographs of the events attended by the ACG.



The Port Jackson 4-Pounder Project.

This gun's barrel was held at the Sergeants Mess, School of Artillery when Army occupied the North Head Barracks. The barrel was relocated with the School's transfer to Puckapunyal in 1997. The RAAHC took the lead in a restoration project that involved the School of Artillery, the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust and a group of their volunteers. The project commenced in May 2019 and the restored cannon on a naval carriage is now in place at the School of Artillery.

The photos below show the Port Jackson gun, before restoration, presented on a field carriage at the School.



The cannon is from the second group of guns landed at Sydney Cove in the 1790's. After establishing a settlement at Sydney Cove in 1788, Governor Philip constructed forts to provide protection from seaborne attack. Progressively, Forts at Dawe's Point (south end of Harbour Bridge) and Bennelong Point (Opera House) were established to guard against raids on this first settlement in the Colony. This cannon was one of 10 on HMS Supply-2, (a replacement ship for the First Fleet vessel by the same name). She arrived in Port Jackson on 7 September 1795. Following a trip to the Cape of Good Hope in 1797 the Supply-2 was deemed unseaworthy and became a 'guard ship'.

HMS Supply-2 ship's log records that in 1798 the crew constructed a battery at Bennelong Point (near today's Sydney Opera House position), and guns from the ship were emplaced there. This 4 pounder was manufactured by George Matthews and Francis Homfray of Calcutts near Broseley in Shropshire, England. They cast muzzle loading guns for the Board of Ordnance between 1778 and 1785. Its manufacture followed 'Armstrong-Frederick' pattern design principles.



The carriage nearing completion



The gun and carriage RAAHC Directors John Cox & Peter Lawrence



The Volunteers. (L to R) Steve Hasset, Garnet Kinlay, Neil Brough, Bert Goodwin, Bill Stuart (project leader), Peter Lawrence, Dave McBeth (workshop manager), Gerry Butler, Tony Booth, Andy Evans, David Taylor (Stephen McMaster absent).

The restored gun is now located back at the School of Artillery as the photos below show. The RAAHC provided management services, hundreds of hours of research, and almost \$3000 to the project.



The Werribee Gun

For many years the Australian War Memorial (AWM) had been interested in acquiring a 4.5 inch howitzer for its collection. The howitzer and 18-pounder gun had been the main weapons of the Australian Field Artillery in World War I. Only two 4.5 inch howitzers were known to exist in Australia and both were in the collection of the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

(RAAHC). The AWM had in its collection the remnants of a 12-pounder Rifled Breech Loading Gun, serial number 370. This gun was one of six purchased by the Victorian Government in 1864 for use by the Victorian Volunteer Artillery. They were replaced by new 12-pounder breech loading guns in 1885 and placed in storage.

In 2012 the RAAHC exchanged a 4.5 inch howitzer and limber for gun number 370. The release of gun 370 required Ministerial Approval which was readily given. The AWM received a very significant item of Australian military history and the RAAHC received the remnants of a gun that represented a significant development in artillery - breech loading, rifled barrel firing a conical projectile and with an on-carriage traversing capability – and associated with the Victorian Horse Artillery. This gun is one of three used by the Werribee Half Battery, Royal Victorian Horse Artillery between 1889 and 1892. It was made by the Royal Gun Factory in 1864. Originally used as a field gun the carriage was modified when used by the Horse Artillery, the ammunition box was changed to also be used as a seat.

Allan Sterling agreed to take on Project Management and on behalf of the RAAHC successfully obtained funds from the Royal Australian Artillery Association, Victoria (\$2000) and the Federal Government from local member Joanne Ryan through Building Stronger Communities Grant (\$8000). Additional funding of \$4,000 was provided by the RAAHC.



The carriage under construction



The barrel is mounted on the carriage

With the support of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust volunteers at North Head work commenced in 2015. The major restoration work was undertaken at North Head and the gun was moved to Werribee where it will be on long term loan to the Werribee Half Battery Living History Group. They removed the paint from the wheels, stained the carriage and preserved the metal work at a facility provided by the Werribee RSL. The gun has been completed it is planned to display it at Werribee Park, a return home after 127 years, and to eventually display it at the Army Artillery Museum. Movement of the gun from North Head to Werribee was undertaken by Linfox, pro bono.

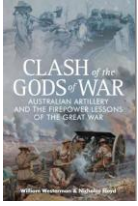


The completed 12 Pounder



James Henderson and Benjamin Casey demonstrate the use of the axle seats

Clash of the Gods of War



Following the success of the RAAHC Firepower Seminar Series, it was proposed that an anthology of all the presentations be published as a book. The book was launched by Lieutenant General Greg Bilton in 2020 and has had an impact as evidenced by the following review by Gary Sheffield, Professor of War Studies, University of Wolverhampton, UK **Clash of the Gods of War: Australian Artillery and the Firepower Lessons of the Great War** - William Westerman and Nicholas Floyd, (eds.). Big Sky Publishing. 2020. \$34.99

“When Stalin described artillery as the ‘god of war’ he knew what he was talking about. More than anything else, artillery firepower shaped the combat experience of soldiers on industrialised battlefields of the world wars. Yet artillery has been a much less popular topic for historians than tanks and aircraft, and even today, we know comparatively little about the gunners’ war. That’s why this book is very welcome. The product of seminars held by the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company to commemorate the First World War centenary, it is a rich and diverse collection of essays on various aspect of artillery in 1914-18.

Although the emphasis is firmly on the Australian experience, with chapters (among others) on Anzac (Chris Roberts), Pozieres (Darryl Kelly) and Hamel (two actually, by Ellen Cresswell and Meleah Hampton respectively), the book ranges more widely. Among the non-Australian pieces are a chapter on an Indian unit at Gallipoli (Muhammad Asghar), one on Ottoman artillery (Mesut Uyar), and discussions of French artillery at Verdun (Roger Lee), and in 1918 (Elizabeth Greenhalgh). Entirely appropriately, ‘Australian’ pieces are located in the context of the British Empire’s armies. There are also pieces on the ‘firepower lessons of the Great War’, to quote the book’s subtitle: Nick Floyd’s chapter should be required reading for modern soldiers. The chapters range from fairly broad overviews (David Stevens’ ‘Naval Gunfire Support at Gallipoli is a good example) to extremely specialist studies, such as a piece on the incorporation of howitzer batteries into the Australian Field Artillery by Keith Glyde. Both types are valuable, and the balance between them is about right.

The editors, William Westerman and Nick Floyd, have done a tremendous job. This is an extremely important contribution, not just to Australian military history, but to the history of the First World War. It will become a standard work and surprisingly, given the technical nature of the subject, it is very readable.”

Australia’s Memorial Walk (AMW) Restoration



Australia’s Memorial Walk (AMW) is listed on the NSW and national memorials registers and was dedicated in December 2012 by the then NSW Governor Her Excellency Dame Marie Bashir. When commissioned, four of the five monuments contained descriptive panels relevant to the military periods represented. The fifth – the UN Peace Keeping Monument - consists of cast bronze panels. The remaining panels originally were engraved aluminium, which became illegible due to weathering in 2015. 12 etched panels were re-installed at a cost of \$10,890 in October 2016. These too suffered

Example of Completion of Installation of New Bronze Panels - Colonial Memorial

from the weather and required replacement.

Early in April 2019 the RAAHC agreed replace the weather affected panels on four monuments as well as restore the Lone Pine Monument. Six panels per monument were commissioned (total 24) and put in place. They match the bronze panels on the Peace Keeping Monument in terms of size, appearance and placement. Company historians spent over 100 hours reviewing and refining the text for the panels. The project was completed in August 2020. Total cost of the project was \$51,000; DVA provided a \$10,000 grant with the balance of funds provided by the RAAHC.

Essential History Project

The Essential History Project will provide serving gunners of all ranks with a succinct, engaging, authoritative and accessible source of information on the important facts of the history of Australian Artillery, from 1871 to 2021. The primary audience for the book is the Young Officer and Gunner Initial Employment Trainee (IET). The project is being progressed in partnership with the Australian Army History Unit (AAHU). The book will be in the style of the well illustrated AAHU 'Campaign Series' of about 200 pages. The RAAHC will, if necessary, provide funding for the principal author component while AAHU will fund publishing and distributing of the completed work. John Cox is managing the project on behalf of the RAAHC. Nick Floyd and Paul Stevens are the co-authors. A Steering Committee of four stakeholders is guiding content and the authors. Many people have been contacted to write the small sections for 'Breakout Boxes. It is planned to publish in late 2022.

150th Anniversary of Artillery in Australia

The RAAHC continues to support the 150th Anniversary of Artillery in Australia. The photo book, Book of Days, has been published and copies distributed to each current regiment and the School of Artillery. COVID-19 has interfered with the planned program and events, such as the presentation of a new Queen's Banner, have been delayed to 2022. The 1st August ceremony at the RAA Memorial in Canberra went ahead and was a great success.

Facebook Posts on 150th Anniversary. At the Head of Regiment's request, the RAAHC and AAA are producing historical video posts tracing the development of Australian Artillery over the past 150 years for Facebook. Lieutenant Colonel Nick Floyd has been the driving force behind a Regimental media initiative. The initiative involves the publishing of material on Facebook, which is then linked across to the RAAHC website. The topics for the material are:

- 'Where Right & Glory Lead'-short stories about ordinary Gunners doing extraordinary things through history.
- 'A Brief History of Australian Artillery' – an insight into the employment of Australian artillery on operations.
- 'Gunner Perspectives' – candid interviews with everyday Gunners, from all corners of today's Gunner Community.
- 'Future Ready' – a series of short articles on where the RRAA is going in the future.

The first three topics are being published. The third will follow.

150th History Products. John Cox has engaged in consultation with the Head of Regiment and his representative Nick Floyd, and developed a set of 'written history products' to directly support the 150th. About 15 well researched written pieces have been produced and used. Four examples are an authoritative account of the origins of Australian Artillery, pieces on the history and significance of the RAA National Memorial (for speech notes and programs), a 'summary page' on the Queen's

Banner, and a 'summary page' on a History of Australian Artillery for the Banner Parade. There have been 'speaking notes' for speakers as well. It's easy to imagine further requests into 2022. Assistance is also being provided for Army Newspaper articles. The series of articles have been most successful, with a number of whole lift out sections. Members of the RAAHC, Kevin Browning and Keith Glyde, deserve special mention.

Ubique150 Lapel Pins. The RAAHC and the Australian Artillery Association Artillery (AAA) combined to produce a commemorative lapel pin for the 150th Anniversary. A pin was provided to all serving members of the RRAA and to members of the RAAHC. A photo of the pin is below.



Photo/Video/Essay Contests. The joint initiative of the Australian Artillery Association (AAA) and the RAAHC to conduct photo/video/essay contests during 2021 has been activated. The response has been disappointing with only two entries for the photo competition and none for the video or essay contests. Prize money is available for all contests and details are on the AAA/RAAHC websites and Facebook sites. However, the winner of the first photo contests, LT Lyndon Harvey of 20 Regiment RAA, provided a stunning image which is shown below.



Pod Cast. James Eling has continued to release episodes of the 150th anniversary series pod cast for the RAA. The podcast can be viewed at:

<https://theprinciplesofwar.com/podcast/63-beginnings-the-150th-anniversary-of-australian-artillery/>

Finally, I would like to extend a huge thank you, to the wide range of volunteers around Australia that assist our activities. I wish to particularly acknowledge those volunteers working on our various projects and in the CRC. Thanks are also due to all the RAAHC Directors for their significant contributions throughout the year. I offer a special thank you to our Patron, Major General Steve Gower AO, AO (Mil) as well as to our Honorary Solicitor Paul Fordyce and our Honorary Auditor Graham Martin.

Ian Ahearn

