



## Chair Report for AGM 27th October 2018

This report outlines the activities and progress of the RAAHC since the previous Annual General Meeting held on the 21st October 2017. Over the last year, the RAAHC Board of Directors has met regularly and continued to develop the Company as a national organisation meeting its core purpose **to promote the significance of Australia's Artillery, its history and heritage**. During the year we have welcomed Colonel Frank Colley AM, CSC (Retd) as a member of the RAAHC Board and Paul Camilleri as our new RAAHC Webmaster.

During its review of the RAAHC Corporate plan for 2018-21, the Board has further emphasised the critical goal of the RAAHC to support in any way possible the RAA Regimental Committee, the RAA Head of Regiment and the RAA Representative Colonel Commandant as well as working closely with a range of stakeholders, regional and unit artillery organisations and individuals around Australia. The RAAHC Corporate Plan FY 2018-20 is available to all members and the public on our website.

The achievements of the RAAHC over the last 12 months are detailed in the Board papers and Financial Report for 2018 that are available on our website as well as being reported throughout the year in "Cannonball" and through RAAHC periodic "Airburst" newsletters.

I again wish to acknowledge the continued success of our two major RAAHC Anzac Centenary projects – the Anzac Centennial 18 Pounder Memorial Gun Project and the *Firepower* History Seminar Series.

The Anzac Centennial Gun (ACG) project has been a complex but most successful one. Following the wonderful restoration of an 18 Pounder Gun and limber from World War 1 and the development, training and maintenance of a team of dedicated riders and horses, the ACG has been paraded, displayed and occasionally fired at over 35 national, state and local events over the last three years. These activities are planned to continue until June 2019 after which we are still seeking an appropriate future home for the Gun and Limber. We are hoping this may be at a new Australian Army Artillery Museum once it is built. Alternative arrangements for display and perhaps future participation in commemoration events will also be considered. It would be such a shame if the dedication of so many does not result in the ACG being permanently on display to the Australian community.

The RAAHC History Seminar Series has also continued strongly over the last 12 months with a further three very successful seminars conducted in Canberra during the year on *Firepower: Lessons From the Great War*. The opportunity to reflect on the profound and enduring influence of the Great War on artillery tactics, technology and command has been welcome indeed, and I am pleased to advise that interest in attendance and a professional appreciation of the value of the presentations in these seminars has steadily and

significantly increased. I am looking forward to a lively discussion at the final seminar on 8<sup>th</sup> November at the Australian Defence Force Academy and to the publication of an anthology of the seminars in the near future.

The RAAHC now holds a much smaller historical collection, compared to late 2017 and to that which was previously owned when the Museum was open at North Head. In November 2017 the Australian Army History Unit (AAHU) collected the last of the large items that have been given to the Commonwealth (reported in the Manly Daily 16<sup>th</sup> November). The vast majority of our previous collection is now in Bandiana awaiting transfer eventually to the Australian Army Artillery Museum (planned to be built at Puckapunyal). Over the last year two guns and some smaller items surplus to the AAHU requirements were made available for private sale and at auction. The limited number of items that remain in the RAAHC's collection will now be managed through a series of long-term loans to heritage organisations around Australia with a very small number still held at the Sir Roden Cutler VC Artillery Research Centre (CRC).

Over the reporting period we have continued to slowly develop the CRC from a stand-alone, paper and other media based library to a 'Trove' compliant, online, remotely accessible research centre while retaining and improving fundamental library capabilities. This is a demanding long-term process. The CRC along with its network of specialist researchers has also continued to provide significant historical and heritage information services over the last year often working in conjunction with the RAA Regimental History Committee. The Company continues to develop its network of researchers and to answer enquiries from around Australia and overseas, and as a result has published many worthy articles in the RAAHC's journal, Cannonball. I encourage anyone inclined to join the Company's research efforts to contact us to explore opportunities.

The development of the national Artillery Register continues with Peter Hartup constructing a Trove compatible database. Trove, an initiative of the National Library of Australia helps us find historic resources and information from many organisations around the world. The RAAHC's Obituary Coordinator, Peter Bruce, continues to develop the Obituaries record on our website and to add those he receives. This record has now become a significant research resource with more than 185 entries. Along with the "Gunners of Renown" record on the RAAHC website, these two collections provide a memorable source of information on Gunners who have contributed to the heritage of the Regiment. I encourage all to add to this record by sending to us additional biographies of memorable Gunners.

Australia's Memorial Walk at North Fort remains under the care of the RAAHC. While it remains our intention to handover this national memorial to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust for their continued care at a mutually agreeable time, options still exist to add both individual and centre piece pavers, and in fact we have seen a continued increase in the level of requests and placement of pavers over the last 12 months. I sincerely thank John Balfour for the great work he continues to undertake marketing and managing the Memorial Walk.

The RAAHC also supported the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Coral Balmoral that was commemorated in Canberra over the period 11-13 May 2018. RAAHC members Ian Ahearn and Chris Jobson were heavily involved in the planning and conduct of the events which included a Gunner Veterans meet and greet, a Gunner Service at the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery National Memorial, a National Gunner Dinner and the DVA

National Commemoration and reception. Additional support was provided by Head of Regiment staff (particularly Major Terry Brennan), RAA Association ACT, 8/12 Regiment and 161 Battery RNZA. The ACG Team provided the 18 Pounder to act as a Minute Gun during the Gunner Service.

In conclusion, it has been a successful year for the RAAHC. I consider the RAAHC continues to effectively support Australian artillery history and heritage, and has appropriate artillery links around Australia. We continue to strive to further strengthen our influence and effect. I encourage all Gunners and those interested in the heritage of Australian artillery to support us by becoming full or affiliated members of the RAAHC. I remind all that anyone who is serving in the Australian Defence Force or is already a member of one of the artillery associations around Australia may become an affiliated member for free. Tax-deductible donations to support our activities are always most welcome and do assist the RAAHC to ensure we can play our part in maintaining the heritage of the RAA and Australian artillery.

Finally, I wish to sincerely thank all those who have contributed to the success of the RAAHC this year, particularly the wide range of volunteers around Australia that assist our activities and a wide range of heritage projects. Amongst these, I wish to particularly acknowledge those volunteers working on our various projects and in the CRC. Thanks also to all the RAAHC Directors for their significant contributions throughout the year. Finally, 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.

Ubique,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Ford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Major General Tim Ford, AO (Retd)