

Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

Brigadier James Clarence HAWKER

(1859-1951)

James Hawker was commissioned on 17 October 1881 in the Adelaide Rifles, a volunteer unit. After becoming adjutant and being promoted captain in 1883, he was appointed a lieutenant in the Permanent Artillery of South Australia on 4 April 1885. In 1886 he took charge of Fort Largs where he commanded a detachment of thirty men and was promoted captain in 1891.

In March 1893, he sailed for Albany, Western Australia, in charge of a party of South Australian gunners; their task was to form the new garrison and mount the guns as part of an arrangement whereby the several Australian colonies had agreed to co-operate in defence matters. The guns were to protect a coaling station for the Royal Navy, the ultimate guarantors of Australia's defence. Hawker supervised the mounting of three six-inch breech-loading guns before returning to Adelaide in June; in August he became commander of the Permanent Artillery in South Australia and was promoted major in 1896.

During the South African War, Hawker served as a major with the 4th (South Australian) Imperial Bushmen as second-in-command and adjutant and was invalided home on 28 February 1901. He resumed command of the Permanent Artillery in South Australia on 1 May after the formation of the Commonwealth Military Forces. In May 1903, he was posted to Sydney as a Company Officer, Royal Australian Artillery, 2nd Military District (2MD).

A succession of staff and regimental appointments followed in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia until his promotion to lieutenant colonel in the Administrative and Instructional Staff and his appointment as Assistant Adjutant General, 3MD, Victoria in 1911. He was promoted colonel on 1 May 1914. During WW I he remained Assistant Adjutant General in Victoria, having his retirement date extended until 1 November 1918.

Hawker died at Mornington, Victoria, on 9 November 1951 and was cremated with Anglican rites.

Sources: J. Whitelaw, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 12, pp.234-235. D. N. Brook, *Roundshot to Rapier, Artillery in South Australia*, RAA Association of SA, 1986, pp.190-3; D. Horner, *The Gunners. A History of Australian Artillery*, 1995, Allen and Unwin, p.32; P. L. Murray, *Official Records of the Australian Contingents to the War in South Africa*, 1912.

For more information follow this link: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hawker-james-clarence-6606>