

Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

Lieutenant General Sir John MONASH, GCMG, KCB, VD

(1865-1931)

In July 1884, he joined the University Company of the 4th Battalion, Victoria Rifles, and was promoted sergeant within the year. Two years after the battalion was disbanded he obtained a probationary lieutenancy with the North Melbourne Battery of the Victorian Garrison Artillery.

He became a battery commander on 2 April 1897. He was a civil engineer and lectured on and wrote technical papers on gunnery, explosives and practical mechanics, extending this to grasp the insights of engineering technology.

After 21 years of service with the artillery he was given command of the Victorian Section of the Australian Intelligence Corps and promoted lieutenant colonel in 1906. In 1912, he took command of the 13th Brigade.

When WWI was declared Monash took command of 4th Infantry Brigade in September 1914. At 50 years of age he landed with his troops at Gallipoli on 25-26 April the following year as part of the New Zealand and Australian Division. In July 1916, his brigade, now part of the 4th Division, had barely settled in on the Western Front when he was promoted and appointed GOC 3rd Division, then training on Salisbury Plain.

In May 1918, Monash was promoted Lieutenant General and appointed GOC Australian Corps leading it in the final epic battles of the last year of the war. His guiding principle was to advance under the maximum possible protection of guns, tanks, machine guns, mortars and aircraft to relieve the infantry of their obligation to fight their way forward. He never forgot his 'kindergarten' – artillery. At Hamel, he forbade registration of targets as all of his guns had been calibrated (by a newly proven technique).

His equestrian statue stands near the Shrine of Remembrance he helped design. His portraits by John Longstaff and James Quinn are held by the AWM, and the National Library holds his papers and memorabilia.

Sources: D Horner (Editor) *The Commanders*, (Monash, by P A Pedersen, p. 89 et seq); G Serle, *John Monash, A Biography*; passim; *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 10, p. 453 – 549.

For more information follow this link: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/monash-sir-john-7618>