

# Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

## Lieutenant Colonel Charles Andrew ORD, MBE

(1905-1977)

Charles Ord enlisted in the Militia in 1923 and was posted to 5th Heavy Brigade, Australian Garrison Artillery, and was commissioned two years later. He was promoted captain in 1928 and major in 1934. On 1 October 1939, he began full time duty as a major, Royal Australian Artillery, and was promoted lieutenant colonel in April 1942 and transferred to the AIF in August.

He was BC 115th Heavy Battery at South Head, and subsequently Banks Battery. When the Fire Commander at the time, Lieutenant Colonel C. R. M. (Royce) Shannon, was seconded to the AIF Ord succeeded him between May and August 1942.

He developed Fire Commanders Standing Orders to set a standard of 'readiness discipline' within the command. His forceful personality brooked no watering down of their contents merely because the threat of surface raiders engaging coastal defences was seen by many as remote. He had, after all, been involved with training on the newly installed 9.2 inch guns at North Head, and he knew the extent of the firepower that could be developed by his command. Ord insisted on the correct procedures being followed at all times and made impromptu visits to his batteries to check that they were alert and ready. He called for battery drill series to be run while he moved from gun to gun, post to post.

He conducted, almost nightly, telephone quizzes over the telephone party line connecting all battery observation posts. The duty BCs were called to the phone and were required to answer questions on the Standing Orders or on such officer-type knowledge of the rules of ranging. As Ken Fullford relates, "*With all one's colleagues listening in, the ignominy of committing a schoolboy howler was an even more salutary penalty than the Fire Commander's query, 'And who is the duty BC at Sign(al) Battery?'*". Ord ran mini-ranging sessions regularly for officers and these were quite stressful for their participants. Everyone knew him, everyone feared his eagle eye but respected his thoroughness and his knowledge. It is not going too far to say that, in the opinion of another very seasoned coast and field gunner (Alf Watt), *'his contribution to Sydney Fire Command extended indirectly to every other fire command throughout the army ... His greatest achievement was to engender in his officers at all levels the same desire and striving for perfection as he exhibited himself'*.

He was Commander Fixed Defences and Fire Commander Darwin November 1942 to March 1943 then Instructor-in-Gunnery of NSW Line of Communications Area Fixed Defences 1942-43 and HQ Second Australian Army 1943-44 with a brief stint at the School of Searchlights in between. His final significant posting was to the Coast Artillery at Fremantle, Western Australia, in April 1945. In September 1945, he transferred to the Retired List.

After the war he returned to banking and with an army friend and experienced stock broker established a very successful stock broking firm (Ord Minnett).

Survived by his wife and two daughters, Ord died on 31 March 1977 at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Camperdown from a cardiac condition and was cremated. His portrait by Jeffrey Smart is held by the family.

Sources: Kay Sweeney, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 15, pp.541-2. Army List; R. K. Fullford, *We Stood and Waited*, pp.56-7; personal memoirs courtesy Col. A. Watt and P. McNeill.

For more information follow this link: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/ord-charles-andrew-11312>