



## **OFFICE BEARERS**

### **RAA ASSOCIATION**

#### **President**

Bob Farrelly  
[bobfarrelly@live.com](mailto:bobfarrelly@live.com)

#### **Vice President**

Peter Mahoney  
[an22ji42n@ozemail.com.au](mailto:an22ji42n@ozemail.com.au)

#### **Secretary**

John Blylevens  
[info@artillerywa.org.au](mailto:info@artillerywa.org.au)

#### **Treasurer**

Stan Davies  
[sftdavies@bigpond.com](mailto:sftdavies@bigpond.com)

### **Committee Persons**

Wendy Mahoney  
[an22ji42n@ozemail.com.au](mailto:an22ji42n@ozemail.com.au)  
Raymond Kennedy  
[r.kennedy09@gmail.com](mailto:r.kennedy09@gmail.com)  
Ken Hepworth  
[hep3swan@hotmail.com](mailto:hep3swan@hotmail.com)  
Robert Coales  
: [Robert.coales@gmail.com](mailto:Robert.coales@gmail.com)

## **HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

#### **President**

David Carter  
[David.Carter@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:David.Carter@education.wa.edu.au)

#### **Vice President**

Graham McKenzie-Smith  
[grimwade4@inet.net.au](mailto:grimwade4@inet.net.au)

#### **Secretary**

John Blylevens  
[info@artillerywa.org.au](mailto:info@artillerywa.org.au)

#### **Treasurer**

Neil Lodge  
[neillodge@westnet.com.au](mailto:neillodge@westnet.com.au)

### **Committee Persons**

Matthew Adams  
[Matthew10@hotmail.com](mailto:Matthew10@hotmail.com)  
Phillip Rowson  
[Phil.Rowson@cf-direct.com.au](mailto:Phil.Rowson@cf-direct.com.au)  
James Archibald  
[Jim.archibald@bigpond.com.au](mailto:Jim.archibald@bigpond.com.au)

Stan Davies  
[sftdavies@bigpond.com](mailto:sftdavies@bigpond.com)

#### **IT Consultant**

Don Rae  
[devar@inet.net.au](mailto:devar@inet.net.au)

#### **Curator**

To All Ranks Serving and Retired:

From Lieutenant General Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB

The Royal Australian Artillery  
The Royal Canadian Artillery  
The Royal New Zealand Artillery  
26 May 2020



As the Master Gunner St James's Park, it is a privilege to send best wishes to all ranks, serving and retired, across the Royal Artilleries of the Commonwealth on the occasion today of the 304th anniversary of the founding of our parent Regiment.

I am acutely conscious that the world has changed much since I last wrote to you on St Barbara's Day in December 2019. Then, I declared our intentions to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> May; our plans to commemorate in Borneo, on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VJ Day, particularly those prisoners of war who were murdered around and indeed after 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945; and we were looking forward to greeting a detachment from The Royal Canadian Artillery in Edinburgh in June as they fired a Royal Salute on the anniversary of the Coronation of Her Majesty The Queen, our Captain General.

Covid-19 has unfortunately put paid to all of the above and more. Since December, we have all had to adjust very rapidly to meet this new, invisible enemy and one that, '10 rounds fire for effect' simply does not recognise. All of our Nations have suffered significant restrictions, hardships and a number have lost loved ones, including amongst retired Gunners and their families. Particularly for the older generations, it has certainly caused isolation, confusion and concern.

For the Royal Artillery family here in the United Kingdom, today's date has another significance; one hundred years ago today, on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 1920, the Royal Artillery Association was formed. Its objectives then remain the foundation of its activities today, namely to embrace and support anybody who is or has been part of our Regimental family; that includes those who are currently serving, veterans, families, widows and widowers, dependants and more. Amongst its services, the Association is proud to provide comradeship and welfare support and advice. It is a fundamental aspect of what makes the Royal Regiment of Artillery a proper 'family' and gives substance to the cry, 'Once a Gunner, Always a Gunner'.

You all have similar Associations that look after the Regimental families around the world; their importance today is as great as ever, for they can reduce isolation and loneliness and also ensure welfare reaches those in need. I commend all who give their time so generously within them to look after fellow Gunners, keeping in touch with them and making sure they are not unduly in need. Our collective strength, unity and sense of being a family will be critical for the remainder of this year and the years ahead.

I wish you all well in these unusual times and I look forward to the day when we can get together again in person.

*Original signed*

## **NOTICE BOARD**



To

Edition	Collation Period	Deadline to Editor	Editing and Preparation	Final Edition	Mail Out
1/2020	4 Jan 2020 to 20 Mar 2020	20 Mar 2020	20 Mar 20 to 28 Mar 2020	29 Mar 2020	30 Mar 2020
2/2020	2 Apr 2020 to 20 Jun 2020	20 Jun 2020	20 Jun 20 to 28 Jun 2020	29 Jun 2020	30 Jun 2020
3/2020	1 Jul 2020 to 20 Sep 2020	20 Sep 2020	20 Sep 2020 to 28 Sep 2020	29 Sep 2020	30 Sep 2020
4/2020	1 Oct 2020 to 12 Dec 2020	12 Dec 2020	12 Dec 2020 to 14 Dec 2020	14 Dec 2020	15 Dec 2020

ensure that the printing deadline is met please observe the dates listed above. Items on any subject, or topic for inclusion in the newsletter are welcome and should be emailed to:  
Bob Arnold on [arnold353@bigpond.com](mailto:arnold353@bigpond.com)

### **WELFARE FUND OFFICER**

John Bylevens is the Association's Welfare Officer. Anybody that needs to discuss any welfare funding can contact John via email [info@artillerywa.org.au](mailto:info@artillerywa.org.au) or telephone 043 869 5711. Access to funds can be made by applying in writing using the Welfare Fund Application Form which is available on request from the Treasurer. The Association reminds members that access to the Fund to help Gunners financially at a time of need is strictly confidential and all applications are treated as such.

**For those who need a reminder—subs are due on the First of January each year**

#### **RAAHS BUSY BEES FOR 2020**

**No activity during COVID Lockdown**

#### **LEIGHTON BATTERY OPEN DAYS**

**No activity during COVID Lockdown**

## ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Fellow Gunners,

Well, what a crazy year we have had with Covid 19 and all the associated restrictions and the associated economic downturn. I trust you are well and have survived the lockdown and are now starting to enjoy freedom again as we are in Phase 4 of the easing of restrictions. Covid 19 saw Anzac day activities cancelled. I was out on the verge with my wife Lisa for the dawn service broadcast on the radio. I was pleased to see a quite a number of people in the street out to remember the fallen.

Short of a new outbreak we should see a move to Phase 5 late July and we are planning for our normal activities of Gunner's Day on Sunday November 1<sup>st</sup> and the Feast of St Barbara on Friday December 4. The Feast of St Barbara will again be extended to include all serving, retired and ex-members of the Royal Australian Artillery, those who served in RAA units, and will include partners and guests. The Dinner is a fabulous time for catching up with Gunner mates and will incorporate the presentation of the "Best Gunner Award".

Save the dates. I look forward to seeing you at both events.

**Ubique,**

Bob Farrelly LTCOL

President RAA Association

---

**MURPHY'S LAW OF COMBAT OPERATIONS**



**I**ncoming fire has right-of-way.  
If the enemy is in range, then so are you.  
Never draw fire – it irritates everyone around you.  
The only thing more accurate than incoming enemy fire is friendly incoming fire.  
When you have secured an area, don't forget to tell the enemy.  
No battle plan survives contact with the enemy.  
If your attack is going well, it is an ambush.  
The easy way is always mined.  
If it is stupid and it works, it ain't stupid.  
The enemy only attacks on two occasions – when you are ready and when you are not.

**THE AIMING POST****Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society****PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**D**ear Members,

If the word 'pandemic,' never really meant much to us before, it sure does now!

By mid March the following changes had impacted on our operations;

Closure of Leighton Battery to all tours. Cessation of the monthly busy bees on-site. No access to Irwin Barracks for Committee meetings or Society administration matters. (We got around that via a Zoom link up). We placed signage over our car park sign and gun profile, to advise the public of the closure. We have also withdrawn the weekly ad in the newspaper for now.

Due to my close worksite, I have been dropping by the Battery twice weekly to check for any mischief to the above ground structures. To date – all clear.

To keep the Guides, Cashiers and Busy Bee people sharp, the Committee has been e-mailing them periodic issues of "The Lockdown Update." I thank the editor and his contributors for such an entertaining publication.

COVID 19 has been a disaster for many nations. With our Kiwi cousins, we have escaped relatively lightly due to good decision making and citizens who have who have been able to see the sense of the many restrictions to their freedoms and "bit the bullet" when the business sector wound down. As I write this in mid May the curve has flattened and the green shoots of local business are more apparent.

Society operations at the Battery will re-commence when our landlord gives us the all-clear. Likewise, the Defence Department will advise us of our access back to Irwin Barracks- Karrakatta.

In the meantime- happenings at Leighton Battery:

The load bearing concrete roof is finished and the contract signed off by TOMP. Council is now seeking contractors to build the entrance structure

above the stairway leading into the rooms below.

Planning approval is also being sought to build a mezzanine floor in the engine room. Project co-ordinator Graham McKenzie-Smith is also after quotes for the fabrication of the light weight turret and barrel from two local firms.

Obstructive vegetation. The Town's Conservation Management Plan includes "Height Management Control". This will now permit the controlled clearing of the 'historic vistas' to allow the public to see what the gunners saw from the gun floors and the B.O.P. in WW2. ( Contractors will do the work.)

Site Welcome Sign. A permanently mounted, all-weather Welcome sign has now been fixed to the wall where visitors enter the former 3.7" gun site. Guides will enjoy not having to lug that heavy original sign about! (Our thanks to Curator-Don Rae.)

Committee changes. For 2020, I welcome as Committee Members- Jim Archibald, Stan Davies and Don Rae. I wish to acknowledge Sue Lawrence's positive involvement over recent years.

Your Society finances are solid- despite the lack of income from the tunnels since late March. Small savings are currently seen via lower power and advertising charges. Certain fixed costs continue such as the \$3,000 annual bill for Primary Liability Insurance

In COVID circumstances may I say, ' Never, in the field of human conflict, have so many hands been washed by so many, so often!' (Apologies to W.S.C.) My wrinkled paws bear stark witness!

At the end of May we received the following details from Council about re-starting the Tunnel tours.

" The Town's Contracts and Property Advisor Angela Sicree will pass on any information relating to the potential for re opening as it is received by the Town."

My best regards to you all,

David Carter

## LOCKDOWN BLUES

On reflection, not very much changed.....still got up each day at the same time,, breakfast, ablutions, morning tea on the verandah at 10.30am (weather permitting ), “Salvage Hunters” at 11.00am and lunch at noon.

In the afternoon, after a period of recuperation ( Doctor’s orders )I commenced physical activities....painting the house (not a keen chore and a long way yet to go ), restoration and disposal of furniture( verge pickups ) and fulfilled a long dream.....had a cocus palm and 3 other trees removed before any of them fell over during a storm and took out any of 3 adjoining house targets.

Despite Government pleas to “stay home” I did venture out on a few of occasions to restock the larder (We did have an adequate supply of Toilet Paper ) and take Mila to medical appointments.

An early challenge was a half page article in the “Have a Go News” explaining what household rubbish went in which bin.....the answer remains a mystery.

Bunnings have always been a draw card and despite their attempts to distance themselves from us....the nearest store burnt down some time ago and then the next nearest closed.....I eventually visited the now nearest Bunnings store to purchase paint. It is years since I had done this and I could not believe the cost. I now have an increased number of partially filled cans.

What did suffer during the lock down was the lack of physical contact with family members....some became almost visual strangers including my young Great Grand Children who I saw but twice for very short periods on “important occasions” and at the approved distance apart.

Whilst the Irwin Barracks were “closed” I did manage to gain access on two occasions after collecting the RAAHS mail.....someone may have paid their Membership Fees.

I am thankful that most normality has returned but I remain aware of the need to exercise restraint....I believe that the past is behind us but I doubt it will ever be the same.  
Good health to you all and take care.

Neil Lodge

---

## MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETING 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020

Three months since observing restrictions to meeting at the Barracks, the June Meeting was convened at our Annex Building – business as usual at last!

Among the important agenda items discussed were the following:

**LICENCE FOR THE USE OF BUILDINGS AT IRWIN BARRACKS:** After occupying Building A0050 for 25 years Defence became aware that the Society had never formalized our presence on the Barracks – not through any fault on our part! We are currently in the process of examining the terms and conditions of the Licence Document and hope to finalize the arrangement shortly.

**TUNNELS REOPENING:** This is not as clear cut as applies to “normal” Museums – the narrow passageways, small rooms and humidity levels introduce additional disciplines that are being closely examined by your Committee.

**THE 5.25 EMPLACEMENT STAIRWELL ENCLOSURE:** It is anticipated that all approvals and permits will be in place by end June. Then, we will welcome the disappearance of the unsightly fence!

### My COVID 19 Experience

Dear members. My experience has possibly been less of a disruptive one compared to others' experience. I was on leave at the time of the lock down – early to mid March. During this time, I was in a kind of self-imposed lock down because during the early stages of the pandemic the news was becoming increasingly bad.

When I went back to work I found that many of my co-workers had opted to work from home and that I needed to prepare for a complete lock down and to start working from home if needs be. This however did not eventuate. I did set myself up to work from home a few days after coming back from leave but opted to continue to come into the office.

I did my “work from home” interview with my boss and she asked me if I wanted to work from home. I told her I wasn't keen on the idea and that there was a real danger that I would not do any work at home ie I would watch TV play computer games, sleep and read the newspaper instead. She thanked me for my honesty.

I continued with coming into work and there were few distractions as there was hardly anyone there at the time. I managed to get a lot done.

My exercise regime was disrupted. I had made a new year's resolution to go to the gym 3 times a week. This was going swimmingly until the shutdown in late March. I was able to partly replace this as I renewed my interest in cycling to work. This was because I use public transport and the buses went to a Saturday timetable for weekdays in early April. As I did not want to drive into to the office, the only alternative was to get on my bike.

My experience with my public speaking hobby – Toastmasters – changed because in late March we started to hold our meetings online with “Zoom”, as our venues had been shut down. I have learnt quite a lot about online meetings and using “Zoom”. Although it is not the real thing, I have enjoyed these meetings. We are slowly transitioning back to “in face” meetings as the venues are re-opening.

Although my daily routines have not changed much, I can tell you that have been doing a lot more walking, just to get out of the house. I have also been reading novels and biographies – actually reading stuff for enjoyment and not just readings procedures or instructions.

I do hope that you are all in good health and I look forward to seeing you all again,

cheers

Charles Fisher



## A BLAST FROM THE PAST!

A group of our Wednesday Volunteers gathered in the Drill Hall at Hobbs Artillery Park obviously amused at what is happening – the Hand-over of the MAJGEN John Whitelaw Sword from one Battery Commander to another – December 2007.

*From Left to Right:*

Phil Pougault; Bob Arnold; Merv Ward; Stan Davies; Harvey Everett; MAJ Steve Mathers; John Blylevens; Don Rae; John Sanders; Basil Twine.

Unfortunately, Merv is now deceased and Phil, Harvey and Basil no longer attend due to failing health.



### Coast Defence Quiz Question 1

- \_ I was a military fortification.
  - \_ I was originally an island.
  - \_ U.S. army engineers cut me down to bedrock, just above sea-level.
  - \_ Onto that base was poured thousands of tonnes of reinforced concrete.
  - \_ My offensive weaponry comprised a pair of superfiring 14" turrets.
  - \_ My coast artillery gunners called me the "Concrete Battleship".
  - \_ My ruined remains are still to be seen in Manila Bay.
- I am Fort \_ \_ \_ \_ ( El Freille Island).

*(With thanks to David Carter)*

*Answer Page 12*

**COVID 19**

During the months of March to May, when the pandemic was at its peak in WA, we published three copies of a newsletter which contained matters of particular interest to those volunteers who work with us on a regular basis. As we are now again publishing Artillery WA we have included the experiences in "Lockdown" of two of our members Neil Lodge and Charles Fisher received following the final issue of "COVID 19 LOCKDOWN"



Good morning all,

The Council decided, on the 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2019, to proceed with the implementation of the Buckland Hill Conservation Management Plan and seek relevant approvals, in particular for the clearing and pruning of vegetation within the viewing corridor from the battery observation post, as outlined in the plan.

The Town is able to report that the Department of Water and Environmental Regulations have advised that a clearing permit is not required and the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions have approved the application to modify a threatened ecological community, based on the implementation of the revegetation and weed control specified in the Buckland Hill Conservation Management Plan (2019) and the Buckland Hill Environment Offset Plan (2020). The expectation is to commence work in July 2020 with the pruning of vegetation and planting of tube stock in both the cleared and the environmental offset area. All pruning works will be performed as per Australian Standards and the Town will engage a consulting arborist to oversee the works. Attached is the Buckland Hill Environment Offset Plan (2020) for your information.

As a stakeholder of the Project Reference Group, which included the Australian Artillery Heritage Society, Buckland Hill Ratepayers Association and Friends of Mosman Park Bushland, we thank you for your involvement in this project. If you have questions regarding the implementation of the project you can contact Paddy Strano- SECO on 9383 6600.

Kind Regards

**Bruce Moorman**

Manager Parks & Environment

Town of Mosman Park

*"Between River and Sea"*

Memorial Park, Mosman Park

\*\*\*\*\*

Coast Defence Quiz Question 2.

- ☐ I was a fort built by the Norwegian government.
- ☐ In 1940 my 11" guns engaged units of Hitler's Kriegsmarine at Oslo.
- ☐ I targeted and sank the heavy cruiser "Blucher".
- ☐ As she foundered, my gunners heard the strains of "Deutschland Uber Alles" being played by the ship's band!
- ☐ The delay caused by this fort- and others- allowed the King of Norway and his nation's gold reserves, to escape to G.B.

I am Fort \_\_\_\_\_ (Norway).

*With thanks to David Carter*

*(Answer Page 12)*



## ONE OF THE BEST GUNS OF WW 11

Article from QUORA by Willard Foxton updated by Lee Hames and Mike Venon

Most nations in WW2 had pretty good cannons & field guns, but if I had to pick one that clearly outshone the others, it would be the British 25pdr field gun. How I hear Quora cry? IT'S LOWER CALIBRE THAN THE OTHERS, HOW CAN IT BE BETTER?

**The TLDR of this is the 25pdr was a better because it was a better holistic gun system than its competitors.**



The British had gone through WWI with a decent field gun and a decent howitzer, but when the time came to replace them, the British wanted a two in one - a gun that combined the high velocity of a field gun with the high angle fire and multiple shell type capabilities of a true howitzer.

**Among other things, this halved the number of artillery crew you needed in your army; the four-man crew of the 25pdr was also smaller than the six-man crews common to its competitors.**

Lots of work was done on a very low budget, and while other nations largely adopted 105mm guns for their main artillery piece, the British couldn't afford that, so essentially the 25pdr was a WWI gun (the 18pdr) with the barrel liner removed to raise the calibre from 77 to 87.6mm on a very well designed new carriage with modern shells.

The new carriage was a brilliant design; it added a turntable, so the gun didn't have to be physically moved to be relaid on target, and made the gun much more effective in the direct fire role; a combination towing limber/ammunition stowage box enabled the gun to be moved, deployed and redeployed remarkably quickly, and meant ammunition was closely and safely stored; the carriage was also light and manoeuvred well off road (a constant problem for the German 105mm as it was horse drawn and thus terribly slow to manoeuvre.)

So, the 25pdr was light and manoeuvrable compared to its direct competitors; smaller pieces like 75mms - like the US pack howitzer or the Soviet ZIS3 - were no more mobile but packed much less HE punch.

The 25pdr was also designed from the off to be road and off road transportable and part of a mechanised army; part of the reason costs had to be cut was every gun was bought with its own 4wd transport vehicle (a Morris Quad for most of WW2).



#### ***25pdr, limber and Quad advancing in Italy in 1944***

**This goes to the “better gun system” thing** - it sounds obvious, but was actually very uncommon - plenty of armies (the French, Russian and Italians) did not have anything like organic transport for every gun, preferring to spend money on the boastable number of “how many cannons do you have?” rather than the effectiveness of those pieces. The Italian army suffered the worst from this syndrome, with roughly one truck for every ten guns.

The Germans planned for the bulk of their artillery to be horse drawn, and had enough horses to do that, but this proved logistically complex (with huge amounts of animal fodder needed) and proved disastrous on the eastern front, especially in the retreat from Moscow in 1941.



*German 105, horses and Limber in Italy 1944*

In terms of the killing power of the gun itself, the 25pdr gun shield and elevation mechanism was designed to allow very high angle fire,

**giving the gun a remarkable range for its size (20% more than the bigger American and German 105mm guns).**

This meant it could often engage in counter-battery fire without effective retaliation.

The shells were well designed too, with **side by side tests in 1943 showing the standard 25pdr shell was twice as effective as the German 105mm shell and 50% more effective than the US 105mm shell.** This was largely because the British shell splintered much more effectively than the thicker walled American and German rounds.

The barrel life - bearing in mind the barrels had started life as WW1 guns - was remarkably long, with a quoted service life of 12,000 shots before replacing the barrel (compared to say, 900 for the German 88m). This is part of the reason 25pdrs are so often used as ceremonial guns these days. Finally, in 1941, the British used the then-unusual qualities of the 25pdr - the ability to both use very high angle shots alongside flat trajectory rounds with differing charges - to create a wholly new kind of artillery fire, the time on target barrage, where batteries in different positions would time their shells to all arrive at the same time.

This technique was partly developed off the British observation that the bulk of the damage from artillery strikes was done by the first few rounds before opponents had time to take cover; with the 25pdr with good crews, you could do this even with several rounds from the same gun. Essentially, when a target is well within range, you can loft several shells, have the first one fired on a very high trajectory, last one fired on a quite flat trajectory,

### COVID 19 IMPACT ON RAA AND RAAHS COMMITTEES

**T**he impact of COVID-19 on our everyday lives has been dramatic: how has it affected the RAA and RAAHS Committees?

For starters the Committees have until recently been unable to meet in person. Whilst this did not affect the RAA too much as theirs is a quarterly meeting it had a big impact on the RAAHS who lost their weekly get together on Wednesdays and trialled a monthly management meeting by email for their first meeting post the introduction of restrictions. This was not a great success and led to a rethink.

The actual restrictive measures were fully supported as the average age of the committee is well within the risk group for the virus. For the second committee meeting a ZOOM video conferencing invitation was issued and apart from a few technical problems for some of the group it worked very well. It demonstrated that old desktops, laptops and non-smart phones would not cut it. The meeting was certainly quicker than the standard faced to face meetings.

This month's meeting was a hybrid of face to face and ZOOM VIDCON. It also worked well prompting us to consider the continued attendance of some of the committee by VIDCON to allow members flexibility to attend in whatever way they can. It also assists us to meet the social distancing and room capacity restrictions currently in force to offer maximum protection.

It seems unlikely that COVID-19 is going to "go away" in a hurry. Social distancing is a sensible way to minimise the risk to ourselves and the embracing of technology can help to also reduce the risk as well as fit in with people's busy schedules. As a voluntary organisation we rely on healthy members to keep going. This of course also applies to all the Leighton Battery volunteers who will not be going back for some time. The Committee is currently thinking through options to restart but the confined space of the tunnels is a significant restrictor and we don't want to put our members or the public at risk. Stay safe and don't hoard toilet paper.

John Blylevens



AN EARLIER RAA WA COMMITTEE MEETING IN NORMAL TIMES

Left to Right — Bob Farrelly, John Blylevens, Ken Hepworth John O'Brien, Peter Mahoney