



150 | AUSTRALIAN | 1871
YEARS | **ARTILLERY** | 2021

01 August 2021

Head of Regiment Address
150th Anniversary of Australian Artillery
Commemorative Ceremony and
150 Gun National Salute

Delivered by Brigadier Richard Vagg, DSC
Head of Regiment, Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery
Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery National Memorial, Mount Pleasant, Canberra

Chief of Defence Force, General Campbell; Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Burr; Regimental Colonel Commandant, Brigadier Roach, distinguished guests; fellow Gunners; ladies & gentlemen: on behalf of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, welcome and thank you for attending this auspicious occasion.

The 1st of August marks the 150th Anniversary of the formation of the first permanent battery of Australian Artillery. Which has led to a continuous lineage of artillery batteries and regiments serving first the Australian Colonies, and then the nation of Australia.

Since that day on 1st August 1871, Australian Gunners have rightly earned the Battle Honour granted to the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery – *Ubique* – or, *everywhere*.

From the names on the eight plaques behind me leap images and histories of Australian Gunners during arduous and terrible conflicts; stories of tragedy and human frailty; accounts of initiative and versatility; and of feats exemplifying Service, Courage, Respect, Integrity and Excellence that embody equally, the Royal Australian Artillery's own motto of *Where Right and Glory Lead*; but above all this memorial and the plaques, represent human stories of service and devotion to duty that transcend these simple titles alone.

The story of Australian Artillery starts with the departure of the last British forces in 1870, when each Colony was required to defend their coastline and communities. This step sowed the need build a dedicated and technically professional Artillery capability.

This anniversary is therefore a special day for every Australian, not just for Gunners, as 1871 marks the date from when Australia's Colonial Governments made that permanent commitment to their own self-defence – one of the hallmarks of sovereignty and nationhood.

After the NSW Colonial Government funded and raised its first permanent battery on 1st August that year, officers, gunners, guns and equipment were used to form subsequent batteries. Army's longest continuous serving permanent unit is 'A' Battery traces its history to that original NSW Battery.

The other Colonies soon also raised permanent batteries the cost of these technically complex investments - and the realisation of the benefits of cooperation, economy of effort and concentration of force; sparked motives for federating into a collective self-defence. This led to the creation – by Royal Assent – of the *Regiments of Royal Australian Artillery in July 1899* - a full eighteen months before the proclamation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901.

This united force has evolved to become today's Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery.

Today, Australia's Gunners continue to serve proudly across the nation in war and peace. Artillery remains a vital blend of the science and art of war; and today, the realm of the twenty-first century Gunner extends across multiple disciplines and domains. *Ready Now* as always, the Artillery's critical capabilities are essential to winning battles – including not just guns and mortars, but rockets, missiles, drones, radars and most vitally, the provision of essential joint fires coordination.

Looking ahead, the *Future Ready* Royal Australian Artillery is unquestionably at the forefront of the Australian Army's modernisation program, with projects delivering new air defence systems; self-propelled artillery; long-range rockets; surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting systems; digital terminal control to strike targets; and new artillery ammunition.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the 1st of August unites all Regiments and Gunners, serving and former, across all States and Territories as the date that captures and symbolises the beginning of the Australian Artillery. Today, we recognise all Gunners who have provided *service to our community and the Nation*: at home, and overseas; defending assaults from the sea, in the sky, and on land; advising, defending and supporting their comrades.

After a 150 continuous years, we first remember those who have given ultimate sacrifice and then celebrate the unstinting service of Australian Gunners from 1871 to the present day as they continue to protect and serve the Nation in war and peace.