



CHAIR RAAHC REPORT TO RAAHC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

28 OCTOBER 2023

CHAIR REPORT

Dear Members,

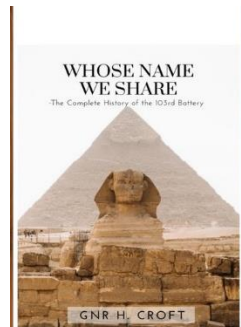
The Board remains the same as last year although we are hoping that Sean Ryan will be joining us later in the year. We need new blood so please put up your hand if interested. The current Board is shown below:

- Chair - Ian Ahearn
- Deputy Chair - Nick Floyd
- Honorary Secretary - Rob Crawford
- Honorary Treasurer - Peter Lawrence
- Directors - John Cox, Schon Condon Craig Furini, Ron West, Bill Foxall, and James Eling

Lieutenant General Greg Bilton continues as Patron.

The Head of Regiment has appointed Lieutenant Colonel James Groves to the Board as a Liaison Officer, a move much appreciated by the RAAHC.

Whose Name We Share



It is refreshing to see a serving gunner showing interest in RAA history by writing a book titled *Whose Name We Share*. The book is a history of 103rd Battery RAA and was written by Gunner Hemi Croft, a current member of the Battery. The book is available for viewing as a 'Flipbook' by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.australianartilleryassociation.org/books/Whose-Name-We-Share/index.html>

It is not intended to sell the book, but copies can be downloaded from the RAAHC website at: https://artilleryhistory.org/gunners_past_and_present/gunners_of_renown_and_gunners_tales/gunners_tales/gunner_croft/Whose%20Name%20We%20Share%20-%20web%20format.pdf

As a recognition of Gunner Croft's efforts, the RAAHC has undertaken to have about 20 copies printed for distribution to 103 Battery, the Cutler Research Centre and selected personnel who

assisted in the development of the book. We hope that other budding authors are encouraged by Gunner Croft's sterling effort.

Reduction in Members' Subscriptions

Inflation is affecting us all so the Board has decided to soften its impact by reducing the RAAHC annual membership subscription to \$20 per year or \$80 for five years. The new rates have been applied to renewals for this year and will automatically extend membership duration for those who previously paid in advance..

Combined Arms Learning and Heritage Centre

The Defence Strategic Review has resulted in some collateral damage to the RAA and the RAAC through the decision to re-scope, delay or cancel some projects. Sadly, one of the projects affected is the Combined Arms Heritage and Learning Centre (the Armoured/Artillery Museum) which has been cancelled. Defence has advised that it understands that this is disappointing for the units, associations and communities connected with the Puckapunyal Military Area, the Royal Australian Armoured Corps, The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery and The Australian Army History Unit. Army will work with these groups to manage the impact of this decision although it is not clear what alternatives may be available.

Cutler Research Centre (CRC)

The current CRC volunteer staff number eight with two more interested parties. As previously advised, the RAAHC would greatly benefit if we could attract some volunteers to the CRC with Gunner experience. Only a few hours a week would be gratefully accepted, and some of the work could be done at home. If you are interested, please contact MANAGER CRC – email managercrc@artilleryhistory.org

Content Management System (CMS). CRC staff continue to update the CMS on the publicly available and searchable eHive account, which has over five thousand entries. Close liaison is maintained with the National Library Australia (NLA) staff how the record is displayed on Trove. Members can view progress on the CMS by going to the website at <https://ehive.com/collections/201005/cutler-research-centre>.

A team from the National Archives of Australia. (NAA) visited the CRC to provide advice on the preservation of the collection. Nick Floyd arranged this review through a contact at NAA in Canberra. The Report on the visit was received on 16th May and has been forwarded to the History Director. The Report notes that overall, the collection managed by the CRC is in a stable condition, is being stored appropriately and well catalogued. It provides several recommendations with respect to storage, environment control and at-risk photo collections.

Inquiries. A steady number of inquiries for information continue to be received and successfully answered by the RAAHC. The research capability of the RAAHC is increasingly becoming well-known and is mostly growing through our online presence. The majority of requests for information are received via email, however all other ways imaginable are also used to contact us. The History Director (John Cox) and the CRC Manager (Tim Ford) routinely consult and organise research assistance from the CRC and the RAAHC's network of knowledgeable and responsive experts. In appropriate instances a donation is requested, and the response is often positive. An outcome in one case was the lady who requested information, decided to become a volunteer at the CRC.

NBN. In September an NBN connection contract with an ISP was purchased for the CRC by

the RAAHC. The speed and reliability of internet access to and from the CRC has improved markedly with only a minor increase in monthly fees.

Military History Research Group of the International University Foundation of Madrid.



The RAAHC has been contacted by Professor David de Caixal, Director of the Security and Defense Area of INISEG, and Director of the Military History Research Group of the International University Foundation of Madrid. The Military History Research Group are preparing a research area and publications on the history of the Artillery in Australia, specifying its participation in World War I and II. The objective of the Research Group is to promote and disseminate the history of the Artillery and has sought a collaboration with the RAAHC to publicize the important work of the dedication and sacrifice of Australian gunners and their principles and values.

The teaching staff are civil and military historians from Spain and from NATO countries. Military institutions such as AUSA (United States Army Association); The Museum of the Great War of Meaux, in France; The Imperial War Museum in London; the Royal Military College of Canada; the Institute of Military History and Culture of the Army and the General Tactics Chair in Military History at the Ecole Militaire in Paris. The Australian War Memorial has also contributed. Nick Floyd has volunteered to liaise with the Group and John Cox, as History Director, will also be involved. The RAAHC has been invited by the Scientific Committee to be part of the Research Group, to participate in a Masterclass or publish an article on the military history of Australian artillery, both in World War I and II, as well as in Korea and Vietnam. Nick Floyd is the RAAHC liaison officer.

Australia's Memorial Walk (AMW)

You may recall in Cannonball 100 that I outlined the work planned for the entrance plinth at the AWM at North Fort. Thanks to Peter Lawrence the entrance plinth to Australia's Memorial Walk has been updated. The photo below shows the brass plaque added to the plinth as an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land and to welcome visitors to the AMW.

AUSTRALIA'S MEMORIAL WALK

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we walk today. We acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging and the spirits and ancestors of the Clans that lived in this area.

Welcome to Australia's Memorial Walk, on land traditionally used for ceremonies and which now honours those who have served and supported the defence of Australia in peace or in war.

Located in bushland within Sydney Harbour Federation Trust's North Head Sanctuary, on the land of the Traditional Custodians, the Memorial Walk overlooks the entrance to Sydney Harbour through which many Australians transited to and from war. It is also located adjacent to North Fort that was crucial to the defence of Sydney Harbour.

The Walk was initiated by the volunteers of the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company in 2002 and dedicated in December 2012 by the then NSW Governor, Her Excellency Dame Marie Bashir AD, CVO.

Members of the public can donate an individual dedicated paver or a centre paver to commemorate an individual or group who have served in Australia's Armed Forces or Merchant Marine or supported them.

Background information on the Monuments, applications to donate a paver or the method to locate a paver on the Walk can be obtained by scanning the QR code nearby.

Please proceed along the pathway and we invite you to enjoy the peace and beauty of Australia's Memorial Walk.



The rebuilt plinth



The 'desk' of the new plinth

RAA Drone Pilots Get Their Wings

A parade in Brisbane on 7 May 2023 saw the historic presentation of the first aviators' brevet to soldiers and officers of the 20th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, who have qualified as operators of category 3 and higher uncrewed aerial systems.



Australian Army soldier Gunner Wright, the youngest serving member of the 20th Regiment RAA is presented with the first artillery brevet by the Head of Regiment, Brigadier Damian Hill at the 20th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery brevet presentation ceremony at Gallipoli Barracks, Brisbane

The lineage of the brevet dates back to World War I where the principal roles of the aircrew were as an air observation post (AOP) and reconnaissance behind the trenches. Commander 16th Aviation Brigade Brigadier Dean Thompson said the awarding of the brevet was significant.

“It is an important moment in the history of the Regiment, Brigade, the Royal Australian Artillery and more broadly the Australian Army,” Brigadier Thompson said. *“We add to the rich history of the Regiment; a history of which you can be justly proud.”* 20th Regiment, RAA has been placed under command of the 16th Aviation Brigade.

Central to the Brevet is a seven-fused flaming grenade, representing the ancestry of the Royal Australian Artillery Corps and was last worn as wings by Artillery Corps Air Observation Post pilots in Vietnam. The grenade is surrounded by a wattle wreath representing the spirit of the Australian people and is surmounted by the Sovereign's crown.

Since being re-raised to the order of battle on 9 October 2005 20th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, has been on operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, East Timor, Papua-New Guinea, and here at home in Australia – flying more than 66,000 hours, of which 55,000 have been operational. Brigadier Thompson said the brevet was recognition of skill and proficiency in trade.

“Today you are being recognised for your hard work, sacrifices and the ongoing commitment which goes with your qualification and trade – and mastery of your weapon system and the capability you bring to the Joint Land Combat System,” Brigadier Thompson said.

Essential History Project

The **Essential History of the Employment of Australian Artillery 1871 -2021** project was to be a combined effort between the RAAHC, the serving Regiment and the Australian Army History Unit (AAHU). AAHU was to publish the book in the form of their campaign Series and the RAAHC was to provide the text and photographs. Unfortunately, that arrangement was unable to be implemented so the RAAHC has decided that to commercially publish the book through Big Sky Publishing. This will mean that the RAAHC

will need to find the funds to publish and distribute the book to gunners while Big Sky will make it available to the general community.

The Essential History is a work that covers 150 years of artillery service to Australia. The book is:

- written in a brief, non-academic and well-illustrated style, designed for straightforward and effective communication.
- planned to be around 200 pages, with over 70 photographs, and dozens of maps, tables and special interest 'breakout boxes' that focus on Australian artillery gunners, commanders, tactics, and technical equipment and expertise.
- fully cited and draws on dozens of primary and authoritative secondary sources.
- planned to be offered in both print and e-versions, to maximise public and serving Gunner accessibility.

About the Audience: The target audience includes:

- Gunners who are currently serving - aiming to contribute to unit morale and esprit de corps, and to provide a professional historical context for artillery operations past, present, and future.
- Retired Gunners.
- Descendants and extended families of Gunners.
- Wider Australian Defence Force seeking knowledge of artillery.
- Historians who need an authoritative overview of Australia's artillery.

Sales: We intend that the book will be offered at a discount to gunners (serving/retired). It will be commercially available to other ADF personnel and the wider Australian community. The detail will be negotiated with Big Sky Publishing. An E book is also being considered.

The RAAHC has a strong record of achievement in supporting and producing quality books and publications on Australian artillery history. The authors, Nick Floyd, and Paul Stevens are both experienced, qualified, and published. They, and all the volunteers involved have given their time for free. The Project Manager is RAAHC History Director, John Cox; interested parties can contact John for further information. Writing and manuscript production is almost complete, and it is intended that to have the book produced, and available, no later than 1 August 2024. The title of the book is likely to be ***ACTION! ACTION! ACTION! ACTION! – A History of the Employment of Australian Artillery 1871 to 2021.***

DVA Grant. The RAAHC is applying for a DVA Grant to assist in defraying the costs for this much needed book. It is planned to have the book available for distribution and sales just ahead of a formal launch on or about 1 August 2024.

Conclusion

Finally, to our wide range of volunteers around Australia that assist our activities, thank you for your support and effort over the past years. Thanks, are also due to all the RAAHC Directors for their significant contributions throughout the year. We are grateful to our Patron, Lieutenant General Greg Bilton, AO, CSC and appreciate the efforts of our Honorary Solicitor, Paul Fordyce and our Honorary Auditor, Graham Martin.

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Chair RAAHC Board of Directors