



The Soldiers' Newspaper

Army

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SPECIAL LIFTOUT

3 Bde soldiers march during the Op Slipper parade in Townsville as three Chinooks fly overhead.
Photo by LCpl Kyle Genner



Diverse stories to be told

Learn lessons from WWI artillery battles with the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company, **Sgt Dave Morley** reports.

IN LINE with Centenary of Anzac events being held across Australia over the next four years, the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company (RAAHC) will be hosting a series of seminars titled Firepower: Lessons from the Great War.

Deputy Director Joint Concepts Lt-Col Nick Floyd has been president of the RAA Association (ACT) since 2011, and is also a board member of the RAAHC, as well as the project director for Firepower.

“Not only does the RAAHC want to get people to come along to the first event on May 13 at ADFA, we also want to make them aware of the entire seminar series over four years,” he said.

“We’d also like to get some interest from people who can contribute material to the series.”

He said the main thrust of the Firepower seminar series would be in Canberra, with 11 events scheduled.

“One of the other directors of the RAAHC is based in Melbourne and has already started organising a parallel series of events there, and we are looking to organise similar series elsewhere, including Sydney,” he said.

An added highlight of the seminars will be the appearance of RAAHC’s recently restored WWI 18-pounder gun at each event.

Lt-Col Floyd said the RAAHC was hoping to get as broad a cross-section of individuals involved as possible to contribute.

“We want to treat each of the different topics with as much diversity as we can,” he said. “So people who might be interested in leadership and command will get that, while people who are interested in soldier stories will get that.”

He said some of the more technical topics such as technology in artillery, artillery tactics, combined arms tactics, and even tactics involving naval gunfire support and airpower, would be included.

“We will also be looking at the logistic train right through from factory to arsenal to gunline,” he said.

“We recognise the stories that need to be told about all the parts that make up firepower.”

Lt-Col Floyd said a rich and diverse group of experts and academics who were passionate about

“Like every corps or regiment, artillery has a proud tradition, and it’s important to understand why we and our comrades in arms have the pride each of us do in our corps and regimental histories.”

– Lt-Col Nick Floyd, Deputy Director Joint Concepts

the subject would be needed to cover the large range of topics.

“We already have many people who have come on board from the heavy-hitter top end of town, but equally we’re engaging directly with cadets from ADFA,” he said.

“They have a military history vocational group and we’re quite keen to get the young ADFA students to start their journey of discovery into Australia’s history and heritage.

“Equally, we’d be delighted to see young bombardiers, sergeants or captains from the regiments contribute a paper they might think is worthwhile, particularly if it is relevant to their unit.

“A lot of today’s batteries claim their lineage from the reorganisation of the Australian Field Artillery in 1916.”

Lt-Col Floyd said stories of an exploit by a gunner, a bombardier, a lieutenant or a forward observer from WWI, if told by a member of a unit that drew its lineage from that time, would be of interest.

“Defence Attachés are also being engaged as it could be a great opportunity for their country to send out an expert to tell their country’s story at the seminars,” he said.

“If an overseas expert is unable to attend in person we’d still be delighted to have a paper submitted by their Australia-based representatives.

“Even if we can’t have it presented on the day, we can put it into the

collection and add it to the anthology of the work we’re collecting for this.

“Each contribution we receive will be published on our website.”

Lt-Col Floyd stressed that both officers and soldiers would benefit from attending the seminars because of the lessons focus of the series.

“It’s not just a study of history but, as the name suggests, we’re trying to ensure we’re true to the topic,” he said.

“The aim is to look carefully, objectively and analytically at things that exist in our past and that of our allies and opposition.

“We need to incorporate these lessons in today’s, and even tomorrow’s artillery – that’s our key purpose.”

Lt-Col Floyd said young soldiers and young subalterns would get an understanding of context out of the seminars.

“Like every corps or regiment, artillery has a proud tradition, and it’s important to understand why we and our comrades in arms have the pride each of us do in our corps and regimental histories,” he said.

“Where they came from, why they’re important and why we should continue to hold them in high esteem is an important aspect of a soldier’s character and a young officer’s character.”

The seminars will be podcast on the RAAHC website, ADFA website and regimental websites for those unable to attend.

Troops try to get an 18-pounder gun out of the mud in October 1917 during the Third Battle of Ypres. Photo courtesy Australian War Memorial



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