

Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

Major General Walter Adams COXEN, CB, CMG, DSO

(1870-1949)

Wacky Coxen is Australia's preeminent artillery commander. He was commissioned into the Queensland Militia Garrison Artillery in 1893 transferring to the Queensland Permanent Artillery two years later. After Federation he became Chief Instructor of the School of Gunnery in Sydney. He later undertook further training in the UK and by the outbreak of WWI was Director of Artillery.

In May 1915, he took the 36th Heavy Artillery Group to France becoming the first AIF artillery unit to arrive on the Western Front. His exemplary leadership and gunnery skills saw him rise quickly through the artillery chain of command until he became General Officer Commanding Royal Artillery (GOCRA) of 1st Anzac Corps in October 1917 and GOCRA of The Australian Corps from January 1918 first under General William Birdwood and, from May 1918, under Lieutenant General John Monash.

At the Battle of Amiens on 8 August 1918 and subsequent battles, contrary to the ADB entry, he did not command the greatest aggregate of artillery in the history of warfare, but he did command the greatest number of guns ever commanded by an Australian.

After the war he held several senior appointments retiring as Chief of the General Staff in 1931. He was also Honorary Colonel of the RAA Regiment 1931-49, and of the Medium, Heavy, Anti-Aircraft, and Survey elements of the RAA (Militia) 1932-49.

For more information follow the link below.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/coxen-walter-adams-5800>