



ANZAC CENTENNIAL MEMORIAL GUN PROJECT

THE VISION

To create a living memorial to all, especially Gunners, who served in the Great War and to the horses that supported them.

MISSION

To deploy the gun, limber horses and drivers for ANZAC Centenary commemorative events from 2015 to 2019

The Royal Australian Historical Company (RAAHC) initiated a unique project in 2013 to commemorate the Centenary of ANZAC. The project has been a daunting task and has involved the restoration of an original World War 1 18 Pounder, its ammunition limber, the acquisition/restoration of harness and saddles, the recruitment of gun detachments, the acquisition of horses, the collection and restoration of shells from World War 1 battlefields and the replication of period uniforms. The Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company is a not-for-profit organisation a registered charity run entirely by volunteers.

The gun and limber have been sourced from the RAAHC component of the artillery collection held by the Army at Bandiana since the closure of the Australian Army Artillery Museum at North Head. The Australian Army History Unit has transported the gun and associated spare parts to North Head where restoration is taking place. The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust has provided facilities for the restoration. The Restoration has been carried out by Jim Frecklington a noted coach builder and restorer; Jim has built the Australian State Coach which was presented to Her Majesty on the occasion of the Australian Bicentennial in 1988. He is being assisted with expert advice on the gun and limber by members of the RAAHC and information being provided from the UK, Canada and New Zealand. Harnesses, saddles, uniforms and people are being sought by a Canberra and Goulburn based team. Max Pearce of Beauwood Stud in Goulburn provided the training for horses and drivers. This geographically separated team is led by Ian Ahearn, a retired gunner who is based in Canberra.

The Gun

The Quick Firing (QF) 18 Pounder was the principle Field Gun of the British Army in World War One. The gun saw service in every theatre of the Great War. Its calibre of 84mm and shell weight made it more brutal and destructive than the French 75mm and German 77mm. Its ammunition had the shell combined with the cartridge thus giving it the description of 'quick firing'.

The gun and its ammunition limber were towed by a team of six light draught horses. A driver was allocated to each two horse team and rode the left horse of

each pair. The two wheeled ammunition limber was hooked up to the horses and the trail of the gun was hooked to the limber. Further to this, each gun had two additional ammunition limbers towed by their own team. The photograph below illustrates the standard horse drawn configuration.



The 18 pounder gun was introduced into Australian service in 1906 and continued to be used until 1945. It was the standard field gun in service until 1940 when it began to be replaced by the 25 pounder gun. When World War 1 commenced there were 116 18-pounder guns in Australia and 76 of these were sent to Gallipoli and France during the war. In addition further guns were purchased to replace damaged guns and also to supply the increasing number of gun batteries in the AIF. It is estimated some 500 guns were obtained in all. 116 were brought back to Australia. Today only seven of this early model remain three of which are updated with pneumatic tyres and three are static Museum items.

Ammunition

A spent round has been collected from every European battlefield on which the Australians were engaged. The photos below show the collection of the ordnance and the progress on restoration. The rounds will be carried in the limber and will serve as an introduction to the history of the battles.



**Jim Frecklington & johan van de Walle
with collected casings & fuzes**



The restored casings

Horse and Driver Training

Max Pearce of Beauwood Stud a Goulburn has trained the horses and drivers. Training has occurred over many months with gradual care taken to match the horse pairs to ensure maximum safety. The horsemen and woman ride postillion and were known as "Drivers". Volunteer Drivers have been Rebecca Wozniak, Mollie Mercer, Ben Bogle, Wes Leseberg, Luke Dowell, Kerrie Stewart, Rick Jones, Melinda Stinziani Max Pearce and Sandy McMillan. Outriders have been Neil Wilson, Joseph Roberts, Paul Leseberg and Trent Wagstaff. Gun detachment members include Aaron McMillan, Harold Ganter Shane Cheney, Dom Stinziani aided by Brian Armstrong, Ian Ahearn, Tony Jensen and Christopher Jobson.

Getting Around

It soon became obvious that a means of transporting the gun and limber was needed. Dean Trailers in Bowral was engaged to build a purpose designed trailer. The canopy was constructed by A1 Marine and Auto Trim in Mittagong and the sign writing by Bowral signs. The finished product met all expectations and has been successfully used on multiple occasions. The trailer is shown below



Events

The Team has attended over forty events in four states; some of the events attended are shown in following pages.

Goulburn NSW Heritage Parade 15 March 2016. The first outing of the Team.



Welcome to Canberra. On the 15th April 2015 the Team was officially welcomed to Canberra by the Governor General, Sir Peter Cosgrove. The welcome was conducted at the Canberra Airport at Fairbairn. Mr Terry Snow and the Airport staff have provided assistance, storage and display facilities for the Team. Their support has been invaluable.



The photograph above right shows (L to R) Project Manager Ian Ahearn, RAAHC Director of Collections Kevin Browning, Jim Frecklington, the restorer and Sir Peter Cosgrove the Governor General discussing the finer points of the restored 18 Pounder in the foreground.

ANZAC Day, Canberra. ANZAC Day 2015 in Canberra was a major milestone for the project when the Team led the parade onto the Australian War Memorial forecourt. The vision partly achieved with the Team passing the saluting point during the National ANZAC Day Commemoration (photo below).



Goulburn, NSW. Goulburn also participated in the Kangaroo March on 26 September 2015. The gun was reviewed by the Governor of NSW General David Hurley.



Gunning, NSW. The re-enactment of the Kangaroo March began in Wagga and the RAAHC joined it in Gunning on 22 September 2015.



Moss Vale, NSW. On 3 October 2015 the Team attended the Moss Vale part of the Kangaroo March and for the first time provided a full mounted detachment.



Belgium Embassy, Canberra. The gun and limber were displayed at the Belgium Embassy on 10 October 2015 as part of the Embassy Open Day.



Willow Mavin, VIC. Later in October 2016 the Team visited the Willow Mavin Primary School in Victoria to participate in an award to the pupils for their commemorative work for the ANZAC Centenary.



Inverell, NSW. The Team participated in the commemoration of the Kurrajong march in Inverell in January 2016 (Photo below left).



Horsepower, Ariah Park, NSW. On 10 April 2016 the 18 Pounder participated in the Horsepower event at Ariah Park near Temora, NSW. (Photo above right).

Woo Back Heavy Horse Ploughing Event, Yass, NSW. Yass was the site for a Clydesdale show on 24 April 2016 and the Gun Team accompanied by 7 Troop Light Gundagai Horse, Max Pearce with his military "T" cart Phaton and Rick Jones with his WW1 GS Wagon appeared at the ANZAC Commemoration held during the event.



ANZAC Day 2016. Gundagai and Jugiong NSW hosted the Gun Tem, "T" Cart and GS Wagon at the Gundagai Dawn Service and march then at the Jugiong march.



The whole shooting match Gundagai (Photo K. Winter)

ADFA Open Day 27 August 2016, Canberra. Static display of the ANZAC Centennial Gun with modern artillery equipment



Then there was the Harden NSW Annual Show September 2016 where the heavens opened.



Echuca Steam Rally, VIC June 2019



The gun and limber have been displayed in the departure hall of the Canberra Airport (see photograph below).



Remembrance Day 2016. The Gun and Limber formed a back drop to the Manly Council's commemoration.



On the 4 December 2016 Saint Barbara's Day (Patron Saint of Artillery) was marked by a progress through Canberra to Old Parliament House.



The gun is capable of firing blanks and the inaugural firing took place at Jugiong on 25th February 2017. The photographs below show the blank firing.



ANZAC Day 2017 was commemorated at Springdale near Temora in NSW. A salute was fired to commemorate the five residents killed in WW1.



The Passchendaele Salute 2017 Lille, France

The Team attended the Passchendaele Salute 2017, under the patronage of the UK, High Commissioner for Canada. It took place on the morning of 10 November 2017 at Fort Seclin in Northern France. A service of remembrance was held and a 100 rounds salute was fired to commemorate the Centenary of the end of the Battle of Passchendaele. The RAAHC Team participated and funded their own attendance.

The salute consisted of 16 Great War with each gun manned by a nationality that participated in the Battle of Passchendaele. Australians were there in 1917 and were there again in 2017. Below Left: the gun line. Right the gun line fires



The Salute was a sight that will probably not be seen again as 16 WW1 firing at 10 second intervals commemorated the end of one of the worst battles of the War. The RAAHC detachment performed faultlessly and was a credit to both Australia and the Company



The Australians fire and the Kiwis wait the order.



The Canadians fire while the Belgian & French await the order
After the salute the ANZACS together and the French clean up



Below: Our youngest detachment member Joey Roberts avec Les French and the Irish detachment with banners





The whole Team - All were volunteers and all paid their way

ANZAC Day 2018 Brisbane QLD.



Remembrance Day 2018 Liverpool, NSW



Willinga Park, NSW



ANZAC Day 2019 Goulburn, NSW



Waiting to lead the march with RMC Lon Tan Company right



Down the main street

Further Information:

Website: www.artilleryhistory.org .

FaceBook: Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company