

Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

Major General John Stewart WHITELAW, CB, CBE

(1894-1964)

John Whitelaw entered the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in June 1911. He was appointed lieutenant, Australian Imperial Force, in August 1914 and posted to 7th Infantry Battalion. Two months later he embarked for Egypt. At Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 he suffered a severe bullet wound to the foot. After recovering in hospitals in Egypt and England, he returned to Melbourne in December 1915. His appointment in the AIF was terminated on 25 July 1916 and he was assigned to the Administrative and Instructional Staff of the 3rd Military District.

He transferred to the Royal Australian Garrison Artillery in September 1917, and undertook staff and regimental duties in NSW, Queensland and Victoria. In October 1920, he was allocated to the newly formed Australian Staff Corps as a captain. A student at the School of Gunnery (reorganised as the Artillery Schools of Instruction), Sydney in 1921, he returned as an instructor in 1927. After further gunnery training in England in 1928-30 he became chief instructor at the ASI (renamed the School of Artillery) in January 1931 and was promoted major in October. From 1935 he served on the General Staff at Army Headquarters, Melbourne, rising to substantive lieutenant colonel in July 1937.

He went on to become Australia's chief gunner (MGRA) in WWII responsible for technological development and equipping the artillery. In 1943, he convened a conference of all the CRAs and CCRA's at Advanced LHQ, Brisbane. No fewer than 25 brigadiers and colonels attended, which occasion would have been a 'one off' for the AMF.

He died of cardiac infarction on 21 April 1964 at Berwick and was cremated; his wife survived him, as did their three sons, all of whom became artillery officers.

Source: Jackson Hughes, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, Vol. 16, pp. 538-539 and J. Whitelaw, Personal Papers.

For more information follow this link: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/whitelaw-john-stewart-12018>