



The word from the
Horse's Mouth

The Newsletter of the RAEME Association of WA

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What the Prez Sez

Welcome to the summer edition of the Horses Mouth.

For those in the Royal Corps that I have not had the pleasure to meet yet, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as yet another past OC of 103 and 113 Field Workshops. I am currently posted to CASG in Victoria Barracks but working in a part time capacity as SO2 EME at HQ 13 Bde. I have also just become a Commonwealth Public Servant (in Defence of course) and so am keeping busy.

I nominated for the role of President having wanted to take on a committee position for some time and coming back home to WA now seemed like the right time to put up my hand. I thank the previous Committee for their work in keeping the Association in a healthy shape ready for the future and with the support of Dick, Peter, Perry, Alex, Phil and SO, I look forward to supporting and meeting you all in the coming year. We will continue to have our 3 core activities run next year being our pre-ANZAC Day memorial, our get together after

the ANZAC Day march and the celebration of the Corps birthday. Suggestions for other activities will always be considered.

The end of 2022 is almost upon us so before it's gone let's see how many members and guests, we can get to our 80th Birthday celebration on the 2nd December!

The Committee and I wish you all a safe, happy and COVID free Christmas and New Year,

All the Best

Ray Mizzi

RAEME Get Together and AGM

We had a great get together at the IBIS on Saturday 29 October, with over 30 of us rolling up to share a quiety or two (?) and tell considerably more lies than usual. Lots of disparaging talk about Russian Tech Spt in the Ukraine and the subsequent Ukrainian Recce Mech heaven. The AGM just missed out on beating last year's record time of 22 minutes with the new positions as per the front page of this newsletter.



Corps Birthday

We have booked the Bayswater again on 2 December from 1730. Same format as last time – just roll up and buy what you want. While we do have a door prize this year there are no other raffles so you can relax.

Social Functions

The committee is looking at the possibility of some additional social functions for next year. These include:

- A partially subsidised cocktail party at ANZAC House in March
- A visit to the SASR Museum.
- A visit (and possibly lunch) to RAAF Museum to see new Ex RAF Tornado and Ex RAAF Hornet once this is on display
- A visit to Leighton Battery once 5.25” replica turret installed

Before we investigate each of these options further can we please get some feedback from you over which one(s) you would be interested in – or suggestions on other functions. Just flick us an e-mail to secretary@wa.raeme.org.au

Vale

Our sympathies go out to some of our members who have recently lost loved ones – Grant and Kerri Stinson on the loss of their son Alex and Norm Wells on the loss of his wife Felicity. We are a RAEME Family and are just a phone call away if needed.

CSSB Artwork

13 CSSB has commissioned an art work to embody WA Army logistics throughout the years. To this end a suitable title has been sought that appropriately captures logistics over the ages. The winner is yet to be officially announced, but the Editor’s suggestion of “Metric, Imperial or Whitworth” is not expected to win. Prints are available if requested



??Did You Know???

Amiens Gun

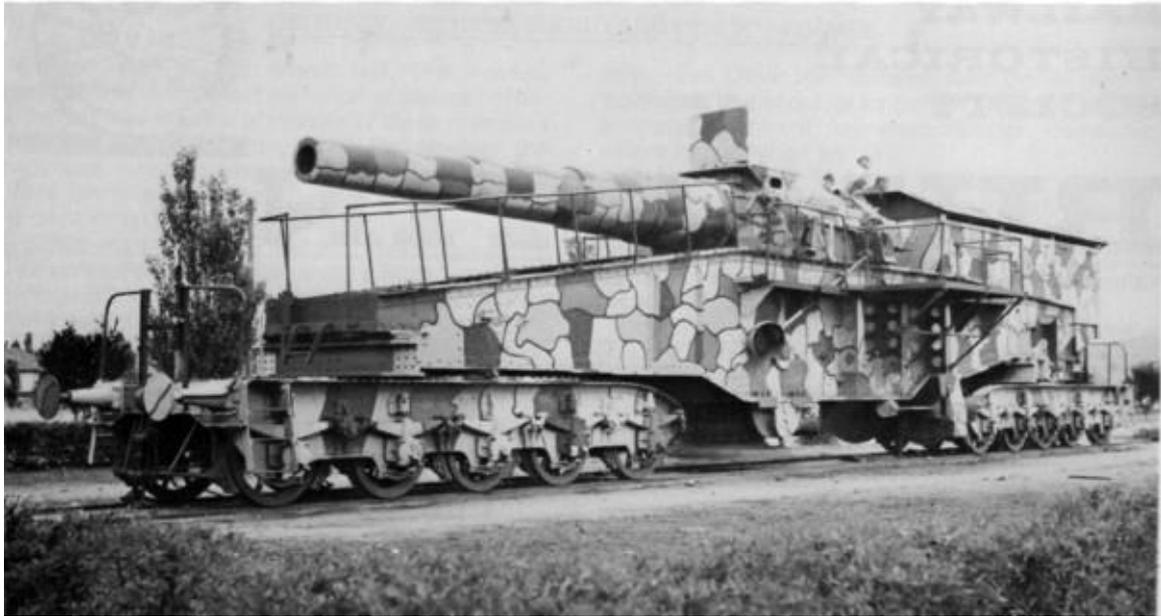
Many of you will be aware of the capture of a 28cm SK I/40 Bruno rail gun by Australian forces during the Battle of Amiens and how when a demolition party went forward they found it still attached to its train, with steam up. Sapper Les Strahan, who has been a driver in WAGR asked for a fair go to drive it back to Australian lines. The rest, as they say, is history.

The gun was eventually sent to Sydney where it was reassembled in the NSW Eveleigh Railway Workshops by Lt George Pocket – of our Ordnance based predecessor and made its way to Canberra in 1923.

After many years outside the Canberra railway station, during WWII the mounting was identified as being useful to test heavy guns and ammunition at Port Wakefield. The gun was disassembled with the mounting going to the Artillery Proof Range at Port Wakefield and the bogies to Bandiana for storage

It is unclear whether the mount was ever actually used and when the Australian War memorial requested its return post war (as promised) no one wanted to bear the cost. After

a number of years of negotiation, the bogies were scrapped in 1961, and the mounting two years later, with the barrel being preserved outside the War Memorial where you can see it today.



Amiens gun complete outside Canberra railway station -1940



The Amiens gun today

AEME 80 years ago in WA

Just how big a presence did we have in WA on formation? Graham McKenzie-Smith has supplied the following:

The Big Picture:

As a small state the pre-war militia in WA included a single infantry brigade (four battalions), two light horse regiments and supporting units, under *HQ 5 Mil Dist* which became *HQ Western Comd* in 1939. Several garrison battalions were added in 1940 and in the December 1941 defence plan these formed *Fremantle Covering Force* to protect the strong coast defences on Rottnest Island and the mainland. The light horse regiments covered the flanks, while *13 Inf Bde* (three battalions) was inland as the counterattack force. Another garrison battalion had company groups at Geraldton, Bunbury, Busselton and Albany, while the fourth infantry battalion (as *Special Mobile Force*) formed company groups to reinforce these areas if necessary. The limited forces available in the main east coast areas meant that no reinforcements were to be sent west in case of attack.

However, the impending return of the AIF allowed reinforcements to be sent to Queensland and WA, so *6 Inf Bde Gp* arrived from Melbourne in March 1942. They were followed in April by the rest of *4 Inf Div* and *HQ W Comd* was upgraded to *HQ 3 Aust Corps* under General Gordon Bennett. After his Malayan experience he feared that the Japanese would land at Geraldton, before advancing south to Fremantle. With *HQ 4 Inf Div* at Guildford he sent *6 Inf Bde Gp* to Geraldton and retained *2 Inf Bde Gp* behind Fremantle in reserve. Then he sent *Spec Mob For* and the light horse regiments to patrol the coast between Geraldton and Fremantle, with *13 Inf Bde Gp* at Moora to back up any of these sectors.

The loss of the Japanese carriers at Midway reduced the threat to south east Australia and in July 1942 *2 Inf Div* was sent to the west from Sydney. Now *HQ 4 Inf Div* moved to Moora with their brigades guarding Geraldton, patrolling the coast from Dandaragan and in reserve at Mingenew, with a motor regiment at Northampton guarding the northern flank. *HQ 2 Inf Div* settled at Guildford with a brigade patrolling the coast from Gingin and the other in reserve behind the garrison battalions guarding Fremantle. After the armoured and motor divisions were reorganized, the new *1 Armd Div* was to be sent to WA and *3 Mot Bde Gp* arrived at Mullewa in October, from where they could respond to any landing in the Gascoyne region. In November the divisions switched roles with *HQ 2 Inf Div* moving inland from Geraldton with brigades at Geraldton and Mingenew. *HQ 4 Inf Div* returned to Guildford with its brigades at Dandaragan, Gingin and Bellevue

As well as a full range of support units for the front line troops, WA also had a range of base level supply units, controlled by *HQ WA L of C Area*. As WA was remote from the training depots which by then had been centralized on the east coast, most corps retained training depots in WA.

OOB: AEME Units in WA as at 31 December 1942.

Unit	Supported Unit	Location
<u>Corps Troops</u>		
5 Infantry Troops Workshop	3 Aust Corps	Wongan Hills

Defending the Geraldton Sector

2 Divisional Ordnance Workshop		Kojarena
5 Section, 2 Divisional Ordnance Workshop	HQ 5 Inf Bde Gp	Strawberry Siding
8 Section, 2 Divisional Ordnance Workshop	HQ 8 Inf Bde Gp	Moonyoonooka
206 Light Aid Detachment	7 Fd Regt	Narngulu
220 Light Aid Detachment	18 Fd Regt	Strawberry Siding
223 Light Aid Detachment	52 Fd Pk Coy	Wicherina
251 Light Aid Detachment	HQ 8 Inf Bde Gp	Mt Fairfax
252 Light Aid Detachment	104 A/tk Regt	Kojarena
253 Light Aid Detachment	HQ 5 Inf Bde Gp	Strawberry Siding

Defending Moora to Perth Sector

4 Divisional Ordnance Workshop		Guildford
2 Section, 4 Divisional Ordnance Workshop	HQ 2 Inf Bde Gp	Gingin
6 Section, 4 Divisional Ordnance Workshop	HQ 6 Inf Bde Gp	Bellevue
108 Independent Bde Ordnance Workshop	HQ 13 Inf Bde Gp	Dandaragan
215 Light Aid Detachment	10 Fd Regt	Gingin
221 Light Aid Detachment	3 Fd Regt	Dandaragan
233 Light Aid Detachment	HQ 4 Inf Div Sigs	Bushmead
268 Light Aid Detachment	HQ 2 Inf Bde Gp	Gingin
269 Light Aid Detachment	HQ 6 Inf Bde Gp	Bellevue
278 Light Aid Detachment	15 Fd Regt	Rockingham
279 Light Aid Detachment	HQ 13 Inf Bde Gp	Moora
305 Light Aid Detachment	56 Fd Pk Coy	Guildford

Corps Reserve

3 Motorised Bde Group Workshop	HQ 3 Mot Bde Gp	Mullewa
272 Light Aid Detachment	4 Mot Regt	Mullewa
227 Light Aid Detachment	26 Mot Regt	Mullewa
288 Light Aid Detachment	101 Mot Regt	Mullewa

Support Units

WA Lines of Communication Ordnance Workshop		Midland Junc
10 Anti-Aircraft Ordnance Workshop Company		Cottesloe
5 Anti-Aircraft Ordnance Workshop Section		Beaconsfield
22 Anti-Aircraft Ordnance Workshop Section		Cottesloe
55 Anti-Aircraft Searchlight Ordnance Workshop Section		Beaconsfield
66 Anti-Aircraft Searchlight Ordnance Workshop Section		Karrakatta
6 Radio Maintenance Section		Rottnest Is
15 Radio Maintenance Section		Fremantle

Training Units

Army Trades Training Depot		Claremont
Motor Transport Training Depot		Northam
Motor Vehicle Trades Training Centre		Claremont
