

Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company
History Seminar Series 2015-2018:
Firepower – Lessons from the Great War

ACTIVITY OUTLINE

Object: To arrange and coordinate a seminar series of presentations on the history of Australian artillery in WW1, from the Anzac Landings in April 1915 to the final Hindenburg Line breaches in September 1918.

Purpose: The output of the seminar series will be the comprehensive treatment of firepower and the role of Artillery during what is still considered one of the most globally significant conflicts of all time. The Series seeks to reignite passion and interest in the profession of Artillery within the Army, Defence and the wider public.

Key Points:

- **Topic relevance.** Presenters will be encouraged to scope their papers to address relevance for today's and tomorrow's Gunners.
- **Period.** Seminar sessions will be timed throughout the period 2015-2018 to coincide with key battle anniversaries, and other salient dates.
- **Themes.** Topics will include principal themes that address the events playing out in these key battles, while other supporting topics will explore related aspects such as allied technology, the evolution of all-arms cooperation, the birth of joint fires coordination, 'human interest' stories of soldiers and commanders, and the contemporary experiences of both Allied and Central Powers gunners – including from British, Empire, French, German and Turkish perspectives.
- **Presenters.** Presenters will be drawn from a careful mix of well-known historians, up-and-coming authors and serving & ex-serving Gunners of all ranks and fields. Invitations to contribute will be made in the *Royal Australian Artillery Liaison Letter*, as well as other academic and Service publications, as well as through the various 'Gunner' social networking channels.
- **Topics.** Each seminar will comprise a section of papers exploring seminar sub-themes as relevant to each battle anniversary. A maximum of three seminars is planned for each year of the series.
- **Partners.** Opportunities to elicit support from, and collaboration with other stakeholder entities like the Australian War Memorial, the Australian Defence Force Academy and the United Services Institute will be maximised.
- **Publication.** Presentations will be based on papers suitable for peer review and subsequent publication in the RAA Historical Company's own magazine, *Cannonball*, or other publications.
 - The RAA Historical Company has in-principle agreement from Army History Unit to publish longer, fully researched and cited versions of the papers as an anthology of the Series, under peer review arrangements.
 - The RAA Historical Company will seek to obtain parallel publication consideration in *Australian Army Journal*, the *Australian Defence Force Journal* and other publications.
 - The peer review and editorial element will be based on the Editorial Board for *Cannonball* - seeking *pro bono* support from suitable academic & subject-matter expert peers to make it substantive.
- **Venues.** Venues will mostly occur in Canberra, but the preferred intent will be to incorporate other capital cities – in particular Melbourne and Sydney. Where possible, timings will coincide to capitalise on other *Centenary of Anzac* activities.

Organisation: Coordination for this Seminar Series will be as a non-public funded activity. It will form a key activity within the RAA Historical Company's 2014-2017 Corporate Plan. Involvement from serving Army or Defence personnel will be in a private capacity, although the RAA Historical Company will seek, where possible, permission to utilise Defence facilities. Speakers will be approached to contribute on a *pro bono* basis - with their reward being a token gift of appreciation, and the esteem of a peer-reviewed publication.

Costs: Facility costs will be minimised due to anticipated use of Defence venues. Other costs are TBA

SEMINAR THEME

- **Firepower – Lessons from the Great War: 1915 - 1918**

SEMINAR SUB-THEMES

- Command and Control
- Human Stories – Gunners
- Human Stories – Commanders
- Artillery Tactics

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- Technology – Ammunition systems
- Technology – the ‘Gunnery Problem’
- Combined Arms – the advent of modern warfare
- Force Generation and Sustainment
- Other Gunners – allies and adversaries

COORDINATION

Steering Committee: Decides events dates, venues, themes and topics

Events Committee: Coordinates/ runs / participates in events (book theatres, write letters, invite guests, do marketing/outreach, and arrange gifts)

Research Team: Suggests possible authors. Provides research advice to authors for sources

Editorial Board: Reviews and edits submissions for publication in *Cannonball*

- *Cannonball*
- *AHU Seminar Series Anthology*

Contributing Authors: Papers must be no longer than 10 minutes in duration (delivered), no longer than 3,000 words submitted), and related to the seminar theme.

Papers must provide an evident relevance ‘hook’ to contemporary and future artillery capability

Stakeholder organisations:

- Royal Australian Artillery Historical Sub-Committee
- Australian War Memorial
- Army History Unit
- Land Warfare Studies Centre, Sea Power Centre, and Air Power Development Centre
- Royal Australian Artillery Associations
- University History Departments
- Other Historical societies
- Select Defence Attachés
- United Services Institute (ACT) (and potentially Vic and NSW RUSIs)