

THE ARTILLERY NEWS.

JUNE – AUGUST 2007



Official Correspondence.

R.A.A Assoc. of Tas. Inc.

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R.A.A.A.T. NORTHERN HISTORICAL- SOCIAL WING. APRIL 2007

The second informal get-together for 2007 of the R.A.A.A.T. Historical-Social Wing group was held at the QVM&AG at 2.00 p.m. on Thursday 12th April, 2007 and was attended by:- Norman Andrews (Hon. Sec.), Gunter Breier, Terry Higgins, Graeme Petterwood, Lloyd Saunders, Marc Smith, Frank Stokes, Charles Tee and Rick Wood..

We did receive apologies from several members - and we were aware of others who are still on the sick list – so ‘Get Wells’ are extended We also extend our sincere sympathy to our member Bob Brown who recently lost his dear wife through illness. Hang in there Bob...!

Norm read several notes he had received from other Associations regarding their activities and also advised us of an invitation from Reg Watson regarding the Annual Boer War Commemorative Day which is to be held on Sunday 10 June 2007 commencing 12.00 noon at the Boer War Memorial in Launceston’s City Park. There will be an opportunity to present flowers, posy or wreath in memory of those Tasmanians who fought in and perhaps died in the South African War (1899-1902)

Further inquiries phone Reg Watson 0409 975 587.

Launceston contact also will be Mr. Fraser Murray 0439 378 827

A last reminder that the date of our Artillery function is now 23 June at South Launceston Football Clubrooms, Highgate St., Youngtown at 12.00 for 12.30 p.m. start.

Cost \$20.00 per person. Contact Norm Andrews RSVP

Donations of items for our Lucky Door Prize draws are solicited – if you have something suitable to put into the prize-pot it will be appreciated on the day.

The next meeting, of the Royal Australian Artillery Association of Tasmania Inc. Historical- Social Wing, will take place on the **14th June** at the **Friends of the Museum Room, Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Inveresk at 2.00 p.m.**

Members - and anyone else who is interested - are cordially invited to attend this informal gathering and have a chat about artillery in Tasmania. Members, please bring a small plate of afternoon tea to share as usual.

ANZAC SERVICE AT PEACE HAVEN



Max Frost.

A brief **ANZAC DAY** ceremony was organized by our RAAAT stalwart, Mr. Max Frost. at the Masonic Peace Memorial Haven Chapel, Penquite Rd., Norwood.

Max, who has been a resident in the retirement village for some years, realized that many of his neighbours, several in-care residents, and most of the day staff would find it difficult to get into the city and participate in the official march and service. Despite his own mobility problems, Max organised a small band of willing helpers and managed to round up an

extremely respectable crowd of 72 for the brief 15 minute ‘dawn service’ held at 10.00a.m.

The theme of the address was ‘Lest We Forget – What?!

Mr. Michael Ferguson (MHR Liberal for Bass), despite his very busy schedule, made the time to be in attendance prior to attending the main Cenotaph service in Launceston at 11.00 a.m.

Max hopes that a small tradition may have been established at the Masonic Peace Memorial Haven and that it might grow in time.

LEST WE FORGET

ANZAC DAY 2007



ANZAC DAY 2007

Part of the large crowd in attendance at the Cenotaph, Launceston, being addressed by Mayor Ivan Dean.

Many of our R.A.A.A.T. members attended services throughout Tasmania to commemorate the sacrifices made by our nation in time of conflict. The main emphasis was on the landing by the fledgling AIF on Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 but consequent sacrifices were never far away from the minds of the 5000 strong crowd in Launceston.

We had the honor of listening to a young Scotch Oakburn College schoolgirl, Grace Southwell – the guest speaker at the 11.00 service – deliver a beautifully prepared oration that looked back at the past and promised so much for the future. This was no glorification of war – just a recognition that she knew the sacrifices of those who had gone before was giving us all a freedom and a future that we may not have had.

Each ANZAC service always has some memorable moments and, to the appreciative crowd, this was one of them.

She thoroughly earned the ovation she received.

STATE FLAG PRESENTATION

After the ANZAC ceremony had been completed another small Artillery-oriented one took place near the Memorial Wall. It was organized by members of the R.A.A.A.T and, by invitation, Mr. Ray Tilley represented the 6 Field Gunners.

Some time ago the National Artillery Museum at North Fort, (North Head) located near Sydney, New South Wales, had asked our Association whether we could procure a Tasmanian State Flag, for a commemorative display at this national museum, along with other state flags.

With the swift cooperation of the State Community Development Minister, Ms. Michelle O'Byrne MHA Labor for Bass, a suitable flag was obtained and arrangements were made to present it to Lt.Col. Mark Cameron RFD, Colonel Commandant Artillery, Tasmanian Region, on ANZAC DAY for delivery to North Fort on behalf of the Tasmanian Government and Tasmanian Artillery.



STATE FLAG PRESENTATION

**l. to r. - Norman Andrews OAM (Sec RAAAT)
LtCol. Mark Cameron RFD (Colonel Commandant Artillery, Tasmania Region)
Community Development Minister,
Michelle O'Byrne (MHA State Labor Bass)**



l. to r. Ray Tilley (President 6 Fd. Gunners Assn.), Norm Andrews OAM (Sec. R.A.A.A.T.), Graeme Petterwood (Editor – Artillery News), LtCol. Mark Cameron RFD (Colonel Commandant Artillery – Tasmanian Region), Senator Kerry O’Brien, (Federal Labor - Bass), Community Development Minister, Michelle O’Byrne (MHA State Labor – Bass), Terry Higgins (Member R.A.A.A.T.)

THE GOOD OLD 25 POUNDER

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QF_25_pdr

The **Ordnance QF 25 pounder** (or just 25-pounder or 25-pdr) was the major British field gun/howitzer that was introduced into service just before World War II and was the British Army's primary artillery system into the 1950s. Smaller numbers served until 1967 in the training role in England, while many Commonwealth of Nations countries used theirs until about the same time. It was considered by many to be the best field artillery piece of the war, combining high rates of fire with a particularly lethal shell in a highly mobile system. While of smaller calibre than contemporary post-war designs, it was only replaced due to NATO standardization, and its users were not particularly enthusiastic about its replacement. The 25 pounder was used in combat during the Battle of Mirbat in 1972 in Oman. One of the last uses of the 25-pounder in combat was by the Cypriot National Guard during the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Ammunition for the weapon is currently produced by Pakistan Ordnance Factories.

The design was the result of extended studies looking to replace both the 18 pounder (84 mm) field gun and the 4.5 inch (114 mm) howitzer, which had been important weapons during the First World War. The basic idea was to build a single weapon with the direct-fire capability of the 18 pounder with the high-angle fire of the howitzer, firing a shell about half

way between the two in size, around 3.5 to 4 in (90 to 100 mm) of about 30 pounds (14 kg).

Development during the inter-war period was severely hampered by a lack of money, and it was eventually decided to build a "new" design from existing 18 pounders converted using new liners and pneumatic road wheels to allow towing. The result was a 3.45 in (87.6 mm) weapon firing a 25 pound (11 kg) HE shell. It was mounted on the original 18 pdr's single-trail design, which included a circular firing platform under the trail. When used in the direct fire role, the firing platform was dropped and the gun pulled onto it, providing a flat surface that allowed the gunners to quickly turn the weapon in any direction.

Whereas earlier designs had used fixed ammunition with the shell and propellant in a single round, the new design looked to increase flexibility by providing a variety of different propellant loads. The result was three different "charges", Charge 1, 2 and 3. This variety allowed the gun to fire either high-angle or direct at various ranges, without overstressing the system. To these were added two sub-charges to cover the ranges between the 3 main charges and a super-charge that gave a maximum range of 13,400 yards (12,250 m). The introduction of the supercharge necessitated the addition of the muzzle-brake to later models. Rounds would be fitted with the proper charge prior to firing, at which point the gun could be loaded just as quickly as with older single-charge designs, allowing it to be called a "QF" design even though that normally excluded separate-charge systems.

The gun was fitted with a telescopic sight for engaging armoured vehicles and other targets in the direct fire role as well as the standard sight for indirect fire. The large gunshield gave cover for the gunners and could take a periscope.

An important part of the gun was the ammunition limber (trailer). The gun was hitched to it and the trailer hitched to the tractor when on tow. The limber carried the ammunition (thirty-two rounds) and a selection of stores and the gun tools.

Ammunition - The 25 pounder's main ammunition was the High Explosive (HE) shell, but it could fire smoke shells, star shells, chemical shells, and special projectiles containing propaganda leaflets. In the direct fire role, the 25 pdr was also supplied with a limited amount of 20 pound (9 kg) solid armour piercing (AP) rounds, later replaced with a more potent version with a ballistic cap. A shaped charge version was under development in Canada, but the introduction of the 17 Pounder dedicated anti-tank gun ended its development.

Service - The 25 pounder was the main field artillery gun used by British Commonwealth infantry divisions during the Second World War. Throughout the war each British-pattern infantry division was authorised seventy two 25 pounders, with each of the division's three field Regiments being issued with 24 guns organised into three 8 gun batteries. After seeing the utility of the M7 Priest, the British introduced the similar Canadian-built Sexton, mounting the 25 pdr on a Ram tank chassis (based on the M3 Lee). The British also developed the Bishop, a similar conversion using the Valentine tank chassis. Normally the gun was towed, with its limber, usually behind a Morris C8 4x4 Field Artillery Tractor called a "Quad". The early 18/25 pdrs had been towed in the field by the Dragon a tracked vehicle.

Even by WWII standards, the 25 pdr was at the smaller-end of the scale. Most forces had entered the war with even smaller 75 mm designs, but had quickly moved to 105 mm and larger weapons. However the 25 pdr was nevertheless considered by all to be one of the best artillery pieces in use, and in particular its HE round was particularly deadly due to excellent embrittlement of the metal casing. The devastation caused by the gun (and the speed at which the British artillery command system could respond) in Normandy and the rest of North-West Europe made many German soldiers believe that the British had secretly deployed an automatic 25 pounder.

The introduction of NATO standardization led to the replacement of the gun with the 105 mm, but many of these proved to be less reliable in combat as a result of trying to make a larger gun of the same weight as the 25 pdr. This kept the 25 pdr in operation with mountain and airborne units for many years, its replacement generally being mortars as opposed to newer artillery units.

The gun known as the G1 was extensively used in the early stages of the South African Border War by the South African Defence Force, including Operation Savannah. The G1 is still used in the ceremonial role. The Rhodesian Army used the weapon during the Bush War, but by this stage the round couldn't penetrate enemy bunkers. The last British military unit to fire the gun in its field role (as opposed to in a ceremonial role) was the Gun Troop of the Honourable Artillery Company on Salisbury Plain in 1992.

The gun was extensively used by the Sri Lankan Army during the early years of the Sri Lankan civil war. It still remains in service although only in a ceremonial role.

The MkIII is still in service in the Irish Reserve Defence Forces (RDF) and a significant number are held in active reserve by the Cypriot National Guard.

Mark I - Known officially as the **Ordnance, Quick Firing 25 pounder Mark I**, or **QF 25 pdr Mk.I** in short, these conversions of the 18 pdr first entered British service in the early 1930s. Often referred to as the **18/25 pdr**, the majority of these were lost in the early Norwegian Campaign. Many of these were captured by the Germans, who liked them so much they built up entire artillery units based on them. These units were deployed in Normandy prior to D-Day, leading to somewhat ironic duels between 25 pdr units on either side.

Mark II - The Mark II, many of which were built by Canada in Sorel, Quebec, entered service with the Royal Canadian Artillery in 1940. A later addition was the "super" charge to increase the gun's range to 13,400 yards (12,250 m), the power of which put extra stresses on the carriage and necessitated the adoption of a muzzle brake to reduce recoil. Guns with this modification were known as the Mark 2/1. The distinctive brake is a well-known feature of the gun that makes it easily recognized.

Mark III - The Mark III gun was a Mk.II with a modified receiver to prevent the rounds from slipping back out when loading at high angles. With the muzzle brake they became the Mark III/1, while the Mark IV were identical new-build versions which all featured the brake. A Mark 2 Carriage was developed for easier towing, and the Mark 3 Carriage included a hinge to allow the gun to be fired at much higher angles. Neither carriage was very reliable though, and not widely used. With the introduction of dedicated anti-tank guns, the single-trail design was no longer considered important, and the Mark 5 used a split-trail design with a much wider angle of traverse.

Short, Mark I - The 25 pounder Short Mark I, or Baby 25 pr, was an Australian pack gun version of the 25 pounder, first produced in 1943. This was a shortened version of the standard 25 pounder, mounted on the **Carriage 25 pr Light, Mark 1**. The Baby was intended for jungle combat and was used in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, during World War II. The gun could be towed by a light vehicle or broken down into 13 sections. During the campaign in New Guinea the gun could be manhandled up steep jungle tracks where trucks could not operate.

The Artillery News. - Graeme E. Petterwood. (Editor).

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Mr. Peter Gutwein (Liberal MHA - Bass).- Henty House, Civic Square, Launceston 7250.**