

YOUR VIRTUAL VISIT - 37

TO THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY MUSEUM OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Welcome to 2021 The series will be continuing to present interesting features from the collection and their background stories.

The Australian Army Museum of Western Australia is now open three days per week, Wednesday through Friday. Recruiting of new volunteers and roster planning is underway to hopefully re-establish a 5-day open schedule in February

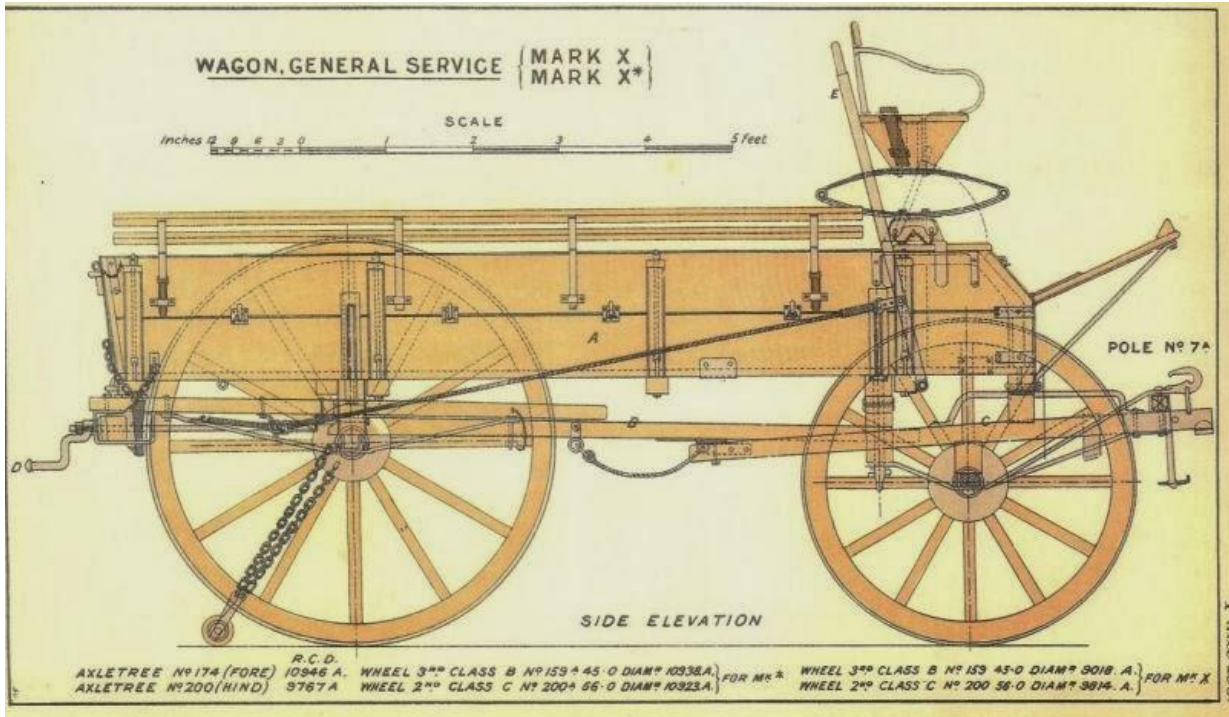
General Service Wagon



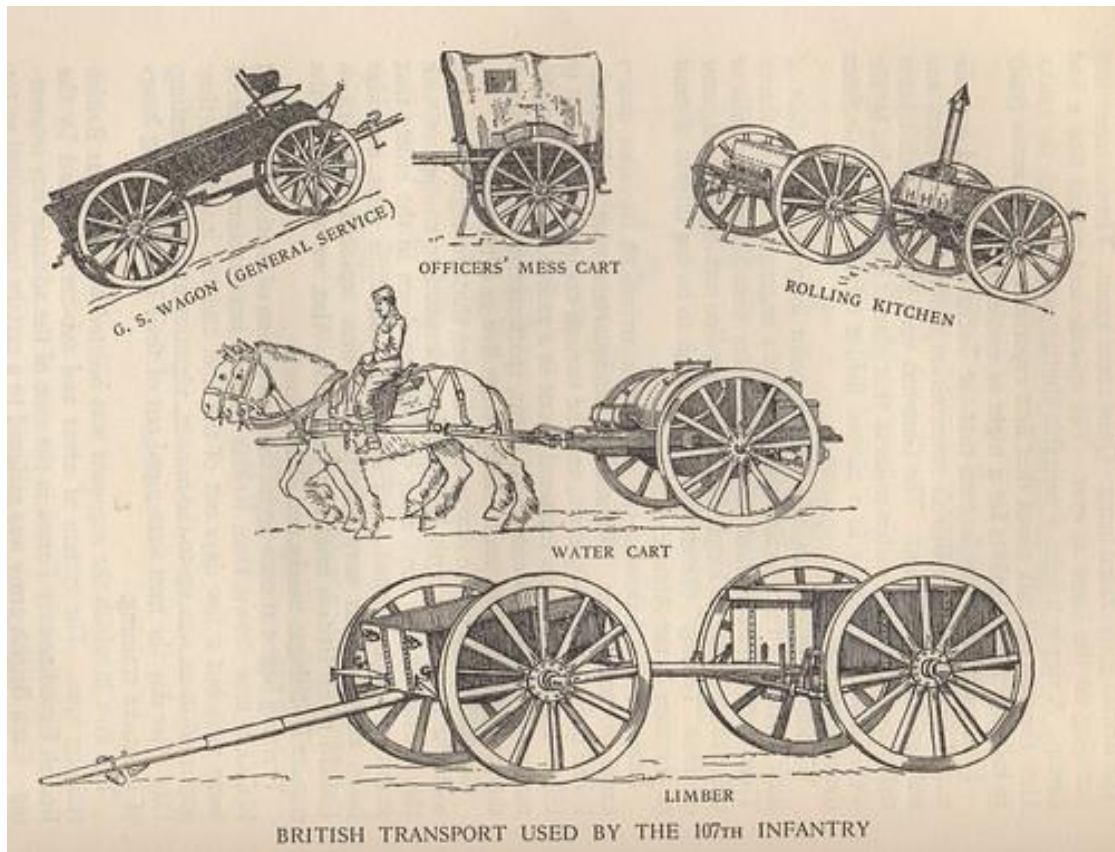
DESCRIPTION

The General Service (GS) wagon was the British Army's main horse drawn transport vehicle from 1862 till superseded by the broad adoption of motorised vehicles following the World War One. Many variants of the GS wagon were used during the war for general haulage, ambulance and troop transport. This 'Commonwealth' pattern wagon shared many common components with the British GS Mark X, which was used by Australian Forces on the Western Front. Little documentation of the development and manufacture of the 'Commonwealth' pattern has survived, and its production ceased in about 1917.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION



The Australian Army Museum is fortunate to have a restored GS wagon, an Officers' Mess Cart and a water cart in its horse drawn logistics and supply collection. Long term planning is underway to provide a more accessible display location to enhance both the visitor experience and their understanding of the importance of logistics and supply in military operations.



ARTILLERY PATTERN WHEELS



The artillery wheel was a nineteenth century and early-twentieth-century style of wagon, gun carriage, and automobile wheel. Rather than having spokes mortised into a wooden nave (hub), it has them fitted together in a keystone fashion bolted into a two-piece metal nave. The design evolved over the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and was ultimately imitated in drawn steel for auto wheels. The Museum's GS Wagon has this pattern of wheel. The Ford Model T used wooden spoked artillery pattern wheels until 1926.



FROMELLES (PHEASANT WOOD) MILITARY CEMETERY

Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery is a World War One cemetery built by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission on the outskirts of Fromelles in northern France, near the Belgian border. Constructed between 2009 and 2010, it was the first new Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery for more than 50 years, the last such cemeteries having been built after World War Two. The cemetery contains the graves of 250 British and Australian soldiers who died on 19 July 1916 in the Battle of Fromelles.

The bodies were discovered following historical research that included analysis of aerial photographs showing the presence of mass graves on the edge of Pheasant Wood (*Bois Faisan*), just outside the village of Fromelles. The presence of the bodies was confirmed in May 2008, and the bodies were recovered during excavation work in 2009.

On 19 July 2010 a GS wagon was used to convey the coffin of an unidentified soldier for burial at the dedication ceremony for the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery.



In the early evening of 19 July 1916, near the village of Fromelles, in northern France, two infantry divisions newly arrived on the Western Front, the 5th Australian and British 61st (South Midland) attacked a 4,000 yard section of the German frontline centred on a notorious strongpoint called the "Sugar Loaf". Advancing over unfavourable ground, in clear view of resolute and expectant defenders, the attackers suffered terrible casualties in a matter of minutes. The action turned into a bloody catastrophe - the Australians had over 5,500 killed, wounded and missing; 61st Division reported over 1,500 killed, wounded and missing. No tactical advantages resulted from the action and it remains the worst day in Australian military history.

The cemetery contains a total of 250 Australian and British soldiers. 225 are Australians, of which 59 are unidentified, 2 are unidentified British soldiers and 23 are entirely unidentified Commonwealth soldiers. The 250 were recovered in 2009 from a number of mass graves located behind nearby Pheasant Wood, where they had been buried by the Germans following the disastrous battle of Fromelles on 19 and 20 July 1916.

LINKS FOR FURTHER UNDERSTANDING

Visit the Australian Army Museum of Western Australia web site

<https://armymuseumwa.com.au/>

<http://www.wdmodels.com/GS%20instructions%20final.pdf>

<https://www.mediastorehouse.com/mary-evans-prints-online/general-service-army-wagon-mark-i-7219405.html?prodid=80906>



HRH Prince Charles and Governor General Quentin Bryce at the dedication of Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Cemetery