

YOUR VIRTUAL VISIT - 47

TO THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY MUSEUM OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



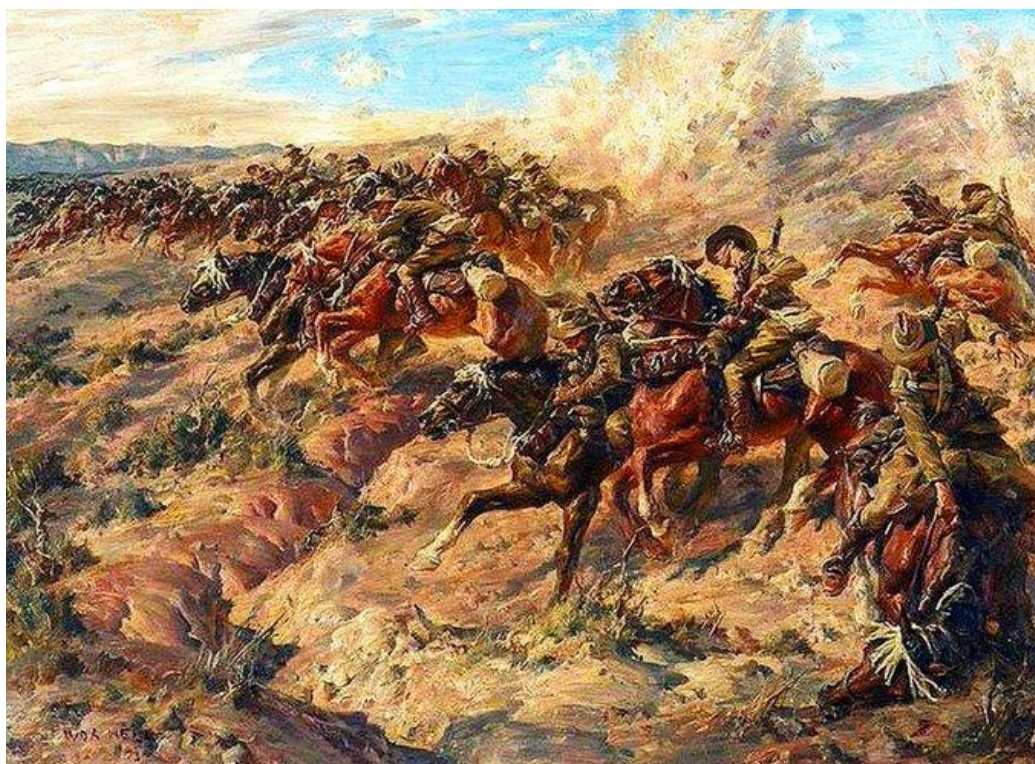
Throughout 2021, the Virtual Visit series will be continuing to present interesting features from the Museum's collection and their background stories.

*The Australian Army Museum of Western Australia is now open four days per week, Wednesday through Friday plus **Sunday**. Current COVID19 protocols including contact tracing apply.*

10 Light Horse Trophy Gun

The Gun Is Captured

The series of actions designated the **Third Battle of Gaza** was fought in late October -early November 1917 between British and Ottoman forces during the Sinai and Palestine Campaign. The Battle came after the British Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) victory at the **Battle of Beersheba** on 31 October had ended the stalemate in Southern Palestine. The fighting marked the launch of Southern Palestine Offensive, By 10 November, the Gaza-to-Beersheba line had been broken and the Ottoman Army began to withdraw.



The **10th Australian Light Horse Regiment** was part of the pursuit force trying to cut off the retiring Ottomans. Advancing forces were stopped by a strong rear guard of Turkish, Austrian and German artillery, infantry and machine guns on a ridge of high ground south of **Huj**, a village 15 km north east of Gaza. The defensive position was overcome late on 8 November, at high cost, by a cavalry charge by the Worcestershire and Warwickshire Yeomanry.

Exploitation by the 10th Light Horse on 9 November captured several more artillery pieces which were marked “**Captured by 10 LH**” This particular gun, No 3120, K26, was captured by C Troop, commanded by Lt FJ MacGregor, MC of C Squadron. The incident relating to its capture is described “**Westralian Cavalry in the War**”, Chapter XXVII.

This weapon is an example of the 10.5 cm light field howitzer leFH 16. This particular gun was manufactured by Fried. Krupp of Essen although they were also manufactured by Rheinmetall. It fired a projectile with a weight of 15.7 kgs to a maximum range of 10.2 kms. At the end of the World War One, 13,004 of these guns were still in use as the standard equipment for German divisional artillery units.

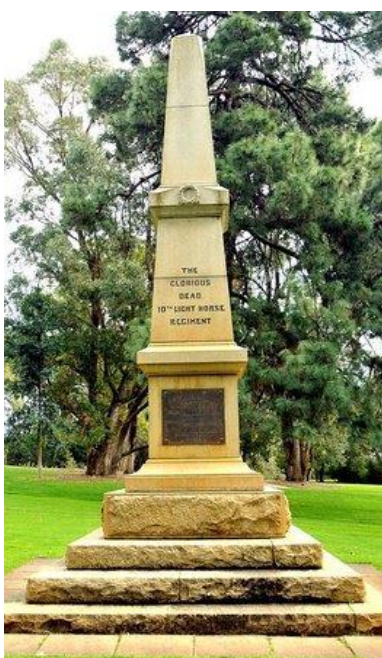


Without motive power (oxen, horses or trucks), artillery weapons could not be moved and were vulnerable to capture. Captured guns were visible evidence of a successful operation and rapid advance. Marking the trophy with the unit name ensured proper attribution of the feat of arms.

The Gun Displayed (As Envisaged)



The Australian War Records Section, (AWRS), established in May 1917, by the end of 1917, controlled the administration of war trophies captured by Australian units. Items were to be clearly labelled, contain the name of the unit that had captured the item, the town or area it was from, the time and place the item was found or captured, and the unit's wish for its ultimate disposal. After the Armistice, it was agreed that artillery trophies (seemingly requiring little protection from the weather) were to be allocated to towns, as war trophies and memorials based on population and enlistment record. Once delivered, they became a local responsibility.



Designated as K 26 in Australian War Memorial records, battle damage to the gun was recorded to the trail, shield and barrel although the general condition on arrival was good. Because of the details of its capture, the gun was allocated to the City of Perth and was displayed for many years at the 10th Australian Light Horse Regiment Memorial in Kings Park.

In its location by the Memorial, vandalism was slight but over the decades, the gun's condition was allowed to gradually deteriorate. It was eventually removed to 10 Light Horse lines in Karrakatta where it deteriorated further, to a stage where the trail had virtually collapsed. The gun was removed from display and hidden from view although conservation work was conducted on the wheels. The gun was transferred to the Army Museum in 2014 and after interim remedial measures was placed in its present location. Funding for stabilisation and remedial conservation continues to be actively

sought.

THE GUIDON AND BATTLE HONOURS

In 1913 approval was granted for the Light Horse Regiments of the Australian Army to possess and carry Guidons similar in design to those sanctioned for the Dragoon Regiments of the British Army. The Guidon was swallow-tailed in form and originally carried by 'the leader of Horse'. Australia follows the British tradition of awarding battle honours to military units as official acknowledgement for their achievements in specific wars or operations of a military campaign. A **battle honour**, so awarded by the sovereign, to a Light Horse unit would normally be emblazoned on its Guidon. During World War One, 10th Australian Light Horse was awarded 17 battle honours, but regulations permitted only 10 to be emblazoned on the Guidon. The Regiment selected the Battle Honour **Gaza-Beersheba** as one of those to be so emblazoned.



10th Australian Light Horse was raised in October 1914, joined the 3rd Light Horse Brigade in Egypt and served dismounted at Gallipoli. The Regiment's most famous actions were the charge at the Nek on 7 August 1915, and Hill 60 on 29-30 August. After the withdrawal from Gallipoli in December 1915, the Regiment with the rest of the Australian light horse defended Egypt from the Ottoman Army advancing on the Suez Canal. Through 1916 they drove the Turks across the deserts of Sinai, participating in the battles of Romani and Maghaba. In 1917 as part of the Desert Column they advanced into Palestine. to break the Gaza-Beersheba line and capture Jerusalem. They participated in the Es Salt Raid in May 1918. In August they were one of the regiments re-equipped with swords retrained as cavalry. The Regiment took part in the rout of the Ottoman army in the Jordan Valley, a campaign referred to as

"The Great Ride". In September 1918 the 10th Light Horse was the first formed regiment to enter Damascus.

LINKS FOR FURTHER ENJOYMENT

Visit the Australian Army Museum of Western Australia web site

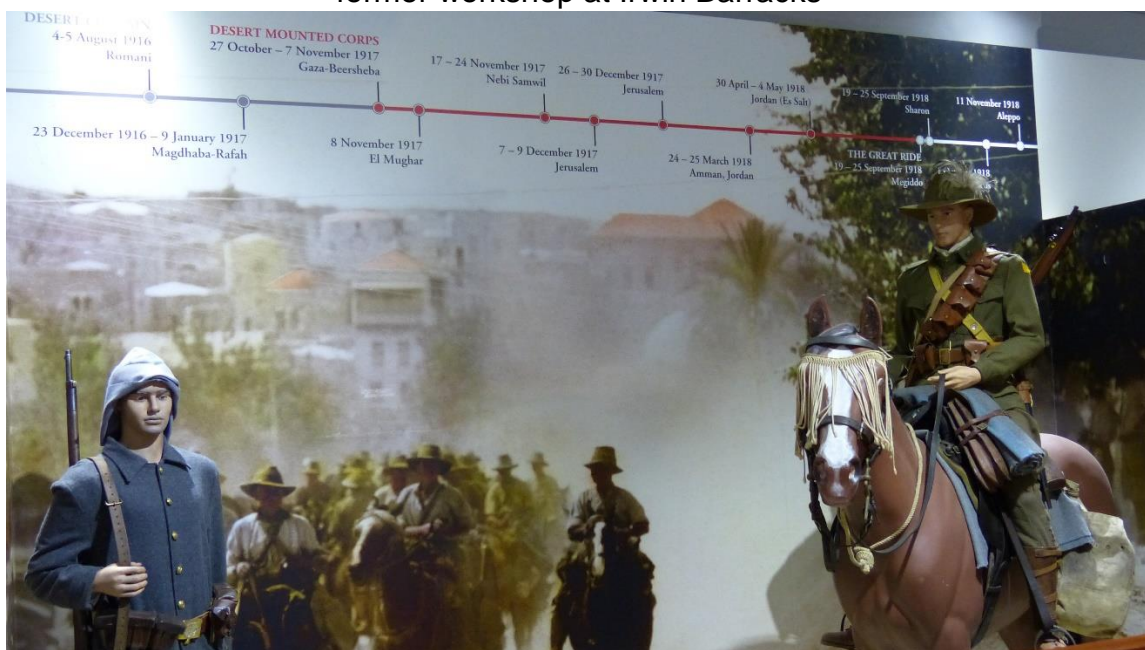
<https://armymuseumwa.com.au/>

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/palestine-campaign/third-battle-of-gaza>

<https://www.rusinsw.org.au/Papers/2017SP06.pdf>



Remediation efforts being undertaken by the RAAHS of WA in its former workshop at Irwin Barracks



Desert Mounted Corps represented in the EEF Diorama
in the World War One galleries