

YOUR VIRTUAL VISIT - 72

TO THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY MUSEUM OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Throughout 2021, the Virtual Visit 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 four days per week, Wednesday through Friday plus Sunday. Current COVID19 protocols including contact tracing will apply.

The Colours of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery

On 1 August 2021, the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery officially celebrated its 150 Anniversary. It was on 1 August 1871, when the NSW Colonial Government funded and raised its first permanent battery. A synchronised Gun Salute fired from locations across states and territories, including Kings Park, took place to commemorate the anniversary.



3 Battery, 9th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery (RAA) fire M2A2 Ceremonial Guns at Perth's Kings Park as part of the Australia wide commemoration of the RAA's 150th Anniversary.

Many viewing the Salute would be less likely to be aware of service customs and protocol than their parents or grandparents as ceremonial functions occur less frequently today. Many observing the ceremony may have arrived in Perth from countries which do not follow the precedents established in the British military tradition. Perhaps only a knowledgeable few would have been aware that they shared the opportunity to view the Colours of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery on parade.

Colours of a unit represent the spirit of the Regiment. In the days when the infantry carried their Colours into battle they were to be found in the centre of the front rank, a position in which they were easily seen and recognised, for they acted as a rallying point for the soldiers. The term 'Colours' broadly encompasses the four distinctive forms of Honourable Insignia that are the symbol of the spirit of a regiment. On them are borne the battle honours and badges granted to the unit in commemoration of gallant deeds performed by members of the unit from the time their unit was raised. There are four distinctive forms of Honourable Insignia currently in use by the Australian Army, they are in order of seniority: Standards, Guidons, Colours, and Banners.

The Colours of the Artillery

The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery has a different definition of Colours to the foregoing. The traditional rallying point for Gunners has always been the guns. Up until the end of the 19th century, guns were deployed in the open, in full view of the enemy, and the detachments were instilled with the tradition of serving their guns under fire and to abandon them was, and still is, the ultimate disgrace. Initially the largest piece in an artillery train carried the equivalent of today's Queen's Colour and it was known as the 'Colour' or 'Flag Gun'. In the latter part of the eighteenth century this practice ceased and the guns themselves became the Colours.



*Sexton SP guns passing the reviewing stand in the Charlottenberger Chausee
Berlin, 21 July 1945*

Today the guns, **on parade**, be they a Regiment's worth (18 guns), a Battery (6 guns), or a section (which in the case of a heavy battery is 1 gun), constitute the Colours. All the guns are paid the correct compliments and respect, not just the first gun of the group. There may be occasions when it is impracticable to pay compliments to the Colours; however, they are to be treated at all times with the greatest dignity and respect. Such practices as smoking on or near them, decorating them for social occasions, hanging clothing off them, sitting, standing or leaning on them compromise their dignity and status.



*Line of six L5 105 mm Pack Howitzers rolling past
at phase out ceremony for the 25 Pounder, December 1974*

The Kings Banner

The King's Banner was presented in November 1904 by the Governor General Lord Northcote. It was one of 20 awarded in recognition of valuable services to the Empire. In addition to the Royal Australian Artillery, Banners were presented to 18 Regiments of the Australian Light Horse and the Australian Army Medical Corps. A Battery RAA received the Banner on behalf of the Australian Artillery.



The silver plaque reads "*Presented by His Gracious Majesty the King Emperor to the Royal Australian Artillery in recognition of the services rendered to the Empire in South Africa 1904*". The artillery units or sub-units that served were A Battery, NSW Regiment RAA, and the Machine Gun Section, Queensland Regiment RAA, although many Gunners, permanent and militia, enlisted in the various colonial contingents, and after Federation the battalions of Australian Commonwealth Horse, that served in South Africa.

An original King's Banner displayed at the Australian Army Museum of WA

Originally referred to as "King's Colours" the status of these Banners was subsequently clarified. As an Honourable Insignia, the Artillery presentation came to be known as the Royal Australian Artillery King's Banner. Unlike Colours, these Banners were deemed to be unique presentations and not eligible for normal replacement. As the centenary of the formation of A Battery approached in 1971, a new Banner presentation was requested, and Queen Elizabeth assented.

On 25 April 1972 a detachment from A Battery laid up the King's Banner at the Australian War Memorial as part of the Anzac Day Commemoration Service.

The Queen's Banner



The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery is the only Regiment of Artillery of the nations of the Commonwealth of Nations to have been presented with The Banner of Queen Elizabeth II. The Queen's Banner was presented to the Regiment on 1 August 1971, replacing the King's Banner. The silver plaque fixed to the Banner pike reads "*Presented by Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Captain General of The Regiment of Royal Australian Artillery, to replace the Banner presented by His Majesty King Edward VII and in Honour of the Centenary of the Regiment 1971.*"

The Banner is accorded all the honours and dignity of Colours when it is displayed in public on ceremonial occasions, taking second place only to the Regiment's Colours – the guns. The Queen's Banner was last paraded in Western Australia in 2012. In Honour of the 150th anniversary, a new presentation of a Queen's Banner is planned for later in 2021.

Battle Honours

Prior to 1832, the Royal Regiment of Artillery shared with a large number of other British Regiments a number of Battle Honours. In 1832, by Royal Command of King William IV, these were substituted with the single honour of “**Ubique**” (Everywhere). The Honour acknowledges that where and wherever this is a battle, the Artillery will be found in support. King George VI granted the Battle Honour “Ubique” to the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery in 1950.

Honour Titles

In 1925, the Royal Regiment of Artillery initiated a system of granting Honour Titles to individual batteries. The title signifies either a particular battle, a famous battery commander or a badge associated with the battery. A provision was subsequently made in Royal Australian Artillery Standing Orders for RAA batteries to be granted Honour Titles. To date, only one has been awarded, with the title **CORAL** being granted to 102 Field Battery in 2008.

The Royal Australian Artillery Standard

As World War 2 neared its conclusion, it was proposed by the Royal Artillery that there was a need for a dignified flag above the status of camp flag for ceremonial occasions. The College of Heralds produced a design which was approved by HM King George VI and the Royal Artillery Standard was adopted in August 1947. The Royal Australian Artillery adopted the Standard as the Royal Australian Artillery Standard in 1952. The Standard conforms in shape and style to heraldic usage and custom.



Form of Heraldic Standard granted to an individual



Standard of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery

The RAA Standard is flown on special occasions only, by HQ and units (including independent batteries) and the School of Artillery. These occasions are generally visits by Royalty or Vice-Royalty and visits or inspections by General Officers, Colonels Commandant, RAA Formation Commanders and the Director of Artillery. It may also be flown on visits by senior civilians or Allied Officials of comparable rank or appointment.

On Display at Army Museum

The Army Museum has on display examples of four artillery field guns which in their service were the Colours of Western Australian Artillery units.



15 Pdr Rifled Breech Loader



25 Pounder Gun/Howitzer



L5 Pack Howitzer



M2A2 105 mm Howitzer



9.2 inch Howitzer at Australian War Memorial