



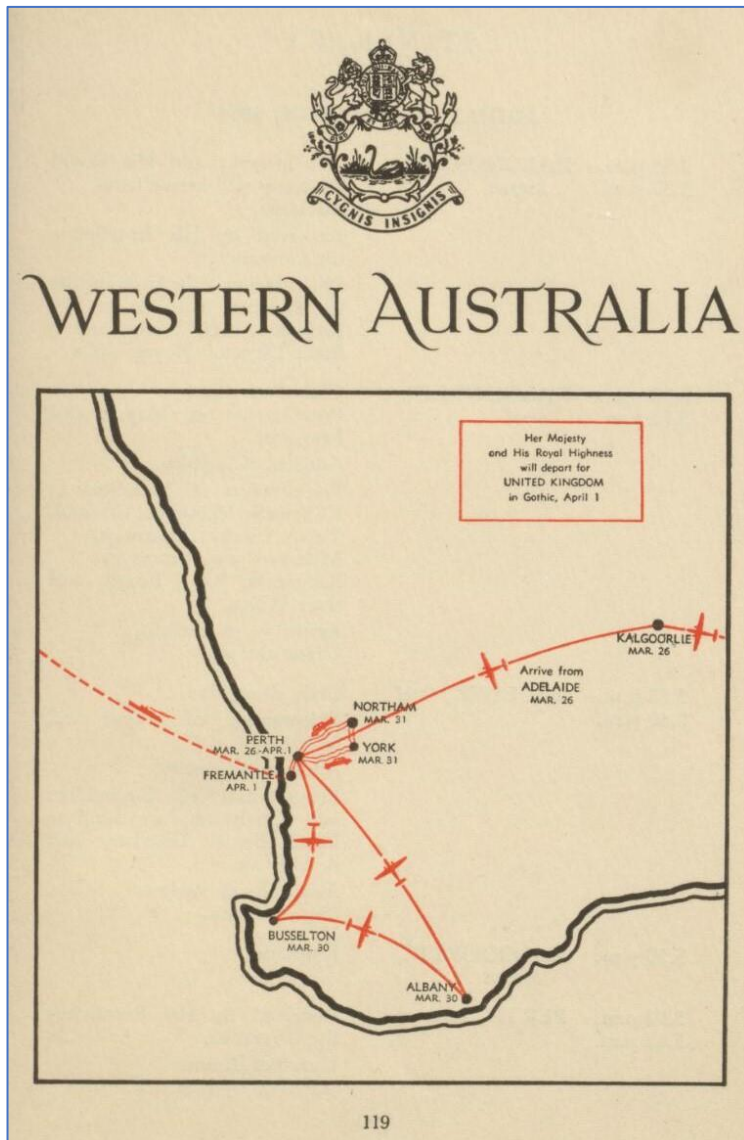
FROM THE GALLERIES AND COLLECTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY MUSEUM OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Typically only a small portion of a museum collection is exhibited at any one time. This is due not only to practical consideration of display space but a range of professional considerations designed to protect and preserve the artefact.

This series highlights objects and stories you may have overlooked in the galleries or collection items awaiting their story. Enjoy and explore further.

ROYAL VISIT 1954



Queen Elizabeth II was the first, and to date obviously, the only reigning British monarch to visit Australia. The 1954 royal tour was a much-anticipated event. Planning had commenced in 1949 for King George VI (Elizabeth's father) to visit Australia and New Zealand. However, a coded telegram received in October 1951 relayed the disappointing news that due to the king's ill health and an impending operation, he would be unable to visit the antipodes as planned. Instead, the then Princess Elizabeth and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, would come in his place. In 1952, she was in Kenya, enroute to Australia when her father died, forcing her to return to the United Kingdom.

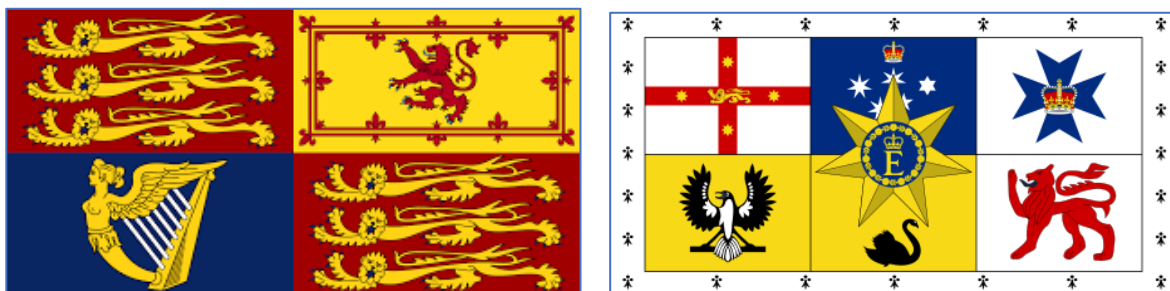
When it did occur, the royal tour of 1954 was the single biggest event ever planned in Australia. It was a significant accomplishment in the days before email, facsimile and mobile telephones.

Western Australia was the last State to be visited by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. Although they were in their 52nd day of the Tour, the place did not slacken. The schedule for Kalgoorlie/Boulder is typical. Arriving at Kalgoorlie airport from Melbourne at 2:35, the Queen was received by and introduced to the Premier, Minister for Rail, State Tour Director and their wives before a Civic Reception from 2:50 to 3:10 at Kalgoorlie Oval. The Civic Reception included a Loyal Address and then presentation of the Mayor, Kalgoorlie Council, Kalgoorlie Road Board and their wives followed by a review of civic groups including the RSL, Scouts, Guides, CWA and schools. From 3:25 – 3:45 a similar Reception was held at Boulder Oval followed by emplaning for Perth at 3:50 and arriving at 5:30 to be greeted by an RAAF Guard of Honour. Further welcomes and introductions of Government and Service dignitaries followed at the Airport. The Royal visitors then travelled to Fremantle and the liner SS Gothic acting as the Royal Yacht. Because of the polio epidemic in Perth, Government House was ruled out as the residential base for the WA portion of the tour.



Queen Elizabeth II visits Perth, 1954. Household Royal Guard of 11/44th Infantry Battalion, City of Perth Regiment at Government House on 27 March awaiting arrival of Their Majesties. Photo courtesy ABC.Midwest and Wheatbelt and Sergeant Darcy Branch-Smith

<https://www.facebook.com/abcmidwestandwheatbelt/posts/10152229193165985/>



The Royal Banner (Left) (commonly referred to as the Royal Standard) used by Queen Elizabeth during her visit in 1954. Approved in 1962, the Queen's Personal Banner in Australia (Right) was first used during the 1963 Royal Tour.



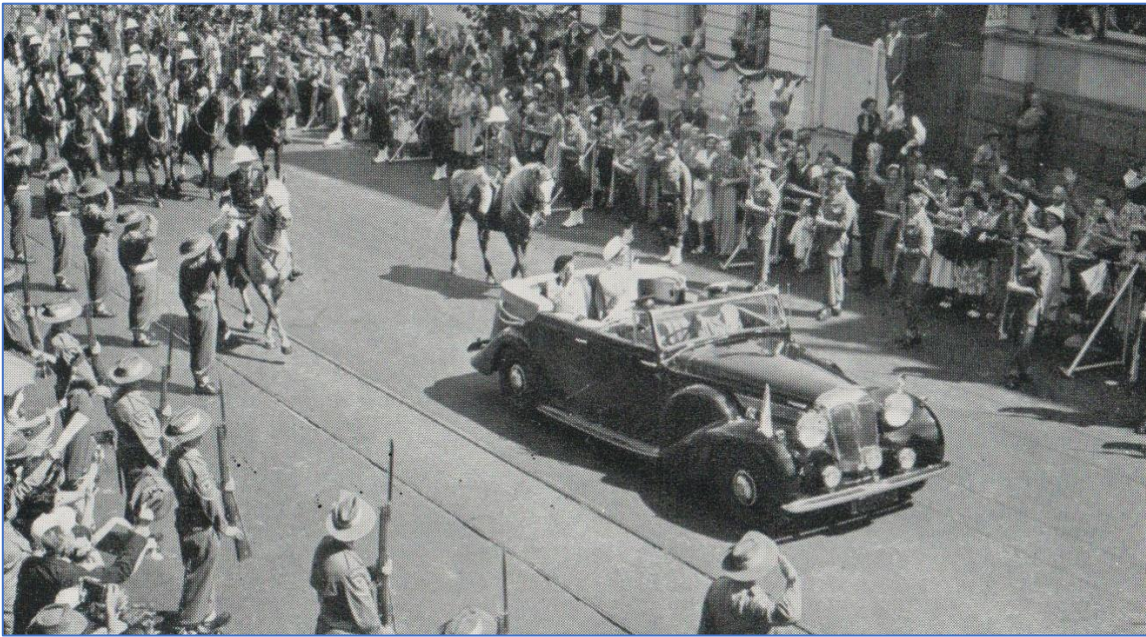
The next day, 27 March was equally busy. After being received at Government House, there was a Royal Procession through Perth, a visit to the State War Memorial and a parade of veterans on the Esplanade. Despite detailed planning, not everything went according to schedule. When the Queen planted a tree in Kings Park, the inscription on the Queen's spade read: *With this spade Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II planted a tree on April 1, 1954 to commemorate her visit to Western Australia.* The inscriptions were engraved before last-minute changes were made to the Royal tour itinerary, primarily due to the polio epidemic.

The tree was planted near the newly constructed Court of Contemplation and new gardens established for the Royal visit. The Duke of Edinburgh planted a Red Gum at the same time. This was lost in a storm and replaced in 1962 and subsequently in 2011 from seed harvested from the Queen's tree

The Queen's tree was ring-barked in 1980 in an act of vandalism but survived with the help of a bridge graft performed by Kings Park staff. The wound is still visible about one metre from the ground.

A feature throughout the Royal Tour was the numerous ceremonial roles assigned to Legatees. It was noted that the girl and boy wards of Legacy positioned at the Court of Contemplation all appropriately wore their father's medals. Later in the afternoon there was an investiture at Government House. Included in the awards personally presented by the Queen was the Distinguished Service Order to Major Jack Gerke for bravery and leadership during the Battle of Maryang San in July 1951, an exploit featured in the Post 1945 Gallery at the Army Museum. Later in the afternoon there was a marchpast on the Esplanade of 10,000 veterans of four wars. Notable features, commented on at the time, were the 160 surviving veterans of the Boer War and the immaculate turn out of the white uniformed nurses



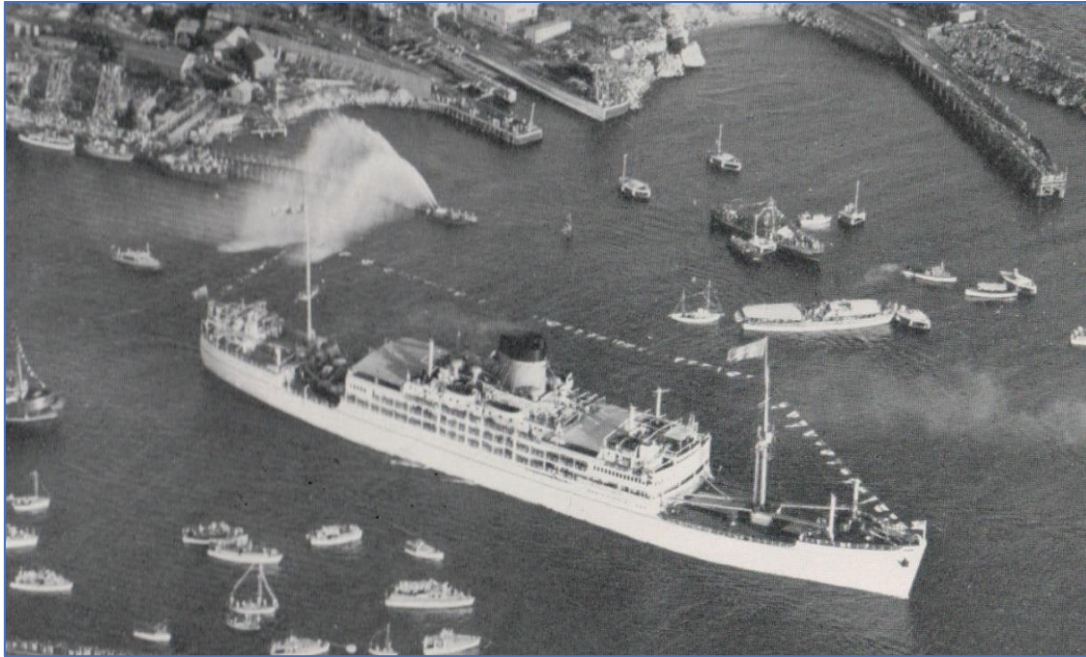


A closed Royal car was used for evening and extended road trips but processions through Perth were in an open topped Daimler. At civic receptions in Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Northam and York and at Hollywood Repatriation Hospital, a specially configured Land Rover provided an elevated platform for a dignified regal passage through the assembled crowds. Seated next to the driver is Edward John Spencer, Viscount Althorp, father of Princess Diana, in his capacity as Equerry to Her Majesty and Master of the Royal Household on Tour. From 1947 to 1950, he had also served as Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency Lieutenant-General Sir Willoughby Norrie, then Governor of South Australia.



Another reminder of the 1954 Royal Visit at the Museum is one of the Staghound Armoured Cars which formed part of the escort for the Royal Procession in Northam. The escort was provided by the 10th Western Australian Mounted Infantry, that following re-activation as a squadron in 1949 had been expanded to a full regiment in 1952. *The more things change ...*

The Royal Entourage departed Fremantle on the SS Gothic on 1 April 1954.



CAN YOU HELP?

The land transport services for the Royal Visit were provided by the Royal Visit Car Company. This unit operated a fleet of 55 British and Australian-manufactured vehicles throughout New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and South Australia. According to the Queen's itinerary, detachments of the main fleet were transported around the country by air and rail to supplement sub-fleet vehicles in Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia, bringing the total to 115 vehicles. Administered with military precision, the management of the convoy was no mean feat. The Company registered an astounding 500,000 miles covered by motor car over the duration of the tour, with barely a delay or incident. The Army Museum seeks your assistance to identify three members of the Royal Visit Car Company shown here at Artillery Barracks and also the Land Rover driver at page 4.

