

Australian Artillery - Celebrating 150 Years – 1 August 2021

Talking Points

The Australian Artillery 'Birthdate' – 1 August 1871

- Why 1 August 1871?
 - Gunner history predates Australian Federation on 1 Jan 1901.
 - The defence of colonial ports was a priority from the outset.
 - Gunners manned coast artillery and provided mobile field artillery.
 - Great Britain withdrew its own garrisons from the Colonies to save costs and force the Colonies to better fund their own defences in the late 1860's.
 - Colonies recognised their volunteer gunner units alone were not adequate.
 - Colonies funded and raised their own permanent artillery batteries from 1871.
 - On 1 August 1871, the NSW Colonial Secretary's Office proclaimed the raising of a Permanent Military Force that included one battery of artillery, to be called the 'New South Wales Artillery'.
- It is not known when and how all Australian gunners accepted a common national date of celebration:
 - Colonial pride became State pride after 1901; and not surprisingly States continued to celebrate their own adopted 'birthdates'.
 - At least NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia each celebrated important dates from a history that predated Federation; and some continue to this day.
 - Interstate rivalry played a major role in a lack of consensus for adoption of a common date, probably until after World War 2.
 - It is assessed that the Regiment's decision to adopt 1 August 1871 could have occurred as late as the early 1960's.
- Possible dates of celebration for a symbolic 'birthdate' considered, but discounted, probably included:
 - 14 July 1899 – Queen Victoria assented to the titles of the Permanent Artillery Forces of NSW, Victoria and Queensland being changed to Regiments of the Royal Australian Artillery.
 - 1 Jan 1901 - Federation
 - 1 March 1901 – Australian Army Birthday
 - 22 October 1903 – Assent of the first Australian Defence Act

'A' Battery's 'Birthdate'

- The lineage of 'A' Battery is traced back to the raising of a second battery of permanent artillery in NSW.
 - No. 2 Battery NSW Artillery was raised on 22 August 1876, which became 'A' Battery.
 - The NSW 'A' Battery was given its name on 24 June 1893 as a consequence of renaming of No. 2 Battery.
 - From 1876 to 2019 'A' Battery had many name changes (see over page)
- 'A' Battery's birthday is 22 August 1876.
 - It is not 1 August 1871 as was widely believed for over 50 years.
- 'A' Battery is the longest continually serving permanent unit in the Australian Army.
 - Some Reserve units have longer continuous service.
- 'A' Battery continues to be central to the history of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, evoking long service while providing leading contributions to gunner esprit de corps.

**Summary of Changes in Title for A Battery RAA
1876-2019**

22.08.1876	No 2 Battery, New South Wales Artillery
09.01.1891	Field Battery, New South Wales Artillery
24.06.1893	A Battery, Brigade Division Field Artillery
07.09.1899	A Battery, New South Wales Regiment of Royal Australian Artillery (Field)
01.07.1902	A Battery, Royal Australian Artillery
09.01.1903	A Instructional Cadre, Royal Australian Artillery
01.12.1910	No 1 Battery, Australian Field Artillery (Permanent)
25.04.1911	No 1 Battery, Royal Australian Field Artillery
14.10.1920	1st Battery, Royal Australian Field Artillery
01.07.1927	1st Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery
19.07.1930	1st Field Cadre, Royal Australian Artillery
31.01.1936	1st Field Cadre, Royal Australian Artillery Regiment
01.02.1939	A Field Battery
27.02.1942	Depot Battery, Army School of Artillery (Field)
29.05.1942	Depot Battery, Headquarters Allied Land Forces School of Artillery (Field, Medium & Survey)
09.08.1943	2nd Australian Mountain Battery (Mechanised)
05.11.1943	2nd Australian Mountain Battery (Mechanised) (Australian Imperial Force)
22.10.1945	2nd Mountain Battery
02.02.1946	A Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery Regiment
15.09.1949	A Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery
31.01.1955	100th (A) Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery
08.12.1958	A Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery
01.01.2011	A Battery, Royal Australian Artillery