



ESTABLISHED 1946

August 2026
Issue No. 496w

Journal of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps Association NSW Inc
Building 41 VBS Locked Bag 7005 LIVERPOOL 1875 .
Website: www.raacansw.com.au
Email: mikebutler181@optusnet.com.au .
Tel: 0401 966 989 . ABN 50 331 080 227

ARMOUR

Patron: Major General Dave Chalmers, AO CSC
President: Brig. Rob Lording CSC . Editor George Baczocha

The Australian Sentinel

In 1941 the Australian continent felt smaller and more isolated than ever before, for decades the nation's security had rested on the comfortable assumption that the British Empire's fortress Singapore was an impregnable shield against any northern threat but as the Imperial Japanese Navy swept across the Pacific that shield shattered with the fall of Singapore.



The Australian Army was a force designed for infantry operations and light reconnaissance, it possessed almost zero armored capability. If a Japanese invasion force landed on the beaches of Queensland or the Northern Territory they would be met by soldiers on horseback or in light trucks facing off against Japanese Type 95 Haego and Type 97 Chiha tanks. The London and Washington response to a request for armoured vehicles was a cold dose of reality, Great Britain was struggling to replace the tanks lost at Dunkirk and the United States massive industrial engine was still warming up prioritizing its own defense and the lend lease shipments to Russia and Britain. Australia was told quite literally to wait its turn, a luxury it did not have. It was in this atmosphere that a bold decision was made, if no one would send Australia tanks, Australia would build its own.

At that time, Australia didn't have factories to make strong metal plates for armor, and it didn't have powerful engines strong enough to move a 30-ton piece of steel. There were no tank designers, no specialized assembly lines and no blueprints, yet the Australian government driven by the sheer necessity of survival gave the green light to the Australian Cruiser program.

As the Australian cruiser program lurched into life the primary obstacle was not a lack of will but a lack of industrial infrastructure. Building a tank usually requires massive hydraulic presses to shape thick armor plates and advanced welding facilities to join them together, Australia had neither.

In 1940 the nation's heavy industry was largely centered around railway workshops and small scale foundries. To build a conventional tank Australia would have had to wait years to import the necessary machinery, years they

The Australian Army was a force designed for infantry operations and light reconnaissance, it possessed almost zero armored capability. If a Japanese invasion force landed on the beaches of Queensland or the Northern Territory they would be met by soldiers on horseback or in light trucks facing off against Japanese Type 95 Haego and Type 97 Chiha tanks. The London and Washington response to a request for armoured vehicles was a cold dose of

Inside this Issue

President's Report	2
AGM 2026 details	3
Arena-m Development	5
British Defence Review 2025	10
COL John Haynes Trust Report	11
RAAC Vision Statement	12
Senate Inquiry into Defence Assets	13
British Ajax Vehicle Report	14

(Continued on page 7)



Presidents Report



This is the first edition of our Armour publication which will be primarily distributed via email and online through the website (raacansw.com.au) rather than being printed and distributed by mail. This will help us achieve a significant cost saving and has allowed the Association to remove the requirement to impose and collect membership fees. Note: A printed copy can still be obtained but will be subject to payment of an annual or three yearly subscription fee. Please contact the secretary (secretary@raacansw.com.au) if you want to subscribe.

Producing an electronic version also means that we no longer face the restrictions on the number of pages and content that can be shared. As a result, I would encourage members to submit photographs or other articles of interest for inclusion in the next edition.

There has been wide spread concern among current serving members and veterans of the ADF regarding the decision by the Government to divest parts of the Defence Estate with the intention of raising revenue and reducing costs. The Australian Senate established an inquiry into the management of Defence estate assets on March 11, 2026, following advocacy and a national petition led by the Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL). Our Association made a submission to the Inquiry with a focus on Lancer Barracks at Parramatta and has subsequently provide a response to follow up questions from Senator Jacqui Lambie which can be found on our website. This work was led by Phillip Bridie who appeared before the committee together with Michael Krause. It appears that Defence's Security and Estate Group undertook their review and implemented the divestiture with little consultation and a pre-determined outcome. The Senate Inquiry is due to hand down their report on 15 September.

This edition contains an update from the Chairman of the Colonel John Haynes Trust, Keith Schollum, which continues to provide financial grants for education, development and welfare. The Trust is fortunate to be working with our financial advisor, Morgan Stanley, and has achieved a very good rate of return over the first two years of operations. This puts the Trust in a solid financial position to be able to support current and former members of the RAAC and their immediate family members.

The Trust was originally established as a testamentary type trust which appointed the named Trustees in accordance with John Haynes wishes. However, this structure has several practical limitations which impose a significant administrative liability on the Trustees. As a result, the Executive Committee has sought legal advice and a decision has been made to transition the Trust to a company structure in which all shares will be held by the Association. The constitution of the new company mirrors the same aims and objectives set out in the existing Deed of Trust and will be managed by a Board of Directors comprised of the current Trustees. The aim is to take the necessary steps to implement the new structure before the end of the year which will enable the Trust to operate more efficiently and deliver better outcomes for the RAAC community. Further details of the changes will be provided at the Annual General Meeting.

The RAAC Corporation is continuing to advocate through the Alliance of Defence Service Organizations (ADSO) for several Veteran Issues, including the egregious decision by Government regarding the Allied Health Care Cap. This issue is receiving considerable attention with advocacy from a wide range of Ex Services Organizations (ESO). An important factor in being able to have a voice and garner influence in the various ESO's and related forums, is the number of members that the associations and organizations represent. To this end, we need to encourage all current and former members of the RAAC to join our RAACA or their specific unit affiliated Association. Membership in RAACA NSW is free and can be completed using the online form at <https://raacansw.com.au/membership>.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to those members who have made generous donations to the Association and which have ensured that we remain in a sound financial position.

Tenax in Fide



Royal Australian Armoured Corps Association (NSW) Inc
Patron: Major General Dave Chalmers AO, CSC

Tel: Secretary +61 414 782 572

Email: Membership and General enquiries mikebutler181@optusnet.com.au

Web: www.raacansw.com.au

**RAACA NSW/2026/ NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY 17
SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 6.30pm ANZAC HOUSE, RSL SUITE 12.02, LEVEL 12 60
CARRINGTON STREET SYDNEY**

1. Notice is hereby given of the intention to conduct the Annual General Meeting of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps Association (NSW) (including the election of office holders) on Thursday 17 Sep 2026 at the above time and place.

Agenda

2. Introduction – President (including One Minute Silence for absent colleagues).
3. Apologies
4. Correspondence – Secretary. (to include Annual Dinner)
5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
6. Business arising.
7. President's Report.
8. Treasurer's Report (FY25/26).
9. Colonel John Haynes Trust.
 - a. Briefing on the amendment to the model of governance of the Haynes Trust.
10. Election of office holders. The positions for which elections are to be held are:
 - a. President
 - b. Vice-President
 - c. Secretary
 - d. Treasurer
 - e. General Members (six)
11. Budget Consideration FY26/27. (Treasurer)
12. Close and Next Meeting.

AW Hine, CSC Secretary
Mob: 0414 782 572
September 2026



NOMINATION FORM
ELECTION TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF RAACA NSW 2026 ANNUAL
GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 6.30pm

I, _____ hereby nominate
(insert NOMINATOR first and last name on the line above)

_____ for the position
(insert THE NOMINATED PERSON first and last name on the line above)

of, _____ of the
Royal Australian Armoured Corps Association (NSW).

SECOND OF NOMINATION

I, _____ second the nomination of
(insert SECONDER first and last name on the line above)

_____ for the position
(insert THE NOMINATED PERSONS first and last name on the line above)

of, _____ of the
Royal Australian Armoured Corps Association (NSW).

(insert the TITLE of the office to be held on the line above)

Signed _____
(Signature of Nominator)

Signed _____
(Signature of Secunder)

Date _____

Date _____

CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE

I, _____ ACCEPT the nomination
(insert THE NOMINATED PERSONS first and last name on the line above)

for the position of _____
of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps Association (NSW).

(insert the TITLE of the office to be held on the line above)

Signed _____
(Signature of NOMINATED PERSON)

Date _____ (Dis.

Up Coming Events

RAACA NSW Annual Dinner November 6th 2026

Where: The venue is the Officers Mess Victoria Barracks Sydney.

Time: 1830 for 1900.

Dress: Black tie with miniatures, although active Permanent and Reserve members can wear Mess Dress, or in the absence of black tie, Lounge Suit with tie may be worn. (Tie is essential)

Cost \$130.00

Electronic payments to: RAACA NSW

BSB 803-205

A/C No: 20539747

Payments on the night will not be accepted

Will the Success of the Arena-M system change the face of Warfare

Recently, Ukraine's former military leader, Valeri Zaluzhny, made an interesting announcement about Russia's use of new defense systems on their tanks.



Russia has been sending tanks equipped with a system called Arena-M to the front lines. This system is designed to protect the tanks from enemy attacks. In the past month, it was reported that T-72B3A tanks with Arena-M would be used in battles. These tanks are now being prepared for combat by the military. They will support the attack groups in their fights against the enemy's strongholds.

A recent video showed a T-90M tank during factory tests at a Russian factory.

The tank had the Arena-M system installed. The system can be seen as small boxes at the top and front of the tank's turret.

There are reports that the tanks coming from the factory have different levels of protection. Some have the standard protection system, while others have an improved version with better shields and protection for the engine. The T-80BV tanks are also getting an update. They now have a modern turret and better protection design.

The Arena-M system was originally created to protect tanks from certain types of weapons. However, it can now also protect against drones. This is because it has a special radar that detects incoming projectiles and shoots a small explosive to destroy them.

In a recent battle in the Dobropillya area, Russian tanks with the Arena-M system were used for the first time. Footage released by the Azov Corp which defends the area, showed the shooting down of FPV drones by the Arena system: Ukrainian military leaders spoke to the soldiers involved in the battle and confirmed that the Arena-M system worked well. The tanks were only hit because they ran out of ammunition to shoot down drones.

(Continued on page 6)

The interesting thing about the Arena-M's now-confirmed success is that the hard kill mechanism is able to do what even the best EW cannot: kill fiber-optic or even autonomous AI-guided drones.

The canister charges are not expensive to make, which means theoretically such a system with massive amounts of rounds should be feasible to take out drone after drone from every possible direction.

Nothing would ever be 100% foolproof but it could cause enemy drone expenditures to go through the roof exponentially on each assault.



RAACA(NSW): 25 Years Afghanistan Commemoration Canberra

A national commemorative service for the 25th anniversary of Australian service in Afghanistan (2001–2021) will be held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on Sunday, 11 October 2026.

The service marks exactly 25 years since the first Australian boots landed in Afghanistan under Operation Slipper in 2001. It is an opportunity to honour the more than 35,000 Australians who served, remember the 47 personnel who lost their lives, and support those who returned home wounded or dealing with the physical and mental impacts of the conflict.

DVA is coordinating.

<https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2026-07-13/honouring-those-who-served-afghanistan-25-years>

simply did not have. Given the limitations of Australian industry a solution was proposed, instead of welding plates together why not cast the entire hull as a single massive piece of steel. At the time no nation in the world, not even the industrial giants like the United States or Germany was mass producing tanks with one piece cast hulls.



The technical challenges were staggering, casting a single piece of steel weighing several tons requires an immense mold and perfect temperature control to prevent the metal from cracking or forming air bubbles as it cools.

The Australian engineers at the New South Wales Government Railways workshops had to innovate on the fly, they developed a specialized sand molding technique and utilized a nickel steel alloy that was tough enough to stop anti tank rounds but fluid enough to fill the massive molds. The result was a marvel of engineering. The AC1 Sentinel emerged with a smooth rounded and futuristic silhouette unlike the American M3 Grant or the early British Crusaders which relied on

rivets that could pop inward like deadly shrapnel when hit, the Sentinel's hull was an unbroken fortress of steel. The curved surfaces were naturally superior at deflecting incoming shells, a principle known as sloped armor that would later become the global standard. Because it was cast as one unit the hull was also incredibly rigid and durable providing a stable platform for the engine and turret.

By successfully casting the hull Australia had leapfrogged over the world's leading military powers, this was not just a workaround for a lack of machinery it was a genuine evolution in tank design the Sentinel's hull was lighter and stronger than a bolted or welded equivalent proving that Australian ingenuity could turn a catastrophic industrial deficit into a world class advantage.



The AC1 under construction at the Chullora tank annex. (Source:- Australian War Memorial)

The engineers faced their next critical hurdle, a tank is only as good as its engine and in 1941 Australia possessed no domestic industry capable of producing a specialized high output tank motor. The British were using the massive Rolls Royce Merlin and the Americans had the Continental radial engines but Australia was an ocean away from these supply chains.

The only engine available in abundance was the Cadillac V8 automobile engine. A single 125 horsepower Cadillac engine was woefully inadequate for a medium tank, however they devised a brilliant albeit complex configuration known as the Cloverleaf. They took three separate Cadillac 46 cubic inch V8 engines and geared

them together to drive a single common output shaft. Two engines were placed side by side in the front of the engine bay with the third position behind them. They functioned as a single unit delivering a combined 330 to 350 horsepower.

It was a radical improvisation that required a sophisticated transfer case to synchronize the three engines ensuring that if one stumbled the others would compensate. While it sounded like a frantic patchwork, the Cloverleaf system was surprisingly effective, the Cadillac V8 was a refined reliable and smooth running engine and by combining three of them the Sentinel achieved a top speed of nearly 30 miles per hour. That made it faster and more nimble than many of its contemporaries and this configuration also offered a form of redundancy. The tank could continue to limp back to base even if one of the engines was damaged or failed. As the engine used was similar to many other car and military engines already in the country, getting spare parts was not difficult.

(Continued on page 8)

As the first completed AC1 Sentinels began to roll out of the Chullora railway workshops they presented a silhouette that was unlike anything else on the battlefield. While most tanks of the era were boxy bolted together contraptions the Sentinel looked almost organic with its smooth flowing lines and low profile turret.



The Sentinel had some really smart design choices. The turret, was very wide for a medium-sized tank and it gave the crew more room. The designers realized that while the first AC1 tank only had a small gun, the war was changing fast, and they would eventually need bigger and heavier guns. They avoided the trap that many British tanks fell into, being unable to upgrade their armament because the hull was too narrow. The Sentinel also boasted a surprisingly low silhouette making it a difficult target to spot and hit.

By the time the production line was in full swing the AC1 Sentinel had to prove it could survive the brutal conditions of the Australian continent and the high intensity combat of the Pacific. To do this the Army subjected the Sentinel to a series of grueling field trials often pitting it head to head against the American and British tanks that were finally beginning to arrive in limited numbers.

Stretching from the dusty rock strewn plains of the interior to the muddy humid coastal regions these environments were notorious for destroying transmissions and clogging air filters in these head to head trials. The Sentinel's unconventional Cloverleaf engine system proved its worth while the American



M3 Grant with its high profile radial engine struggled with a high center of gravity and was prone to tipping on steep Australian slopes.

The Sentinel with its low silhouette and wide tracks gave it superior stability and low ground pressure allowing it to traverse soft mud and sand that bogged down its heavier counterparts. (This is similar experience of the Russian T series tanks versus the western supplied Ukrainian tanks especially in autumn rain and the melting snow of spring of the Steppes.)

One of the most surprising outcomes of the testing was the Sentinel's mechanical reliability, there was a prevailing fear that a patchwork engine made of three Cadillac V8's would be a maintenance nightmare, however the opposite proved true. They were remarkably easy to tune and repair.

Australian mechanics already familiar with the Cadillac brand found the Sentinel much more approachable than the complex specialized power plants of the British tanks. In endurance runs the Sentinel consistently covered hundreds of miles with fewer mechanical breakdowns than the early model imports.

The cast hull also proved its superiority during ballistics testing. When subjected to live fire trials the rounded one piece construction performed exactly as predicted, anti-tank rounds that would have caught the edge of a riveted plate or shattered a weld on a conventional tank simply glanced off the Sentinel's curved surfaces.

By the end of the trials, the Australian military leadership was stunned they had started the project out of a desperate lack of options but they had ended up with a vehicle that in many categories was functionally superior to the tanks they had been begging for from overseas. The Sentinel was no longer

(Continued on page 9)

a symbol of desperation it was a legitimate contender for the title of the best medium tank. In the rapidly evolving arms race of World War 2 it became obvious that a tank equipped with a 2 pounder gun would soon be obsolete. The Sentinel had been designed with a massive turret ring specifically to allow for future growth and in 1943 that foresight paid off with the development of the *big brothers the AC3 and the AC4*.

These variants aimed to transform the Sentinel from a capable cruiser into a heavyweight, capable of taking on the heaviest armor the axis could field. The AC 3 Thunderbolt was the first major evolution, they successfully fitted the powerful 25 pounder field howitzer into a newly designed larger turret. This was a significant feat, the 25 pounder was a versatile weapon with devastating high explosive capabilities making the AC3 a formidable infantry support vehicle.

The power was also boosted by upgrading the Cloverleaf engine to a more streamlined triple Cadillac configuration improving the tank's power to weight ratio, however the true moment of Australian tank design came with the AC4.



By this stage of the war the Allied forces were desperate for a platform that could carry the legendary British 17 pounder anti tank gun, a weapon so powerful it was one of the few capable of piercing the front armor of a German Tiger tank. Many experts believed the Sentinel hull was too small to handle the violent recoil of such a massive gun. To prove them wrong the Australian engineers conducted one of the most audacious ballistic tests in history, they didn't just mount one gun they mounted two 25 pounder cannons side by side in a single Sentinel turret and fired them simultaneously.

The combined recoil of these two guns was significantly higher than that of a single 17 pounder, the Sentinel didn't flip over, the turret ring didn't shatter and the cast hull remained intact.

This successful brute force experiment paved the way for the AC4 which became the first tank in the world to successfully mount and fire the 17 pounder gun from a fully enclosed rotating turret beating the famous British Sherman Firefly to the punch. Testing these variants represented the peak of Australian military innovation, the AC3 and AC4 weren't just upgrades they were evidence that the Sentinel platform was one of the most adaptable tank designs of the war.

By mid-1943 the Australian cruiser program had achieved the impossible, the factories were humming, the technical bugs had been ironed out and the formidable AC3 and AC4 variants were ready to redefine armored warfare in the Pacific. On paper the Sentinel was a triumph, a world class tank, however just as the Sentinel reached its zenith the cold hard logic of global wartime logistics intervened delivering a crushing blow to Australia's domestic tank ambitions.

The turning point came not on the battlefield but as the United States fully mobilized its industrial capability the Lend Lease program began to flood the Allied world with an endless stream of Sherman and Grant tanks. By 1943 thousands of American tanks were rolling off assembly lines in Detroit and being shipped directly to Australian ports. Australia was no longer starving for armor it was being offered a feast of mass produced American tanks.

For the Australian government the decision became a matter of brutal economics and logistics. While the Sentinel was arguably a superior design and particularly suited for the rugged Australian terrain it was an orphan in the global supply chain. Maintaining a fleet of Sentinels required a dedicated domestic production line for every spare nut bolt and engine part in contrast the American M4 Sherman was part of a global standardized system.

(Continued on page 10)

In July 1943 with 65 AC1 units completed and the superior AC3 ready for production the Australian government made the heartbreaking decision to terminate the program. The war had moved too fast, the massive investment in the Chullora railway workshops and the years of sweat and genius were sacrificed at the altar of standardization.

The Sentinel never saw a single day of combat against the Japanese, instead of leading the charge into the jungles of New Guinea or the Philippines the 65 completed tanks were relegated to secondary roles. They were used for grueling training exercises in the Australian interior helping to prepare the crews who would eventually go to war in American made tanks.

To the men who had designed and built them it was a bitter pill to swallow, they had created a masterwork only to see it shelved because it was too late and too unique. The Sentinel became a victory of engineering but a victim of the very victory it was designed to ensure.

Today the Sentinel stands as a silent witness to a time when a nation's survival depended on pure unadulterated grit. Of the 65 tanks that rolled off the Chullora assembly lines only a handful survive scattered across museums like the Royal Australian Armored Corps Memorial and Tank Museum in Puckapunyal.

The legacy of the Sentinel is not found in battle honours or scorched enemy hulls but in the profound impact it had on the Australian identity the project proved that the digger spirit extended far beyond the battlefield and into the drafting rooms and foundries. The Sentinel was a declaration of independence, it showed that when a nation was pushed to the brink it could out engineer the most formidable industrial powers on earth.

In recent years the Sentinel has enjoyed a resurgence in popularity among military historians and armored vehicle Enthusiasts. It is celebrated for its firsts; the first one piece cast hull and the first tank to successfully mount the 17 pounder gun in a rotating turret even its bizarre features like the infamous machine gun mantle are now viewed with a sense of nostalgic pride a quirky thumb in the eye to conventional aesthetics in favor of raw practical utility. It remains a cult classic of the tank world, a homegrown tank that was too advanced for its own supply chain.

The Sentinel may have never fired a shot in anger but in the story of Australian innovation it remains an undefeated champion.

Source: Tanks-Encyclopedia, <http://www.tanks-encyclopedia.com>

British Defence Review 2025

The British Army has embraced the Recce-Strike doctrine, a significant shift in military thinking since the Cold War. This approach recognizes the dominance of drones, sensors, and rapid precision strikes in modern combat, as demonstrated in Ukraine. The Ministry of Defence predicts future lethality will be 80% from autonomous systems and 20% from traditional platforms.

Recce-Strike integrates surveillance, reconnaissance, and strike assets into a digital ecosystem, collapsing the traditional "kill chain" through AI-assisted targeting, drones, and precision fires. Key components include rapid targeting, persistent battlefield surveillance, and long-range fires. The acquisition of 72 new 155mm howitzers mounted on the Boxer chassis is significant. These systems can fire eight rounds per minute at targets up to 70 km away and operate unmanned. Combined with Ajax and Challenger 3—Britain's first digital main battle tank—these assets form a modern, integrated land force.

However, integrating these systems faces challenges in training, logistics, and doctrine. Sustained funding and strategic focus are crucial. Political instability could jeopardize defence spending, as Britain has seen in the past, hollowing out military capabilities.

Ultimately, national security is paramount. Without the will and capability to defend itself, Britain's other public spending priorities become meaningless.

THE RAACA NSW COLONEL JOHN HAYNES TRUST

Haynestrust.org

The RAACA NSW Colonel John Haynes Trust calls for applications opened in July this year, and will close on 30 September. It is not too late to apply for financial support for education and development opportunities that will require funding in 2027.

Applications for welfare support can be made at any time and the Trustees will expedite payment to assist those assessed as needing immediate help.

Grants from the Haynes Trust are specifically for EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT and for WELFARE SUPPORT.

- **Grants of up to \$4000.00 per annum** are available for **supporting education and development.**
- Grants are available to **provide welfare support or to undertake projects/activities that provide a welfare value to individuals or groups** if funds cannot be obtained from other sources.

Remember that the Haynes Trust is able to allocate funds to **serving or ex-serving members of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps, whether Regular, Reserve or National Service members of the Corps, and their issue to two generations, and their step-children, spouses, widows and widowers.**

The Trust is also working with the Corps Representative Honorary Colonel, MAJGEN Michael Krause, and the Corps RSM, to provide funding for a developmental grant that will be linked to the future RAAC Soldier of the Year Award. More information will be provided through the chain-of-command once the new Award is formalised.

To date the Haynes Trust has distributed in the order of \$45,000 in grants, including to those who needed support in welfare-related cases. The Trust has the capacity to provide more funding, so please spread the word and encourage applications.

I'd also like to thank General Sir Peter Cosgrove for providing a wonderful endorsement of the Trust through a video that can be seen on the Haynestrust.org website

The Trustees are confident that Colonel John Haynes's legacy will endure for many years to come and will be a direct benefit to many within the RAAC community.

Warm regards to all,
Keith

Keith Schollum
Chairman, Haynes Trust

RAAC Vision Statement

The Royal Australian Armour Corps (RAAC) can be employed both mounted and dismounted utilising a variety of platforms in order to perform a broad range of tactical actions, providing flexibility and agility to the integrated force across all echelons of command. Its soldiers are the Australian Army's mounted combat combined arms experts.

The RAAC provides a principal component of the combined arms land system through the provision of firepower, protection, mobility and C4ISREW, allowing the integrated force to gain a position of marked advantage by delivering combat, reconnaissance and security effects.

At the theatre level the RAAC allows the integrated force to generate an asymmetric effect, generating a dilemma for the enemy. A small armoured force deployed forward to conduct persistent cueing, security or combat operations forces the enemy to risk the commitment of a larger force or the unmasking a strategic asset to confront armoured elements.

The RAAC is ready to adapt and lead in complex and evolving operational environments through the provision of tailored force options, combat team and battle group headquarters. The RAAC underpins force expansion through excellence in training and agility in employment. Its inherent mobility, lift and C4ISR system supports agility, modality and teaming across the integrated force and with our allies and partners.

Fostering a culture of professional mastery, innovation and teamwork, the RAAC is made up of reserve and full time forces. Its personnel are agile, have a bias for action, generate tempo and demonstrate tactical excellence grounded in strategic understanding. They are technically literate and capable of high cognitive load, they have mechanical aptitude and demonstrate excellence in equipment husbandry.

The RAAC is grounded in tradition and driven by innovation. It recognises its linkage to the evolution of armour dating back to World War One, and its soldiers are the proud custodians of the Australian Light Horse and cavalry commando history.

The RAAC remains at the forefront of combat innovation, leading Army's employment and teaming with autonomous land combat and surveillance systems. The corps leads Army in the use of simulation both in training and operational preparation to maximise resources, refine skills and rehearse tactical actions. It keeps abreast of Australia's pacing threat to provide a ready and credible combat force.

Roles

Obsolete role of armour. The role of armour is to locate, identify and destroy or capture the enemy, by day or night, in combination with other arms, using fire and manoeuvre.

Recommended revised role of armour. The role of armour is to identify and defeat the enemy through persistent mounted and dismounted operations using observation, firepower, manoeuvre and shock action.

Role of cavalry. The role of cavalry is to locate, dislocate and disrupt the enemy through the conduct of offensive, defensive and security actions; both mounted or dismounted.

Role of tank. The role of tanks is, in coordination with other arms, to close with and destroy the enemy using fire, manoeuvre and shock action.

Under review - Role of light cavalry. The role and tasks of light cavalry is the same as for cavalry, but are enabled through non-AFV platforms. Light cavalry are more likely to conduct security, stability and enabling activities in lower threat environments or in rear echelon areas (COMD 1 Div prefers this as it's a better descriptor).

2 (AS) Div recommended revised role of light cavalry. Light Cavalry fulfils the same role as Cavalry, employing tactics suited to its platform. The role of light cavalry is to be reviewed at the 2026 Corps Conference (Reserve Day).

RAACA(NSW) at the Senate Inquiry into Defence Estate Assets

RAACA(NSW) has played a significant role in the national discussion surrounding the future of Defence estate, particularly the proposed divestment of Lancer Barracks. On 11 March 2026, the Senate referred the *Management of Defence Estate Assets* to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee for inquiry and report. As the breadth of submissions and evidence expanded, the Senate extended the reporting date to 15 September 2026, reflecting the seriousness of the issues raised.

RAACA(NSW) lodged its formal submission in April, followed by a detailed response to Questions on Notice on 22 May 2026. Together, these documents set out a clear and evidence-based case that Lancer Barracks is not simply a heritage precinct, but a living Defence capability asset whose loss would have direct operational consequences. The submission emphasised that Reserve units rely fundamentally on geographic accessibility: soldiers join units close to where they live, work and study, and their ability to parade, train and remain active depends on realistic travel times and public transport access. Relocating RAAC Reserve capability from Parramatta to Holsworthy would impose 45–90 minute commutes each way, a burden that history shows leads to sharp declines in recruitment, retention, and skill continuity.

The submission also stressed that Lancer Barracks provides a visible Defence presence in the geographic centre of Sydney, a critical factor in attracting new Reservists, Cadets, and university officer trainees. Its co-location with the NSW Lancers Memorial Museum reinforces RAAC identity, heritage and esprit de corps—elements that directly support morale, retention and professional pride. RAACA(NSW) made clear that divestment without a fully costed, practical and heritage-safe plan would fracture this ecosystem, severing the link between the Regiment, the Museum, volunteers and the broader RAAC community. With more than 206 years of continuous military occupation and 135 years of uninterrupted RAAC presence, Lancer Barracks remains an active Defence, heritage and community precinct whose value cannot be replicated elsewhere.

On Monday 4 May, MAJGEN Michael Krause, AM, and BRIG Phillip Bridie, AM (Retd) attended the Senate Committee hearing as members of the RAACA(NSW) Executive, providing evidence on behalf of the Association. They were joined by Mr Len Koles, who appeared separately representing the NSW Lancers Association. Together, their testimony reinforced the importance of geographic accessibility for Reserve and Cadet participation, the operational role of Lancer Barracks in civil assistance and inter-agency security, and the irreplaceable heritage preserved by the NSW Lancers Memorial Museum.

The Committee engaged closely with these issues, with Senator Jacqui Lambie asking a series of follow-up questions relating to the constitutional transfer of the Barracks, Defence's stewardship of heritage assets, and the feasibility of relocating the Museum. RAACA(NSW)'s written response highlighted that the Museum's collection—over 8,000 artefacts, including rare armoured vehicles, weapons, archives and specialist workshops—cannot be relocated without fragmentation, loss of capability and significant security challenges. The Association also emphasised that Reserve and Cadet participation is highly sensitive to travel distance and public transport access. The historical example of the 1990s relocation of 1/15 RNSWL squadrons from Kingswood to Holsworthy was cited as evidence of the capability degradation that follows when units are moved outside their natural catchment.

The Inquiry will now consider all submissions, evidence and follow-up material before delivering its report on 15 September 2026. RAACA(NSW) will continue to advocate for the protection of Lancer Barracks, the preservation of RAAC heritage, and the capability of our Reserve soldiers, Cadets, and community partners.

Links:

RAACA(NSW) website article: <https://raacansw.com.au/veterans-issues>

Inquiry Website (all submissions): https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/DefenceEstates

RAACA(NSW) appearance – video: <https://www.youtube.com/live/EbjE24EAzhM?si=4iFdLQPBO-WF73wS>

Hearing transcripts: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/DefenceEstates/Public_Hearings

The British Army's new fighting vehicle gets a reprieve

The British Army's new Ajax armoured vehicle is set to resume service after a suspension due to 35 soldiers falling ill in November 2022. The Ministry of Defence has ruled out cancellation, despite the £6bn investment and 700 jobs at stake.



Ajax is a family of vehicles designed for reconnaissance, command, engineer, recovery, and troop-carrying tasks, with plans to replace the aging Warrior infantry fighting vehicles. A new variant, capable of carrying eight troops, is also in development. However, the project has faced numerous challenges: the Army provided 1,318 specifications, leading to criticism; the MoD's procurement processes were deemed dysfunctional; and GDLS, the winning contractor, has been exposed for delivering substandard vehicles and facing social media backlash.

In 2019, vibration issues led to testing suspension, but subsequent tests in 2021/22 found the problem acceptable. Ajax has already delivered around 200 vehicles at a rate of twelve per month. Cancellation would mean billions spent and a 3-5 year delay, which the government is reluctant to accept given its focus on rebuilding military production.

Despite criticisms, Ajax offers better armour compared to current British vehicles. The focus now is on swiftly addressing remaining issues and maturing the vehicle. Past armoured vehicle development has shown that improvements often come after initial challenges.

The Army, MoD, and GDLS must work together to make Ajax a truly impressive vehicle, as overplaying catastrophism may be unwarranted.

Source: Mark Urban's War and Peace markurban@substack.com Wed Apr 29 2026



In Memory of a true trooper, SirWillow (aka Tobie) 1989 to 2024

Foaled in Canada, 3rd September 1989. Mare: Bay Willow (CAN),
Sire: Bluebird (USA). Imported by Duffy Holdings SA.



Growing up in the 50s, I had very little contact with the equestrian world. In fact I only became interested in horses after serving in an army cavalry unit, BSqn, 2 Cavalry Regiment. There were too many jokes of where's your horse so I decided to see what it felt like being a mounted trooper of old.

(Continued on page 15)

After looking around for a suitable horse I came across an ex race horse called Sir Willow. Cutting a long story short, I purchased him in 1998 and within 2 days of receiving him we departed for Canberra to take part in the 200th Centenary of the Boer War. Remarkably we were able to raise almost a complete regiment of horse; some 360 mounted troopers. The CO was LTCOL Mike Annett, RSM WO1 Greg Hooper, SSMS Andy Clarke, Warren Baxter. Over five days we participated in mounted skill at arms demonstrations at the Canberra showgrounds followed by official government parades, first at the War Memorial and then at Canberra Parliament House. A regiment of Horse, in troop order, riding down Northbourne avenue was one of the most memorable experiences of my life.



The success of this event led to Light Horse troops to be included in the Sydney Reserve Forces day parades. Training prior to each parade was carried out by the NSW Mounted Police at Malabar next to the rifle range.

Tobie was also an eventer, much more capable than me. Over the years he helped me become a competent horseman. In the last years of his life we would often go trail riding which he loved and often I let him decide

where we would go. Rarely was he in a hurry to go home.

He was a remarkable horse; rest in peace my friend.

Vale

Kel Warham

It is with great sadness that I advise that our friend and colleague, Kel Warham, passed away suddenly at his home at Loch Sport, Victoria, on Sunday 29 March 2026.

Kel served with the Lancers from 1967 to 1987 (approximately) reaching the rank of Captain. Kel was a second-generation Lancer his Dad, Don Warham, served together with him at the Lancers for some time.

Kel is survived by his wife, Denise, his two children, Danielle and Joel and 4 grandchildren. He will be greatly missed.

Regards,
John Howells
New South Wales Lancers' Memorial Museum Inc

Vale

Warrant Officer Class One Harry Crampton



It is with great sadness that I let you know of the passing of Warrant Officer Class One Harry Crampton, the last ARES RSM of the Regiment.

Harry was one of the most influential mentors I had during my service with the Regiment and beyond, and I am certain many will feel the same. Later he served on the Colonel Armour 2 DIV HQ, there he was the administrator that enabled the RAAC TEWTS to run from 1985 'till 1990.

Harry was later RSM of the complex Reserve Forces Day Parades in Sydney 1998 – 2018.

Regards,
John Howells
New South Wales Lancers' Memorial Museum Inc