



A Brief History of 105th Battery RAA

Following the withdrawal of the ANZAC troops from the Gallipoli Peninsula, the doubling of the Australian Imperial Force in Egypt spawned the 105th Howitzer Battery on 8 March 1916. Less than five weeks later, the 105th was in action near Armentieres, France.

Becoming part of the 5th Australian Field Artillery Brigade (5 AFAB) in the artillery reorganisation of 11 May 1916 began a long association with this unit. The Battery served with distinction for the next three years from Passchendaele and Ypres in Belgium to Amiens and Villers Bretonneux in France, concluding its time at Thuin, Belgium after the Armistice. The unit was disbanded on 30 March 1919.

The 105th Howitzer Battery was re-raised as part of 5 AFAB at Kelvin Grove, Brisbane in the Militia remodelling of 1921. It survived all the reorganisations between the wars and the hardships of the Great Depression and continued its camps and live firings at Fort Lytton, Cominya, Mt Walker and Caloundra. Mechanisation farewelled horses in 1939, and the Battery went on full time duty in 1940. Sadly, it was disbanded in the Second World War reorganisation which formed field regiments of artillery in December 1940.

Australia's commitment to the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve led to the re-emergence of 105th Field Battery on 1 July 1955. It sailed for Malaya on 6 October 1955 to become the first unit of the Royal Australian Artillery (RAA) to fire a shot in anger since World War 2. With its headquarters in Butterworth and gun troops in Perak and Kedah states, the Battery supported British, Malay and Australian battalions till its return to Australia in October 1957.

The 105th came under command of 1st then 4th Field Regiments till it was again called upon as the first RAA unit to serve—this time in the Vietnam War. Arriving on 28 September 1965, the Battery came under operational control of the 173rd United States Airborne Brigade, served with the 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (1 RAR) Group, and was awarded the US Meritorious Unit Commendation. Joining 1st Field Regiment RAA at Nui Dat in June 1966, it supported 6 RAR's D Company at the Battle of Long Tan before returning to Australia in September.

The 105th Field Battery commenced its second tour in Vietnam on 4 February 1969 in support of 5 RAR. Though 'home' was at Nui Dat, in 12 months it built 31 fire support bases between Long Binh near Saigon and the south coast of Phuoc Tuy Province, fired over 76 000 rounds and returned home on 4 February 1970 without loss of life.

Since then the 105th has remained under the command of 1st Field Regiment RAA in Brisbane, witnessing the many changes of doctrine and reorganisations of peacetime soldiering. Australia's entry into peacemaking in East Timor saw 47 members of the Battery on active service again, primarily in Civil Military Liaison Teams with 6 RAR. Second and third tours have now been completed.

The 105th became a medium battery equipped with 155-mm M198 Howitzers on 1 July 2005 with the new role of direct support to a motorised 6 RAR Group.