

Seymour Light Horse Memorial Park



Seym 18.jpg



Seym 20.jpg



Seym 19.jpg



14271 Seymour Light Horse Park May06



14271 Seymour Light Horse Park May 06 ruins Camp 20



14271 Seymour Light Horse Park May 06 filtration system



14271 Seymour Light Horse Park May 06 WWI horse trough

Location

GOULBURN VALLEY HIGHWAY SEYMOUR, Mitchell Shire

Municipality

MITCHELL SHIRE

Level of significance

-

Heritage Listing

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 28, 2006

The Australian Light Horse Memorial Park, Seymour, is 130 hectares of regenerating Box-Ironbark woodland and part of the former Seymour Camp, a Commonwealth military training camp established at the outbreak of WWI. The Australian Light Horse Memorial Park officially opened in 2001 and incorporates only the western portion of the original 320 ha of the Seymour Camp which, prior to the opening of Puckapunyal Army Camp north of Seymour in 1939, was Victoria's foremost military training camp. Following this the camp became known as the Old Seymour Camp and during WWII continued to be used for the training of militia and Australian Imperial Forces (AIF) and after the war for compulsory military training in the 1950s. The camp closed in 1978.

The Australian Light Horse Memorial Park has local historical significance being a part of the Old Seymour Camp, one of a number of twentieth century military sites in the Seymour area. In 1910 Lord Kitchner recommended the Seymour area as a mobilisation point for Victorian troops of the AIF because of its proximity to Melbourne, suitable terrain and the available railway transport. Along with the Old Seymour Camp, sites in the Seymour area associated with the mobilisation of troops over the twentieth century include Mob Siding, constructed following World War I as the mobilisation stores for the Old Seymour Camp, Puckapunyal Army Camp and the Mangalore Ammunition Depot and Dysart Siding constructed to service Puckapunyal along with several rifle ranges and a number other small camps established during World War II.

In the Australian Light Horse Memorial Park this military history is reflected in archaeological features that date primarily to World War II and consist of discrete clusters of the concrete foundations of buildings and ablution blocks of the former Camp 20A and 20B and a military hospital along with the sealed roadways connecting the former camps. The only remaining standing structure is the filtration tank for the camp sewerage system. Although from 1887 the Seymour Troop of the Victorian Mounted Rifles and following Federation, the Seymour Troop of the Australian Light Horse trained in the area where the Seymour Camp was later established, no tangible evidence of this early military history survives in the park although two large concrete horse troughs on the Goulburn Valley Highway outside the park are associated with this early period. Throughout the camp's history much of the accommodation was in tents, leaving little or no physical evidence.

The Light Horse Memorial Park has local social significance as a place of recreation and community involvement especially in efforts to regenerate the box-iron bark bushland and in the development of the site as a Memorial Park. The Park is also of social significance as a place of commemoration for individuals who underwent military training in the Old Seymour Camp.

The Australian Light Horse Memorial Park has local historical and social significance in contributing to an understanding of the role of Seymour in Victorian military history. The Australian Light Horse Memorial Park has been included as an archaeological site on the Victorian Heritage Inventory and should be considered by Mitchell Shire for inclusion in the heritage overlay of the local planning scheme.

Other Names OLD ARMY CAMP,

Hermes Number 125437

Property Number

Veterans Description for Public

The Seymour Light Horse Memorial Park, comprising of 140 hectares, commemorates the Mounted Rifle Regiments and the legendary Light Horse. The park officially opened in 2001 and incorporates only the western portion of the original 320 hectares of the Seymour Camp which, prior to the opening of Puckapunyal Army Camp north of Seymour in 1939, was Victoria's foremost military training camp. Following this the camp became known as the Old Seymour Camp and during the Second World War continued to be used for the training of militia and Australian Imperial Forces (AIF) and after the war for compulsory military training in the 1950s. The camp closed in 1978.

The association of the area with army training camps really began in 1887 with the formation of the Seymour Troop of the Victorian Mounted Rifles. The troop trained in this vicinity by permission of the 'Marengo Run' pastoral landholders. After Federation this troop became part of the 7th Australian Light Horse camped at Site 17 (now the Australian Light Horse Memorial Park). Training on these hills a century ago, they laid the foundations of the present Australian Army.

In 1910, Lord Kitchener visited to review a parade of 4000 men, 2000 horses and artillery and nominated the 'Marengo Run' site as Victoria's main military training centre due to its central location and good railway access. The 1910 parade is thought to have been held on the Seymour Race Course just north of the Camp area and a triumphal arch over the Trawool Road was erected to welcome Kitchener.

The precinct also contains the Seymour Bushland Reserve with military relics not represented elsewhere within the area including a small arms/machine gun firing range consisting of a substantial concrete abutment about 30 metres long and 4 metres high with brick footing ruins, a practice grenade-throwing shelter pit with concrete-walled blast compartments, and a series of about 8 "foxholes"; ephemeral soil pits each with 4 steel star pickets at the base.

Along with the Old Seymour Camp, sites in the Seymour area associated with the mobilisation of troops over the twentieth century include Mob Siding, constructed following the First World War as the mobilisation stores for the Old Seymour Camp, Puckapunyal Army Camp and the Mangalore Ammunition Depot and Dysart Siding constructed to service Puckapunyal along with several rifle ranges and a number other small camps established during the Second World War.

A full timeline of the precinct's use is featured below.

1914 - Defence leases part of the site (318 ha) for the Seymour Camp.

1915 - Viral meningitis closed Broadmeadows Lighthorse Camp - Lighthorse AIF regiments sent to Seymour.

1916 - Defence formally establishes Seymour Military Camp to raise 37th. Infantry Battalion, train 4th., 8th, and 13th Lighthorse regiments.

1917-19 - Training continues, mostly in tented accommodation. Built accommodation in corrugated iron huts includes 16 sleeping huts, 8 mess huts, 3 cookhouses, a 24 bed hospital, 24 other huts and unsewered latrines and wash places.

1920 - Army purchases land later extending it to a 350 ha. Camp area (encompassing what is now the Seymour Golf Course, Seymour Bushland reserve, Granite Hills Race Track., Australian Lighthorse Memorial Park and Seymour Industrial Park). General (later Field Marshal) Thomas Blamey plans it as a military camp for one Cavalry division, two other Divisions and non divisional troops totalling 1,224 personnel . Sewerage systems planned from this time.

1921-39 - Victoria's principal military camp. Citizen forces trained there including 8th. Division Lighthorse. Victoria's mobilisation for war commences at Camp October 1939. Puckapunyal opened November 1939, becoming the main AIF training area.

1939-45 - Became a transit camp for Americans 1942-3, the 6th. and 9th AIF Divisions and a resting Marine Division. Housed Italian prisoners-of-war prior to repatriation. Military hospital, hutted and tented accommodation for militia and AIF. The School of Mechanisation (motorised army), School of Tactics and Administration, and Australian Staff College commenced here.

1945-50 - Temporary location for School of Infantry.

1950's - Used for accommodation and training during era of compulsory military service.

1963 - Army begins winding down Camp, vacates the area now used as Seymour Golf Course.

1974 - Site 16 cleared, becomes Granite Hill Motor Raceway.

1978 - Sale of residual 272ha to Shire of Seymour.

1983 - Seymour Bushland Park opened as a nature reserve.

1995 - Australian Lighthorse Memorial Park (ALHMP) concept initiated. Seymour Industrial Park on Site 17 developed around this time.

2001 - Official opening, ALHMP.

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>