
Bofors Anti-Aircraft Gun

Location

Anzac Road, Moe VIC 3825

Municipality

LATROBE CITY

Level of significance

-

Heritage Overlay Numbers

Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 1, 2008

What is significant?

The Bofors anti-aircraft gun now mounted on a plinth and situated within the median strip in Anzac Road, Moe is thought to be similar to those installed by the Commonwealth Government around Yallourn Power Station as part of defence measures during World War II. It was declared surplus and installed on this site in the 1970s and was originally adjacent to the World War I memorial, which has since been relocated to another site. A tree using a seed from the 'Lone Pine' has been planted nearby.

How is it significant?

The Bofors anti-aircraft gun is of local historic significance to Latrobe City.

Why is it significant?

Historically, although it is no longer on its original site the Bofors Gun is significant as an object that provides a tangible reminder of the measures that were taken to defend Victoria's power supplies during World War II. As many of the physical reminders of the defence measures have now been demolished or removed, the Bofors gun provides an opportunity for this little-known but very important story to be more widely known and understood. (RNE criteria A.4, C.2 and D.2).

Heritage Study/Consultant	Latrobe - Latrobe Heritage Study (1991), Christine Johnston, Latrobe Regional Commission, 1991;
Construction dates	1908, 1970,
Hermes Number	127447
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

This is a Bofors anti-aircraft gun mounted on a round concrete plinth and situated in the median strip in Anzac Street. The gun is beside a semi-mature 'Lone Pine' tree, circumference at chest height - 1.87 m. Canopy diameter - 1.15 m.

Physical Conditions

Good

Intactness

Not known

Historical Australian Themes

9. COMMUNITY & CULTURAL LIFE 9.2 Memorials and remembering

Veterans Description for Public

The Bofors anti-aircraft gun is mounted on a plinth and situated within the median strip in Anzac Road, Moe. It is thought to be similar to those installed by the Commonwealth Government around Yallourn Power Station as part of defence measures during the Second World War. In the mid-1970s, the Defence Department offered surplus military hardware to RSL clubs as part of their war memorials, and the Moe Branch installed the Bofors gun as a part of a memorial which has since been relocated to 63-67 Albert Street.

During the Second World War, the old Yallourn Power Station made a significant contribution to the war by ensuring a constant supply of power to heavy industry that kept the war machine turning. Between 1940 and 1942, Yallourn Power Station was responsible for generating more than two-thirds of Victoria's electricity, and logically it would have been a major target if the Japanese forces, rapidly moving south through Asia by the end of that period, had attacked.

For this reason, the governments of the day set about shoring up Yallourn's defences. About £30,000 was spent on additional fire protection at principal SEC sites at Yallourn, while many precautions were taken to protect buildings and workers in case of an enemy air attack. These included the construction of earth walls, blacking out windows, protective casings for vital plant equipment, air raid shelters for key personnel and the construction of walls made from brick and concrete. These walls were designed to withstand the impact of a high explosive 500 pound (227 kilogram) bomb detonating at 16 metres.

By the middle of 1941, the 11th Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery unit began its protection of Yallourn Power Station and the project area. Four guns, three inch 30 cwt mobile units, were initially provided to guards against air raids while gun crews, headquarters personnel and machine gun units were allocated to the works area. The Old Brown Coal Mine and the south west end of the Yallourn ovals were selected as sites for 3.7 inch guns. Each round for one of these guns weighed 49 pounds (22 kilograms), and to operate the gun took 11 men.

Bofors guns were later placed behind the briquette factory, near the open cut office, on the far side of the Latrobe River on the hill opposite the power station and between the screen house and the open cut. An extensive network of volunteers, were the eyes and ears of the formidable range of 'AckAck' guns around the works area. Aircraft were prohibited from air space within eight kilometres of the open cut. Fortunately, the guns were only fired once in anger; a night in December 1941 when a large Melbourne-bound plane strayed into the prohibited area. The plane was not, as suspected, a Japanese bomber.

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/>