

U3A talk on “Battle of Beersheba”

U3A History Group, “Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow” were very fortunate to have guest speak Alan Smith at their September meeting.

Alan gained an Associate Diploma in Industrial Chemistry & a Masters Degree in Commerce. In 1952 he joined the RAA as a Recruit Gunner and had regimental service in 1954/55 with the Royal Artillery & Royal Canadian Artillery before being promoted Major in 1962.

When Alan was gun detachment commander his Battery Commander stressed the importance of artillery history to him – 40 years later he applied the wisdom and began contributing to the RAA Historical Society’s media, “Cannonball”.

Alan (who is a friend of Margaret Higgins) has written many history books – and so he and his wife Jenny, travelled to Gloucester to talk on the history of the Beersheba Cavalry Battle.

The battle of Beersheba took place on 31 October 1917 as part of the wider British offensive collectively known as the third Battle of Gaza. The final phase of this all day battle was the famous mounted charge of the 4th Light Horse Brigade. Commencing at dusk, members of the brigade stormed through the Turkish defences and seized the strategic town of Beersheba. The capture of Beersheba enabled British Empire forces to break the Ottoman line near Gaza on November 7 and advance into Palestine.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the famous mounted charge of the 4th Light Horse Brigade into Beersheba.

As a tribute, our local Poet Margaret Higgins wrote a poem which can be found on the U3A website <http://gloucester.u3anet.org.au/>

