

The Military History Society of NSW presents

CHARIOT OF FIRE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TANK

Public Lecture by Major (retd) Paul Handel, RFD

10:30AM Saturday 1 March 2025



ANZAC MEMORIAL HYDE PARK, SYDNEY CBD

This talk will look at how tanks evolved after their first conception and the earliest attempts to design, test and produce them. There will be discussion of tank use on various battlefields and how this experience shaped tank design and production. The period covered will start before World War I and continue up until the present time. The lecture will look at the tanks of many different countries with the assistance of photographs supplemented by succinct presentation of data, and will show the differences between them through the years. It will cover tanks only – whilst important there will be no coverage of wheeled vehicles.

LECTURE TIME AND VENUE: 10:30AM Saturday 1 March 2025 at The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial Hyde Park, Hyde Park South, corner Elizabeth and Liverpool Streets, Sydney CBD. Admission is free of charge but a donation would be appreciated. For information call 0419 698 783 or email: president@militaryhistorynsw.com.au

Speaker - Major (retd) Paul Handel, RFD

Paul Handel studied mechanical engineering after leaving school and worked for Email Ltd at Waterloo and Botany in the 1970s. He then joined a German Engineering company, based in North Sydney, in 1980. He was involved with large steelworks and open cut mining projects until 2000, when the company's operations ceased. In 2004 he joined a division of his former company as the Production and Logistics Manager for the manufacture of overhead travelling cranes, retiring in 2016.



He joined the Citizen Military Forces in 1970, and was commissioned in 1972 into the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RAEME). A series of postings followed, including five years as the OC of the LAD/TSS of 1/15 Royal NSW Lancers. Promoted to Major in 1981, he served on HQ 2 Division Plans Team, before being posted as OC 103 Field Workshop. Attendance at the Reserve Command Staff College (Senior Course) in 1987 was followed by a posting to the HQ 2nd Division Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

In the middle of 1986, he was appointed as the RAAC Tank Museum's Honorary Research Officer. At the end of 1989 he was posted as

Research Officer Royal Australian Armoured Corps (RAAC) Tank Museum, and in February 1999 was transferred to the Army History Unit, and became the Museum Manager of the RAAC Museum, later Australian Army Tank Museum, a position he held until August 2012.

In September 2016, he returned to Army Reserve service and undertook a project for Army History Unit involving the sectioning of a Leopard Tank. This project was undertaken by the RAN Fleet Support Unit (SE) at Garden Island in Sydney. The sectioned tank is now an exhibit at the Tank Museum, Puckapunyal.

He is a volunteer at the Australian Army Museum of Military Engineering and the Australian Army Tank Museum.

He is the author of three books on Australian armoured history – *Fifty Years of the RAAC 1948 to 1998*; *Dust, Sand and Jungle – A History of Australian Armour 1927 to 1948*; and *The Vital Factor - The History of the 2/6th Australian Armoured Regiment 1941 to 1945*.