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Field gun a moving target

Lauren Pilot

THE heritage-listed World War II field gun in South Perth has a new home after more than 50 years on Angelo Street.

The quick-firing 25-pounder Howitzer Mark I gun was moved on Friday from outside the old RSL building to a dedicated site at Ernest Johnston Reserve.

The relic was shifted to its new home about 1km away by crane following the RSL's move to the John McGrath Pavilion this year.

It was built in 1942 and used by the British Commonwealth during World War II. It was the UK's primary artillery field piece until the 1960s.

City of South Perth Mayor Sue Doherty said the RSL bought the gun from the army, which was selling surplus war stock, in 1961 for 75 pounds, which equates to about \$2930 in today's money.

South Perth RSL president Justin Regan said get-



An Australian 25-pounder Field Gun Howitzer Mark I in use during World War II at El Alamein, Egypt, in July 1942.

ting the weapon to Perth was a monumental feat, with the then-members making the more than three-hour drive to the Nungarin Ordnance Depot to collect it.

Mr Regan said the members hooked the gun up to a tow truck, stopping at every waterhole on the journey back.

The decommissioned gun was placed on Angelo Street in April 1962 as a memorial to the World War II gunners who lost their lives during conflict.

According to the RSL, the gun was not initially secured and until a brace was fixed to the gun, local youths would release the brakes and roll it on to the road to the annoyance of local police.

It is listed on the City of South Perth's Municipal Heritage list and was restored in 2010.

It is now a fixed feature of the new RSL building on Sandgate Street. Plans for the old RSL building site and the field gun are under review by the City.



The heritage-listed World War II gun outside the old South Perth RSL branch on the corner of Angelo and Anstey streets in South Perth. Picture: David Baylis www.communitypix.com.au d486636