six-inch rifle and the Nordenfeldt were less archaic. The local volunteers, one writer says, “handled the guns with such precision and accuracy that they became the crack company of the State, and never failed during the nine days' camp each year at Middle Head to win the gunnery competition from all comers.” They were commanded for some years by Major MacCabe — that was where he got his title — who lost his life in the rescue operations after the Mount Kembla disaster and is commemorated (despite the spelling) by McCabe Park. According to “Old Pioneer” he “had no equal in the State in the laying of a gun for discharge”.

In 1907 the Commonwealth Government decided, not before time, that the Smith's Hill guns were obsolete, and offered them to the Council for ornamental purposes. Apparently they were allowed to remain as they were till the 1950's, when the Council decided that the old gunpits were being used for “undesirable purposes”, and filled them in. The stonework is believed to be still intact under the grass. The Flagstaff Hill fortifications were apparently dismantled about 1914, and in recent years the entries to the magazines and quarters were bricked up — “undesirable purposes” again.

A few years ago the Fort Artillery Society, thinking — no doubt rightly — that Wollongong does not appreciate its historic relics, tried to hijack the Smith's Hill guns for Bare Island. The Society was able to beat that, for the time being anyway, and hopes at least to keep the guns — we would like to see the old fortifications reopened and restored.

— Corp’ril Wanst

AT REST AT LAST:

On Thursday 31st July 1902 there was an explosion at Mount Kembla Colliery. The greatest mining disaster in Australian history, it cost the lives of 96 men, two of whom, Henry Osborne MacCabe, a mining engineer, and William McMurray, an “off shift” deputy, perished in the rescue operations.

A memorial to the victims, which became known as the “MacCabe-McMurray Monument,” was erected by public subscription and unveiled on Saturday 12 August 1905.

Originally situated just west of the entrance to Crown Lane (near the Crown/Keira Traffic Lights), it was removed in March 1937, with the approval of the mining unions, to the rest park at Globe Lane/Burelli Street, having become a traffic hazard.

However, many people in the mountain villages had considered over the years that “Its rightful place is on the Mount.” Following representations from interested villagers, early in August 1973, with the approval of the City Council and this Society, it was again shifted to the Churchyard of the present Soldiers' and Miners' Memorial Church of England, Mount Kembla, where it was dedicated in the annual remembrance of the disaster service on Sunday 5th.

It stands immediately west of the main entrance of the Church, readily visible from the road.

P.S. The rest park looks somewhat forlorn without it!

(Historical information from The Wollongong Rest Park . . . And the Memorials Therein, by A. P. Fleming, an I.H.S. Publication, November 1971).