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NOTES ON THE ROYAL ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS

Introduction

As a result of the MacLeod recommendations to streamline the logistic support for the British Army various changes have now taken place not least of which has resulted in a considerable number of officers and men transferring to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from the Royal Army Service Corps. You are probably one such person and this leaflet has been produced with the hope that you will be better able to understand the organisation and function of your new Corps.

You are probably still a little apprehensive of what your chances now are for furthering your Career. It is still early days for being really forthright on the future but everything points to the days ahead being every bit as good as the past and if anything your chances for promotion should be better. You will appreciate that the first few years after such a reorganisation will be spent 'shaking down' and undoubtedly certain trades will amalgamate in time but this is all in the future.

Most of you will already have a good idea of what the responsibilities of the Royal

Army Ordnance Corps were and what additional responsibilities have been taken on as a result of MacLeod. The next section will bring you up to date.

Responsibilities of the RAOC

The primary responsibility of the RAOC is to:-
order, receive, store, maintain and issue to the Army at home and overseas all types of stores, ammunition, vehicles, supplies and POL.

The five main categories of stores which the Army require the RAOC to supply are:-

a. Ordnance stores which are:-

(1) warlike and technical stores including artillery equipment, aircraft spares marine stores, guided missiles of all types signal wireless and all other intercommunication equipment, engineer stores and so on.

(2) MT spare parts and assemblies.

(3) general stores including tools, workshop materials, tentage and accommodation stores.

(4) clothing for all conditions of climate in all parts of the world.

b. Ammunition which includes:-

(1) liquid fuel for guided weapons.

(2) gun, rocket and small arms ammunition.

(3) mines, grenades, pyrotechnics and demolition explosives.

c. Vehicles including:-

(1) all armoured fighting vehicles e.g. tanks, armoured and scout cars and carriers.

(2) wheeled load and passenger carrying vehicles and trailers.

(3) cranes, bulldozers and plant.

d. POL including:-

(1) aviation gasoline for light aircraft.

(2) MO gas.

(3) diesel, fuel oils and lubricants, disinfectants and miscellaneous chemicals.

e. Supplies including:-

(1) fresh rations including bread.

(2) compo rations.

(3) trial packs for expeditions.

The great and complex organisation, of which the Director of Ordnance Services at the Ministry of Defence is the head, is the largest purchasing and distributive concern in the Commonwealth. Its operations are directed through the Stores Organisation, the Ammunition Organisation, the Vehicle

Organisation and now the POL and Supply Organisation.

Each of these reaches across the whole world and to give you some idea of their size and resources the following points are quoted at random.

..... the RAOC occupies nearly 90 different locations in the UK alone and world wide uses 86,000,000 sq ft of storage space. Over 1,000,000 different items are held in stock and over 11,000,000 issues are made in a year.

..... the weight of stores handled in a normal year is 1½ million tons.

.. men and women of 22 different nationalities are employed and their wage packets add up to £24 million per year.

Here now is a diagrammatical layout of store holding units showing how an item after manufacture eventually arrives in the hand of the fighting soldier.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

CBS VCBS DCBS AG QMG MGD Chief Scientist

AGD DOS
(Maj Gen)

HQ DOS

Inspector RAOC (Brig) DDOS (Brig) ORD 2 ORD 55 ORD 6

ORD 1 ORD 3 ORD 4 ORD 6

DDOS (Brig) or Col

Eastern
Northern
Western
Southern
Scottish

Comd

UK Command Depots

CRAC (Lt Col) MID

Command (HQ) RAOC Trg Centre (Brig)

Commander (HQ) Stores Org (Maj Gen)

Stores Depots

Commander (HQ) Veh Org (Brig)

Veh Depots

Commander (HQ) Ammo Org (Brig)

Ammo Depots and School of Ammo.

DOS BAOR (Brig)

DDOS Corps BAOR (Col)

DADOS Cyrenaica Area

CRAC MALTA (Lt Col)

DDOS HQ Cyprus Dist (Col)

DDOS MELF (Col)

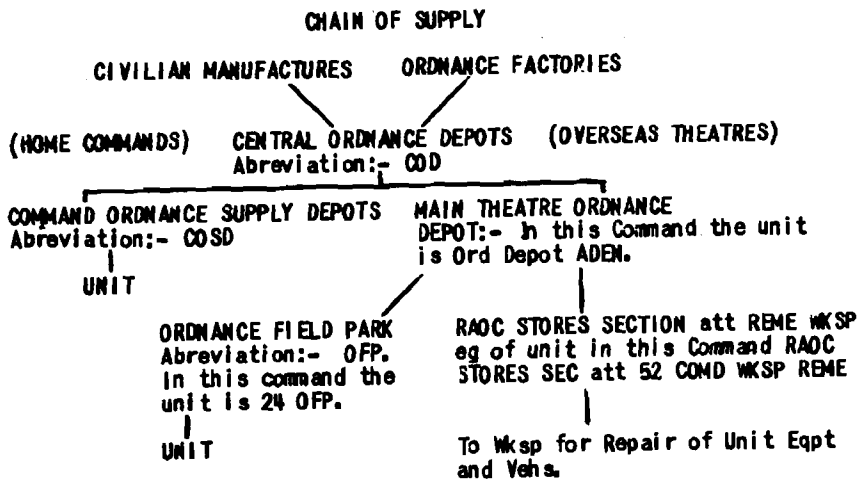
Representative

BATTEN (Lt Col)

DOS FAR EAST (Brig)

Representative Malaysia (Lt Col)

To complete the picture we now have a diagram showing the various RAOC Representation at home and overseas.



In addition to the main responsibilities outlined above the RAOC is also responsible for various ancillary services i.e. Printing, industrial gas, laundry, ammunition repair, fire service and certain barrack services.

As you can imagine to fill these numerous jobs in the various organisations and units there are a number of trades in which a soldier can gain training.

Ammunition
Technician

Clerk Tech

Clerk RAOC

Driver

Storeman

Crane Operator

Cinema
Projectionist

Butcher

Laundry
Operator

Clerk
Shorthand
Writer

Shoemaker

Tailor

Textile
Refitter

Printer

Photographer

Baker

Petroleum
Operator

We hope this will give you a fairly broad outline of the responsibilities of your new Corps and now list a few notes about the various Corps Institutions, some of which you will no doubt be interested in.

RAOC Institutions

The Depot and Training Centre

The RAOC Depot and Training Battalion is situated at Blackdown, Nr. Aldershot in Hampshire. Also at Blackdown is the Junior Leaders Battalion, Corps Secretariat and RAOC School which is responsible for furthering our knowledge of nearly every aspect of our Corps with the exception of ammunition which is looked after by CAD Bramley.

The Headquarters Officers Mess

The RAOC Headquarters Officers Mess is at Blackdown where it is run and cared for on behalf of all officers of the Corps by the Training Centre.

Much of the corporate social life of the Corps revolves round the HQ mess. There are regular regimental dinner nights which may be attended by any serving officer of the Corps. These regimental dinners not only give officers the opportunity of meeting each other, but also the chance to meet senior officers

from other arms, leaders of great industrial and business enterprises, notable professional men and many other interesting personalities from outside the Army who come as guests of the Corps to broaden and enrich our knowledge of the world and affairs.

The RAOC Officer Club

The Club exists to foster the spirit of friendship among serving and retired officers of the Corps, to finance and encourage sport and social events and to provide social amenities for its members.

The Club has no premises, but is affiliated to the Junior Army and Navy Club in London, full facilities of which can be enjoyed for a small annual subscription.

The RAOC Gazette

This is a journal of the Corps which is published monthly and sets out to report the Corps to the Corps and provide news and articles of professional, social, sporting and domestic interest.

It keeps serving and retired members of the Corps informed of what is going on in the far flung stations of the Corps and all its readers are encouraged to take a hand in filling its pages.

It is lively, interesting and controversial and the Corps claims to have the best regimental journal in the Army.

The RAOC Staff Band

The Band is based on the RAOC Training Centre at Blackdown, but, of course, makes extensive tours. As well as playing in RAOC and other military units at home and abroad the Corps Band fulfils many engagements for the BBC, the Royal parks in London and a variety of resorts and cities.

The RAOC Aid Society

This is the Corps benevolent fund which is largely supported by serving officers and men who are proud to assist their less fortunate or afflicted comrades.

An average of six hundred cases of hardship are dealt with each year and as much as £4480 per year is distributed by way of direct financial assistance to serving or ex members of the Corps, or their widows or orphans, who have suffered misfortune.

Generations of soldiers have always regarded this type of assistance to unfortunate comrades-in-arms, as an honourable debt to be readily discharged and the Corps has never failed in this.

The RAOC Association

Its purposeful objective is to create and cherish a bond of good fellowship between past and present members of the Corps.

It has branches in all the larger cities throughout the UK and in all major units world wide.

By organising social events and re-unions for all ranks, by maintaining close contact with welfare bodies and institutions and by providing the link between all branches the association accomplishes its aims.

We are at the moment forming a local branch here in Aden.

The RAOC Museum

This is situated at the Training Centre and is in the care of a full-time Curator who is a retired officer of the Corps.

A disastrous fire some years ago deprived the Corps of some of its most prized and interesting relics, but since then the collection has been diligently and laboriously built up again and there are now many exhibits, including such things as Charles 1 Commission on the Standardisation of Military Equipment dated 1631, a vocabulary of Ordnance Stores of 1664, journals and letters from Ordnance Depots in various places at home and overseas dating from the 1700s and - to bring the

collection up to date - a selection of Russian arms and ammunition which fell into the hands of RAOC personnel in the Port Said incident in the Autumn of 1956.

The RAOC Sports Association

The aim of the Association is to promote every kind of sport in the Corps and to provide financial and other facilities. The following sports are catered for:-

Cricket	Athletics	Swimming
Soccer	Fencing	Tennis
Rugby	Hockey	Riding
Boxing	Sailing	Shooting
Squash	Golf	Motor Cycling

Each sport is controlled by a Sub-Committee and as some measure of the enthusiasm in the Corps for games it is recorded that no less than twenty-four members of the RAOC have represented their country in international events since the end of the last war. In addition to this the RAOC has won the Army FA Cup three times, the Enlisted Boys FA Cup eight times, the Army Inter Unit Boxing Championship five times and for six consecutive years have held the Army tug-of-war crown, as well as the inter Services and National tug-of-war titles for much of the same period.

The Corps has produced a number of Bisley winners in the last few years, is well to the fore in Army and International motor cycling events and has won a wide variety of other individual and team honours, far too numerous to list here.

There will always be full support and every encouragement for Corps members who are keen on games and will help the Corps maintain its standing in the sporting world - but not only the gladiators are welcomed: there is always plenty of room for the not-so-good in the smaller events. For the less energetic there are camera clubs, amateur dramatic societies, bridge circles, archaeological groups - and of course, in all units there are opportunities for language study and other higher educational facilities.

The RAOC Group Insurance Scheme

This is a comprehensive insurance scheme designed to cover nearly every eventuality that might happen to any of us. It is in being in BAOR and it is hoped that we will soon have a scheme operating in the Middle East and you will be kept informed as soon as anything definite is decided.

Historical Notes on the Ordnance Services

It takes a long stretch of the imagination to span the period from when the long-bow ruled the battlefield to the present day when remote controlled missiles can threaten continents: from the appointment of the Master of the Kings Wardrobe and Armoury in 1323, who kept the first permanent military stores in the Tower of London, to the Director of Ordnance Services of the present day who controls the enormous world wide organisation of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. Nevertheless, the thread continues unbroken from those far-off days; developing in strength as the importance to the Army grows of an adequate supply of an increasing range of warlike stores. A symbol of this link with the past is the shield of the Board of Ordnance which forms the centre piece of the RAOC cap badge today, which was from almost the beginning the coat of arms borne by the military stores department.

During the century which followed the establishment of a permanent military store at the Tower, there are a few recorded references to its activities, but as this period saw the beginning of the Hundred Years War and the first known use of gunpowder weapons, there is no need to doubt that it was busy and increasing in importance.

The first major change came in 1414, when Henry V was absorbed in warlike preparations for his bid for the throne of France. The needs and planning for the battles which culminated with Agincourt, were probably foreseen by Henry and he re-organised his stores department and extended its functions under his Master of Our Works, Cannon and Other Ordnance for War.

After Henry's wars, English fortunes waned. Jeanne D'Arc defeated our Armies at Orleans; the Hundred Years War ended with the expulsion from French soil of all but a tiny garrison at Calais, and so the Middle Ages began to draw to a close. One last glimpse of the development and increasing use of bigger weapons is interesting, because soon a larger organisation was to become necessary to handle its provision and issue.

In 1495 the turbulent Irish were at last reduced to acceptance of English domination by the power of the cannon. Sir Winston Churchill wrote, 'cannon spoke to Irish castles in a language readily understood'.

The turn of the century; and soon a period began which saw 'the Golden Age of Elizabeth, the spread of English people all over the globe, the foundations of Empire and finally the emergence of Parliament as a governing body' and in 1515 the Board of Ordnance was formed. Of this event, Hampden

Gordon the military Historian writes:-

Provision and issue of all kinds of equipment and the growing importance to the Royal Armies of an adequate supply of gunpowder weapons explains, as we may safely assume, the growth in the status of the provision office. From this time onward the Board of Ordnance succeeded in preserving an unbroken existence for nearly four eventful centuries; maintaining a sturdy independence of the rest of the host of military offices'.

Some idea of the extent of this growth may be obtained from the fact that in 1515 the Tower was still the main depot; while in 1683 the board had eleven stations at home; by 1796, 35 at home and 20 overseas; while in 1856 there were 36 at home and 44 overseas.

Each depot stocked armaments, shot, shell, powder, small arms and ammunition, artillery and its ammunition.

The higher appointments in these establishments were filled by permanent officials of the Board of Ordnance, who received their commissions from the Master General of Ordnance and the junior officials and labourers were mainly recruited locally. A proportion of these were on a permanent basis and they received a warrant from the MGO. One of these warrants, signed by the Duke of Marlborough when Master General of Ordnance in 1702 hangs in the RAOC Museum at Blackdown.

Between 1818 and 1827 the Duke of Wellington was Master General of Ordnance and we are told he 'infused fresh vigour into the torpid arteries of his office'. He made many recommendations for re-organisation and the first volume of Ordnance regulations appeared during his office. He also established a systematic method of planning demands.

After the Duke relinquished this office, soon to become Commander-in-Chief and then Prime Minister, changes were made in the composition of the Board of Ordnance which do not appear to have been for the good. Major General Forbes the historian of the RAOC, writes '...no sooner did he vacate the post than it drifted into the old bad habit of leaving everything to subordinate permanent officials.

In fact dry rot set in throughout the whole Army and rarely had the country been so unprepared for active service as when France and England declared war on Russia in early 1854 and the Crimean War resulted.

The failures and scandals of the campaign are well known. Raglan in the Crimea had not the administrative ability of Wellington in the Peninsula; officials at home ignored the needs of the fighting troops and although the principal civil officer of the Board of Ordnance, the Surveyor General, went to the Crimea, his links with home base and anyone in supreme authority failed with the resultant

breakdown in the supply of warlike stores.

After the mess and disasters of the Crimea, those in authority turned in panic on the entangled administrative system of the army and a series of reforms were set on foot. The Master General and the Board of Ordnance were abolished along with many other changes some of which were overdue and essential, but others were changed for the sake of change. Many felt that the Ordnance Services came into this latter category because, whatever its shortcomings, its stewardship had survived four restless centuries of war, violence and change: begun under the Tudors, before there were Secretaries of State for war or Commanders in Chief, it survived through the Great Rebellion, the Commonwealth, the Restoration and the Revolution into Victoria's reign and the recent history of the nineteenth century.

However change there was in no short measure, and in 1855 a Director of Stores was appointed at the War Office, directly responsible to the Secretary of State for War, and soon after the Storekeepers of the old Board were formed into a uniform Military Stores Department.

For the next fifty years it seems that every new Secretary of State had different ideas on how the Ordnance Services should be run, for with each change in office the Ordnance was reorganised. To add to the burden

there was a complete clash of aims between the various Secretaries of State and the Commanders-in-Chief. The former officials were resolved to eliminate extravagance; the latter were determined to improve the army's equipment and as the Duke of Cambridge was C-in-C for nearly forty years, it can be expected that he had grown a little set in his ways and was not prepared to give way to each new upstart in the opposing office. At one period, through the determination of each to control the flow of stores to the troops, the impossible situation was reached whereby every indent from every unit in Great Britain had to be stamped by both offices in London before it was approved.

Even the great reformer Cardwell, who, from 1870 introduced radical changes to so many established practises and institutions, failed to do much for the Ordnance Services. About this time, however, a great advance was made, in that, standard regulations for the Ordnance Services were drawn up. Generations of officers since, struggling to find their way through a maze of complicated and apparently contradictory regulations, may challenge the statement that this represented an advance but in fact it was, because it led, more than any dramatic re-organisation of the Ordnance Department, to the decentralisation of authority from London.

In these golden years of Victoria, British influence and prosperity were spreading to every distant corner of the globe. Where commerce wanted or had gained a foothold the army made it or held it and to serve them a chain of Ordnance Depots spread round the world. At last, with his printed regulations the Ordnance soldier knew better where he stood and what to do in the many and varied situations which arose and the extreme and wasteful over centralisation of business which existed in 1870 has never again reappeared.

At this time, the Ordnance Services were known as the Army Ordnance Department and Corps and its Director became responsible as he is to-day, to the Quartermaster General who in turn is a member of the Army Council.

And now we enter the period of recent history; too recent to see all in proper perspective; too complicated by the awful convulsions of the First and Second World Wars to write of simply and lightly in a short history such as this.

This narrative, therefore, traces a story for well over 500 years, like a strong bright thread through a tapestry of violent and stormy colours, with the following facts of the twentieth century proudly given.

In 1918, in recognition of the splendid past and promise of the future, King George V proclaimed:

'Our Army Ordnance Corps shall be styled Our

Royal Army Ordnance Corps'.

In 1921, H.M. King George V again honoured the R.A.O.C. by appointing H.R.H. The Duke of York as Colonel-in-Chief who, on succeeding to the throne in 1936, signified his continuance of the honour which has so graciously been perpetuated by H.M. Queen Elizabeth II. Finally, in all the great wars of this troubled century, officers and men of the R.A.O.C. have been present at every major battle, keeping alive the great and selfless tradition of service.

ST BARBARA, THE PATRON SAINT OF THE ROYAL ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS

The Patron Saint of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers, is Saint Barbara.

According to legend, Saint Barbara was the daughter of a rich Egyptian nobleman who adopted the Christian faith. Because she refused to renounce her faith she was taken to a mountain near the city and executed. Immediately after a heavy thunderstorm broke over the party killing a number of those responsible for the execution.

Since 303 AD, the fourth of December has been dedicated to St Barbara. This Christian martyr and the saint was adopted as protectress against thunder and lightning, firearms and explosives and is also invoked against

sudden death, for it was beleived that those who devoted themselves to her should not die impenitent, nor without having first received the Holy Sacraments.

The legend of St Barbara was introduced into Western Europe by the early Crusaders, both she and her contemporary, St George, becoming military saints of Chivalry and Knighthood.

On the introduction of cannon in 1313, the connection between the flash and explosion on firing, with that of thunder and lightening, with the additional fact that early ordnance frequently burst on firing, killing the gun's crew, was no doubt the reason for her adoption as the patron saint of artillery men and those connected with the manufacture, storage and inspection of firearms and explosives.

FINALLY - OUR MOTTO

'SUA TELA TONANTI'

'TO THE WARRIOR HIS ARMS'

