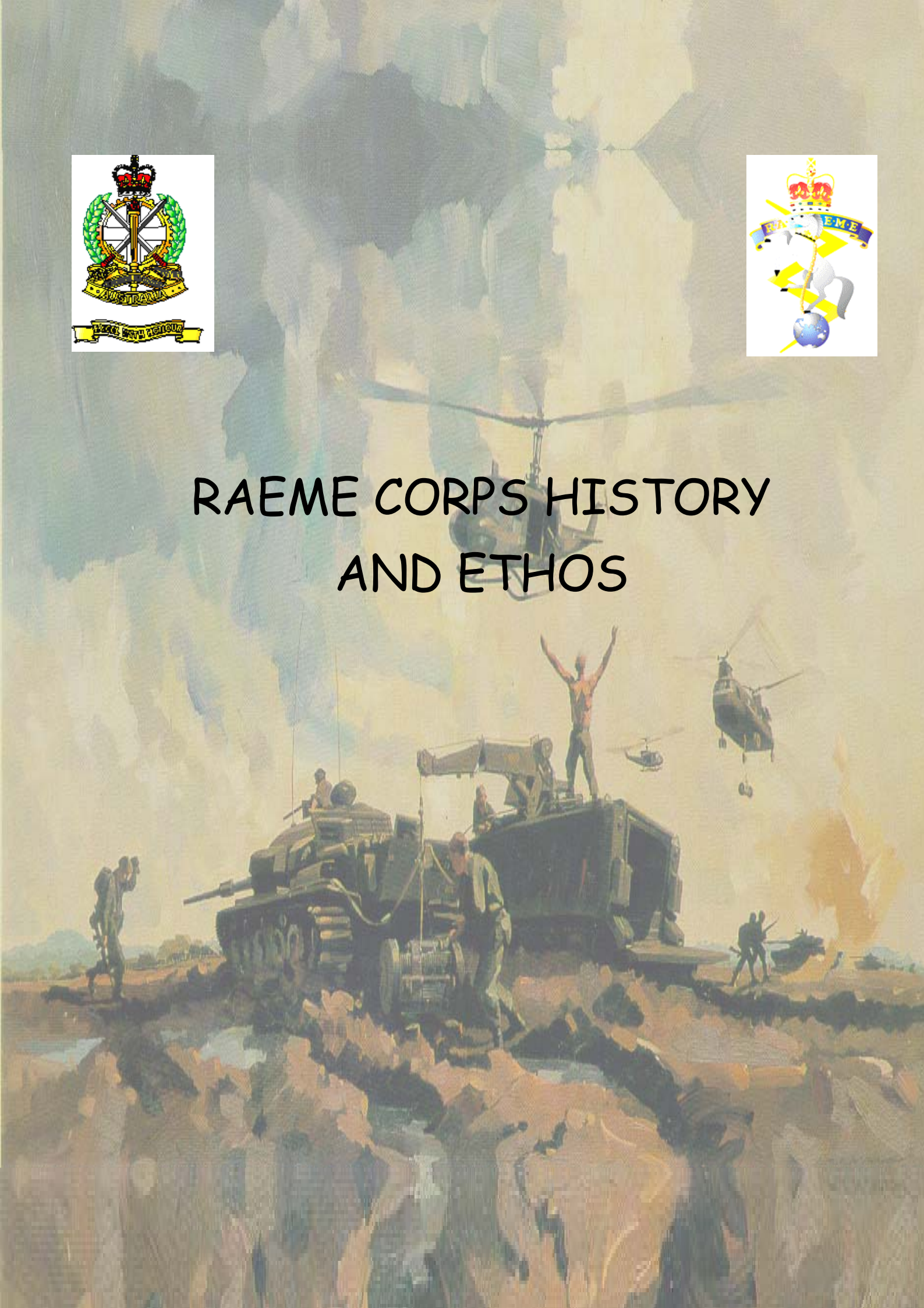
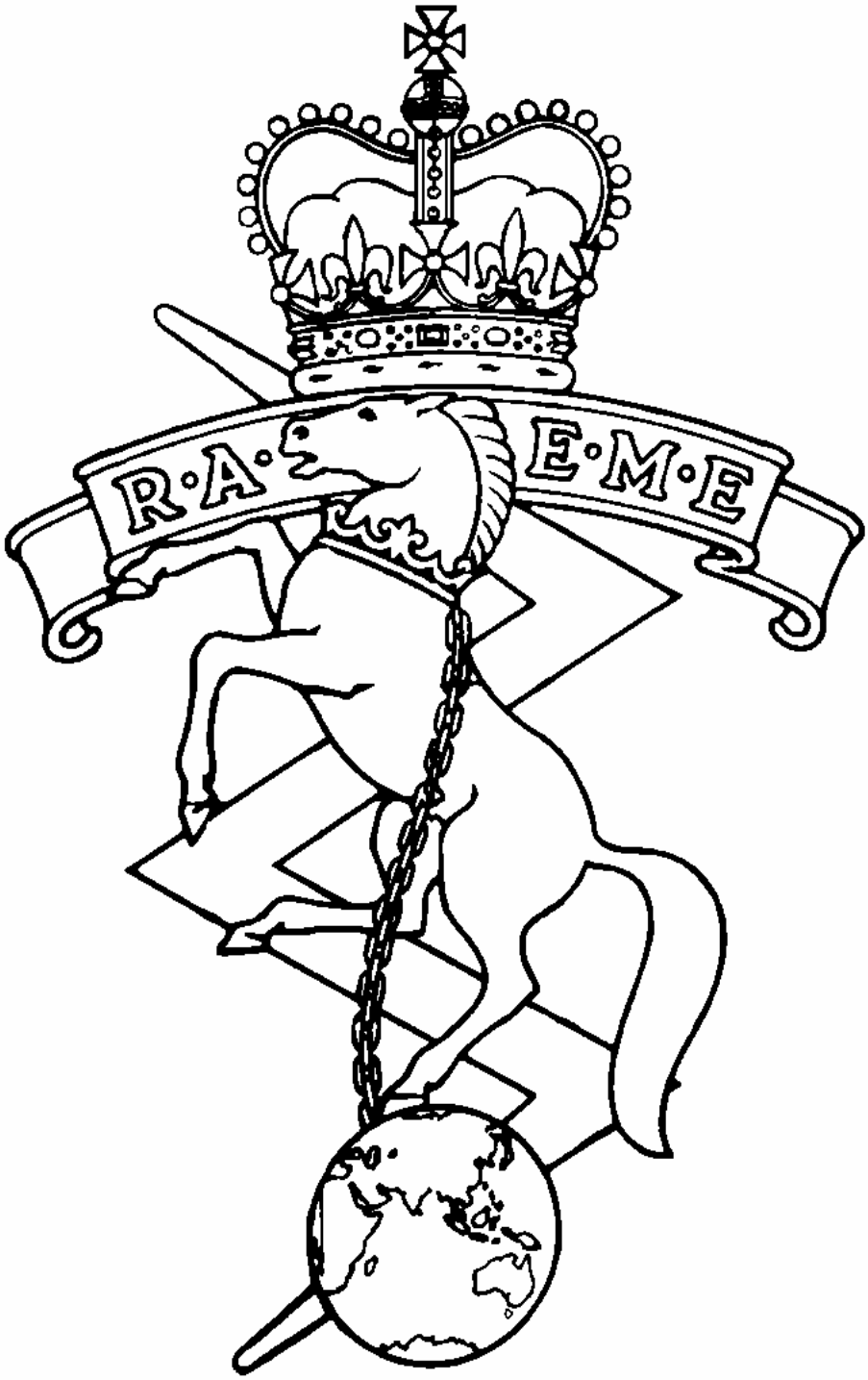
RAEME CORPS HISTORY AND ETHOS



VERSION CONTROL DATA

Title:	Corps History Overview
Author:	S2C RAEME CELL
Approver:	Senior Instructor
Version number:	1.0
Date of Approval:	6 Nov 06
Summary of last modification:	
Modified by:	
Next review date:	30 Sep 07

THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS



THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS

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Introduction

1. All Army equipment, whether simple or complex in construction, is subject to wear and tear and breakdown due to failure or malfunctioning of its component parts. It is also subject to damage due to enemy action or misadventure. The equipment is required to operate in extremes of weather conditions and in all types of terrain, all of which can bring in their train various types of equipment failure, malfunctioning and other problems.

2. Additionally, no matter how well equipment has been designed, developed and tested, often when brought into use, it is found to be lacking in some facility which could inhibit its use on the field of battle.

3. Herein lies the role of the Soldier Craftsmen of the Army. Broadly, it comprises inspection, recovery, repair, modification and reclamation of military equipment and its components in such a manner so as to ensure that the soldier has at his disposal, the maximum amount of serviceable equipment. With which to carry out his prescribed tasks.

Early History

4. In 1870, the English Regiments garrisoning the Colonies of the Australian continent were being withdrawn and the defence of these Colonies was left to the respective Colonial Governments such that prior to Federation, each Colony had its own defence force. As part of the nucleus of these Colonial Forces, there were tradesmen, artisans and artificers who previously, were craftsmen of English Regiments. Rather than return to England, they decided to stay in the Colonies.

5. Between 1870 and Federation, various Colonial Ordnance units were raised and these English craftsmen provided the expertise to maintain the equipment of the respective Colonial Defence Forces. In the majority of cases, artisans and artificers were attached to Artillery units, Ordnance units and cavalry/infantry regiments. Their main tasks consisted of the repair of small arms and coast and field artillery.

6. In 1886, LT Richard Harding was appointed as Inspector of Ordnance Machinery (IOM) with the Ordnance Commissarist and known as the Ordnance Department (1888) and even later, became the Victorian Defence Department (Military Forces Workshop). LT Harding eventually retired as a Colonel in 1925 and from his firstly appointment, most of the policy matters affecting the Ordnance Corps, particularly after Federation, emanated from him. He was also responsible for the formation of the Corps of Artificers before Federation and this Corps continued as such until 1927. It can truly be said that this man had a direct influence on the repair and maintenance of Army equipment and provided the base on which a new Corps would eventually be formed.

Control of Ordnance - Federation to 1938

7. The formation of the first Federation Parliament in May 1901 brought about the amalgamation of the respective Colonial Forces into the Commonwealth Military Forces. On 7 April 1902, the Ordnance Department (basically a civilian oriented organisation) was formed under the Director of Artillery and Stores. On 1 January 1909, the Defence Act was passed and the control of the Ordnance services came under the control of the Quarter Master General (QMG). The Director of Ordnance Services (DOS), under the QMG, was solely responsible for the equipment of the Army in all its phases. Local design functions were carried out by the Mechanical Engineering Branch of the Ordnance services under the control of a Principal Ordnance Mechanical Engineer (POME).

8. Control of the Ordnance service remained with the AMG until 1 June 1938 when a division of Directorates was anticipated due to the likelihood of war. The QMG Branch then became the QMG - MGO Branch (Master General of the Ordnance) under the leadership of the QMG, to facilitate a separation of responsibilities in time of war. A Deputy QMG and a Deputy MGO were appointed to control their respective aspects but actual division of Directorates did not occur until 1939. Further aspects of control of the Ordnance services are discussed later in this paper with events leading up to the formation of the Corps. We now need to return to 1914 to consider the impact of war on the Ordnance services and the effect the war had on the Army.

Decline of the Army from 1919

9. Just prior to 1914, the possibility of war was becoming greater and plans for mobilisation were set in motion, however, little was achieved in respect to equipment readiness until 7 August 1914 when the Armament Artificer Corps were placed under a tremendous strain to ensure equipment availability for forces moving overseas as well as providing repair support to those forces once they had arrived.

10. The Mechanical Engineering Branch of the Ordnance Corps acquitted itself very well in nearly all the campaigns of World War 1. At the end of the war, the Army went into a decline, due mainly to the lack of financial support from the Government. This, no doubt, stemmed from war weariness, followed in the early 1930's by the onset of the depression and the pious hopes that the defence of Australia was well covered by the still powerful British Navy and the large areas of ocean that surrounded and separated Australia from possible enemies.

11. Apart from small permanent garrisons in the main fortress areas associated principally with the capital cities, the Army was basically a Military organisation (akin to present-day Army Reserve) manned by two cavalry divisions and three mixed brigades. These formations were ill equipped with weapons and equipment of World War 1 vintage and remained so, with few exceptions, until the outbreak of war in 1939. Additionally, after the cessation of compulsory military training in 1929, these formations were very poorly manned and certainly not viable. The electrical and mechanical service of the Ordnance Corps comprised a small technical staff on various formation headquarters. Small static workshops in each State establishment were related to the peacetime load and were not organise for smooth expansion in the event of war. Workshop personnel were part military, part civilian. The military component comprised primarily skilled tradesmen including armament artificers. The civilian component comprised mainly artisan trades such as armourers and blacksmiths.

12. The number of Ordnance personnel at the outbreak of World War 2 comprised:

a. Australian Army Ordnance Corps (Permanent) or AAOC (P) 36 officers and 375 other ranks. These personnel were the Permanent Military Forces artificers and tradesmen;

b. Australian Army Ordnance Department (AAOD), 538 civilians. This department had no influence on the activities of the AAOC (P), it controlled the issue, receipt and holding of stores; and

c. Australian Army Ordnance Corps (Military) or AAOC (M). These were the tradesmen and artisans acting in a similar capacity to the present-day Army Reserve.

World War II

13. Needless to say, the AAOC (P), at the outbreak of war, had the gigantic task of preparing equipment and providing the repair organisations for rapidly expanding Army and for a rapidly expanding technology. Their problems were many; not the least of which was the training, both technical and military, of skilled and semi-skilled tradesmen who volunteered for active service. Additionally, patriotic spirit was high and many tradesmen of the AAOC (M), who as such, were not allowed to serve outside Australia, volunteered to transfer to the AIF as fighting soldiers, consequently, their skills were lost to the Corps.

14. Officers selected to command newly raised workshops required to support the AIF and in fact to go overseas, had the unenviable, task of gathering tradesmen and engineers to man the workshop. In some cases, 'scouts' moved into recruiting depots to look out for likely recruits and attempt to influence the Recruiting Officer to allot likely tradesmen to the unit. Additionally, scouts' were sent to Ordnance depots and commercial trade houses in an attempt to obtain hand tools and other workshop equipment which the Ordnance Department was then encouraged to purchase and issue to the unit. In nearly all cases, the raising of these new workshop units had to be based on English counterparts because of a lack of appreciation, or time, to develop Establishment Tables related to an Australian environment. The first workshop units to go overseas to support AIF units arrived in the Middle East during the first half of 1940.

15. At this time, events were occurring, which, in line with events occurring in the United Kingdom (UK), would shape the destiny of the Mechanical Engineering Branch of the Ordnance Corps. To provide a complete outline of these events, it is necessary to follow them through to the formation of the Corps and then revert to activities in the Middle East, followed by the Pacific campaigns.

16. Immediately after the outbreak of war, effect was given to the Military board's intentions to create a separate MGO Branch. The Deputy MGO (DMGO) carried out the duties of Director of Mechanisation and the POME remained responsible for the Mechanical Engineering Branch under the DMGO.

17. Subsequently, on 17 December 1940, further development and reorganisation resulted in the POME being appointed as Director of Mechanical Maintenance and was authorised to function in parallel to the DOS. He was given direct access to the MGO on all matters related to the technical maintenance of Ordnance material. This authority extended to the Australian Army Ordnance Corps (AAOC) Mechanical Engineering staff in the Field force and in Command. Despite the direct access and control of the engineering function, these staffs were never-the-less AAOC personnel and responsible to DOS representatives (DDOS, ADOS) at Formation Level and in Commands. During this particular reorganisation, the office of Chief Military Adviser (CMA) was formed. The functions of the CMA are set out as follows (Military Board Instruction (MBI) G33/1941): Technical specification, design, trials and experiments and inspection in connection with equipment (other than general stores and clothing), arms, armament, ammunition, armoured fighting vehicles, **motor** transport and other vehicles and their stores.

18. Difficulties arose because of the divided control between the CMA and the MGO and differences between senior officers in the CMA Branch aggravated the position. The Director of Artillery and the Director of Mechanisation felt that many of the officers of the CMA Branch avoided referring matters to them and much money was wasted on parallel or unnecessary development of projects.

19. Following a report on the use of manpower in the Army, the Government directed that a review be made of certain Army war establishments. As a result, the Commander-in-Chief (General Sir Thomas Blamey), in 1942, appointed a committee to investigate and determine whether existing arrangements for the control and design and inspection of Army munitions and stores caused some duplication of effort and staffing. The committee consisted of LTGEN H.D. Wynter, LTGEN in Charge on Administration (Chairman); MAJGEN C.S. Steele, Engineer-in-Chief; Brigadier G.E.M. Lloyd, Director of Staff Duties and Colonel W.D. Watson, on loan from the War Office and serving with the Director of Armoured Fighting Vehicles Production.

20. Added significance was given to this investigation, as the CMA, in August 1942, had sought approval for the raising of a technical field group (AIF), whose function was to investigate technical problems in the field, inspect captured enemy munitions and vehicles and obtain first hand knowledge of user requirements. Interchanges between officers serving in this group and officers serving in the Design Division (MGO) Branch were to be made each six months. This proposal represented further encroachment on what were considered to be the functions of the equipment directors in the MGO Branch for the technical interpretation of General Staff specifications to ensure that user requirements were met.

21. The organisation recommended by the Wynter Committee provided for a DMGO (Army Equipment), with separate directorates for weapons, vehicles, ammunition and explosives, engineer and signal stores and general stores and clothing; a Director of Design and an Inspector-General of Munitions, each administering sections with functions complementary to those of the directors under the DMGO (Army Equipment) and a DMGO (Maintenance) for the supervision and co-ordination of the activities of the DOS, the Director of Mechanical Engineering and the Chief Provision Officer. While the Wynter Committee was carrying out investigations, events of significance had been occurring in the United Kingdom (UK) since early 1941 and these events undoubtedly had some influence on the final report submitted by the Wynter Committee.

22. With the embodiment of the Territorial Army in the UK in 1939, a large number of skilled and experienced men had been absorbed into the Army, many of them going to arms which could not make use of their particular talents. In an endeavour to stem the continuing flow of skilled men into the Services, the Government appointed the 'Committee on Skilled Men in the Services' under the chairmanship of Sir William Beveridge. This Committee was to examine, in consultation with the three Service Departments, the use to which skilled men were being put. In particular it was to say if this use was economical and effective, and to recommend whether these demands on industry should in anyway be modified.

23. The Beveridge Committee made two reports, the second of which resulted in the formation of the Sinclair-Weeks Committee to work out ways and means of effecting changes recommended by the Beveridge Committee. The Sinclair-Weeks Committee submitted their report in February 1942 and it resulted in the formation of REME on October 1942.

24. These developments were being monitored by Australia and resulted in the MGO recommendation that the Title of the Director of Mechanical Maintenance (DMM) be changed to Director of Mechanical Engineering (DME). The matter was discussed at a conference on Motor Transport and Responsibilities of QMG and MGO on 16 September 1942. The formation of a new Corps was to be discussed by MGO with 'A' Branch and the change of title, DMM to DME, would be brought before the Commander-in-Chief (C in C) for approval. Other decisions reached included:

a. All repairs to be referred to as 1st, 2nd and 3rd and 4th echelon repairs;

b. Australian Army Service Corps (AASC) will continue to carry out 1st and 2nd echelon repairs;

c. 3rd and 4th echelon repairs will remain under MGO;

d. AAOC will be responsible for supply and distribution of spare parts to field units, including AASC; and

e. AASC may pass over certain acceptable officers and OR's to the AAOC now for further inclusion in the new Corps.

25. These decisions were confirmed by the daily staff conference on 17 September 1942, subject to approval by the C in C.

26. General Routine Order (GRO) G465, issued on 16 October 1942, authorised the formation of the Corps of Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (AEME) as part of the Branch of the MGO, and the change of nomenclature DMM to DME. Administrative instructions regarding the raising of the Corps would be issued separately.

27. The results of the Synter Report (subsequently implemented in January 1943) and the discussions and meetings related to the formation of AEME set the stage for delineation of responsibilities at Land Headquarters (LHQ) and allowed for concerted efforts both at Branch level and at the policy making level of the new Corps.

28. GRO 0573, issued 20 November 1942, promulgated full instructions regarding the formation of the new corps, the reorganisation to be effected in two phases. Phase One - Transfer to AEME of personnel of the Mechanical Engineering Branch of AAOC, to take effect on 1 December 1942. Phase Two -Transfer to AEME of unit maintenance tradesmen (with certain exceptions) whose duties are solely or predominantly the maintenance of mechanical equipment. After further investigation of personnel problems, Phase two took effect on 1 May 1943 (GRO 0290/43).

29. GRO 0578 set out clearly the changed designations of the Head of the Corps, his representatives on formation HQ's, and other engineer officers; the changed designations of units, and the tradesmen to be transferred.

30. To carry out the reorganisation entailed a considerable amount of work, particularly on the 'A' side. Formations in forward areas, being fully engaged in training and other preparations for action, were loath to divert the necessary time and energy to a procedure, the advantages of which were not immediately apparent.

31. Bold action was particularly essential in implementing Phase two. Units guarded jealously their control over their own tradesmen, and saw the possibility of being robbed of their services. There was, also the element of risk that by transferring tradesmen from units, the AEME would incur responsibility for a lowered standard of maintenance of unit equipment which actually is the responsibility of the unit CO.

32. It was left to the good judgement of EMEs concerned, and their tactful handling of each situation to ensure that, during the development period while the new organisation was getting under way, the normal service and assistance in Unit Maintenance would in no way suffer.

33. The AEME Corps came into existence at a time when great demands were being made from various directions on Australia's resources of skilled manpower, equipment and workshop accommodation. It was necessary therefore, in order to meet its increasing repair commitments, for the AEME to make determined bids for its share of the available resources.

34. There were a number of spheres in which the AEME could operate or arrange for repair work to be carried out:

a. Within the Army:

(1) Mobile workshops and repair elements, normally engaged in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd echelon repairs for forward formations.

(2) Static workshops covering a similar range of work for Lines of Communication units.

(3) Static workshops normally confined to 4th echelon or heavy repairs to equipment beyond the repair capacity of units vide (1) and (2) above.

(4) By inter-service arrangement, all resources of Army, Navy and Air Force in any on area could be pooled for the common good.

b. Outside the Army, by use of civilian workshops, special allocation of funds being required for this purpose.

35. At the beginning of 1943, the AEME Workshops had an authorised establishment of some 20,000 personnel but only 15,000 personnel were available and even these were not fully effective, as some of them were not fully trained. Accommodation and equipment was also short. In order therefore to help fill the gap, it was necessary to submit, in April 1943, a War Cabinet Agendum to obtain funds for the purchase of civilian resources, which was approved on 14 April 1943. A further agendum was also submitted for the construction of additional Workshop facilities in which to house Army workshop personnel.

36. The AEME thus started with a heavy handicap in that it had only about seventy per cent of the personnel on approved War Establishments and of this many were not fully trained. To overcome this handicap it was hoped:

a. to obtain from among recruits, personnel suitable for trade training, and

b. to obtain from serving personnel, actual or potential tradesmen whose skill and ability was not being used to the best advantage.

37. In its general organisation, the AEME differed little from the pre-existing AAOC - Mechanical Engineering Branch, the only substantial difference being in the fact that whereas under the old organisation, one AAOC representative on formation HQ controlled the activities of both the stores and engineering branches, each corps is now separately and independently represented.

38. At this point it is necessary to return to the Middle East to consider problems related to repair and maintenance under active service conditions.

Middle East Campaigns

39. In 1939, the Australian Army had no established field workshop organisation and thus no experience in this type of activity. The British Ordnance Manual (War), which as published in 1939, was fortunately available to the Australian Army and formed the basis for the raising and dispatch of three Army Field Workshops AAIC to the Middle East to support Australian troops. In view of the lack of experience then available, it is surprising that the organisation and methods set out in the Ordnance Manual should have been so satisfactory. As was inevitable there were some failings but the planned organisations worked reasonably well.

40. As the Australian forces in the Middle East grew, inadequacies in the workshop organisations became apparent and required correction. These inadequacies evolved out of the need to have base areas to provide an in-depth repair system in addition to providing the necessary field support. The situation became dramatically acute following operations of the 6 Australian Infantry Division in the first Libyan campaign. LTCOL G.G. Hayman was sent back to Australia to obtain, if possible, some additional workshop units. As a consequence, additional workshops were raised and assisted greatly in allowing Australian repair organisations, eg, AAOC, to provide in-depth repair support. In any event, British repair organisations were taxed tot he limit and unable to give much support. Another factor which inhibited such mutual co-operation was the general disparity of equipment types between the two Armies.

41. During the period of involvement in the Middle East, Australian repair organisations were involved in all the phases of war, from the route of the Italians in the deserts of Libya, to the disasters of Greece and Crete, to the snows of Syria, to a static defence of the Tobruk garrison. Many lessons were learned by individual units, among which was the need for personnel to show initiative and inventiveness to overcome what appeared initially, to be insurmountable problems. Another lesson learned through bitter experience was that workshops had to become responsible for their own defence when threatened by the enemy. In those times, as there is now, there is a need for repair personnel to be 'soldiers first, tradesmen second'.

Operations in the South-West Pacific

42. During the first half of 1941, the 8th Australian Infantry Division arrived in Singapore and Malaya as a contribution to the defence of these areas and on assurances by the British Government of continued naval protection for Australia. An Army Field Workshop (AFW) was being raised in 1941 and it was intended to be the fourth of a series of these units (the 2/1, 2/2 and 2/3 AFWs went to the Middle East). Before the unit was fully formed, it was decided to change the organisation from a field workshop to three Brigade Group Workshops because of changes found necessary in British organisations. The Recovery Sections of the 2/1 AFW formed the nucleus of the Brigade Group Workshops while the main shop retained the 2/4 AFW title and went to the Middle East to provide the reinforcements needed in that theatre of operation.

43. The three Brigade Group Workshops, in addition to Light Aid Detachments (LADs) attached to Artillery Regiments and Anti-tank units and other workshop units were taken prisoner by the Japanese. Although the Corps of Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (AEME) was formed on 1 December 1942, these units retained their identities as Ordnance organisations until their return to Australia at the end of the war.

44. The imminence of a Japanese offensive prompted the Australian Government to request the British Government to allow Australian troops to return and assist in the defence of their country. The British Prime Minister, Mr Churchill, wanted to retain the Australian Divisions as 'shock troops' and it was only at the insistence of the Australian Prime Minister, Mr John Curtin, that plans were made to bring Australian troops home. In the meantime, the Japanese had begun their southward invasion. The operation of withdrawal of troops to Australia from the Middle East was codenamed 'Step Sister' and during the voyage home, part of the convoy was diverted to Ceylon (now Sri-Lanka) while the remainder continued to Australia and began preparations and training for tropical warfare. The contingent diverted to Ceylon reached Australia several weeks later.

45. Meanwhile, a comparatively small force of Australians was located at Port Moresby in Papua and Rabual in New Britain. The small AAOC workshop detachments located in both places comprised an officer and 30 other ranks while their equipment comprised mainly hand tools. Nearly all of the men at Rabual were either killed or taken prisoner by the Japanese.

46. Shortly after, a force designated 'Emu Force' was hurriedly raised and sent to Port Moresby. Accompanying this force of around 6000 men was 109 Independent Brigade Group Workshop. After this workshop had settled in, the first elements of American forces had reached New Guinea and the workshop had to support US Army and Air Force units to the extent that this load was slightly greater than 16 per cent of its total load. Again, equipment disparities caused many problems for the workshop.

47. In September 1942, when the Japanese were attempting their crossing of the Owen Stanley Ranges, 25 - pounder guns were dismantled and manhandled through the mountains and re-assembled close to enemy positions. This was the first time tradesmen had come in contact with front line action in New Guinea.

48. During the whole island campaign, Australian tradesmen were tasked to provide answers to problems which only such a tropical campaign could produce. Radio sets were modified to provide ground to air liaison, jungle carts were designed and manufactured from motor-cycle wheels, angle iron and pig wire to solve some of the transportation difficulties because of the terrain, and shortly after the Corps of AEME came into existence, jeep ambulances were constructed which enabled two stretcher patients and two seated patients to be carried.

49. In New Guinea conditions of such a nature were encountered which were quite destructive to unit equipment. Recovery and repair tasks were carried out under appalling conditions. Throughout the campaigns in the Pacific, the Corps played a momentous part and without their services beach brigades would have bogged down, advancing troops would have been delayed and equipment of all varieties would have rotted away in the hot, humid climate. In addition to more normal activities, the Corps undertook many unusual jobs. At Brunei, where the RAAF had previously knocked out all the engines of the local railway to prevent use by the Japanese, a combined RAE/AEME unit produced Jeep 'engines' with steel shod wheels and replaceable metal tyres.

50. From the beginning of 1943 onwards, the demands of the campaign resulted in many types of specialist units being formed to cater for a different type of warfare. These specialist units included watercraft workshops, tyre recapping sections, battery repair sections and gas generating section to provide the necessary depth of support to repair units. The peak of the campaign occurred in 1944 and at this time, the total number of personnel in the Corps numbered around 25,000. The latter half of 1944 saw the beginnings of demobilisation when soldiers who had accrued a set number of points in a points system, began to be sent home and discharged from the AIF. At the end of the war in August 1945, the number of personnel in the Corps had dropped to just over 20,000.

Demobilisation 1945/46

51. At the end of the war, the strength of AEME began to run down almost immediately, although, it was not until October 1945 that the major runout of personnel started to increase with any degree of rapidity. By June 1946, the work force had been reduced too slightly over 3,000. Those left in the Corps were principally young army-trained tradesmen with a low number of points for discharge. The main tasks of the Corps at this time involved the storage and preservation of equipment and normal maintenance of equipment still in use by the various units still in being. During this period of demobilisation, the Government decided to ask for volunteers to become part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in Japan.

British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF)

52. At the cessation of hostilities with Japan, the BCOF was raised and again AEME was involved with the Australian Component. The BCOF Base workshop was an integrated unit comprising REME, IEME, RNZEME and AEME personnel. The initial stages of the raising of the workshop were not easy and one of the first tasks undertaken was the compilation of workshop documentation which would be common to all elements. Some of the tasks carried out by the workshop were:

a. the rising of sunken Japanese ferries and their return to service;

b. the construction of a range of buses on stripped Army 3 ton 4 x 4 and 6 x 6 vehicle chassis units for use in transporting troops and families about the countryside; and

c. a base repair line for vehicles of the BCOF.

Change in Title

53. In recognition of the services performed by AEME units in World War Two, the Corps was granted the title of 'Royal' on 10 November 1948 by King George VI and became the Royal corps of Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, the only 'Royal Corps' in the Australian Army. Referring to the war service Field Marshall the Viscount Montgomery said:

> 'They exist to keep the punch in the Army's fist. They are a new Corps born in the late war and they have done magnificently and have won their spurs in battle.'

Introduction of First National Service

54. As a result of the introduction of the first National Service in 1951, a major and increasing technical maintenance and repair task was imposed on RAEME. Approval was therefore given for the RAEME ARA establishment to be expanded by up to 1260 personnel of whom 400 were to be civilians (representing an increase of approximately 100%). In addition civil trade repair facilities used by RAEME were to be exploited to a greater extent to enable the Corps, by using both civil resources and its workshops, etc, to meet as great a proportion as possible of the overall technical maintenance task imposed by the expanded AMF.

Korea

55. The invasion of South Korea saw the involvement of RAEME personnel in another and different type of war. 11 Aust LAD, which was part of BCOF, was disbanded and the personnel transferred to form part of a new unit, 16 Infantry Workshop, which was a British Commonwealth workshop raised to support operations in Korea. The workshop was raised late in 1951 and moved to Korea early in 1952. The workshop remained in Korea until the end of 1955, however, during this period, personnel were replaced several times.

56. A closed loop base repair system operated in support of 16 Infantry Workshop and personnel attached to Australian Battalions in Korea. Kure base was formed as one side of the closed loop, i.e., no equipment was to be returned to Australia for repair; equipment was backloaded from 16 Infantry Workshop to either the tank line of the Base Workshop at Kiro in Japan, or to the general workshop was operating, it was commanded by an Australian LTCOL. The workshop personnel comprised Australians, British, Indians and New Zealanders.

57. Three Australian Infantry Battalions were committed to Korea at various times and these were 65, 66 and 67 Battalions. During the Korean conflict, these Battalions were re-titled respectively 1 RAR, 2 RAR and 3 RAR. Attached to each Battalion during their tour of duty was a SGT Armourer, a SGT vehicle mechanic and four other rank tradesmen to provide direct support to the Battalion.

Malaya/Borneo

58. There were two types of operation in which Australians were involved within Malaya/Borneo. The first was the Malayan Emergency which was basically a guerrilla campaign. RAEME activity during this emergency was limited as there were only small numbers of attached personnel. The basic repair support was provided by British units. The second campaign was the Malaysian confrontation with Indonesia. Australian involvement was confined basically to Borneo early in 1964 to survey and build a road on the Western side of the island and construction of an airstrip at Kawamat on the Eastern side of the island approximately 200 miles inland.

59. RAEME support for the FD SQN GP was provided in the form of 7 Fd Sqn Workshop, the first field engineer workshop raised since the end of the war. This workshop supported both operations and the last detachment of the workshop was withdrawn at the end of 1964 when they were replaced by another workshop.

Vietnam

60. The Corps commenced sending advisers to Vietnam in 1964 and this foreshadowed a massive build- up of RAEME personnel and equipment which peaked in 1971. The first direct RAEME support was provided in early 1965, in the form of a detachment which constituted a part of 1 Aust Logistic Support Coy (1 ALSC) which comprised RAAOC and RAASC personnel in addition to RAEME. They had the task of supporting the Australian battalion and the New Zealand artillery battery.

61. In 1966, 1 ALSC was disbanded and the remaining RAEME personnel became the advance party for 101 Field Workshop which arrived in Vietnam in May to support three infantry battalions and an artillery regiment. In addition, 161 Recce Squadron Workshop arrived to support the Recce Squadron to which it was attached. The build-up to a peak in 1971 saw the RAEME elements of 1 Australian Logistic Support Group build up to a stage where there was two field workshop (102 and 106); a Recce Squadron. One of the field workshops provided the necessary support for operation of Centurion tanks while the other provided general support in lieu of 101 Field Workshop which was replaced. The withdrawal of all Australian forces was completed in 1972 and RAEME again reverted to its peacetime role.

ANZUK Force Singapore

62. When the UK commenced to withdraw from Malaysia, in 1968/69, Australia and New Zealand decided to maintain an ANZ presence in Malaysia-Singapore, although a large RAAF Force was to remain at Butterworth in Malaysia. Australia assumed the role of logistic manager and steps were taken to raise integrated Australian New Zealand logistic units, namely 28 Area Workshop, Battery Sec of a FD Regt LAD, a Detachment 26 Transport Coy Workshop, Det 9 Fd Workshop, EME attached to Bns, 182 Recce Flt, 5 AOD and some minor units. A DADME and staff formed units were being located in Singapore and in 1970 following a change in Government in the UK, the UK decided to retain some troops in FARELF and thus the Force being established became and ANZUK Force, Australia however was to remain the logistic manager in lieu of the UK as in the past.

The Hassett Committee

63. In 1971 General Hassett released the Hassett Committee Report which recommended a complete restructuring of the Army. The findings of the Committee in the logistics area were to have a major effect on the three main elements - transport, supplies and repairs. RAEME, already the major organisation in the Army was to take over all responsibility for repair and maintenance of the Army equipment in total.

The Prince Philip Banner

64. In December 1981, the then Chief of the General Staff, Sir Donald Dunstan, KBE, CB, gave approval in principle for RAEME to be granted a banner. In November 1982, Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh (Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers) agreed the banner be known as The Prince Philip Banner. Her Majesty, The Queen, gave final approval of the design of the banner in December 1983. The Prince Philip Banner was presented to the Corps on 20 May 1986 by His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh at the RAEME Training Centre, Bandiana.

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INTRODUCTION
So. who (or what) is

RAEME??

The **Royal** *Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers* are known by the abbreviated term, or acronym, **RAEME** that is pronounced as 'ray-mee'.

RAEME is the second largest logistic corps in the Australian army and maintains the greatest variety of equipment of **any** organisation in Australia. Because of the demands of Army operations, the corps operates both mobile workshops on the battlefield and static workshops in the support area. The corps provides the repair and recovery service for most equipment operated by the Army, including aircraft and watercraft.

A **RAEME** soldier is known as a *'Craftsman'*. **RAEME** Craftsmen repair and maintain equipment as diverse as tanks, trucks and armoured personnel carriers, helicopters, radios, radar and computers, artillery guns and missile systems. Among the wide range of trades available in the corps are vehicle mechanics, electronics & electrical technicians, aircraft technicians, armament fitters, and recovery mechanics.

For the purposes of identification in military radio parlance, **RAEME** personnel are referred to as 'Bluebells'. A **RAEME** Craftsman is affectionately known as a ‘crafty' - only because of the 'Oz' military trait of abbreviating everything, not because he is! According to the average Crafty, **RAEME** actually is an abbreviation for:

'**R**AEME **A**ids **E**veryone, **M**ends **E**verything.

ROLE OF RAEME

The role of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RAEME) is to provide maintenance engineering, materiel maintenance, modification and recovery support to the Army.

THE RAEME BADGE

Federation to pre December 1942. During this period most tradesmen were allotted to the Mechanical Engineering Branch of the Australian Army Ordnance Corps (AAOC). The badge worn by these tradesmen was the Ordnance badge of the period. Figure 1 illustrates the AAOC badge of the period.

Figure 1: AAOC Badge

The badge 1943 – 1949. The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) have had two designs for their badge. From 1942 to 1947 it was the one shown in figure 2. AEME used it as the model for its first badge with the initials changed and without the crown. It seems that this AEME badge was never officially approved and was not issued in three-dimensional form but sometimes appeared on documents.

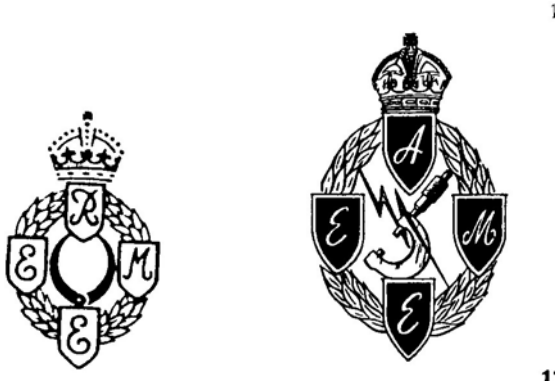

Figure 2: REME and AEME badge

In March 1945, AEME Notes reported that the DME was anxious to receive the suggestions for an AEME Corps badge. Drawings had to comply with the rules of heraldry, employ conventional symbols including one or more indicative of the corps. The badge design had to be suitable to be worn on uniforms, caps or stationary. From this point forward, suggestions began to come in and over the next 12 months drawings by soldiers of the corps were published. In the event, none of the suggestions were accepted.

REME changed to its second badge in 1947 and in 1949 a design derived from it was officially adopted by RAEME. The main differences between the two badges was that the globe in the REME badge showed all Europe including the United Kingdom, whilst on the RAEME badge, the 90th meridian was placed centrally so as to display the Australian portion of the southern hemisphere. REME was replaced on the scroll to read RAEME, initials were located on the scroll to allow for three letters to the right of the horses head. The RAEME badge remained in this form until 1955, figure 3 illustrates the 1949 to 1955 RAEME Badge.

Figure 3: 1949 – 1955 RAEME Badge

1955 to present. The RAEME badge was redesigned in 1955 with a new crown, this is the badge that is in use today. Corps Instruction No 2 was reissued on the 9th of May 1969. It described the configuration of the badge as follows:

Upon a lightning flash a horse forcene gorged with a coronet of four fleur-de-lis, a chain reflexed over its back and standing on a globe.
Above, a crown upon a scroll bearing the inscription RAEME.

'Forcene' means enraged or infuriated; 'gorged' means wearing a collar; and 'reflexed' means laid across the back. In the words of the Corps Instruction:

> The horse and chain are symbolic of power under control and the lightning flash, of electrical engineering. The horse forcene also forms part of the crest of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers and together with the lightning flash, is intended to mark the close relationship which exists between the electrical and mechanical engineers in the Army and in civil life. The globe is indicative of the impact of engineering on the world generally.

Figure 4, shows the evolution of the RAEME badge from its inception in 1949 through to present.

Figure 4: The evolution of the RAEME badge 1949 – present

THE PRINCE PHILIP BANNER

Introduction

The practice of carrying symbols into battle has existed for centuries, the Eagle standards of the Roman legions being perhaps the best known. During the thirteenth century the nobility went into battle with their entire body and most of their horses were hidden by defensive armour, thus increasing the difficulty of quick identification. This was overcome by the use of distinctive badges or crests on their equipment, including pennants or banners. It is from these banners of heraldry that Regimental colours are directly derived.

Colours were used in the British Army originally as a means of identifying the location of the headquarters of regiments in battle. In time the Colours became a focal point of regimental espirit de corps and there are many stories of exploits of great heroism by soldiers defending the Colours from loss. After 1881 Colours were no longer carried into battle because of the improving technology of weapons and the greater distances involved in warfare. However they remained a strong focal point for a regiment and continued to be held in great esteem and accorded great respect.

In the Australian Army, Standards and Guidons are carried by armoured units or Regiments. Queen's and Regimental Colours are carried by the Royal Military College, Duntroon, Infantry battalions and University regiments. Banners are carried by those Corps or units that have had them presented by Royal or vice-regal personages.

The Prince Philip Banner

During the Corps Committee meeting at the RAEME Training Centre on the 12t^{h} of November 1980, Colonel P.M. Robinson introduced a proposal to obtain a Duke of Edinburgh Banner for the Corps. The Committee approved the suggestion and the Director began the necessary action. On the 30th of September 1982, the design for the Banner was approved. For the obverse side, the Corps badge was in the centre and the Duke's cipher in the top left corner. The reverse side carried the Australian coat of arms.

In November 1982, Prince Philip agreed to present the Prince Philip Banner. The Queen approved the design in December, 1983. On the 30th of March, 1984, the DDEME reported good progress and announced that production would take about a year. The manufacturer was R.F. Kemp Pty Ltd of Melbourne and the associated belt was made by George Potter & Co. of Aldershot, UK.

His Royal Highness presented the Banner on the 20th of May, 1986, at the RAEME Training Centre, Bandiana, before a large crowd of spectators and invited guests.

Figure 5: The Prince Philip Banner (the reverse side)

Banner Construction

Banner. The Prince Philip Banner is constructed of crimson silk. The dimensions are 65 cm on the pike and 120 cm on the fly, exclusive of the 5 cm gold fringe.

Pike. The pike is 245 cm in length without the Royal Crest and fitted with a brass shoe. The pike is constructed of ash wood, which is stained and French polished.

Royal Crest. A gilt Royal Crest 20 cm in height is attached to the top of the pike and is detachable.

Cord and Tassels. The cord and tassels of the Banner are 7 mm in diameter and a 140 cm long, each end is finished in a Turks knot. The Banner's cords and tassels are of crimson silk and gold thread mixed and is used to fix the insignia to the pike.

Figure 6: The Prince Philip Banner (the obverse side)

Protocol

The protocol and respect afforded the Banner is as follows:

a. The Banner is not to be touched by ungloved hands.

b. When the Banner party is formed up and on the march (with Banner uncased) all military personnel in the immediate vicinity wearing uniform are to stand fast and salute, personnel in civilian attire are to stand fast and remove headdress.

c. At Mess functions the Banner is to be guarded by the Banner party at all times (if a break in the dinner is granted the Banner party is to remain seated). The members of the Banner party do not consume alcoholic beverages until the Banner is marched out of the dinner.

d. Smoking is not permitted in the presence of the Banner.

THE CORPS MARCH

Background

The march incorporates music, which was known in the British Army in the 17th century (Lilliburlero) which also provides for us a traditional link with our sister corps – REME. The March also incorporates music (The Back Room Boys) which is reasonably contemporary to the formation of RAEME.

Prior to the adoption of the RAEME March, we had been using the RAEME Corps March, which during the period we were using it had undergone some evolution. Initially this march incorporated a well-known tune – 'Whistle While You Work' from Walt Disney's popular film 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'. For those who served in the Western Dessert in North Africa (1940 – 1942) this tune conjures up the picture of seven large Scammel Recovery Vehicles (named after the seven dwarfs). The Scammels trundled up and down the desert road from Bardia and forward to the Base Workshop in Cairo evacuating the road-trains of damaged tanks for repair and return to the front. It was ultimately discarded in favour of another Corps march – an arrangement of Lilliburlero and a French tune 'Aupres De Ma Blonde'.

In 1959 DEME was requested to submit for approval an official Corps March for RAEME. Over the next couple of Years, many tunes were tried in combination with 'Lilliburlero' with varying success and acceptability. Finally success came when LTCOL Newman, Director of music, overheard a RAEME officer in the Army Apprentices School Officers Mess, Balcombe, remark that *'RAEME were the back-room boys'*. He immediately set to the task and after some trials delineated the arrangement which is now our official Corps March. The Southern Command Band presented the arrangement, in 1961, to the annual Corps Conference.

More about the Corps March

The song "See *What the Boys in* the *Backroom Will Have'* or, its abbreviated title, **"The Boys in the Backroom"** was composed by Friedrich Hollander for the film *"Destry Rides Again"* which starred Marlene Dietrich and Cary Grant. Released just a few weeks after the outbreak of WW11, *'Destry Rides Again"* was one of Hollywood's most successful productions of 1939 and was to be the first film to satirise the Hollywood Western - a forerunner of *"Cat Ballou', "Blazing Saddles~'* etc.

Marlene Dietrich portrayed "Frenchie", a brawling dance hall girl who, in one of the film's highlights, jumps up onto the bar of the "Last Chance Saloon" to sing the now famous song which is part of our RAEME March.

Intro: See what the boys in the backroom will have.
And tell them I'm having the same.
Go see what the boys in the backroom will have
And give them the poison they name.

Verse 1: And when I die don't spend my money
On flowers and my picture in a frame.

Chorus: Just see what the boys in the backroom will have
And tell them I sighed
And tell them I cried
And tell them I died of the same.

Verse 2: And when I die don't buy a casket of silver with the candles all aflame.

Repeat chorus.

Verse 3: And when I die don't pay the preacher
For speaking of my glory and my fame.

Repeat chorus.

(Note: These are the original words and format, which differ slightly from the arrangement used in the RAEME March).

In the first years of WWII Great Britain (and the Free World) was fortunate to have the services of Lord Beaverbrook who Churchill appointed Minister of Aircraft Production. Aircraft losses were then 3 to 1 in favour of the Germans however, as early as late 1940, Beaverbrook had boosted British aircraft production to 1600 operational aircraft a month. His contribution to the war effort, particularly during those early dark days, was significant and invaluable to say the least.

A film enthusiast with a private cinema, he was apparently infatuated with Marlene Dietrich as were probably millions of servicemen at that time, and as Nigel Rees records in his book "Sayings of the Century" - Beaverbrook once said that Marlene Dietrich singing "The Boys in the Backroom" is a greater work of art than the Mona Lisa!

The phrase "backroom boys" had been an American saying which dated back to the 1870s with its image of cowboys doing their "serious" drinking and gambling in a saloon backroom uninterrupted by the riotous behaviour in the front room (bar).

However, it is Lord Beaverbrook who is credited with the modern application of back room boys to scientific and technical "Boffins". In a BBC radio broadcast on 19 March 1941 on the matter of record aircraft production he said:

"Let me say that the credit belongs to the boys in the back rooms. It isn't the man who sits in the limelight like me who should have the praise. It is not the men who sit in prominent* places. *lt is the men in the* back *rooms."

According to Rees, Lord Beaverbrook's inspiration for this speech was Marlene singing "See What the Boys in the Backroom Will Have". His new application of the song's title was to eventually influence the RAEME Corps March.

It is now more than 30 years since **"The Boys in the Backroom"** and **"Lilli Burlero'** officially became the RAEME march although it was first proposed a decade before. The combination was arranged by LtCol A. R. Newman MBE, the then Director of Music, replacing the earlier Corps march. **'Lilli Burlero"** was always well received as it provided a traditional link with REME while preserving a martial theme which suited RAEME's "charter". Copyright clearance for the use of these tunes was obtained and it was then approved on August 31st, 1967.

Origin of this article: ***RAEME Craftsman*** Issue 21, November 1989.
Due credit is afforded the author, MAJ Jack Balsillie (RL)

The RAEME March

The RAEME March in quick time is an arrangement of 'LILLI BURLERO' and 'THE BOYS IN THE BACKROOM'.

LILLI BURLERO

***Verse**:* *Ho, Broder Teague dost hear the decree.*
Lilli Burlero. bullen-a-la.
Dat we shall have a new deputy,
Lilli Berlero, bullen-a-la.

Chorus: *Lero, Lero, Lilli Burlero, Lilli Burlero, bullen-a-la. Lero, Lero, Lero, Lero, Lilli Berlero, bullen-a-la.*

THE BOYS IN THE BACK ROOM

Verse: *See what the boys in the back-room will have, And tell 'em I'm having the same. See what the boys in the back-room will have, And give them the poison they name.*

Chorus: *And when I die, don't spend my money, on flowers or my picture in a frame, Just see what the boys in the back-room will have, And tell 'em I sighed ..... Tell 'em 1 cried ..... And tell 'em I died of the same.*

The RAEME Slow March

The RAEME Slow March is adapted from a contemporary early eighteenth century composition by the renowned German composer George Frederick Handel, (1685-1759), the title of the composition is the 'Harmonious Blacksmith'. The work was originally written for a two handed Harpsichord, about 1720.

Musically the composition embodies the tempo and atmosphere of the busy workplace. The composition suggests a sense of priority and purpose, regulated by the disciplined rhythm of the individual segments in harmony, each contriving to carry forward the performers and audience to a satisfying finale. This instrumental work is a delightful surety of writing and felicity of expression. The RAEME Slow March was approved by Army Office in 1992.

The Corps Call

Bugle and trumpet calls have a role at regimental parades, dinners and other appropriate functions. The RAEME call, which was authorised in November 1990, is described as a lively alert that is pleasing to the ear and charged with emotion and intent.

THE CORPS PAINTINGS

On October 29th, 1971, Brigadier Bendall told the Corps Committee that he and Colonel R.D. White had met Mr McFadyen, who had suggested that a painting depicting repairs to a tank by a forward repair team and with a helicopter delivering a spare engine might be suitable. It was necessary to know whether such a combination of events had ever occurred, but it was confirmed during the Committee's discussion that helicopters had been used in this way. The Committee approved the suggestion and Mr McFadyen then painted his subject on a canvas approximately 3 feet by 2 feet. The inscription on the work reads, *AFV Repair in the light green Vietnam November 1969. K.G. McFadyen.* There is no record of when the painting was received; however, it was either late 1971, or some time in 1972.

The caption to the painting below describes a day in the life of a Craftsman. “In November 1969 a troop of gun tanks supported by an ARV became bogged in the light green east of the Long Hai Hills in the Phouc Tuy Province of the Republic of Vietnam. In addition to the bogged vehicle, two gun tanks were immobilised, one with gear box failure and one with a final drive failure. Whilst the crews and the ARV, with sterling efforts on the ‘Shovels, GS (AUS)’ extricated the two serviceable gun tanks, a Forward Repair Team was deployed from 106th Field Workshop to provide the lift necessary for replacement of two failed MUA’s. The M113A1 (Fitters) transported the gear box (inside the vehicle) while the final drive assembly was lifted in by CH47 Chinook. The repair and resupply operations were timed to enable the CH47 to back haul the two repairable assemblies. The operation was conducted over a seven-hour period. The organic RAEME commitment was an ARV, crewed by two Recovery Mechanics, one Electrician and three Vehicle Mechanics. The non-organic support was provided by, 106th Field Workshop Forward Repair Team comprising, one M113A1 (Fitters) crewed by three Vehicle Mechanics. Troops involved were from a Troop from 1st Armoured Regiment consisting of four main battle tanks under command of SGT Browning (RAAC) on operation control to a company of Australian Infantry.”

Figure 7: The Corps Painting

In 1985 Brigadier J.C. Dean suggested that the parade for the presentation of the Prince Philip Banner, which was to be held in 1986, should be the subject of another commissioned painting. This was aggreed by Brigadier C. Ermert (DGEME), who appointed Lieutenant Colonel W.E. Sullivan project officer to oversee its production. The artist was Mr Vernon Jones of Melbourne, a member of the RAAF in World War II, who was 78 years old when he painted the banner parade picture. In 1988, RAEME, as holder of the copyright to this painting, was asked for permission to reproduce it in Debrett’s *Handbook of Australia.*

THE CORPS CENTREPIECE

The RAEME centrepiece is a significant art and craft work in the form of a sterling silver representation of the RAEME badge, mounted on a wooden plinth which features silver panels depicting activities of the corps since its foundation.

The production of a RAEME table centrepiece of sterling silver was first suggested in November 1977 and a silver smith, by the name of Mr Rocca, was commissioned to produce the centrepiece in 1981. The centrepiece was presented to the Corps in September 1982. The cost of the centrepiece was $5,500. The centrepiece has a role at formal functions with units being able to apply for its use at their formal functions. The centrepiece is housed at the ALTC Officers Mess.

Figure 8: The Corps Centrepiece

THE CORPS MOTTO

The Corps of RAEME derives its traditions largely from our sister Corps in the British Army, REME. Following negotiations between the two corps in 1983/1984, Army Office approval was granted for RAEME to adopt the maxim '**ARTE et MARTE'** as their Corps Motto. The Corps Motto is described as a maxim adopted by the Corps, which best expresses the guiding principle bonding the officers and men of the Corps to achieve their individual and collective objectives, whether it be in time of war, in the peacetime workplace, or on the sportsfield.

The strict translation of the Latin **'ARTE et MARTE'** to English is difficult. The Corps Committee has adopted the translation accepted by both our sister Corps of the British and New Zealand Armies. **'ARTE et MARTE'** is translated, as the Corps Motto to mean **'With Skill and Fighting'.** The Corps Motto is to be used on such occasions as a verbal or written call, to express the guiding principle to unite the Corps, or sections of the Corps, to achieve their individual or collective objectives for the task at hand.

THE CORPS CIPHER

Figure 9: The Corps Cipher

Use of the RAEME Cipher is confined to the personal or collective use by officers and warrant officers of the Corps. It can; however, also be used for general Corps matters which relate to all ranks, eg, the Corps Christmas Card, but such use requires the approval of the Corps Executive Officer. Some of the approved uses for the Corps Cipher are mess notepaper, menu cards, invitation cards, blazer buttons, marking mess property, and appropriate Corps Publications.

THE CORPS FLAG

The Corps Flag is not to replace Flag, Identification, RAEME Workshops, (RAEME tricolour) but may be flown at a RAEME unit or other RAEME headquarters, commanded by an officer of the rank of LTCOL or above. It may also be flown at sporting or social gatherings when ordered by the local senior RAEME commander. The flag should be flown at RAEME parades at which the Colonel-in-Chief, Representative Colonel Commandant, Director, or a Colonel Commandant is present. The RAEME Corps flag is not to be given the compliments or ceremony applicable to Colours.

Figure 10: The Corps Flag

The Corps Flag, and the RAEME Distinguishing Flag are made of Union Jack Blue Polyester Bunting or similar light material, and of the size 1,800 mm long and 900 mm wide. The two corps badges and the unit identifier are separate pieces of material.

The heraldic convention requires any animal representation to face the flag pole; therefore, on the reverse of the flag, the RAEME Corps Badge is not reversed so that the horse is facing the flag pole. The approved design and pattern of the Corps Flag can not be altered or stylised without Royal approval.

THE CORPS PRAYER AND GRACE

The need for an official Corps Prayer was determined during preparations for the Prince Philip Banner presentation. The official prayer was approved by the Principal Chaplains Committee.

"O God of all power, your energy is seen in all of creation. Inspire us, members of the Corps of Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, with the spirit of service, that as thorough craftsmen, we may, by the work of our hands, serve faithfully and effectively, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen".

The Corps Grace is used at formal dinner occasions and was accepted by the Corps Committee following the initial suggestion in November 1998. WO2 Gordon Dennis wrote the RAEME Corps Grace in 1987, while he was serving with the 4th Base Workshop Battalion.

"Our Father God, we who are gathered together this night, with our Banner in our midst, pledge again our honour of God, Queen and Country. We give our thanks for the bounteous gifts that you have bestowed upon us and ask your blessings on our fellowship, comradeship and this meal about to be set before us. In Jesus name, Amen".

THE CORPS PATRON SAINT

In 1990, with the approval of the Principal Chaplains Committee – Army, **Saint Eligius** was adopted as the Patron Saint of the Corps of RAEME. In adopting Saint Eligius as Patron Saint, the Corps chose a Saint who had the characteristics required of the soldier – craftsman. Saint Eligius is universally recognised as the protector and supporter of craftsmen, tradesmen, artisans and artificers, and of the Old World 'smiths', farriers, armourers, wrights, saddlers, coach makers and kindred tradesmen. Saint Eligius is recognised as the spiritual guardian and mentor of the officers and men of the Corps of RAEME. The Festival Day of Saint Eligius is on the 1st December each year.

During his lifetime Saint Eligius had achieved mastery of his trade and craft skill, he had won the confidence of kings and queens, he was acclaimed for his high ethical standards within his craft and the community. He was tireless in his contribution to the less fortunate and a recognised motivation force in the development of a strong community, through the fellowship of man. Without exception, the officers and men of the Corps can look proudly to their Saint Eliguis, to draw spiritual strength and guidance in all matters relating to their well-being.

Life History

"Saint Eligius was born the son of an artisan, at
Chaptelate, near Lomoges in France, about the year 588.
Showing remarkable talent for engraving and smithing, he
Undertook an apprenticeship to become a gold smith.
Upon completion of his training he became known to King
Clotaire II in Paris. The King gave Eligius orders to
Make him a throne, and with the materials furnished he made
Two instead of one. Clotaire was so impressed he made him Master of the Mint, and coins are still to be
Found with his name upon them.
King Dagobert I shared his father's trust in Eligius and
Gave the foundation of a monastery, which in 623 was occupied
By monks following the combined orders of Saint Columba
and Saint Benedict. He also gave Eligius a house in
Paris which he converted into a nunnery under Saint
Aurea.
Saint Eligius was eventually chosen to be Bishop of Noyon
And Tournai. He took a leading part in the
Ecclesiastical life of his day and for the whole of his
Life he practiced his craft.
Saint Eligius (known as Saint Elio in France) is well
Known on the European Continent and is the patron of all
Metal workers and farriers.
He died at the age of 71 years, and his remains are in
The Cathedral at Noyon. There is a statue of him in the
Henry VIII Chapel at Westminster Abbey".

THE ARTIFICER'S BADGE

The concise Macquarie Dictionary defines an Artificer as; "a skilful or artistic worker, one who is skilful in devising ways of making things; an inventor".

The origin of the Artificer badge goes back to the early part of the 19th century. During this period, tradesmen of the British Army wore the Badge (a representation of crossed hammer and pincers). The Badge gave instant recognition of the blacksmith and the armourer, the only trades required in the early years of military mechanisation. It was only in the latter part of the 19th century when machinery became more complex that the title 'Artificer' was commonly used, the Badge denoting a higher class of metal working craftsman.

In 1942 the Corps of REME was formed and the tradesmen brought their badges with them into their new Corps. REME Artificers wear them to this day as recognition of their specialist skills as do Artificers of several other Commonwealth Armies. It is a badge that is held in high regard.

Figure 11: The Artificer's Badge

The Australian Military Forces Standing Order for Dress, 1935 stated that the Armourer Staff Sergeant was authorised to wear the distinguishing badge of the hammer and pincers. This is the first official recognition of the Artificer qualification in the Australian Army and entitled personnel wore the Badge throughout World War II mainly in a black oxidised finish. No record can be found of when the Badge ceased to be worn, but it is believed to be one of the many embellishments and forms of dress which ceased to exist at the end of the War.

The re-introduction of the Badge Qualification Artificer was authorised by Army Office in 1989, for RAEME tradesman on successful completion of subject 4 for Warrant Officer, and Metalsmiths on promotion to Warrant Officer.

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