

A HISTORY  
OF  
THE ARMY ORDNANCE SERVICES



LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR TRAVERS CLARKE,  
G.B.E., K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

# A HISTORY OF THE ARMY ORDNANCE SERVICES

by

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LATE R.A.O.C.

THE GREAT WAR

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THIS edition of Volume III, covering the work of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in the Great War, has been produced by the publishing committee in response to a demand from all ranks of the Corps for this volume only. It is thought that all those whose relatives are inscribed on the Roll of Honour would wish to possess a lasting record of their names.

As Volume III of the First Edition did not have a preface by the Author (the late Major General A. Forbes), the following extract from the Preface to Volume I is reprinted.

“I am indebted to Staff Sergeant Rushin, R.A.O.C., for his help, also of those of the R.A.O.C. who by their diaries and other records have helped towards the compilation of Volume III. Beyond those names quoted in the text, these are too numerous to mention. I have to thank Colonel A. R. Oldfield, R.A.O.C., for undertaking all the business arrangements incidental to publication, a laborious undertaking. It is owing to his energy that the book sees the light of day. Lastly, I have to acknowledge my deep obligation to Major Asser, Editor of the *R.A.O.C. Gazette*, who has throughout been a guide, philosopher, and friend, revising my drafts and furnishing me with numerous valuable suggestions.”

The Publishing Committee also wish to record their appreciation of the very valuable work in propaganda and in the distribution of the History carried out by the Staff of the *R.A.O.C. Gazette*. Their special thanks in this connection are due to Major Asser and Lance Sergeant A. Meaden, R.A.O.C.

A. R. OLDFIELD,  
*Honorary Secretary Publishing Committee.*



## FOREWORD

**W**ERE I to be asked by an intelligent military historian to send to him the one document which would best indicate the course of development of the World War, 1914-1918, I should choose the record of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. From that he could gain all the necessary clues to guide him to a knowledge of the British military effort in France, which was ultimately the decisive factor in the greatest struggle which mankind has known.

That document would show that at the outbreak of the War the R.A.O.C. had in France 30 officers and 1360 other ranks : at the close it had 800 officers and 15,000 other ranks : that, beginning in 1914 with one ammunition train and a few hundred tons in reserve, the British Armies in France had in October 1918 eight great depots with 336,450 tons of ammunition and over 120 ammunition railheads ; and that it could give final delivery—to the enemy—of over 9000 tons of shot and shell a day.

Nor would that tell more than half the story. The provision of arms and ammunition is not the sole task of 'Ordnance' : its responsibility is for almost all that the soldier in the field needs except rations ; and the sudden appearance in the records of 'smoke helmets,' and the recurrence thereafter of issues of new types, would tell of how the poison gas of the enemy was met. Sandbags and barbed wire would indicate the trench warfare ; gum boots the fight against the Flanders mud. Every record would show a victory over some new difficulty.

'Ordnance' was the ever-present help of the British soldier in an ordeal of unexampled severity. The devoted and skilful work of its officers and men, supported nobly by the generosity of the people at Home (who never

## FOREWORD

grudged anything to the man in the line) kept the Army equipped to a point near perfection. Grave were the losses of our manhood in the World War: but for 'Ordnance' they would have been graver beyond measure.

TRAVERS CLARKE,  
Lieut. General.

*August, 1929.*



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## ERRATA

- Page 9, line 21. For "Verchoyle" read "Verschoyle."  
 „ 32 „ 27. For "made" read "make."  
 „ 34 „ 2, footnote. For "24/11/24" read "14/11/24."  
 „ 124 „ 4 from bottom. For "Andruicq" read "Audruicq."

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