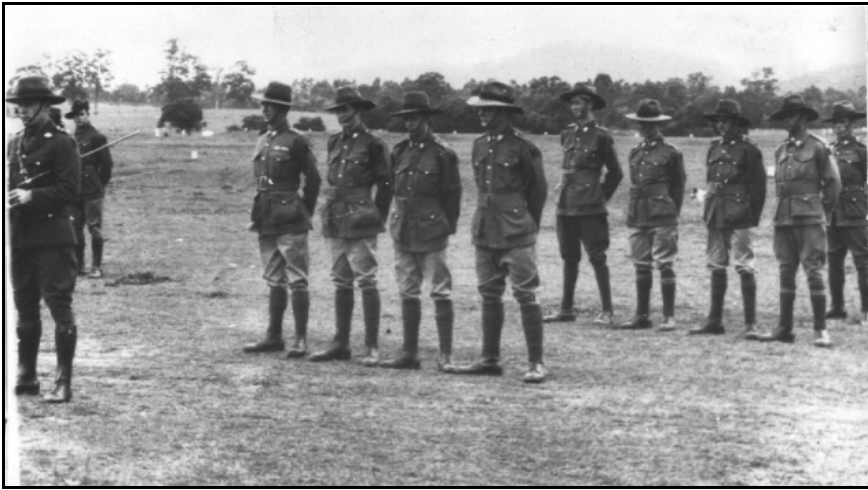


Chapter 2

Number 1 Ammunition Coy AAOC

1927 - 1939

During 1927, inter-Military District rivalry caused a name change, firstly to Number 1 Company AAOC, and then to Number 1 Ammunition Coy AAOC, to better reflect the ammunition training role of the unit.



1 Ammunition Coy on parade during a voluntary camp on Siberia Range Enoggera in 1927 commanded by LT McKay. Those on parade included G. Caffyn, H. Cheetham, SGT J.B. Duncan, G. Blackburne, S. Roach, D. Pickering and W. McEwan

Being a small unit there was little chance of advancement until the OC was replaced. Thus in January 1929 LT Watson retired and was replaced by LT G.M. McKay, an original enlistee and son of the former Ordnance Conductor. Mr McKay had been Ordnance Conductor to the Melilay Mission to Tibet in 1903 and had had an association with Artillery Ordnance since 1886

By 1929, compulsory Cadet Training, which had been introduced by the Australian Government in 1927, had been abolished. Under this system, cadets were required to do twelve months in their seventeenth year and to do three years in the armed forces which they completed in their twenty first year. After



the abolishment of the Cadet Training system, the Citizen Forces became known as the Militia - a completely volunteer force. Only two members of Ammunition Company opted out and their places were quickly filled from a waiting list of men wishing to join.



Ammunition Depot at Frasers Paddock Ashgrove, 1988

It was during this period that the General Uniform was replaced by a Corps Uniform consisting of:

Trousers	Blue with two red stripes down the side;
Coat	Blue with pin stripes around wrist cuffs and epaulettes;
Forage Cap	Blue with red pin stripes. The cap when opened out showed red.
Canes	Officers and NCOs carried canes.
Slouch Hat	Worn by Officers

The coat had a high collar that was buttoned to the neck. A Corps insignia replaced the Rising Sun on the collar and cap. Most members had their buttons gold plated to save the efforts in polishing and thus improve appearance.



The Ammunition Depot, established in 1912 with a laboratory and eight storage magazines, had been expanded during WW1 to about 14 storage magazines. With the co-operation and assistance of the Civilian Ordnance Department, the Ammunition Company worked at the Ammunition Depot at Frasers Paddock (Ashgrove).

It was reported that the strength of the Ammunition depot was only two technicians, and when a load of stores arrived all available civilians from the Department of Army at Victoria Barracks would be seconded to help unload. Consignments of ammunition arrived by ship at the Mercantile Wharf at Queen Street, Brisbane, near the Customs House. It was then transported to Frasers Paddock for storage. At that time, the transport contractor, Jacksons the Carrier, used horse drawn vehicles. At this stage there was only one motor vehicle on strength in 1 Military District and it was issued to the Service Corps.

Training activities

The annual camp was the highlight of each training year.

The Company camped with AASC in huts at Enoggera, near the 1100-yard mound of the old main rifle range towards the creek on Samford Rd. Each morning members would march across the paddock to the Ammunition Depot. They were able to return for lunch, but preferred to take cut lunches, because the only transport available was a horse and dray that had no springs and provided a slow uncomfortable journey.

During these camps valuable experience was gained in inspection, repair and storage of mainly heavy artillery ammunition. Unit morale was high and can certainly be attributed to the practical work undertaken during camps.

Bivouacs were also held at the Ammunition Depot with accommodation in huts near Nimmo Rd Frasers Paddock. Members would travel by electric tram to Stewarts Rd, Ashgrove and then walk across the paddock to the Depot. On these occasions one member would be detailed as cook for the weekend and many and varied brews were prepared or spoiled.



Coy at a weekend bivouac at Frasers Paddock in 1927

During Home Training Parades in the early years, the Coy paraded in four ranks, and with a strength of only 16, disaster could strike during drill periods if the instructor lost sight of his right marker. In the poor light at Victoria Barracks this could easily happen and on more than one occasion it was suspected that the squad deliberately did so, as they would finish up against a corrugated tin wall and start kicking it.

Promotion examinations in this era consisted of three subjects:


Subject A - Drill;

Subject C - Administration and Military Law; and

Subject O - Practical Corps requirements



A.M. Form S.6.
(Revised 1/11/14.)

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES.

CORPORAL'S CERTIFICATE.

This is to Certify that at an Examination held on the 24th
day of May 1926. No. 221357 (Rank) Private
 (Name) McKay G. W. (Regt. or Corps) 1st Regt. H.A.C.
 qualified for the rank of Corporal.

Adjutant.
Thomas D. Watson 1 Lt. Col.
 O.C. 1st Company, A.A.C.

Issued at (Station) Brisbane
24th May 1926.

D. 4370-14 - C. 10903

LT McKay's Corporal's Certificate

The daily rates of pay in the early 1930s were:

Private	5/-	(\$0.50)
Corporal	9/-	(\$0.90)
Sergeant	10/-	(\$1.00)
Staff Sergeant	11/6	(\$1.15)
Lieutenant	15/-	(\$1.50)

In addition actual costs of fares to and from parades were reimbursed.

Social Activities

The main social event of the year was the Annual Naval and Military Ball held in the City Hall, which members of the Corps attended in dress uniform. Other unit social activities that usually followed camps and bivouacs included



swimming in Enoggera Creek and playing tennis. All ranks attended these social events as the unit had no Officers and Sergeants Messes in this era. There were no disciplinary problems in these early years as all members were keen and active in unit affairs. Bonds of friendship developed which were to prove invaluable during the war and later years.

On 14 February 1935, LT G.M. McKay retired after six years of service allowing a vacancy for SGT J.B. Duncan to be commissioned. LT McKay re-enlisted upon the outbreak of war in 1939 and commanded the 2/3 Ordnance Stores Company in Singapore. He was promoted to MAJ on 12 August 1941 and appointed a Deputy Assistant Director Ordnance Service (DADOS) representing AIF Malaysia Comd. Upon the fall of Singapore he became a POW for the remainder of the war. He was noted for his man management including the recovery of Ordnance personnel from within the Malay Peninsular prior to the fall of Singapore. He was mentioned in dispatches.

The unit was commanded by LT J.B. Duncan until 1 July 1937 when pressure in his civilian career forced his early retirement. He moved to Sydney and re-enlisted upon the outbreak of war. He rose to the rank of LTCOL, became ADOS ORD 4 and was later in life awarded the OBE. Upon retirement he was granted the rank of COL.

LT L.D. Price followed LT Duncan but he was forced by civilian commitments to hand over to LT H.N. Vidgen on 21 May 1938.

The addition of MAJ (later Sir) Frank Sharpe to HQ 1st Military District on 21 April 38 as a DADOS meant that proper technical control over the Ammunition Company was available for the first time. His business acumen and higher rank provided the leadership necessary to help overcome logistical problems of the time.

-----oOo-----