



Royal Army Service Corps

The **Royal Army Service Corps (RASC)** was a corps of the British Army responsible for land, coastal and lake transport, air despatch, barracks administration, the Army Fire Service, staffing headquarters' units, supply of food, water, fuel and domestic materials such as clothing, furniture and stationery and the supply of technical and military equipment. It became a "Forming Corps" of the Royal Logistic Corps.

History

For centuries, army transport was operated by contracted civilians. The first uniformed transport corps in the British Army was the **Royal Waggoner's** formed in 1794. It was not a success and was disbanded the following year. In 1799, the **Royal Waggon Corps** was formed; by August 1802, it had been renamed the Royal Waggon Train. This was reduced to only two troops in 1818 and finally disbanded in 1833.

In 1869, there was a major reorganisation of army supply and transport capabilities. Before 1869, supply duties had been the responsibility of the Commissariat, a uniformed civilian body. In 1869, the commissaries of the Commissariat and the officers of the Military Train amalgamated into the **Control Department**. The following year the other ranks of the Military Train were redesignated the **Army Service Corps (ASC)**, officered by the Control Department. In November 1875, the Control Department was divided into the **Commissariat and Transport Department** and the Ordnance Store Department (which developed into the Royal Army Ordnance Corps). In January 1880, the Commissariat and Transport Department was renamed the **Commissariat and Transport Staff** and the Army Service Corps was renamed the **Commissariat and Transport Corps**. Finally, in December 1888, these two bodies amalgamated with the War Department Fleet to form a new Army Service Corps, and for the first time officers and other ranks served in a single unified organisation.

The ASC subsequently absorbed some transport elements of the Royal Engineers. In 1918, the corps received the "Royal" prefix for its service in the First World War and became the Royal Army Service Corps. It was divided into Transport and Supply Branches.

Before the Second World War, RASC recruits were required to be at least 5 feet 2 inches tall and could enlist up to 30 years of age (or 35 for tradesmen in the Transport Branch). They initially enlisted for six years with the colours and a further six years with the reserve (seven years and five years for tradesmen and clerks, three years and nine years for butchers, bakers and supply issuers). They trained at Aldershot

Alone among the "Services" (i.e. rear echelon support corps), RASC personnel were considered to be combatant personnel.¹

Ranks

Officers of the Control Department, Commissariat and Transport Department, and Commissariat and Transport Staff held different ranks from the rest of the Army. From February 1885 they were given honorary military ranks, which they held in conjunction with their commissary ranks. Officers of the ASC and RASC held full military rank.

Second Lieutenant	Sub-Assistant Commissary	Sub-Assistant Commissary	Quartermaster
Lieutenant	Assistant Commissary	Assistant Commissary	Deputy Assistant Commissary-General
Captain	Deputy Commissary	Deputy Commissary	Deputy Assistant Commissary-General
Major	Commissary	Commissary	Assistant Commissary-General
Lieutenant-Colonel	Assistant Controller	Assistant Commissary-General	Assistant Commissary-General
Colonel	Deputy Controller	Deputy Commissary-General	Deputy Commissary-General
	Controller	Commissary-General	Commissary-General