

SAPPERS *in the* WEST

Army Engineers in Western Australia



GRAHAM M^cKENZIE-SMITH

FOREWORD

Head of Corps



Royal Australian Engineers

Esprit de Corps has been a foundation element of military capability since armies were first raised. The concepts of history, tradition, pride, belonging and achievement all contribute to that Esprit de Corps. Whether passed down as folk law, story telling or written records, the need to be able to understand and recite past achievements and attainment of glory is a key element for future reverence.

In this centenary year of the achievements of the ANZACs it is befitting that this book, *SAPPERS in the WEST – Army Engineers in Western Australia*, be published as a record of the achievements of the sappers of the Royal Australian Engineers who have called Western Australia home at some point in their military endeavours. Those knowledgeable in military history will recall that the first AIF of Great War was originally recruited in regional units, creating a strong sense of local identity. This regional identity was a strong and important element of pride and motivation through the vast campaigns of the First World War. The current *13 Field Squadron*, which celebrated its centenary in 2012, traces its lineage to the raising of a Western Australian engineer company. It remains proudly a Western Australian engineer unit.

I commend this book for the way that it has organised the historical facts about units, places, dates, activities and most importantly people. These facts have been tied together with historical photographs, maps and honour rolls. The book provides the necessary detail upon which to appreciate the efforts of the men and women who served as Sappers from and in Western Australia, in the past and to the present day. Current and future Western Australian sappers can be proud of their heritage available in these pages.

The efforts of all involved needs to be commend also. The author Graham McKenzie-Smith has worked with a great team of people in the Royal Australian Engineers Association of Western Australia to make this project appear in print. It has required detailed research, a task which should not be underestimated in its complexity if the resulting story is to have credibility. The project has also collected and archived a wealth of additional detail for future historians, who will review this work as a vital first step to exploring a focus or theme.

SAPPERS IN THE WEST

This book *SAPPERS in the WEST* is an essential record of history for the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers. It builds on the fabric of our official Corps history series and adds depth and feel to the great people who have been able to and still call themselves Sappers. As Head of Corps I am appreciative of the effort expended to produce such a comprehensive history about which we can all be proud. Graham well done.

Wayne Budd
Brigadier
Head of Corps
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About the Author

Graham McKenzie-Smith is a Perth based Military Historian who has written extensively on the Australian Army in World War Two, particularly on their role in defence of the Australian mainland. After serving on the staff of the *School of Military Engineering* during his National Service, he has maintained contact with the sapper ex-service organisations and took on the role of preparing this history on behalf of RAE Assoc of WA. His previous works include the *Australia's Forgotten Army* series and *Defending Fremantle, Albany and Bunbury. Journeys through the Defence Heritage of Western Australia* will be published later in 2015.