

Royal Marine Engineers' Badges 1917-1919

John Rawlinson

Most of us will be aware of the existence during WW1 of a specialist unit of RM Engineers, formed in 1917 to assist with construction at remote naval bases. The unit reached 10,000 all ranks by the war's end. Even the most specialist badge collecting books describe the badge worn by the unit as similar to a collar badge, simply a globe surrounded by a laurel with no separate ornament above. I have been in correspondence with several other collectors in recent months following the discovery of two photographs.



Fig 1: An RME officer circa 1918. The picture shows he wears RMLI pattern collar badges, a two part cap badge, on the fused grenade the letters RME can just be made out.



Fig 2: An RME corporal, again wearing RMLI pattern collar badges, a two part cap badge, a plain fused grenade over a globe and laurel. Not too visible in this copy but clear on the original, the man also wears RME shoulder titles.



Figure 3



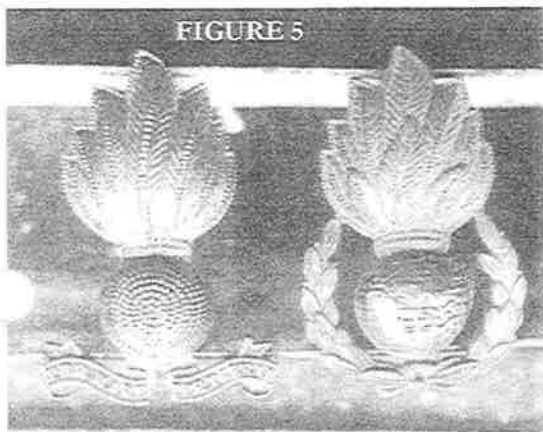
Figure 4

Fig 3: An example of the Officers pattern badge in John Atherton's collection

Fig 4: An example of the Corporals pattern badge in John Rawlinson's collection

Certainly these two photographs and the existence of the badges seems to prove that the RME cap badge was far more complex than "a globe surrounded by a laurel". However it is important to trace the original records that led to this badge being worn. A file, tantalisingly called "Provision of a distinctive badge for Royal Marine Engineers 1918" ADM1/8527/162, is missing at The National Archives.

Can any members help with further details on the badges worn by the RME? Has anyone ever seen the missing file? Please contact me, my address is on the back cover, if you are able to provide more details.



Further details on the Royal Marine Engineers are given in Chapter 39, Vol 3, Britain's Sea Soldiers. The unit should not be confused with RM Divisional Engineers who served as Field Service Troops within the RND.

Figure 5: Some years ago this photograph was forwarded to Alastair Donald. Can anyone help identify the two badges, are they unadopted prototypes?