



CHAPTER 1 : RANK IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

AUSTRALIAN ARMY BADGES OF RANK

The matter of badges of rank is anything but simple, particularly when dealing with the officers, and could very easily be the subject of a book in itself. Well into the later part of the 19th century, for example, there were different badges of rank for corresponding ranks within different corps. The aim here, however, is simply to give a very brief summary of the history of the badges of rank and then cover the origin of each rank individually.

The Officers

In the late 18th century, the different styles of epaulettes worn by officers were in themselves badges of rank. However, by 1803 subalterns were wearing a single gold bullion epaulette on their right shoulders; it was decided to change what was then the lieutenant's epaulette bullion tassels to a coarse gold fringe so as to differentiate between a lieutenant and a captain.

During the period 1822 to 1855, all general officers wore the same badge of rank, that of a crossed sword and baton. However, the means of telling apart the different levels of generals lay in their coat buttons. A major general wore two rows of buttons, with 10 buttons in each row, grouped in pairs. Both a lieutenant general and a general wore two rows of nine buttons, with the former having his buttons in groups of three, and the latter's evenly spaced. In 1855 a major general wore a star, a lieutenant general a crown and a general wore both a crown and a star. A major's badge of rank was a single star. The officer's star (commonly referred to as a 'pip') is the Star of the Knight Grand Cross of the Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, which bears the motto *TRIA JUNCTA IN UNO* (THREE JOINED INTO ONE) ⁽¹⁾, referring to the union of England, Scotland and Ireland. Prior to 1830, the badge of rank was the Star of the Most Noble Order of the Garter.

This was then followed by some more changes; the badge of rank for a colonel became a crown and a star, a lieutenant colonel a crown, and in the case of the Artillery, both a captain and a lieutenant wore only a silver gunner's grenade.

In 1864 the colonel's badge of rank changed yet again, this time to a half-inch (13 mm) wide gold lace pattern around his collar, in addition to a silver embroidered crown and star. In the same year the badge of a brigadier general was of the same collar design as the general's but, with no other embellishments. Over the period 1855 – 1880, the badges for generals were a star for a major general, a crown for a lieutenant general, and a general wore both a star and a crown. During the same period a major wore one star.

Another change was made in 1857, with a colonel, a lieutenant colonel and a major wearing, respectively, a crown and a star, a crown, and a star; all were worn on a collar surrounded with gold lace and cord. Captains wore a crown and a star, and lieutenants wore a crown, both on a collar topped with gold lace and cord on the top only.

1880 saw more changes to forms which have remained relatively constant over the last one hundred years or so. A field marshal retained his crossed batons, wreath and crown, which came into being in 1736. All generals wore a crossed sword and baton, with the addition of a crown and a star for generals, a crown for lieutenant generals and a star for major generals. However, a brigadier general wore no additional embellishments. Colonels wore a crown and two stars; lieutenant colonels a crown and one star, and majors wore a crown. Captains wore two stars, lieutenants wore one star and 2nd lieutenants wore no badge of rank at all. In 1902, however, captains and lieutenants gained an additional star each (now three and two) and 2nd lieutenants wore one star. The rank of brigadier general was abolished in 1921 to be replaced by that of brigadier, and this badge of rank became a crown and three stars.

The Other Ranks

The badges of rank for warrant officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were not quite so confusing as those of the officers. However, there were different badges for both trades and ranks. There were, for example, three classes of master gunner; there were bandmasters, regimental quartermaster-sergeants and provisional staff sergeant-majors; there were also sergeant trumpeters, to name just a few.

Both the master gunners 1st class and 2nd class, the staff sergeant-major 1st class, the bandmaster, and the warrant officers class one (those who did not fit into any of the previously mentioned positions) were

all warrant officers class one. Whilst it could be said that this is not very different from today's system, (master gunners, RSMs, and some bandmasters are all warrant officers class one) at least at present all these different positions wear a common badge of rank.

NCOs are divided into two groups: senior NCOs (staff sergeants and sergeants) and junior NCOs (corporals and bombardiers, and lance corporals and lance bombardiers). It was considered that, due to their length of service, sergeants were the more experienced, or the more senior, of the ranks, hence the terminology 'senior' and 'junior' NCOs.

The Ranks

Lance Corporal

The word 'Lance' means just that. In days past, mounted soldiers were considered superior to those on foot. When unhorsed in battle, the lance which the ex-mounted man carried indicated his superiority and gave him certain prestige. From 'lance-man-of-foot', as he was called, comes the modern 'lance' rank.

Corporal

Corporal is derived from the French 'caporal', which was originally Italian (capod), meaning head of section. The current style of wearing chevrons by NCOs dates back to 1802 when an instruction was issued in the British Army defining the style in which 'stripes' were to be worn.

Bombardier / Lance Bombardier

The most junior NCO in artillery was referred to as bombardier, which is derived from an artillery piece called the bombard (used at the Battle of Crecy in 1346, the first battle in which the English employed artillery). There were problems with the Bombards: at times they could be just as deadly to the detachments as they could be to the enemy, for they were known to blow up as the charge was ignited, therefore the dangerous task of firing the piece fell to the most junior NCO, hence the rank bombardier. In 1924 the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery did away with the rank of corporal and replaced it with that of bombardier; the new rank of lance bombardier was then introduced.

Sergeant

The term sergeant dates back centuries to the English feudal system, when landowners used serfs from the fields to fight battles. The sons and personal servants of the landowners were also employed but, as a mark of respect, they were put in charge of the serfs and others with a lesser station in life. These sons and servants became known as 'servientes', from the Latin 'to serve'. In time the term became sergeant.

Staff Sergeant/Colour Sergeant

The rank of staff sergeant was often held by the eldest son of the most powerful of the landowners, and he was selected to carry the family coat-of-arms into battle. The banner bearing the heraldic device was raised on a pole or staff. The rank of colour sergeant was introduced into the British Army in 1813 as the protector of the ensign and the Colour.

There is no such rank as colour sergeant in the Australian Army except at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, where it is a rank within the Corps of Staff Cadets. The escorts in a Colour party are often staff sergeants and for ceremonial occasions, when Colours are on parade, they are referred to as colour sergeants.

Sergeant-Majors and Warrant Officers

The regimental sergeant-major (RSM) is the senior soldier within an organization (ie. a battalion, regiment, brigade, division or command) and works to and advises the commanding officer, or commander. He is responsible for discipline, dress and all ceremonial aspects of life within the relevant organization. In the field he is also responsible for the re-supply of ammunition. The RSM is the custodian of the unit's customs and traditions.

The title sergeant-major was originally the rank of today's major; it denoted the staff officer of a regiment. The title fell into disuse towards the end of the 17th century, when the word 'sergeant' was deleted. However, in 1797 it was decided to post the senior soldier of units to the headquarters and thus the appointment of sergeant-major was officially incorporated into the establishment of the British Army. Over the years the title was further defined by the addition of the word 'regimental'.

In the early 1800s the sergeant-major wore four chevrons and by the 1840s the crown was added to top the chevrons. In 1881 sergeant-majors were given warrant rank and the badge of rank was a crown which was worn on the cuff. In 1917 the rank of warrant officer class one (WO1) was established with the Royal Coat-of-Arms designated as the badge of rank. The crown was reallocated to the rank of warrant officer class two (WO2). In the Australian Army the badge for warrant officers class one was replaced by the Australian Coat-of-Arms in 1976. The position of RSM is an appointment, not a rank; not all warrant officers class one are RSMs, however, all RSMs are warrant officers class one.

The position for wearing the badges of rank of warrant officers changed from the lower forearm to the mid-upper arm at the end of 1996. It should also be noted that the correct terminology is: 'warrant officer class one (or two)', not 1st or 2nd class. Warrant officers are not non-commissioned officers (NCOs), they are officers who hold a warrant.

See also: 'Warrant Officers and Warrants'.

Lieutenant

The word comes from the French 'lieu', meaning 'in place of' and 'tenant', Latin meaning 'holding' (one who holds the place of, or deputises for another). A lieutenant is the rank below a captain, and deputises for him. The rank of 2nd lieutenant came into being in 1871, replacing that of ensign (or cornet in the cavalry). The rank was phased out of the Australian Regular Army in 1986.

Both lieutenants and captains were referred to as subalterns, whilst officers from major to brigadier are referred to as 'field rank'. However, today the term subaltern generally refers to lieutenants only. There is some argument about the origin of the word; some sources say it is derived from the French, meaning 'inferior to', or subordinate.

Captain

Captain is the oldest of all military titles. It is from the Spanish 'captain', which in turn was derived from the Latin 'caput', the head.

Major

The rank of major is discussed under the sub-heading of sergeant-majors and warrant officers.

Colonel

Colonel denotes the superior officer of a regiment. The term is derived from the Italian 'colonello', a 'little column'; so-called because he led the little column at the head of a regiment (presumably the regimental headquarters).

A lieutenant colonel 'deputises' for a colonel (see: Lieutenant).

Brigadier

At the end of World War I, the British Government told the British Army it had too many generals and that they were to be reduced in number. The Army did just that; it removed the word 'general' and was left with fewer generals and, at the same, had created a 'new' rank.

The rank of brigadier general was abolished in the Australian army in 1921, and it was eventually replaced by that of brigadier in 1929. In the interim, titles such as 'colonel-in-command', 'colonel-of- staff' and 'colonel-commandant' were used for officers posted into that level of command.

General

There has always been some confusion about the different levels of generals, in particular over the matter of a lieutenant general being senior to a major general; as mentioned in the section dealing with officers, a lieutenant 'deputises', hence a lieutenant general 'deputises' for a general and is senior to a major general.

During the (English) Civil War, the Parliamentary Army was commanded by a captain general (see: Field Marshal), the cavalry was commanded by a lieutenant general and the infantry was commanded by a more junior general called a sergeant major general. In time the word 'sergeant' was dropped (see: Warrant Officers).

Field Marshal

The rank of field marshal came into being in 1736 when it replaced that of captain general. The title of captain general was re-introduced in 1950 by His Majesty King George VI, when he expressed his desire to have his title of Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Regiment of Artillery changed. Today Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is the Captain General of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery.

AN EXAMPLE OF PREVIOUS OTHER RANK STRUCTURES (1925)

Rank	Chevrons	Distinguishing Badges	
		On Jackets	On Greatcoats
Warrant Officer Class One			
Staff Sergeant-Major 1 st Class		Royal Coat-of-Arms within a wreath	
Master Gunner 1 st Class		Royal Coat-of-Arms within a wreath, over a field gun	
Master Gunner 2 nd Class		Royal Coat-of-Arms, over a field gun	
Bandmaster		Lyre (large)	
Warrant Officer Class One		Royal Coat-of-Arms	
Warrant Officer Class Two			
Master Gunner 3 rd Class		Crown within a wreath, over a field gun	
Staff Sergeant-Major 3 rd Class		Crown within a wreath	
Brigade (or Regimental) Quartermaster-Sergeant			
Armament Quartermaster-Sergeant			
Mechanist Quartermaster-Sergeant			
(other) warrant officers class two		Crown	
Non-commissioned Officers			
Provisional Staff Sergeant-Major	4	Crown (above the chevrons)	
Sergeant Bugler		Bugle (above the chevrons)	
Sergeant Trumpeter		Crossed trumpets (above the chevrons)	
Farrier (or Wheeler, Saddler or Smith) Staff Sergeant	3	Crown (above the chevrons)	
Squadron (or Battery, Troop or Company) Quartermaster-Sergeant			
Armament Staff Sergeant			
Staff Sergeant (Australian Army Service, Ordnance, Medical or Pay Corps)			
Armourer Staff Sergeant		Crown and crossed hammer and pincers (above the chevrons)	Crown (above the chevrons)
Band Sergeant		Lyre (small) (above the chevrons)	
Sergeant			
Lance Sergeant			
Corporal	2		
2 nd Corporal	1		
Bombardier			
Lance Corporal			
Acting Bombardier			

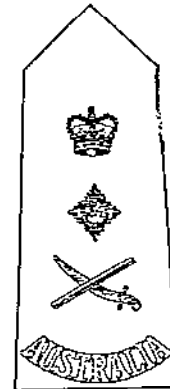
Notes:

1. The ranks of provisional staff sergeant-major, bugle-major and trumpet-major were later changed to acting staff sergeant-major, sergeant-bugler and sergeant-trumpeter respectively.
2. In 1924 the Royal Australian Artillery did away with the rank of corporal, replacing it with the rank of bombardier, at the same time introducing the rank of lance bombardier.

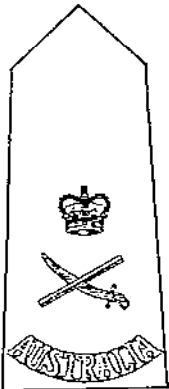
Officers' Badges of Rank



Field Marshal



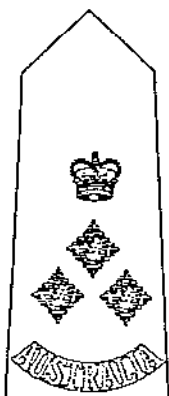
General



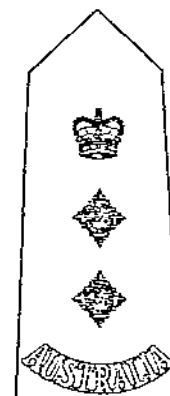
Lieutenant General



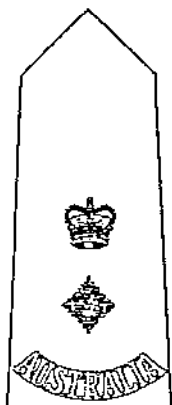
Major General



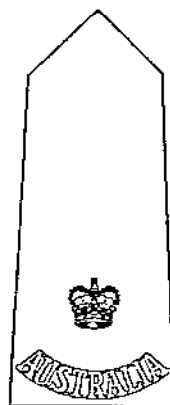
Brigadier



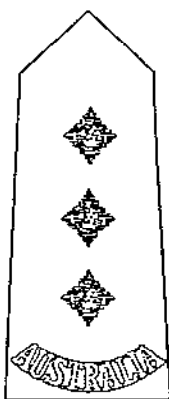
Colonel



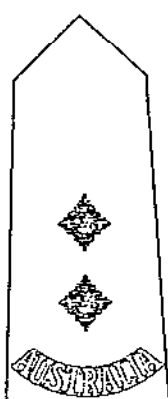
Lieutenant Colonel



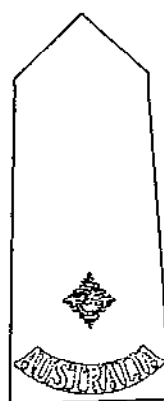
Major



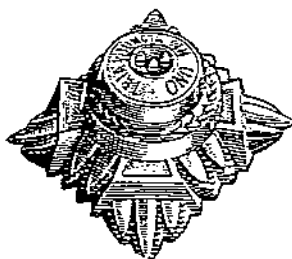
Captain



Lieutenant



2nd Lieutenant



The Star of the Knight Grand Cross of the Military Division
of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath
(the 'pip')

Other Ranks' Badges of Rank



Warrant Officer
(RSM of the Army)



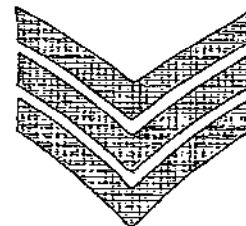
Warrant Officer Class 1



Warrant Officer Class 2



Staff Sergeant



Sergeant



Corporal / Bombardier



Lance Corporal / Lance Bombardier

The Private Ranks

The title of the private soldiers in most corps and regiments within the Australian Army is Private. However, there are some exceptions.

Royal Australian Armoured Corps	:	Trooper
Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery	:	Gunner
Royal Australian Engineers	:	Sapper
Royal Australian Corps of Signals	:	Signaller
Australian Army Aviation Corps	:	Trooper
Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers	:	Craftsman
Australian Army Band Corps	:	Musician
Special Air Service Regiment	:	Trooper
Regional Force surveillance units	:	Patrolman

THE ADJUTANT

An appointment, usually given to a senior captain (however, at times it has been taken up by subalterns or even majors) which confers no additional rank. The duties of the adjutant in barracks consists of attending to the commanding officer's correspondence, the issue of orders to and by his unit, the keeping of officer rosters, etc. Orders signed by the adjutant are considered to be those of the commanding officer, for whom he is really the scribe and mouthpiece; he is the CO's principal staff officer. On operations he also controls the unit command post.

Static units such as garrisons, depots and Army schools also have adjutants whose barrack duties are, to all intents and purposes, the same.

COMMISSION

A Commission, from a military point-of-view, is a document authorizing the holder to perform duties in the service of the State. Commissions are granted by the Governor-General on behalf of the Sovereign and the recipient, in the military sense, is ranked as an officer.

An officer cannot have his Commission taken away from him except by authority from the Sovereign, or the Sovereign's representative (ie. Governor-General). Once commissioned, he holds it for life, which constitutes the reason for a retired officer retaining it (technically, officers retire, although they may resign their commissions, and soldiers take discharge).

WARRANT OFFICERS AND WARRANTS

Warrant Officer is the rank between commissioned officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs). The meaning of the term Warrant Officer is really in its title: an officer who holds a Warrant. Commissions were originally granted by the sovereign to officers who, in turn, could appoint juniors to help them carry out their commissions.

Initially, authority was given to grant Warrants to selected personnel, giving them authority whilst performing particular duties. When these duties had been completed the Warrants expired, so that we


find that Warrant appointments lasted only for a particular campaign. The Sovereign delegated the authority to grant these Warrants to the Commander-in-Chief.

Clause 26 of the (British) Army Circulars, issued on 20th January 1879, gave authority to the Secretary of State for War to appoint, by Warrant, "...such officers whose relative position in the Army was senior to all NCOs, but inferior to commissioned officers". Shortly afterwards the Airey Committee on Army Reorganization handed down a number of recommendations, which included the "...institution of a class of warrant officers...". The Secretary then set in place "...a class of warrant officers intermediate between commissioned officers and NCOs. This class (is to) include RSMs and other sergeant-majors" (2)

The urgent needs of the Great War resulted in the introduction of an additional level of warrant officer in 1915; warrant officers from then on were identified as either class 1 or class 2. On promotion to warrant officer class 2, the soldier was presented with a Warrant, and he was also presented with another Warrant on his promotion to class 1. This practice ceased in 1938, with Army Order 155, and from that time on the one Warrant covered both ranks.

In 1983 the Australian Army introduced the appointment of Regimental Sergeant-Major of the Army (RSM-A), who reports directly to the Chief of Army, and in 1992 the RSM-A was granted the rank of 'Warrant Officer', a rank senior to warrant officers class one.

Warrant officers are not NCOs; they are exactly what the title infers: they are officers by Warrant, as opposed to an officer by Commission or a non-commissioned officer. Today, in the Australian Army, a Warrant is granted under the authority of the Defence Act of 1903. Warrants were signed by the Chief of Personnel; however, they are now signed by the Chief of Army.



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL *of the Commonwealth of Australia and
Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Force*


To: WAYNE LEONARD COOCHAN

WHEREAS you have been appointed to be, on and from 21 JUNE 1983, an officer of the Australian Army:

NOW THEREFORE I, Sir Ninian Martin Stephen, a member of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight of the Order of Australia, Knight Grand Cross of The Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight Grand Cross of The Royal Victorian Order, Knight Commander of The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Knight of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Force, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, issue, in pursuance of Section 10 of the Defence Act 1903, this Commission to you as an officer of the Australian Army:

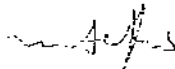
AND I do Charge and Command you to discharge your duty faithfully and to observe and execute all such orders and instructions as you may receive from your superior officers.

By His Excellency's Command,



MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

GIVEN under my Hand and the
Great Seal of Australia
on 26 MAY 1983



GOVERNOR-GENERAL

An Officer's Commission



Australian Army

Warrant


To CHRISTOPHER JOHN JOHNSON

By authority of the Defence Act 1963 and of the Regulations made thereunder, you have been appointed to be a Warrant Officer in the Australian Army on and from 21ST JANUARY 1981.

You are, therefore, carefully and diligently to discharge your duty by doing all things thereunto belonging as required by military law and so to conduct yourself that you ensure respect for lawful authority and uphold the honourable tradition of the rank to which you have been appointed.

Dated this 6th day of MAY in the year 1982

Canberra


Major General
Chief of Personnel

A Warrant Officer's Warrant