What Was The RAOC?

The Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC) was a corps of the British Army. At its renaming as a Royal Corps in 1918 it was both a supply and repair corps. In the supply area it had responsibility for weapons, armoured vehicles and other military equipment, ammunition and clothing and certain minor functions such as laundry, mobile baths and photography. The RAOC was also responsible for a major element of the repair of Army equipment. In 1942 the latter function was transferred to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) and the vehicle storage and spares responsibilities of the Royal Army Service Corps were in turn passed over to the RAOC. The RAOC retained repair responsibilities for ammunition, clothing and certain ranges of general stores.

His Medals

Robert McMullan’s wartime medals are below:

- France & The Defence
- The 1939 War Medal
D-Day Landing

My Great Grandfather was involved in the D-Day Landings. He brought out wheelbarrows filled with spades and ammunition.

Here is a model of what it would have looked like:

My Great Grandad is the one with the wheelbarrow coming out of the boat.

Bobby’s War

My Great Uncle Robert re-told the whole story of my Great Grandfathers experiences copied below.

I have just discovered this and I find it amazing and makes me feel proud and I wish I got to meet him. Today he would have been 104 and had 18 great grandchildren including me and Isla. He was a good man.

Bobby’s War
June 6th 1944. The allied invasion of France, the largest maritime & amphibious invasion in history had begun. The sea state was very rough due to a storm the previous day and in the small landing craft men were groaning with sea sickness & urinating in fear. The German army were expecting Corporal Bobby McMullan, Royal Army Ordnance Corps, they just didn’t know where or when. It was happening now. The closer you come to a beach in rough weather the higher the waves become. The little landing craft, one amongst many, crashed its way down the waves towards the shore. Spare a thought to the coxswain the only head visible above the landing craft as he steered it towards the shore and the deadly ping of bullets clattering over the steelwork all around began to roar. Closer and closer bumpier and bumpier as the landing craft approached the sand the ringing of the bullet impacts became deafening, mortar shells exploded somewhere in the blinding sea spray.
With an almighty roar the chains were loosed and the ships ramp dropped towards the sand. Unfortunately, it had been deployed too soon and the end the ramp was in three feet of water. Almost immediately around Bobby some of the metallic ping became a dull thud of bullets hitting flesh, men instantly fell, wounded or dead. Bobby had a wheelbarrow filled with spades and ammunition to allow the poor souls to dig themselves a hole in the sand on an open beach under fire from the waiting German army. The first problem was getting a laden wheelbarrow ashore through three feet of water. Bobby’s job was to keep the front line supplied with ammunition so there was no hiding in a foxhole for him, he had deliveries to make. Somehow Bobby managed to get off the beach that day after hours as a sitting duck on the sand. Somehow, he avoided becoming one of the hundreds and hundreds of young, lifeless, bloody corpses rolling back and forth on the edge of the tide.

Wherever the front line is there wee Bobby would have to be and in the following months from the coast of France the front line approached the outskirts of the city of Brussels in Belgium. On reaching the suburbs of a city, the pace of the advance naturally slowed down and Bobby’s unit found themselves encamped next to a canal whilst ahead the fighting raged on. It was here that one day Bobby happened to meet a young couple with three small children; homeless, hungry & scared. It transpired that this family, the Van Helsing’s were not in fact homeless but their home had been commandeered by German army officers leaving them on the street. Over the course of the next weeks Bobby befriended this family and supplied them when he could with food including bread and eggs, anything really. This in a time of war was a courtmartialling offence, to supply army rations to persons unknown, but to Bobby they were people, human beings just like him. The fighting moved on towards Germany and so Bobby and his now friends had to part, they had exchanged addresses but none of them could be sure what the outcome might be.

Its 1988 the war has been over for more than forty years, Bobby survived, married Rita & had lots of children. Retired now & in failing health Bobby, out of the blue, informed Rita that he would love to take a trip to Belgium. The trip was arranged and the two set off on what for Rita was a trip into the unknown. On arrival in Belgium and the city of Brussels Bobby surprised Rita by asking directions in the local language. Sometimes he didn’t tell you stuff. Eventually, and now as Rita described it, they arrived at this area beside a beautiful canal. It was clear that Bobby recognised where he was as he raised his walking stick to point to a large house some two hundred yards away. They began to walk slowly towards the house. Bobby fell behind slightly as he was having difficulty walking due to a recent stroke. As they got closer to the house Rita said she noticed an old man with his head under the bonnet of a car. She turned to look back and Bobby nodded towards the house. Rita approached, the old man slew his head out from under the hood & looked at her, he then gazed to her left to the old man walking close behind and then, opening his arms, shouted “Rober! Rober!”. 

THE END