

THE CORPS PAINTING



The Corps Painting depicts a scene from the Vietnam War. Close proximity of contact with the enemy is shown by the Infantry moving in the area, and by the Centurion tank commander manning his cupola .30 inch Browning Machine Gun. The tank's transmission has been removed by a Forward Repair Team (FRT) working from an M113A1 Fitters' Armoured Carrier. Other Centurions from the Troop can be seen in the distance. A replacement transmission is seen as a load suspended from a Chinook Helicopter, escorted by two RAAF UH1B Helicopter Gunships.

Due to the operational situation, there are no known photos of this FRT. However, on 25 Nov 1969, 106 Field Workshop RAEME deployed an FRT, call sign 88 India, in support of a Composite Troop of B Squadron, 1 Armoured Regiment. On 14 Dec 69, Centurion call sign 92 Charlie had a transmission failure. The crew of 88 India requested priority delivery of a replacement transmission, OC 106 Fd Wksp obtained approval from HQ 1 ATF for Helicopter lift, which arranged pickup of an unpacked and prepared-for-fitting transmission from Kanga Pad, near 106 Fd Wksp. The replacement transmission was delivered as depicted in the Painting and fitted - Centurion 92 Charlie being mobile again late 14 Dec 69.

It should be noted that other FRT also received Helicopter support:

- a. 2 Aug 69: Centurion Engine Change: Engine lifted by Chinook; and
- b. 28 Aug 69: M113A1 Power Pack (Engine/transmission) change: Power Pack lifted by Chinook.

Circa 1972, the then Director, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, Brig J.C. Dean, commissioned the Corps Painting, depicting this FRT, from war artist Ken McFadyen. As there were no photos of the actual operation, the artist was supplied with a number of typical photos from which he prepared the composite Corps Painting.

This FRT was chosen because it depicts so much about RAEME: resourcefulness in accomplishing the mission; and co-operation between the arms supported, first and second line repair echelons, as well as fourth line, since both the Centurion and replacement transmission would have been rebuilt at 4 Base Workshop.