

Royal Marines History

On sea and land, over 330 years of COMBAT

The history of the Royal Marines is a roll call of daring deeds and valiant victories. It all began way back in the reign of Charles II when on 28 October 1664 The Admiral's Regiment was formed. The name 'Marines' first appears in the records in 1672. Since then Marines have taken part in more battles on land and sea, all over the world, than any other branch of the British Armed Forces.

Gibraltar 1704

During the war of the Spanish Succession, Britain was part of a coalition who were fighting France and Spain. At this time both British and Dutch Marines were to the fore and successfully both captured and defended Gibraltar, which was under siege for a period lasting 9 months. For their bravery and achievements in this campaign they are today commemorated by "Gibraltar" being the only Battle Honour worn on the Royal Marines badge and on the 'Colours'.

The 18th and 19th Centuries

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the Corp played a major part in the wars, which created the British Empire. This policy which was known as 'Imperial Policing' took the Marines from the bombardment of Algiers in 1816, to the Ashanti Wars, to the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino in 1827, and on to the Siege of Sevastopol during the Crimean War in 1854.

The First World War 1914 – 1918

The outbreak of the First World War saw Royal Marines detachments deployed in all ships of destroyer size and above, where they were employed as gun crews. In this role some 5700 Marines saw action at the Battle of Jutland, the major naval engagement of the war. Royal Marines also took part in some of the famous actions ashore, being present at Gallipoli, and winning honours for their bravery at the raid on Zeebrugge. They also fought in the trenches and in the artillery brigades on the Western Front.

The Second World War 1939 – 1945

The first three years of the Second World War saw most of the action for the Royal Marines at sea. However, in 1942, the first Royal Marines Commandos were formed, and these units fought across Europe, taking part in campaigns in Sicily, Italy, and the Dalmatian Coast, including the Landings at Salerno, Anzio, and Termoli, while others fought in India and Burma. Five RM Commando Units took part in the D-Day Landings, the largest amphibious assault in history. By the end of the war, the Royal Marines numbers had grown to 80,000 - their largest size ever.

Post War

Every year since the end of the Second World War with the exception of 1968, the Royal Marines have been engaged on active duty somewhere in the world. Between 1945 and 1971, 3 Commando Brigade saw action in the Palestine emergency, the Malayan campaign, Brunei, Korea, Suez, Cyprus, Tanganyika, and the Borneo confrontation. Royal Marines Commando Units were among the first troops drafted into Northern Ireland in 1969, and have served in the Province almost every year since.

The Falklands 1982

In 1982, The Royal Marines played a leading part in the recapture of the Falkland Islands from the Argentinians. Sailing thousands of miles from home, they successfully completed an amphibious landing, and after 'yomping' across very difficult terrain in harsh conditions, they defeated a numerically superior enemy in fierce fighting.

The Present

Coming right up to date, 1991 saw the Royal Marines involved in the Gulf War and in mounting a major humanitarian relief operation code named 'HAVEN', in support of the Kurdish people of Northern Iraq. In the last four years, Royal Marines have been deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina in a number of roles and are still serving with the NATO implementation Force today.

FREEDOMS & PRIVILEGES

Today the Royal Marines enjoy a number of privileges, which include the freedom of cities and towns. These privileges were earned by the Corps loyalty, devotion to duty and good character.

The freedom of a city or borough is the most honorable distinction that a local government council can bestow. Currently the Royal Marines have been granted to the following towns and cities:-

Deal	1945	Stanley (Falkland Isles)	1977
Chatham	1949	Exeter	1977
Plymouth	1955	Medway	1979
Portsmouth	1959	Newcastle Upon Tyne	1989
Poole	1973		

As well as the freedoms listed above the Royal Marines also have privileges in London. The City of London has the legal right to prevent troops freely entering the city, but since the formation 1664 of the Admirals Regiment, and subsequently the Royal Marines, the Corps has been granted the privilege of marching through the city with drums beating, bayonets fixed and Colours flying, and on 23rd April 1974 the Royal Marines were affiliated to the Church of the Corporation of the City of London, St Lawrence Jewry.

In addition the Royal Marines have been affiliated to the town of Exmouth since 1968.

There are currently three commando units in the Corp, these are 40, 42 & 45 Commando.

They are currently based at:-

40 Commando	Based in	Norton Manor, Taunton
42 Commando	Based in	Bickleigh Camp, Nr Plymouth
45 Commando	Based in	RM Condor, Nr Arbroath

The current Captain General of the Royal Marine Corps is HRH Prince Philip.