

MEMORANDUM ON REORGANISATION OF
ROYAL MARINES.

1. In consequence of the Reduction in the Personnel of the Fleet, the strength of the Royal Marines has been reduced from approximately 18,000 (strength before the war) to 9,797. (Staff on Recruiting 17, R.M.A. 2,119, R.M.L.I. 6,865, Band 790).

This reduction is due to the fact that Royal Marine numbers are based on the requirements of the Fleet plus a certain margin for casualties and shore establishments.

The reduction in effectives has necessitated a reduction in the Administrative Organisation which can only be effected by the abolition of one of the five Divisions or Depot.

2. The abolition of a Division is complicated by the fact of the separation of the Corps into the two branches (R.M. Artillery & R.M. Light Infantry); a difficulty which is accentuated by the smallness of the total numbers and the fact that the R.M. Artillery provide half detachments for Capital Ships only and do not provide their proportion of the special ratings required by the Fleet.

3. It has therefore become necessary to consider a re-organisation of the Corps which will admit of a Drafting Headquarters at each Home Port with a recruit Depot at Deal, and whose general training together with the provision of specialists will render the Corps available for any duty which the Royal Marines may be called upon to perform.

4. The following is a short account of the formation and relations of the two branches of the Corps :-

(i) Prior to 1804 there were 3 Divisions of R.M. stationed at Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth which were formed in 1755 under the Admiralty.

(ii) In 1804 3 Companies of R.M. Artillery were formed, one at each Division to take over the duties of the Royal Artillery in bomb vessels.

(iii) A 4th Division at Woolwich was added in 1804, and a 4th Artillery Company added in 1805. (Abolished in 1869 when Depot at Deal was formed).

(iv) The Artillery Companies were collected at Fort Monckton, Gosport in 1816 and attached to the Portsmouth Division.

(v) In 1832 the strength of the Corps having fallen to 9,000 men the Royal Marine Artillery were ordered to be abolished, but 2 Companies and a School of Gunnery were ordered to be retained at Portsmouth (Order-in-Council 6th February, 1832).

(vi) In 1855 the Royal Marines were granted the title of Light Infantry as a reward for services.

(vii) In 1859 the Royal Marine Artillery were formed into a separate Division at Fort Cumberland (later at Westney),

but

at forming part of the Portsmouth Division; the Officers were all on one list, and men for the Royal Marine Artillery were drafted from the Infantry Companies at Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth.

(viii) In 1862 (Order-in-Council 21st March, 1862) the Corps was definitely divided into two branches Royal Marine Artillery and Royal Marine Light Infantry; and the Officers placed on separate lists.

The strength at that time was 24 Artillery Companies and 116 Infantry equal to 18,000 men.

Recruits continued to be trained at Eeal and picked
drafted to Royal Marine Artillery till 1897 when the
Recruit Depot at Eastney was formed and recruits were entered
direct.

(ix) In the meantime R.M.L.I. who up to about 1840 had learnt no Naval Gunnery, were gradually being trained being granted 1d a day as T.** in 1881; and in 1902 all the higher Gunnery Ratings were opened to them.

(x) In 1919 the pay of both branches was equalised; prior to that time R.M.A. had received pay as Artillery and the R.M.L.I. as Infantry.

5. After consideration of various proposals for carrying out this reorganisation the Board consider that the most suitable method is the amalgamation of the 2 branches Royal Marine Artillery and the Royal Marine Light Infantry into one Corps with the title of Royal Marines (the title of the Corps prior to 1862).

A proposal to this effect was considered by the Board in 1919 and postponed sine die owing to the want of unanimity in the Corps, though unanimity cannot be expected on this point the conditions have so far altered as stated above that the change has become imperative.

6. The proposals of the Board are :-

(i) That the distinctive titles R.M.A. and R.M.L.I. shall be dropped and the Corps called "The Royal Marines".

(ii) That the Corps shall consist of :-

With a Depot for Recruits at Deal.

A School of Land Service Gunnery at Portsmouth.

A Musketry Training Camp and School at Brownstown.

The Royal Naval School of Music at Eastney.

The last 3 units attached to the Second Division and under the Commandant of that Division.

The Signal School & P.T., and Bavonet School to remain respectively at Chatham and Deal as at present.

(iii) The Officers' lists to be amalgamated in such a way as to create the least hardship. (See Appendix A. for proposals).

(iv) The Training of all Ranks to be that of Infantry in accordance with the Army Training Manuals of that arm, together with Naval Gunnery as at present laid down, and to provide the Non-substantive ratings now open to the Royal Marines.

4. (v) That specialists shall be trained as follows :-

(a) A percentage of Officers, Non-commissioned Offrs. & men to be trained in Land Gunnery to enable them to form the nucleus of Coast Defence, Anti-Aircraft and Medium Batteries, together with the management of Searchlights.

(b) Machine Gunners.

(c) Signallers.

(d) The various special ratings required by H.M. Fleet.

(e) All Recruits to receive preliminary Training at Deal.

It is considered that this training for Shore Service will provide the fleet with the personnel required for landing operations.

(vi) That the Regimental Colours be retained and carried by the 3 Divisions.

(vii) It is proposed to effect the amalgamation gradually by transfer between Divisions; such transfer to be voluntary as far as possible subject to the requirements of the Service.

(viii) Retirement of any Officers or Non-Commissioned Officers resulting from the amalgamation to be carried out on the principles of the retirement scheme in force for the recent reduction of the Navy, but if lists cannot be cleared in this way selection for retirement to be as laid down in recent Admiralty Fleet Orders.

(ix) Non-commissioned Officers and men transferred to other Divisions to be placed on the promotion rosters of their new Divisions in accordance with date of seniority or date of candidature.

Corporals R.M.A. c seniority prior to February 1918 to count seniority from date of promotion to Bombardier.

7. Uniform.

Proposals as to changes of uniform and badges are shown in Appendix B. It is proposed generally that the Uniform of the Corps should be Blue with Red facings, with the badge of the Globe and Laurel.

(Sgd.) H. E. Blumberg.
Adjutant General of
Royal Marines.

UNIFORM.

Certain points require decision at once. The uniform is precisely similar except in following respects.

1. Cloth Tunic not having been reintroduced the question of its colour and pattern does not arise at present, except in the case of the Divisional Bands, and the Detachments of the Royal Yacht, and it is submitted that His Majesty's pleasure should be taken on these points.

The Committee of Royal Marine Officers in 1919 reported as being in favour of generally blue.

2. Officers Mess Jackets.

R.M.A. Blue, R.M.L.I. Red. If there is no valid objection propose that the colour of jacket should be "Blue" of the present Infantry pattern with collar Badge, Globe and Laurel, Bugle and Grenade as described below, and badges of rank on lapel. Infantry pattern buttons, but this is a matter on which the opinion of the Officers might be taken.

3. Stripes on Officers' and Men's Trousers.

R.M.A. wear broad red stripe. Infantry Red Welt. Committee reported in 1919 in favour of broad red stripe; - This stripe however is peculiarly an artillery distinction and as bulk will be trained as Infantry it is hardly appropriate and a narrow stripe should be adopted.

4. Badges.

Collar. R.M.A. wear Grenade. R.M.L.I. Globe and Laurel. Globe & Laurel proposed for all.

Cap. R.M.A. wear Globe and Laurel with Grenade over (Officers crossed Guns over).

R.M.L.I. wear Globe and Laurel with Bugle over. Committee 1919 suggested Globe and Laurel with bugle over and grenade superimposed on bugle, and this is recommended for adoption.

Shoulder titles. R.M. instead of letters R.M.A. and R.M.L.I.

