

23 Royal Marines

The Royal Marines were founded upon infantrymen raised to serve at sea in 1664, and have retained their military-style organization since those days. The name 'Marines' was first applied in 1672 with the award of the distinction 'Royal' being granted in 1802. The 'Blue Marines' of the newly formed Royal Marine Artillery (RMA) were introduced in 1804 to serve alongside the 'Red Marines' of the Royal Marine Light Infantry (RMLI). The uniform worn by the Royal Marines reflected the style of the army uniform that was contemporaneous, with hats moving from tricornes to bicorns to shakos (black cylindrical hats with peaks), and then to helmets, which were first introduced in 1905. Caps ranged in design from the pillbox, the Glengarry and the peakless 'Broderick' of 1903 to the field service cap of 1897 and the blue beret of 1943. The green 'Commando' beret was introduced into the Royal Marines in 1960 and is worn only by those who have completed the Commando course. From the shako onwards, all required a badge to indicate the wearer's social position (officer or other rank), with arm, shoulder or cuff badges to indicate actual rank. The rank badges continued to follow the army tradition of crowns, stars ('pips') and stripes.

Royal Marine Officers (examples)
shako plates



Royal Marine Light Infantry 1856–1866.



Royal Marine Light Infantry 1866–1878.



Royal Marine Light Infantry
1866–1878 variant.

Helmet plates



Royal Marine Light Infantry 1878–1901.



Royal Marine Light Infantry
1878–1901 variant.



Royal Marine Artillery 1878–1905.

In 1923, the RMLI and the RMA were amalgamated in the face of threatened Treasury cuts, and reverted to the sole title 'Royal Marines' with the old army rank of 'Private' being replaced by 'Marine'. The blue uniform of the RMA was retained with the addition of the slashed 'mariner's cuff' and a red stripe down the trousers in remembrance of the red RMLI uniform. The 'Globe and Laurel' badge, first introduced during the time of King George IV, was adopted as the 'Corps' badge and used for wear on caps and berets. Originally, Sergeants and above wore a gilt version, with junior ranks wearing a badge of polished brass. Anodized badges were introduced for all ranks in 1958. A bronze version was worn in khaki service dress from the date of the merger, with a Bakelite version being produced for economy reasons during the Second World War. Since 1964, the bronze cap badge has been worn by all ranks in the field. From 1941, all ranks wore a red flash behind the badge on completion of basic training. With the introduction of the green beret, the red flash is worn on a blue beret only by Marines under training.



Royal Marine Light Infantry 1901–1905.



Royal Marines 1905–1953.



Royal Marines 1953–.

Other headgear



Busby badge and plume holder 1862–1878.



Glengarry badge 1870–1897.

Cap badges



Royal Marine Light Infantry 1880–1923.



Royal Marine Artillery 1880–1923.



General Officers (example showing pre-1953 crown).



Brigadiers and Colonels.



1923–1953.

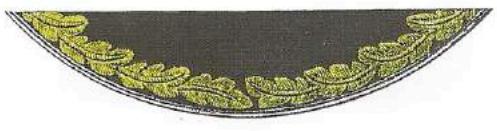


1953–.

Cap peaks 1953–



General Officers.



Brigadiers, Colonels, Lieutenant Colonels, Majors.



Gorget patches



Brigadiers and Colonels.

General Officers.

Collar badges



Blue uniform.

Royal Marine Light Infantry
Officer c.1895.Royal Marine Captain serving as a pilot with the
Royal Naval Air Service c.1915.

Mess jacket shoulder stripes



General Officers.

Brigadiers and Colonels.

Shoulder straps



General.



Lieutenant General.



Major General.



Brigadier.



Colonel.

Lieutenant Colonel.



Major.



Captain.



Lieutenant.



Second Lieutenant.

Buttons



General Officers.



Brigadiers and Colonels.



Chin straps.



All other officers.

Cuff insignia 1914–1918



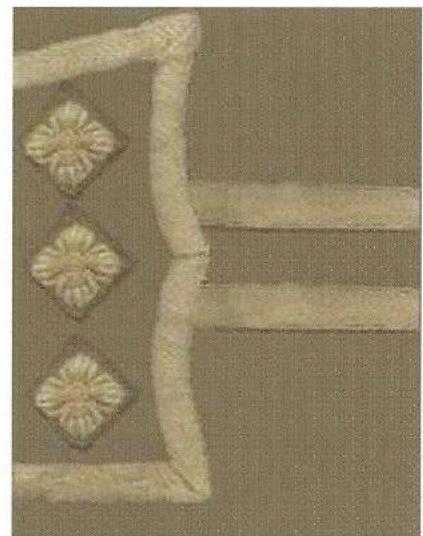
Colonel.



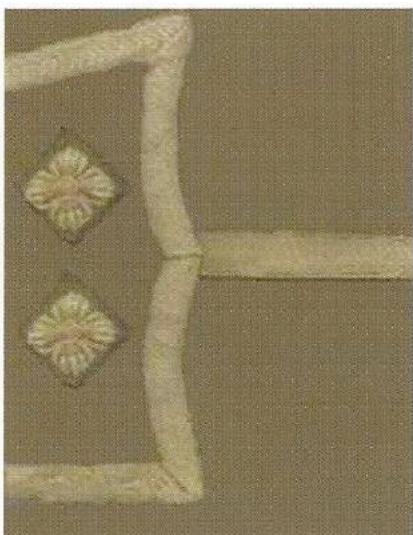
Lieutenant Colonel.



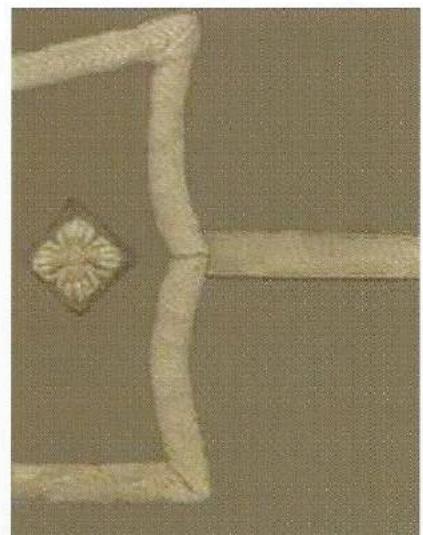
Major.



Captain.



Lieutenant.



Second Lieutenant.

Royal Marine Warrant Officers and Other Ranks (examples)
Shako plates



Royal Marines 1854-1866.

Royal Marines Light Infantry
1866-1878.

Helmet plates

Royal Marines Light Infantry
1878-1901.Royal Marines Light Infantry
1901-1905.

Royal Marine Light Infantry Private c.1895.

Royal Marine Light Infantry Bugler
wearing the 1870-1897 Glengarry badge.

Royal Marines 1905-1953.

Royal Marines 1953-.

Other headgear



Royal Marine Artillery Warrant Officer's busby badge and plume holder 1863-1878.



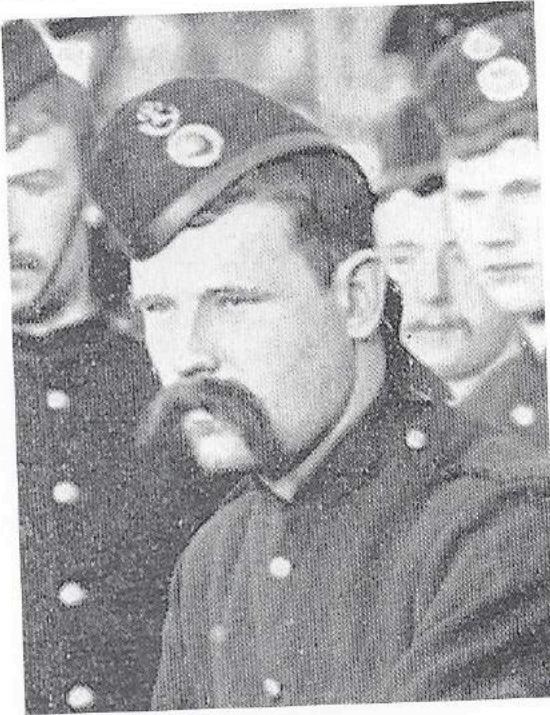
Royal Marine Artillery Other Ranks busby and plume holder 1863-1878.



Royal Marine Light Infantry Glengarry badge 1870-1897.



Royal Marine Artillery pillbox cap badges 1874-1892



Royal Marine Light Infantry Private wearing the 1870-1897 Glengarry badge.



Lance Sergeant.



Bombadier.



Lance Bombadier.



Private.

Cap badges



Royal Marine Light Infantry 1892-1923.



Sergeant Royal Marine Artillery 1892-1923.



Other Ranks Royal Marine Artillery 1892-1923.



Royal Marines Labour Corps 1916-1919.



Warrant Officer Royal Marines 1923-1953.



Other Ranks Royal Marines 1923-1953.



Warrant Officer 1st Class 2004-.



Warrant Officer 1953-2004, Warrant Officer 2nd Class 2004-.



Other Ranks 1953-.



Other Ranks, bronze version 1953-.

Warrant Officer's cuff badges (2007)



Warrant Officer 1st Class.



Warrant Officer 2nd Class.



Royal Marine c.1930. The chevrons above his left cuff are good conduct badges.

Non-commissioned Officer's rank stripe (Blue Uniform) 1953–



Colour Sergeant.



Sergeant.



Corporal.



Sergeant mess dress



Lance-Corporal.



Colour Sergeant's stripes for lovat uniform 1963-.



Sergeant Armourer (obsolete).



Provost Sergeant.



Hospital Sergeant in charge of the Infirmary (obsolete).

Royal Marine Light Infantry Colour Sergeant badges. Worn on the right arm, they were worn above three stripes from 1881



1830–1868.



1868–1881.

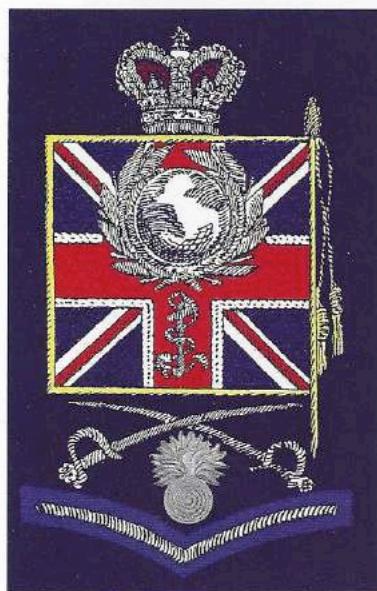


1881–1901.



1901–1923.

Royal Marine Artillery Colour Sergeant's badges. worn on the right arm, they were worn above three stripes from 1881



1862–1868.



1868–1901.



1901–1923.

Royal Marine Colour Sergeant's badges. Worn on the right arm, they were worn on the right arm of the blue uniform above three stripes



1923–1953.



1953–.

Collar badges



Warrant Officer 1st Class 2004-.



Other ranks.

Button



RMA 1901-1923.



1923-1953.



1953-(bronze).



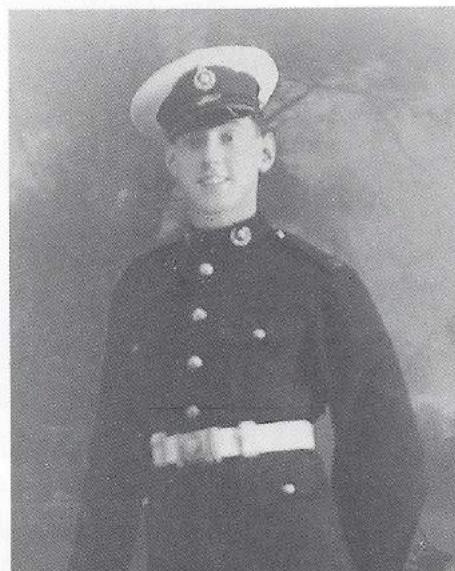
1953-(Staybright).



Royal Marine Artillery Lance Bombardier wearing the 1874-1892 pillbox cap badge.



Royal Marine Sergeant c.1925.



Royal Marine c.1928.

The Royal Marines Band (examples only)

It should be noted that, in general, rank insignia is identical to that of the Royal Marines.

Officers' helmet plates

Royal Marines Artillery Band
Master's busby badge 1860–1878.



Chatham Royal Marines Light
Infantry Band 1905–1950.



Royal Marines Band, Portsmouth Group
1955–1972. Band of Commander-in-Chief,
Naval Home Command 1972–. Band of
Her Majesty's Royal Marines, Portsmouth.

Warrant Officers and Other Ranks helmet plates

Royal Marines Band, Plymouth Division
1953–. Band of Her Majesty's Royal
Marines Commando Training Centre.



Chatham Royal Marines Light Infantry
Band 1905–1923. Royal Marines Band
Chatham Division 1923–1950.



Plymouth Royal Marines Light Infantry
1920–1923. Royal Marines Band, Plymouth
Division 1923–1953.



Royal Marines Band, Plymouth Division 1953–. Band of Her
Majesty's Royal Marine Commando Training Centre.



Royal Marines Band, Portsmouth Group 1955–1972. Band of
Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command. Band of Her
Majesty's Royal Marines Portsmouth.

Royal Naval School of Music and bands without specific cap badges 1903–1950

Cap badges



Bandmaster.



Bandsman.



Early Bandsman split variety.

Cap badges of other bands



Royal Marines Band, Portsmouth 1903–1911.



Royal Marines Band, Portsmouth 1911–1923. Band of the Royal Marines, Portsmouth Division 1923–1947. Royal Marines Band, Portsmouth Group. 1947–1955.



Royal Marines Band, Portsmouth Group, 1955–1972. Band of Commander-in-Chief, Naval Home Command, 1972–1997. Band of HM Royal Marines, Portsmouth 1997–.



Chatham Royal Marines Light Infantry Band 1902–1923.



Plymouth Royal Marine Light Infantry Band 1902-1911.



Plymouth Royal Marines Light Infantry Band 1911-1923.

Royal Marine Band,
Chatham 1923-1950.Band of the Royal Marines,
Plymouth 1923-1953.Royal Marines Band, Plymouth 1953-
Band of Her Majesty's Commando
Training Centre.

Collar badges



Officer's dress uniform 1923-.



Bandmaster, brass, blue uniform, 1903-1950.



Bandsman, brass, blue uniform, 1903-1950.

Bandsman, embroidered cotton, dress uniform, 1904-1950.



Drum Major c.1860.



Band Corporals, Musicians, embroidered cotton, c.1950–.



Sergeants, gold thread, 1950–.

Other badges



Bandmaster 1953–1968 (worn on right cuff). Warrant Officer 2nd Class, Bandmaster.



Other Bandsman.



Royal Marine Light Infantry Drum Major, c.1860. (Worn on both upper arms.)



Drum Major (worn on lower right arm).



Bugle Major (worn on lower right arm).