

Land Units 1919-1938

63rd (Royal Naval) Division and 3rd RM Brigade: Served in Dardanelles and Gallipoli, dispersed in June 1919.

1st and 2nd RMLI Battalions: Formed from remains of Battalions after Gallipoli, disbanded June 1919.

3rd RM Battalion: Raised October/November 1916.

4th RM Battalion: Assaulted the mole at Zeebrugge in 1918 and in their honour, no subsequent 4th Battalion has been raised.

5th RM Battalion: Formed September 1918 for coastal defence system. Disbanded January-February 1919.

RM Field Force: Formed 5th May 1918 as USSR support force, and served until July 1919. Left on 10th July 1919 and disbanded on their return to the UK.

6th RM Battalion: Formed July 1919 and diverted to Russia for relief of northern garrisons. Left Murmansk on 8th October and dispersed a week later.

7th RM Battalion: Raised summer 1919.

8th RM Battalion: Raised June 1920 as a local defence unit in Ireland. Withdrawn Spring 1922 from Ireland.

11th RM Battalion and RM detachments in Turkey: Deployed to Turkey against Nationalist uprisings. Withdrawn in August 1923 and disbanded September the same year in the UK.

12th RM Battalion: Formed for operations in China and arrived Shanghai 21st March 1927. Withdrawn 6th December.

13th RM (Reserve) Battalion: Formed from reservists at the time of the national coal strike in 1920, provided defences for installations and RN personnel in the mines. Disbanded within the year.

RM Battalion for Public Duties (London Battalion): Formed in July 1935 for these duties.

Infantry Units 1939-1946

RM Division HQ: Formed August 1940 with three Brigades 101, 102 and 103. Also had 15 RM(MG) Battalion, The Anti-Tank Battery and 18 RM(Mobile) Battalion. Became HQ of Special Service Group on 15th August 1943.

RM Brigade, later 101 RM Brigade: Formed December 1939. Split in January 1940 to 101 and 102 Brigades.

102 RM Brigade: Formed May 1940, Personnel became HQ staff of 3 SS (Cdo) Brigade in August 1943.

103 RM Brigade: Formed April 1941. Disbanded 17th June 1942.

104 RM (training) Brigade: Formed before Summer 1942, absorbed by RM Training Group in 1943.

116 Infantry Brigade RM: Formed to command beach battalions in January 1945, but disbanded in January 1946.

117 Infantry Brigade RM: Formed 16/1/1945 with three battalions, 31, 32 and 33 RM. Germany in Mid-May 1945. Returned UK 1/7/1945 and disbanded 31/8/1945.

1st RM Battalion: Formed 1/1940, trained for amphibious operations. Reformed as 42 RM Commando at the end of July 1943.

2nd RM Battalion: Formed 12/1939, and occupied Iceland as part of Force Sturges on 10th May 1940. Returned UK in late May and became part of 103 RM Brigade, before being reformed as 43 Commando in August 1943.

3rd RM Battalion: Formed December 1939 and took part in Dakar operations. before returning to UK in 2/1941. Reformed as 44 RM Commando in August 1943.

4th RM Battalion: Not formed in WW2

5th RM Battalion: Formed May 1940. Took part in Dakar operations before returned to UK. Trained for Amphibious operations in 1942, disbanded early August 1943 and reformed as 45 RM

commando.

6th RM Battalion: Not formed in World War II

7th RM Battalion: Formed April 1941 for service with 103 RM Brigade. Some served with MNBDO. Independent from May 1942. Sicily and Italian operations before returning to UK in 2/1944. Reformed as 48 RM Commando soon after.

8th RM Battalion: Formed April 1941. MNBDO operations. Reformed May 1942 and men transferred to 41 RM Commando in Autumn 1942. Battalion disbanded October-November 1942.

9th RM Battalion: Formed 1/1941 as part of 103 RM Brigade. Transferred to 7th RM in May 1942, reformed August 1943 as 46 RM Commando.

10th RM Battalion: Formed 18/4/1941. Amphibious exercise August 1941. Reformed as 47 RM Commando on 1/8/1943.

11th RM Battalion (Formerly Land Defence Force): Designated as 11th RM in 1940, originally being Land Defence Force of MNBDO. Egypt 2/1941. Raid on Kupho Nisi Island 15-16/4/1942. Operations in Tobruk 13-15/9/1942. Ceylon and India 1942-1943 until October 1944 when returned to UK and disbanded.

12th RM Battalion: Formed in UK about January 1942 as Land Defence Force of MNBDO II, was disbanded the same summer.

13th RM Battalion: Not formed in World War II

14th RM Battalion: Originally to replace 8th Argylls in RM Division but not raised.

15th RM Battalion and MG companies: Formed March 1941. Disbanded August-September 1943, many of the men posted to the gun crews of support landing craft.

16th and 17th RM Battalion: Not formed in WW2

18th RM (Mobile) Battalion and Mobile Companies: Formed in January 1940 as Mobile gun company of the RM Brigade. Reformed as 18th in March 1941. Disbanded August 1944.

19th RM Battalion and RM Companies at Scapa Flow: Originally Auxiliary Battalion but reformed later as 19th RM Battalion. Engaged in enlarging Scapa Flow during 1940-1942 when part of unit was sent to Ceylon with MNBDO I. Disbanded 1945.

20th RM (Training) Battalion, formerly RM Division Reinforcement Depot: Originally formed as a Reinforcement depot in 1940. Retitled in 1942. Merged with 21st RM Holding Battalion in October 1942 to form Infantry Training Centre.

21st RM Holding Battalion: Formed early 1942, Merged with 20th RM in October 1942.

22nd RM (Training) Battalion: Formed November 1942 for under 19 soldiers. Merged with 23rd RM in October 1944 to become part of RMTG Wales.

23rd RM (Trg) Battalion: Formed in April 1943 as part of 104 RM Training Brigade. merged with 22nd RM Battalion in October 1944.

24th RM Battalion: Formed late July 1943 in Ceylon from MNBDO I men. Never achieved full strength before returning to the UK.

25th RM Battalion: Not formed in World War II

26th RM Battalion: Raised to assist repairs to damage caused by V2 rockets in London, forming July 1944. Disbanded in early 1946.

27th RM Battalion: Formed 24/8/1944. Operations in Emden and Sengwarden after local enemy surrendered. Returned UK on 27-8/6/1944 and provided farm workers. Training Battalion early 1946 and absorbed 3rd RM Battalion. Disbanded later in 1946.

28th RM Battalion: Formed August 1944. Trained as nucleus for a Beach Group. Changed to Army battalion role. Served on the Maas. Returned UK 6/1945 and took part in Internal security duties. Disbanded 21/1/1946, men transferred to 27th RM.

29th RM Battalion: Trained as Nucleus of a Beach group from men transferred from the disbanded Armoured Support Group. Personnel drafted to form 34th Amphibian Assault Regiment RM on 3/10/1944. Battalion disbanded February 1946.

30th RM Battalion: Formed 15/1/1945. Disbanded 7/11/1945. Personnel merged with 28th RM

31st, 32nd and 33rd RM Battalion: These were Battalions of 117 RM Brigade formed Late January 1945. 33rd assisted with surrender of German fleet. 31st and 32nd joined in second week of

May 1945 as security troops before returning to the UK in July 1945. 31st and 32nd were disbanded shortly after. 33rd RM absorbed some men from these battalions before being disbanded on 7/10/1945

Other Infantry Units

- *60th Reinforcement Holding Unit:* Formed Spring 1945 and went to NW Europe under Army Command. Reverted to RM command 1/6/1945. Disbanded shortly after.
- *RM Base Defence Unit:* Formerly 'Y' Company. Formed 1945 for ground defence of naval bases.
- *Plymouth-Argyll Battalion:* Formed in Singapore 29/1/1942 with 'A' and 'B' Companies from 2nd Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. 'C' company from RM units on Prince of Wales and 'D' from Repulse In Action 8-15/2/1942 in Singapore before troops ordered to cease fire.
- *Defence Force RN Air Stations:* From 1940 and in some specific stations beforehand, RM units formed to provide ground defences of Naval air stations, and were organised in companies and platoons.

Commandoes 1942-1980

For this section, SS refers to 'Special Service' not German units!

SS Commando Group: Formed September 1943 to control the four new SS Brigades under General Sturges (GOC SS Group). In November 1944 all these Brigades titles changed from SS to Commando. Disbanded 8/8/1947.

HQ Commando Forces: Formed 31/10/1969.

1st SS/Commando brigade: Formed November 1943 and participated in the Normandy Landings and was withdrawn after 83 days to the UK. Took part in operations to penetrate the Siegfried line and crossing of the Rhine, Weser, Aller and Elbe rivers. Disbanded early 1946.

2 SS/Commando brigade: Formed 23/10/1943. Served in Italy, the Dalmation Islands, Albanida and Greece. Disbanded September 1945.

3 SS/Commando brigade: Formed 1/9/1943. Served in Ceylon, Kong Kong and undertook Internal security duties. Served in Malaya post war, Cyprus, Suez and Sarawak. Participated in NATO exercises in Norway throughout the Cold war.

4 SS/Commando brigade: Formed September 1943. Served in NW Europe after Normandy landings. After making preparations for Far East Operations before the war ended, returned to UK and disbanded in December 1945.

40 RM Commando: Formed February 1942 as The RM Commando, it was briefly known as A RM Commando before being designated 40 RM Commando. Retitled in August 1945 to 40 Commando RM. Served in Dieppe, St Benere, Termoli, Anzio. Comacchio during WW2. Postwar, 40 RM was disbanded early in October 1945, before reforming when 44 RM was redesignated. Served in Palestine, Malaya, Cyprus, Suez, Brunei and Borneo and Ireland.

41 RM Commando: Formed 10/10/1942. Operations at Salerno, Orne, Walcheren, before disbanding 20/2/1946. Reformed 16/8/1950 as 41 (Independent) Commando and served in Korea. 41 Commando was disbanded 22/2/1952, reforming 31/3/1960 as 41 Commando RM and served in Kenya, Norway and the West Indies. The Commando was disbanded again on 30/4/1977, but reformed in the autumn of that year. The commando went on to operations in Cyprus and Northern Ireland.

42 RM Commando: Formed Augst 1943. Redesignated 42 Commando RM early in 1946, heaving been 42 RM Commando (Light) since August 1945. During WW2, the Commando served in India and Burma. Postwar, the Commando operated in the far East, with combat operations in Malaya, Suez, Borneo and Brunei, and Northern Ireland.

43 RM Commando: Formed 1/8/1943 and disbanded September 1945. Reformed on 5/9/1961 until disbanded mid-November 1968. In World War 2, the Commando raided Hvar and other targets, Comacchio Spit and the Reno river. Postwar, the Commando participated in NATO Exercises.

44 RM Commando: Formed 1/8/1943. Changed titled to Commando RM in 1946, the redesignated 40 Commando RM in 16/3/1947. World War 2 operations included Burma, and Trincomalee.

45 RM Commando: Formed 8/1943 Redesignated 45 Commando RM in March 1946. World War 2 operations included Normandy landings, Rhein, Weser, Aller and Elbe crossings. Postwar, the Commando served in Malaya, Cyprus, Aden and in Northern Ireland. The Commando also participated in exercises in Norway under NATO command.

46 RM Commando: Formed August 1943 and disbanded 31/1/1946. Having taken part in operations at Normandy, The Orne line, Ostend and Antwerp.

47 RM Commando: Formed 1/8/1943, disbanded 31/1/1946 having taken part in operations in Norway, Normandy, Port-en-Bessin, Orne Line, Le Havre, Walcheren, the Maas and the Scheldt Estuary.

48 RM Commando: Formed 21/3/1944 and disbanded January 1946. Operations in Normandy and subsequent security duties.

RM Engineer Commando: This unit provided demolitions and assault engineers for the Normandy invasion Mine-Clearing, demolition and other work was also undertaken. These units eventually developed into today's RM Assault Engineers.

Commando Logistic Regiment: This formation was created to provide logistical support in the mid-1960s to the Commando deployments, which could not be provided by existing formations. The unit also included army personnel.

Commando Brigade Air Squadron: A light aircraft unit formed by various commandoes used to support the Commandoes in the field were amalgamated on 12/8/1968. The flights have served with their respective commandoes in Northern Ireland and other locations, operating helicopters such as the Aerospatiale Gazelle and Westland Scout.

Comacchio Company RM: Formed in 1980 to provide detachments for the defence of naval installations.

29 Commando Regiment RA: Formed in 1961, to operate light artillery in support of the commandoes. The Brigade took part in operations in Borneo, Malaya, Singapore, Brunei, Sarawak, Cyprus, Aden and Northern Ireland.

59th Independent Commando Squadron RE: Formed as a Field Company in 1900, the Squadron served in both World Wars and reformed as its current title in April 1971. They build bridges, ferry troops, lay and/or clear minefields, as well as other defences.

Other Commando and SS Units: Varied units included Boom Patrol detachments, Assault units, Mountain and Arctic Warfare Cadre (now Brigade Patrol group) and the SBS (Special Boat Squadron).

Raiding Squadrons RM: Reformed in the 1960s from its WW2 ancestors. They normally land from rigid raiders or from inflatables, and typically carry out raids against shore installations and provide training for the other Commandoes in this necessary skill.

MNBDO

'X' Organisation, Later MNBDO Nucleus: Formed autumn 1923 at Fort Cumberland. Men went to MNBDO I on its formation, though some skeleton AA units remained.

MNBDO Group: The RM component of a RN Mobile Naval Base.

MNBDO I: Formed 1/9/1939 for defence of Naval bases. Disbanded 9/1944.

MNBDO II: Formed January 1941. Disbanded 5/1944.

Fortress Unit I: Formed 8/1939 as defence units to install and man guns for Scapa Flow and other Naval bases. Also served in Iceland. Disbanded 1/1941 when absorbed into MNBDO II.

Fortress Unit II: Formed 5/1940. It became the L & M Group of MNBDO II.

Special Gun-mounting Party, RM: Formed 27/8/1939 to install coastal defense guns around major ports, including Yarmouth.

3 Mobile Naval Base Brigade: Formed Summer 1943 to defend against Japanese amphibious and other raids on naval bases in Ceylon. Disbanded 14/5/1944, personnel remustered for LC crews.

'MNB Group' with XXXIII Indian Corps: 1 RM AA Brigade HQ and 1st RM (Heavy) AA Regiment (and L & M Unit) from MNBDO I were sent to India from Ceylon in April 1943. Disbanded in January 1944.

Land Artillery Units

Artillery of World War I: The RMA formation that had fought in the 1914-1918 war but was disbanded in 1919.

Artillery HQs RM Division:

Brigade Artillery HQs: In August 1942 part of Arty HQ RM Division became a separate Artillery Headquarters. Disbanded August 1943 and personnel posted to Armoured Support Group.

Air Defence Brigade MNBDOI/1RM Anti-Aircraft Brigade/HQ AA Ceylon: Formed as the nucleus of an air defence group on 29/1/1940. Air Defence Brigade MNBDO I dispersed 12/1942. 1RM AA Brigade and HQ AA Ceylon formed 1941 and disbanded in UK on 7/5/1944.

Air Defence Brigade MNBDO II/2 AD Brigade: Formed 5/2/1941. Became HQ 5 RM AA Brigade in Spring 1944.

3 and 4 RM AA Brigades: Not formed in World War II

Artillery Staff HQ MNBDO II: August 1942 to July 1943.

5 RM AA Brigade: Units of MNBDO AA Brigade retained were formed in 5 RM AA Brigade on 22/3/1944. Manned Scheldt AA defences in the winter of 1944-1945. Relieved 5/3/1945 after having contributed to the defence of Antwerp against V1 and V2 attacks. Returned UK May 1945 and disbanded 12/1945. Personnel and HQs absorbed by 27th and 28th RM.

RM Siege Regiment: Manned coastal defence 14inch BL guns and were engaged against German defences in Boulogne and Calais. Did exchange shells with German guns on French coast occasionally. Units disbanded 3/1945.

RM Light AA Regiment/1st RM Light AA Regiment: Formed Summer 1942 as Organic artillery units.

1st RM AA Regiment: Formed 2/1940 and served in Ceylon and Egypt.

2nd RM AA Regiment: Formed 15/4/1940? Served in Crete, Egypt and Indian Ocean Islands.

1st RM (Heavy) AA Regiment: Formed 12/1941. Operations in defence of London against V1s, Cherbourg and Antwerp.

2nd RM (Heavy) AA Regiment: Formed 12/1941. Disbanded 23/5/1944.

3rd RM AA Regiment/3rd RM (Heavy) AA Regiment: Formed January 1941. Served in Egypt, Scotland, Cherbourg, Antwerp and Ostend. Disbanded November 1945.

4th RM AA Regiment/4th RM (Light) AA Regiment: Formed as a regiment of MNBDO II Air Defence Brigade, January 1941. Served with MNBDO II, Egypt, Sicily, Scotland, Cherbourg, Antwerp and Ostend. Disbanded 29/10/1945.

11st RM Searchlight Regiment/'S' RM Battalion: Formed 2/1940 as part of MNBDO. Operations in Egypt, Crete and Ceylon. Disbanded June 1943.

12th RM Searchlight Regiment: Formed January 1941 as part of MNBDO II. Operations on UK Southern Coast, in Sicily and Italy. Disbanded April 1944.

RM Coast Brigade/1 RM Coast Brigade/1st RM Coast Regiment: Formed 15/2/1940 by MNBDO I. Briefly known as RM Coast Defence Group. Operations in Crete, Egypt, the Indian Ocean and Ceylon. Disbanded in Ceylon February 1944.

2nd Coast Brigade/2nd RM Coast Regiment: Formed by MNBDO II in January 1941. Mediterranean, Sicily and Italy operations. Disbanded mid-1944.

RM Quick Firing (QF) Regiment: Formed mid-May 1940 by MNBDO I. Disbanded within 10 weeks of their formation.

RM Field Artillery Regiment: Formed as organic artillery units in September 1942. Disbanded August 1943.

RM Anti-Tank Regiment: Formed 26/10/1942 as organic artillery for 102 Brigade Artillery HQ. Disbanded 31/7/1943.

Artillery Batteries and Associated Units: Various RM AA, Tank Killing and standard artillery units were formed. Some under Naval or Army command.

Beach Units

RM Beach Battalion/RM Beach Unit/RM Beach Group: Formed 7/7/1941. Initial roles to land

RM Division and its stores and holding the beach area, and to cover any withdrawal if the operation was a raid. Redesignated Beach Unit HQ in September 1942. Became RM Beach Group later. Trained 27 and 28 RM beach groups. Disbanded Spring 1945.

1 and 2 Beach Groups/1 and 2 Landing Groups: Formed October 1942. Exercised in Scotland and at Christchurch on Amphibious landings. Disbanded 31/7/1943.

1st Middle East Beach Brick/Beach Brick 31: 7th RM Battalion formed the nucleus of this unit and was enlarged as Beach brick 31 in 1943. Landed in Sicily, before reverting to infantry role under XXX Corps on D+7.

Force X: Ship unloading company. RM Engineers and Landing Craft Crews served under command Rn Iceland from 7/1940-6/1942. Formed RN Repair Base, Hvitanes.

Other Mobile Base Units

MOLCAB I: MOLCAB (Mobile Landing Craft Advanced Base) was formed 1-2/1945 to provide shore base facilities for minor landing craft and their maintenance units while away from the parent ships. Disbanded 1945.

MOLCAB II: Formed 2/1945 as Naval Party 2401. Not employed as war ended before its' Pacific operations could begin.

MOLCAB III: Formed 2/1945. Operations in Antwerp. Disbanded 6/1945.

MOLCAB IV, V and VI: Formed 4/1945. Disbanded later in 1945.

MOLCAB Assembly Base: Formed 12/7/1945 from an RN Command. Base was disbanded in the autumn of 1945.

MONABS: 11 of these had reached planning stages in August 1945, to build intermediate forward bases in the Pacific. All units disbanded as the war ended, after being used on restoration work in some cases.

Ocean Fortresses: Indian Ocean Island garrison manning coastal defence guns. Abandoned after WW2 but rebuilt in 1950s as an RAF staging post.

Armoured Support Formations

RM Support Craft Regiment: Formed 7-8/1945. Units became nuclei of units in the Armoured Support Group at the end of 1943. Disbanded March 1944.

Armoured Support Craft Group: Formed 14/3/1944, this Group would command the Two Armoured Support Regiments and an Independent Battery of Centaur Tanks. Action in Normandy. Personnel disbanded Autumn 1944 and personnel transferred to the 29th RM Battalion, later forming the 34th Amphibian Support Regiment.

1st and 2nd Armoured Support Regiments: Formed Spring 1944. Action in Normandy, tactical portion only landing, disbanded Autumn 144. Many of the HQ staff transferred ultimately to the 34th Amphibian Support Regiment.

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th (Independent) Armoured Support Batteries: Normandy operations, before being withdrawn on 24/6/1944. Equipped with Sherman tanks, supplemented by 95mm Howitzer equipped Centaur tanks. Disbanded 3/10/1944 when the 29th RM Battalion formed.

Armoured Support Group HQ Wing and Holding Battery: Included reserve tank crews, mechanics for RM tanks.

34th Amphibian Support Regiment: Formed 1/3/1945 from 29th RM Battalion. Served in Indian 5/1945 and was equipped with Rocket, Armoured and Flamethrower LVTs. Only employed on internal security operations due to the end of the war. Returned UK 1946 and disbanded that autumn.

Naval Parties and Missions

These units covered varied operations and units form Black Sea operations in 1918, Yangtse river guards, Patrol crews, Naval Missions, Port Parties and Beach Control Parties.

Royal Marine Engineers

Formed 19/3/1940 after WW1 unit was disbanded at the end of WW1. by 1/8/1945, the Engineers

strength had reached 257 officers and 7,764 other ranks in the battalions.

RM Signals

The Signallers were trained at the Signals School at Chatham. During World War II they served with RM formations, and in August 1945 a Line Signals Unit was briefly formed in Hong Kong.

RM Provost Units

Provost sections served with all higher RM formations during WW2, including those landed at Dieppe and Normandy. they worked with the army to direct traffic and undertook other duties besides policing patrols.

RM Reserve

The RM Volunteer Reserve was formed by the 1903 Act, and in 1948 Parliament approved an RM Forces Volunteer reserve of 200 officers and 1,300 other ranks. In 1975 strength was reduced to 1,300. and has since been reduced even further.