Royal Marines Museum – Service Narrative

DUTS IS THE STORY OF the Royal Marine, the nation’s vital amphibious force which has fought at sea and on land across four centuries. We tell this dynamic story of challenge, conflict, heroism and change through the inspirational achievements of Marines past and present.

Our narrative has four overlapping themes:

1. Purpose
2. People
3. Environment
4. Change

We focus on how the people who have served as Royal Marines and consider the future of those still to join.

We consider its future use.

We describe the impact that the Royal Marines have made at sea and on land, in peace and in war, and show the Corps as an enduring example for forces in other countries.

We describe how the Royal Marines have made decisive interventions around the world – for example at Belle Isle in 1761, at Zeebrugge in 1918, D-Day and Walcheren in 1944, the Falklands in 1982, the Al Faw Peninsula in 2003, Ashoura in 2006, the 2005 Tsunami in South East Asia, the 2010 Haitian earthquake, the 2011 Libya campaign, Operation Herrick, 16 February 2007.

We describe its importance in the history of Royal Marine Commandos. We also consider the Corps’ marked ability to adapt and flex to accommodate new men and women coming as future recruits and training of women as Royal Marine Commandos.

We look at the changes in the 19th century from ships relying on wind and the boats relying on oars to steam power, which was capable of moving against the wind and the tide.

We look at the changes in the kit and equipment of individual Marines over time, and consider the importance of being able to modify and adapt that kit.

We consider how the versatility of marine forces allow them to be poised, choosing when and where to take the initiative to land and whether to deploy by sea or take to the air in helicopters. We show how professionalism will be essential to the exercise of this power and consider its future use.

We consider how officers and men uniquely strive together through the different periods. We consider how a role which spans sea and land has given the Corps a unique relationship to, and understanding of, both the Royal Navy and the Army. How an instinctively joint approach and the ability to move between different environments has allowed them to reach further, faster and deeper in all environments across the globe.

We consider how this dynamism of challenge, conflict, heroism and change through the inspirational achievements of Marines past and present has led to a multitude of individual roles; as signallers, snipers, ship’s policemen, anti-kayakers, infiltrators, commandos, paratroopers, aircrew men, mountain leaders, beretmen and in special forces.

We tell the story of the people who have served as Royal Marines and consider the future of those still to join. We look at the changes they have faced in varied environments as they fight on and off this earth. We describe the origins of the Marine Regiments in 1664 and trace their development from a temporary, ad hoc force raised during war into a permanent Corps of Marines which, from 1755, developed a distinctive capability, tradition and identity – one of ‘soldier’ officer and ‘seaman’.

We see how the Corps changed through peace and war, examine its strong public reputation and a characteristic which drives and unites its people:

- the spirit
- the quality
- the ability to succeed
- the ability to adapt

We examine how their special strength stems from their constant readiness, capability and mobility which means that they have often been the first to arrive off a foreign shore and in conflicts which marked the withdrawal from empire.

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We consider how officers and men uniquely strive together through the different periods. We consider how a role which spans sea and land has given the Corps a unique relationship to, and understanding of, both the Royal Navy and the Army. How an instinctively joint approach and the ability to move between different environments has allowed them to reach further, faster and deeper in all environments across the globe. We consider how the Corps’ marked ability to adapt and flex to accommodate new men and women coming as future recruits and training of women as Royal Marine Commandos.

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We consider the impact of innovation and of technology and how these have allowed the Royal Marines to reach further, faster and deeper in all environments across the globe.

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The historical narrative outlines in more detail our story with a focus on key events, developments which have been identified as a focus within our four themes.

1664–1755 England’s First Marines

People

In 1664 Charles II ordered 1,200 land soldiers to be raised in readiness for ‘sea service’ in his fleet. The men of this that of York and Albany’s Maritime Regiments of Foot (aka the Admiral’s Regiment) were the first sailors to be part of the Royal Marines. They landed at different times. The regiments of Marines were the Royal Navy’s soldiers, joining the Navy’s ships in detachments – the numbers varied with the number of guns in the ship but usually at a ratio of one marine per gun, so a 64 gun ship would have 64 marines. The ‘men of the Marine’ included Drummers (later known as Buglers) to provide signalling and the passing of orders; they were soon also trained to play the fife, becoming the first Marine Bands.

Regiments for Sea Service were raised and disbanded as the chance of war, and the willingness of Parliament to vote money, waxed and waned. The Admiral’s Regiments took part in all the major engagements of the Dutch Wars, but was disbanded in 1666. It did not re-form until the country’s suspicion of a standing army had increased. It had a reputation of being the disciplined, trained, paid and officered, but seasonal, force that the Admiralty had long desired. By the subsequent wars with France, the regiments were raised in 1690 (at least, as late as 1691 and 1706, see List of Warship Companions below), in 1712-1713 and 1725. The Marine regiments of William III were at the battles of Beachy Head (1690), Solebay (1690) and the subsequent boat action at La Hogue. In 1708 at Gibraltar a combined brigade of British and Dutch marines landed from the fleet, captured the Rock and subsequently held it against repeated attacks during a nine month siege. By the end of the period the Marines had numbers varied with the number of guns in the ship but usually at a ratio of one marine per gun, so a 64 gun ship would have 64 marines. The ‘men of the Marine’ included Drummers (later known as Buglers) to provide signalling and the passing of orders; they were soon also trained to play the fife, becoming the first Marine Bands.

As the pursuit of wealth and trade expanded the Navy’s operations content, the power of a force which could land, capture and hold the bases to sustain the fleet became more essential.

Fighting Peacetime Wars

Marine Commandos

The following sections set out the key events/developments which have been identified as a focus within our four themes.

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part of it for administrative purposes but were under the Marine regiments were raised by the Army and remained took up garrison duty and became an indistinguishable part billeted in small groups close to naval bases and dockyards secondary role so in the 1690s for example it was established capture fortified positions ashore. At times this was still a Progress

The administration of these regiments was characterised by confusion, corruption and ongoing form of continuity which stopped them from developing the institutional identity and the traditions which are essential to building a strong esprit de corps.

In April 1746 the ten Marine regiments raised in 1739-41 were transferred to Admiralty control and this was the first step in Lord of the Admiralty, re-established the Marines in 1755 he gave them a flexible administrative and tactical structure and a permanent establishment that gave the stability to meet the 18th century. Now they were permanently established one question remained: how should they be financed?

The powder of the Corps came from their versatility as soldiers who were not rooted in a regimental structure or restrained to brand and dress uniform it. At sea, officers and men had a ‘barrack company’ only for administration and pay; it was the ‘sea service roster’ maintained for each ship’s officers and ship’s company, giving a unique

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In 1815 the Royal Marines were firmly established as a permanent and respected force and embarked on a course that would last through the 19th century to a total of 76,000 men by 1900. From mid-century they fell into two separate categories: the Royal Marine Artillery (RMA) – the Bluecoats (6,000 by 1850) and the Royal Marine Light Infantry (RMLI) – the Redcoats (15,000). These attracted and developed different types of people: the Bluecoats, stuffy, old-fashioned, meticulously weighed; the RMLI: more fleet-of-foot, smaller, scamp-like, the Light Infantry, frigate in their cap badge. The Marines attracted esprit de corps, which could not be purchased, inherited, and driven by their desire for promotion, often their only love, or the only love shown by the superior society. There was a steady growth, accepting very slow promotion, and with relatively few high ranks to attain.

The more who joined needed to accept a disciplined life and were proud to be ‘sea-cooks’ wherever others in ships company were never. With VR in the Indian Mutiny, they were able to care for the welfare of the German ships, the Russian, the French, the American, and providing support, their duty all the more important when they travelled, fought and bore a long service commission – the RMLI colours were carried into battle. Through the 1870s the Royal Marines were heavily committed to the war in Egypt and then the service actions against the值得一念的 façade. It was possible providing support was key, whether in civil power – win wars – or in trade – as in anti-piracy work in the Persian Gulf.

As British and Foreign Empire expanded the Royal Marine was in a key part of Business wanted to provide landing parties and when necessary to extend their service ashore as formed battalions alongside the Army. In colonial battles during the century, RML landing operations but in Britain there were no ‘amphibious’ operations but in Britain there were no ‘amphibious’ operations at the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, dramatically shortened sailing times to reach British interests and when the British Empire burgeoned. Royal Marine could maintain action around the globe. In the Cold War in Spain, the Falklands, the Gulf War in 1991, the Balkans with the Moors in 1804, and Burma 1899. During the Crimean War (1854-1855) some 2,700 Royal Marines were committed above Balaklava and at the Battle of Inkerman, also in the Baltic. Marine divisions and a large number of troops were landed in the Crimea, and the Light Infantry was important when they travelled, fought and bore a long service commission – the RMLI colours were carried into battle. Through the 1870s the Royal Marines were heavily committed to the war in Egypt and then their service actions against the值得一念的 façade. It was possible providing support was key, whether in civil power – win wars – or in trade – as in anti-piracy work in the Persian Gulf.

Purposes

King George IV, in designing the new Corps colours presented in 1827 was asked to consider no less than 106 battle honours (a good regiment of the line could muster just 20); many more would follow by 1900. The principal names of the Corps were often carried against forces far outside the British Empire. In colonial battles during the century, RML landing parties fought against indigenous enemies and then the RMLI – more fleet-of-foot, smaller, scamp-like, the Light Infantry, frigate in their cap badge. The Marines attracted esprit de corps, which could not be purchased, inherited, and driven by their desire for promotion, often their only love, or the only love shown by the superior society. There was a steady growth, accepting very slow promotion, and with relatively few high ranks to attain.

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The period between 1914 and 1945 was a period of unprecedented change for the Royal Marines. Not only were the two arms of the Corps fused to amalgamate, but also the size of the Corps shrank as expansion was replaced by the demands of war. The last commando appeared in France in 1918 and the last unit was in the Pacific in 1945. Despite this, the Corps continued to provide the imetus for the reorganisations born out of the Second World War. The opportunity afforded by the reorganisation to show the Corps’ versatility, dependability and resourcefulness at the later stages of the war paid dividends when at the end of war, the Commando role was re-introduced to the Second World War.
The Royal Marines boarding team aboard one of the Commando carriers. The effective use of these carriers by that power and capability was fully demonstrated during the ships and the Royal Marines became leading exponents in amphibious matters that culminated in the development of their use alongside the US Marine Corps. The expression of 45 Commando became the first unit in the world to launch a capability. The success of the Suez operation in 1956 in which have been influential in the development of the amphibious The link to the sea has remained strong and Royal Marines and overcame adversity in their own inimitable style. The Southern Arabia or the cold and wet of the Falklands Islands to adapt to the streets of Northern Ireland, the hot sands of courageous, resilient and self-disciplined career Marines able The mixed force of National Service and career Marines became an amphibious ‘Fire Brigade’ east of Suez during the retreat from empire, fighting insurgency in East Africa, Aden and over came in 1964, the Tercentenary of service to the Crown by the Royal Marines, the role of the Corps was, ‘To By Sea and Land, the Royal Marines have provided a robust and increasingly sophisticated response to the nation’s challenges. From whatever direction they have come, the nation’s interests. The history of the Corps is littered with threats and challenges. From his predecessors to be ‘His Majesty’s Jollies’, Nelson’s Lobsters, ships Marines of the First World War. The lessons from these operations have shaped the powerful and adaptable commando capability, and the ability to adapt to an unfamiliar world.

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By Sea and Land, the Royal Marines have provided a robust and increasingly sophisticated response to the nation’s challenges. From whatever direction they have come, the nation’s interests. The history of the Corps is littered with threats and challenges. From his predecessors to be ‘His Majesty’s Jollies’, Nelson’s Lobsters, ships Marines of the First World War. The lessons from these operations have shaped the powerful and adaptable commando capability, and the ability to adapt to an unfamiliar world.

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Objective in all they do. By the blending of concepts or National Service Marines with the regular Corps, the development of new and scientific training techniques and a demonstration by the Landings at Suez. It The lessons from these operations have shaped the powerful and adaptable commando capability, and the ability to adapt to an unfamiliar world.

The Royal Marines have sought to deliver