



History of the Royal Marines

The Corps of Royal Marines, the infantry land fighting element of the United Kingdom's Royal Navy, was formed as part of the Naval Service in 1755. However, it can trace its origins back as far as 1664, when English soldiers first went to sea to fight the Dutch.

Origin

The 'first official' unit of English Naval Infantry, originally called the **Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment of Foot** and soon becoming known as the **Admiral's Regiment**, was formed on Tuesday, 28 October 1664, with an initial strength of 1,200 infantrymen

The Regiment was very distinctive, being dressed in old gold, rather than the Red coat of the other regiments, until 1685. John Churchill, later the 1st Duke of Marlborough, was the most famous member of this regiment.

First World War

During World War I, in addition to their usual stations aboard ship, Royal Marines were part of the Royal Naval Division that landed in Belgium in 1914 to help defend Antwerp and later took part in the amphibious landing at Gallipoli in 1915. It also served on the Western Front in the trenches.

The Division's first two commanders were Royal Marine Artillery Generals. Other Royal Marines acted as landing parties in the Naval campaign against the Turkish fortifications in the Dardanelles before the Gallipoli landings. They were sent ashore to assess damage to Turkish fortifications after bombardment by British and French ships and, if necessary, to complete their destruction. The Royal Marines were the last troops to leave Gallipoli, replacing both British and French troops in a neatly planned and executed withdrawal from the beaches. It even required some Marines to wear French uniforms as part of the deception.

In 1918, Royal Marines led the Zeebrugge Raid. Five Royal Marines earned the Victoria Cross in the First World War, two at Zeebrugge, one at Gallipoli, one at the Battle of Jutland and one on the Western Front. After the war Royal Marines took part in the allied intervention in Russia. In 1919, the 6th Battalion RMLI rose in mutiny and was disbanded at Murmansk.