



63rd (Royal Naval) Division

The **66rd (Royal Naval) Division** was a United Kingdom infantry division which served during the First World War. It was originally formed as the **Royal Naval Division** at the outbreak of the war, from Royal Navy and Royal Marine reservists and volunteers, who were not needed for service at sea. The division fought at Antwerp in 1914 and at Gallipoli in 1915. In 1916, following many losses among the original naval volunteers, the division was transferred to the British Army as the **63rd (Royal Naval) Division**, re-using the number from the disbanded second-line 63rd (2nd Northumbrian) Division Territorial Force.

Origins

On 16 August, Winston Churchill the First Lord of the Admiralty, decided to embody two more Naval brigades with surplus Naval Reservists, to join with the Marine Brigade to produce a composite Royal Naval Division.

The eight battalions were named after naval commanders, Drake, Benbow, Hawke, Collingwood, Nelson, Howe, Hood and Anson, later being numbered from 1st–8th. The division was not provided with medical, artillery or engineer units, consisting solely of lightly-equipped infantry.

The General inspecting the trenches
Exclaimed with a horrified shout
"I refuse to command a division
Which leaves its excreta about".

But nobody took any notice
No one was prepared to refute,
That the presence of shit was congenial
Compared to the presence of Shute.

And certain responsible critics
Made haste to reply to his words

Observing that his staff advisors
Consisted entirely of turds.

For shit may be shot at odd corners
And paper supplied there to suit,
But a shit would be shot without mourners
If somebody shot that shit Shute.

In 2003, Corrigan wrote that Shute was entirely right to criticise the neglect of hygiene and the cleaning of weapons, which led in January 1918, to the 2nd Ox and Bucks Light Infantry severely censuring the Nelson Battalion for dirtiness and the leaving of food around, attracting rats.