



Royal Field Artillery

History

The introduction of artillery into the English army came as early as the Battle of Crécy in 1346. Henry VIII made the army's artillery semi-permanent in the sixteenth century but the recognition of the need for a permanent body of artillery did not happen until 1716. Traynes were raised at Woolwich. The title "Royal Artillery" (RA) was first used in 1720. The regiment was under the control of the Board of Ordnance until the board was abolished in 1855. Thereafter the regiment came under the War Office along with the rest of the army. The School of Gunnery established at Shoeburyness, Essex in 1859.¹ In 1862 the regiment absorbed the artillery of the British East India Company—21 horse batteries and 48 field batteries—which brought its strength up to 29 horse batteries, 73 field batteries and 88 heavy batteries.

On 1 July 1899, the Royal Artillery was divided into three groups: the Royal Horse Artillery of 21 batteries and the Royal Field Artillery of 95 batteries comprised one group, while the coastal defence, mountain, siege and heavy batteries were split off into another group named the Royal Garrison Artillery of 91 companies.

From its beginnings, the Royal Artillery has been based at Woolwich, in south-east London