

Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisation 1 ⁽¹⁾

Headquarters, Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisation 1
M.N.B.D.O. Signals Company, R.M.
Suda Sector Signals Section
Naval Officer in charge, Suda and Naval Base Details

Coast Artillery

15th Coast Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽²⁾
'Z' Coast Battery, Royal Marines ⁽³⁾

Anti-Aircraft Artillery

'M' Group

52nd (East Lancashire) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽⁴⁾
(H.Q., 151st Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, 129th & 156th (East Lancashire) Light Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

'S' Group

234th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Royal Artillery ⁽⁴⁾
2nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Marines ⁽⁵⁾
(H.Q., 'A' & 'C' Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries, 23rd Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, Royal Marines)

304th Searchlight Battery, Royal Artillery ⁽⁶⁾

NOTES:

1. The Mobile Naval Base Defence Headquarters (M.N.B.D.O.) 1 formed the Suda Bay Sector of Creforce. Major General Eric Culpepper WESTON, C.B., Royal Marines, commanded this formation, which was mainly a Royal Navy organisation. The formation of the organisation was approved with effect from 12 September 1939, with an establishment of 78 officers and 2,150 other ranks. Equipment, however, was short, e.g., there only being 6 searchlights available out of the establishment of 48. The Mobile Naval Base was commanded by a Royal Navy Captain, with the Royal Marines providing the defence element for the Naval Base. Brigadier (Temporary) WESTON assumed command of the new formation on 1 March 1940, with the Headquarters Wing being formed four days later at Fort Cumberland and Hayling Island in Hampshire. On 1 January 1941, M.N.B.D.O. 2 was formed, with 500 personnel transferring to the new unit. The Headquarters closed at Fort Cumberland on 4 February 1941, and it sailed for the Middle East, by which time, WESTON had been promoted to the rank of Major General. Travelling via Durban, the formation reached Egypt on 23 April, with the heavy equipment being unloaded at Haifa in Palestine. Major General WESTON took elements of M.N.B.D.O. 1 to Crete, where they landed on 9 May and took command of the Suda Bay area. The formation suffered about 1,200 casualties, mostly prisoners-of-war, as a result of the campaign in Crete. The Sector Headquarters was composed of 29 officers and 223 other ranks. The M.N.B.D.O. Signals Company, a Royal Marine unit, had a strength of 6 officers and 220 other ranks. The Sector Signals Section, which was provided by the Army, comprised 2 officers and 40 other ranks. The Naval Officer i/c Suda had a staff of 15 officers and 300 men.
2. This regiment was armed with four 6" and two 4" coastal guns, and two 12 pounder guns and two searchlights. Its strength was 25 officers and 440 other ranks. Following the invasion, the regiment acted as infantry.
3. This battery was located in the Maleme Sector and was equipped with two 4" guns. It had a strength of 3 officers and 82 other ranks.
4. The 52nd (East Lancashire) L.A.A. Regiment was a Territorial Army unit that was based in Burnley and nearby towns. The 154th L.A.A. Battery was based in Church, Accrington, the 155th L.A.A. Battery was also based in Burnley, and the 156th L.A.A. Battery was based in Clitheroe. The regiment mobilised on 1 September 1939, and was sent to France to come under command of I Corps. It was in action around Tournai on 18 May, and on 22 May, it came under command of the 42nd (East Lancashire) Infantry Division. The regiment provided anti-aircraft cover for the beaches at Dunkirk, before being evacuated itself. It was refitted in the North Midlands, and then was sent to Egypt in September 1940. The R.H.Q. and 156th L.A.A. Battery were sent to Crete in December 1940, where it took under command the 151st Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery and the 129th L.A.A. Battery, and one section of the 7th Australian L.A.A. Battery. On 20 May 1941, the R.H.Q. had a strength of 6 officers and 70 other ranks, the 151st H.A.A. Battery (equipped with eight 3.7" guns) comprised 8 officers and 280 other ranks, the 129th L.A.A. Battery (equipped with twelve 40 mm Bofors guns) had 9 officers and 240 other ranks, and the Australian section with its two 40 mm Bofors guns had 2 officers and about 40 men. One troop of the 156th L.A.A. Battery was deployed to Maleme, and another to Heraklion. Those remaining at Suda Bay amounted to 3 officers and about 60 other ranks. The 154th L.A.A. Battery had been sent to Greece in December 1940, while the 155th L.A.A. Battery remained in Egypt and fought a Beda Fomm under the 7th Armoured Division in February 1941. It was then sent to Greece and was located on the Aliakmon position at the time of the German invasion.

The 155th L.A.A. Battery was evacuated to Egypt, while the 154th and 156th Batteries were disbanded on 1 July 1941. The 52nd L.A.A. Regiment received three new batteries (100th, 195th and 224th L.A.A. Batteries), and it continued to serve in the Middle East and Italy until the end of the war.

5. The 234th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery was equipped with eight 3.7" anti-aircraft guns. It had a strength of 8 officers and 280 men.
6. The 2nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Marines, was formed in December 1941, and joined the M.N.B.D.O. 1 organisation in Egypt. The Headquarters comprised 4 officers and 7 other ranks. 'A' Battery was equipped with eight 3" anti-aircraft guns, and it had a strength of 10 officers and 260 other ranks. There was only one section of 'C' Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery deployed at Suda, and this had two 3" guns with 3 officers and sixty other ranks. The 23rd L.A.A. Battery was equipped with machine guns only, and it had 4 officers and 100 other ranks.
7. The 304th Searchlight Battery was equipped with twenty searchlights, and it had a strength of 10 officers and 300 other ranks.

SOURCES:

Please contact the webmaster, or see: <https://www.librarything.com/catalog/RobPALMER>