

1st Royal Marines Anti-Aircraft Brigade (1)

Headquarters, 1st Royal Marines Anti-Aircraft Brigade

1st Royal Marines Anti-Aircraft Regiment (2)

(H.Q., 'B', 'C' & 'D' Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries and 22nd (Devon) Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, Royal Marines)

2nd Royal Marines Anti-Aircraft Regiment (3)

(H.Q., 'A' Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery and 23rd Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, Royal Marines)

11th Royal Marines Searchlight Regiment (4)

(H.Q., 'R' & 'S' Searchlight Batteries, Royal Marines)

1st Royal Marines Anti-Aircraft Brigade Signal Squadron, Royal Marines

Arrived on Ceylon – 6 March 1942

65th (The Manchester Regiment) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery (5)

(H.Q., 181st, 183rd & 196th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

43rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery (6)

(H.Q., 147th, 148th & 264th Light Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

55th (Devon) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery (7)

(H.Q., 163rd, 164th & 165th Light Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

Arrived on Ceylon – 28 May 1942

56th (Cornwall) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery (8)

(H.Q., 165th (Cornwall), 201st (Cornwall) & 202nd (Cornwall) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

76th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery (9)

(H.Q., 226th, 227th & 228th Light Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

Arrived on Ceylon – 1 July 1942

23rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery (10)

(H.Q., 73rd, 74th & 130th Light Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

Arrived on Ceylon – 9 July 1942

54th (City of London) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery (11)

(H.Q., 160th (City of London), 161st (City of London) & 312th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

NOTES:

1. Early in the Second World War, the Royal Marines formed Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisations (MNBDO) to act as formations that could be deployed to locations where military operations were being conducted but there was no permanent naval base. The MNBDO comprised artillery, infantry, engineer, and landing control elements. The first Royal Marines Air Defence Group was raised on 29 January 1940, but the brigade headquarters was not formed until January 1941. The formation moved to the Mediterranean with an Advance Headquarters being sent to Crete in May 1941. The rest of the formation went to Egypt. In late 1941, most of the formation moved to Ceylon and a new headquarters was formed by redesignating the Headquarters, 1st Royal Marines Anti-Aircraft Regiment. On arrival in December 1941, the brigade headquarters had under command the two heavy anti-aircraft regiments and the searchlight regiment. Between February 1942 and 29 August 1943, the brigade headquarters was designated Headquarters Anti-Aircraft Defences Ceylon. Colonel Cecil Thomas BROWN, R.M., was appointed as the commanding officer with effect from 21 December 1941, and shortly after his arrival in Ceylon on 1 February 1942, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier, and he assumed command of all anti-aircraft defences on the island, with the title of Commander, Anti-Aircraft, Ceylon. The date that he assumed command of all anti-aircraft defences in Ceylon is believed to be 15 March 1942. Additional anti-aircraft regiments of the Royal Artillery arrived on 6 March 1942, prior to the two main Japanese attacks on Ceylon which occurred on 5 and 9 April 1942. In this attack on 5 April against Colombo, 'A' Troop of the 22nd L.A.A. Battery claimed three hits in enemy aircraft. On 9 April the attack targeted Trincomalee, with 'B' and 'D' Batteries claiming two enemy aircraft destroyed each, while the 22nd L.A.A. Battery claimed four. In addition, the 163rd L.A.A. Battery, Royal Artillery, claimed one aircraft destroyed. Further reinforcements arrived on 28 May, 1 July, and 9 July, to come under command of Headquarters, Anti-Aircraft Defences, Ceylon. Forty-seven-year-old Brigadier C. T. BROWN died in an aircraft crash near Madras on 24 July 1942, which also claimed the life of Brigadier BRITTAN, commanding officer of the 13th Anti-Aircraft Brigade. Both are buried in the Madras War Cemetery, Chennai. This brigade disbanded in Ceylon on 7 May 1944 as the threat of Japanese air attack had diminished to a large degree. Elements of the brigade were sent to India in April 1943 under command of Brigadier V. D. THOMAS to train for amphibious operations in the Arakan, but they were not used, and the formation was sent to Egypt, where it was broken up. The Brigade formally disbanded in Scotland on 17 May 1944.
2. This regiment was formed at Fort Cumberland in February 1940 as the 1st Royal Marines Anti-Aircraft Regiment. It was sent to Egypt with 'A', 'C', 'R' Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries and 22nd Royal Marines Light Anti-Aircraft Battery under command. Whilst in Egypt it was deployed on airfield defence and internal security duties. It was redesignated as the brigade headquarters on 21 December 1941. A new regiment was formed with personnel from the 2nd R.M. Anti-Aircraft Regiment. The new regiment comprised 'B', 'C' and 'D' Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries and the 'Devon' Light Anti-Aircraft Battery. On 1 February 1942, the regiment deployed in Colombo, but by April it was stationed at the main naval base at Trincomalee. Sickness was a major issue, with 'D' Battery at one time suffering a 92% sickness rate. In April 1943, the regiment moved to Poona in India to train with XXXIII Indian Corps. In January 1944, it returned to the United Kingdom (with the 'Devon' L.A.A. Battery now designated again as the 22nd R.M. L.A.A. Battery). The regiment fought in the campaign in North-West Europe.

3. This regiment was formed at Arborfield in April 1940 as the 2nd Royal Marines Anti-Aircraft Regiment (the designation of 'Heavy' was added in December 1941). It comprised 'C' and 'D' Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries and 23rd R.M. Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. The regiment sailed to Egypt in March 1941 and deployed 'C' Battery and elements of the light anti-aircraft regiment to Crete in May 1941. It arrived in Ceylon with only the 23rd R.M. L.A.A. Battery under command. 'A' Battery joined whilst the regiment was stationed in Ceylon. The regiment returned to the United Kingdom in February 1944 and was disbanded in May of that year.
4. This regiment was formed at Yeovil on 14 February 1940 with 'R' and 'S' Searchlight Batteries under command. In June 1940, the regiment was based at Exton, with 'R' Battery transferring to the 1st R.M. A-A. Regiment, and 'S' Battery being used as infantry as few searchlights were available. In May 1941, the regimental headquarters and 'S' Battery were deployed to Crete, where many personnel were taken prisoner. The remainder of the regiment was sent to Ceylon with the brigade, where it was reformed. It returned to the United Kingdom in March 1944, being disbanded in June 1944.
5. Formed in 1936 by the conversion of the 6th/7th Bn. The Manchester Regiment, this regiment was part of Home Forces until January 1942. It sailed to Ceylon, where it arrived on 15 March 1942, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel W. A. MacLELLAN. Initially under Ceylon Command, this regiment came under the 23rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade when it was formed, as it was stationed in and around Colombo. It left for the Middle East on 4 May 1943, and from August 1944, it was serving back in the U.K..
6. This regiment was formed in November 1939 with a battery from the 16th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. It was based in the U.K. until it left for the Far East in December 1941. The regiment arrived at Colombo on 4 March 1942, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel W. BALDWIN-FLETCHER, and it joined the 23rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade. In September 1943, it transferred to the 24th Anti-Aircraft Brigade at Trincomalee. The 264th L.A.A. Battery was detached to join the 13th Anti-Aircraft Brigade at Chittagong. The regiment disbanded in Ceylon in January 1945.
7. In June 1939, the 55th (Devon) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment was formed as a duplicate of the 51st (Devon) L.A.A. Regiment. The Headquarters and 163rd L.A.A. Battery were based at the Drill Hall, Barrack Road, Exeter. The 164th L.A.A. Battery was based in Paignton, with the 165th L.A.A. Battery having Drill Halls in Crediton and Okehampton. The regiment was sent to France to relieve its sister regiment, being deployed at airfields at Lille, Amiens, Abbeville and Poix. Then the regiment was recalled to Le Havre in April 1940, from where it sailed to Southampton. It travelled by train to Scotland to embark for Norway under command of the 6th Anti-Aircraft Brigade. The 163rd and 165th L.A.A. Batteries operated in support of the French forces around Narvik, whilst the 164th L.A.A. Battery was sent to Mosjoen. The 164th Battery fought in the series of rearguard actions as British forces fell back to Bodo for evacuation. The entire regiment successfully brought back to the U.K. all its 40 mm Bofors guns, leaving Harstad on 8 May. On its return to the U.K., it came under the command of Home Forces. The regiment left the U.K. bound for Ceylon in April 1942. It arrived at Colombo on 4 March 1942, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel A. E. HUNT, and it came under command of this Brigade. On 29 July 1943, it moved to Calcutta where it was reorganised as a Light Anti-Aircraft/Anti-Tank Regiment with the 165th and 524th L.A.A. Batteries, and the 203rd and 290th Anti-Tank Batteries from the 56th Anti-Tank Regiment. As such, the regiment came under command of the 20th Indian Infantry Division, and it arrived at Tamu on 16 December 1943. Here it destroyed four Japanese tanks during the major enemy advance, and on 29 May 1944, it was located in the Artillery Box at Bishenpur on the Imphal Plain. It claimed twelve Japanese aircraft destroyed in the battle for Imphal, with four more claimed as 'Possibles'.

On 17 July 1944, the regiment was again reorganised as an Anti-Tank Regiment, with the 165th, 203rd and 290th A/Tk Batteries. As there was an existing 55th Anti-Tank Regiment serving in North-west Europe, the regiment was redesignated as the 111th Anti-Tank Regiment, and it remained with the 20th Indian Division for the rest of the war.

8. This regiment was formed in 1932 by the conversion of the 51st Medium Brigade. The headquarters based at Falmouth, having moved from St. Austell. The 201st Battery was based at Padstow, the 202nd Battery at Par, and the 203rd Battery at Penzance. These three batteries were the original medium batteries. The 165th Battery was based at Redruth, and it was formerly part of the Cornwall Heavy Regiment. In September 1939, the regiment was part of the 35th Anti-Aircraft Brigade, 5th Anti-Aircraft Division, and it was stationed in and around Plymouth. In September 1940, it was still stationed in Plymouth, but it was now under command of the 55th Anti-Aircraft Brigade, 8th Anti-Aircraft Division. The regiment remained in the U.K. until December 1941 when it sailed for India with the 165th, 201st and 202nd Batteries. The 203rd H.A.A. Battery had transferred to the 12th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment in December 1941. The regiment arrived at Bombay on 4 March 1942, and it was initially deployed to Madras, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel J. DANIEL. In May 1942, it came under command of the 13th Anti-Aircraft Brigade in Madras, and in February 1943, it transferred to the 3rd Indian Anti-Aircraft Brigade, also stationed in Madras. In February 1944, the regiment came under command of the 9th Anti-Aircraft Brigade, but a month later, it was under command of XXIII Indian Corps in India. In July 1944, the Regiment was stationed in Poona, where it was converted to a medium regiment, becoming the 86th Medium Regiment. It continued to serve in India, with a period as a training regiment, until the end of the war. After the war, it was reformed as the 456th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery, based at Redruth.
9. Formed in February 1941, this regiment served in Home Forces in the U.K. until March 1942. It arrived on the island of Ceylon on 28 May 1942, and it was deployed in the Colombo area. Between October 1942 and March 1943, this regiment was under the command of the 1st Royal Marine Anti-Aircraft Brigade. In March 1943, it transferred to the command of the 24th Anti-Aircraft Brigade, and then in September 1943, it transferred to the 23rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade. It was disbanded on Ceylon in January 1945. Lieutenant Colonel D. E. JONES commanded the regiment in 1942, to be followed by Lieutenant Colonel R. J. COCKWELL. The last commanding officer was Major E. V. PROFFITT, as the regiment was run down and disbanded.
10. This regiment was formed in December 1938 in the U.K., and it served under Home Forces. In September 1939, it was under the command of the 55th Anti-Aircraft Brigade. The headquarters, 73rd and 74th Batteries were located in Bristol. The 75th Battery was based at Poole, with the 130th Battery being located at Corsham in Wiltshire. In early 1940, this regiment transferred to the 46th Anti-Aircraft Brigade to cover Bristol. It left the U.K. in May 1942 to move to Ceylon. It arrived on Ceylon on 1 July 1942, and it came under command of the 1st Royal Marine Anti-Aircraft Brigade at Trincomalee. Lieutenant Colonel G. D. HOLMES commanded the regiment, until he was promoted to the rank of Acting Brigadier to assume command of the newly formed 24th Anti-Aircraft Brigade. This formation assumed responsibility for the anti-aircraft defence of the Trincomalee Fortress, allowing the Royal Marine Brigade to move to India. Lieutenant Colonel T. W. R. HILL replaced Lieutenant Colonel HOLMES as the Commanding Officer of the regiment. In March 1944, the regiment moved to India to join the 44th Indian Airborne Division. It was redesignated as the 23rd Light Anti-Aircraft/Anti-Tank Regiment in February 1945.

11. Raised in 1923 as an anti-aircraft brigade in the Territorial Army as one of the first six Territorial Army anti-aircraft brigades formed in the early 1920's. All five batteries were based at Putney, London SW15. Now comprising just three batteries, the Regiment sailed for Ceylon when it arrived on 9 July 1942. It was equipped with twenty-four 3.7" anti-aircraft guns. Lieutenant Colonel J. A. MORTON commanded the regiment. It was based at Trincomalee, but it left on 4 May 1943 to sail for Suez. It served in the Middle East until February 1945, when the regiment was placed in suspended animation. On 1 January 1947, it was reconstituted in the T.A. as the 454th (City of London) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, still based at Putney.

SOURCES:**By Sea, By Land – The Authorised History of the Royal Marines Commandos**

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