

23rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade ⁽¹⁾

Headquarters, 23rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade & Signal Section

6th Coast Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽²⁾

52nd (London) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽³⁾
(H.Q., 155th (London), 159th (Lloyds) (City of London) & 271st Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

65th (The Manchester Regiment) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽⁴⁾
(H.Q., 181st, 183rd & 196th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

2nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Ceylon Garrison Artillery ⁽⁵⁾
(H.Q., 5th, 6th & 8th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Ceylon Garrison Artillery)

23rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽⁶⁾
(H.Q., 73rd, 74th & 130th Light Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

43rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽⁷⁾
(H.Q., 147th, 148th & 264th Light Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

315th Searchlight Battery, Royal Artillery

23rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade Company, Royal Army Service Corps

23rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade Workshops, Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers

NOTES:

1. This brigade was formed on 9 September 1942 to assume command of the anti-aircraft units stationed in the Colombo area on the island of Ceylon. Its commanding officer was Brigadier (Acting) Albert Edward HUNT, T.A. He was an officer in the Territorial Army, having served in the First World War with the King's Regiment (Liverpool) in the rank of Lieutenant. He joined the T.A. on 9 August 1939, and in 1940, he assumed command of the 55th (Devon) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. He was promoted to the rank of Acting Brigadier with effect from 9 September 1942 on assuming command of this Brigade. This is the order of battle for the Brigade in November 1942, and it was the same in October 1943, other than the 7th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, C.G.A., and 9th Searchlight Battery, C.G.A., were now under command.
2. The 6th Coast Regiment was a Regular Army regiment of the British Army, formerly the Ceylon Coast Defences. The troops manned the coastal defence guns at Colombo and at Trincomalee. These were usually 6" or 9.2" guns intended for use against enemy naval forces. It became the 6th Heavy Regiment in 1939, and in December 1940, it was redesignated as the 6th Coast Regiment. It came under command of this Brigade on 15 March 1944, and although it left this Brigade on 27 December 1944, it remained based in Ceylon until the end of the war. Lieutenant Colonel A. J. GODFREY was in command of the regiment from 11 September 1938 until circa May 1943.
3. This regiment was formed in 1923 as an Anti-Aircraft Brigade in the Territorial Army, which was based in London. It originally comprised the H.Q., 154th (London), 155th (London) & 156th (Barking) Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery, but by May 1942, the 156th Battery had transferred to another regiment. The regiment served in Home Force until March 1942, when it sailed for India. It arrived in Colombo on 28 May 1942, and at this time, the 154th H.A.A. Battery transferred to the 56th H.A.A. Regiment, and in return, this regiment received the 159th (Lloyds) (City of London) H.A.A. Battery from the 53rd H.A.A. Regiment. The regiment came under Ceylon Command until September 1942, when the 23rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade was formed. It was under command of this Brigade from 9 September 1942 until 23 November 1944. In November 1944, the regiment left Ceylon and moved to Chittagong, from where it moved to Kalembo to join the 14th Army. The regiment was equipped with twenty-four 3.7" anti-aircraft guns. In April 1945, the regiment came under command of IV Corps, having taken over possession of two 7.2" howitzers from the 67th H.A.A. Regiment at Shwebo on 31 January 1945. In May 1945, the regiment came under command of the 24th Anti-Aircraft Brigade, and then the 3rd Indian Anti-Aircraft Brigade in June, by which time it was stationed in Rangoon. The three known commanding officers of the regiment were Lieutenant Colonel F. HEVEY, followed by Lieutenant Colonel J. H. GALE, and finally Lieutenant Colonel L. A. HOPE.
4. 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 station in and around Colombo. It was under command of this Brigade from 20 September 1942 until 4 May 1943. It left for the Middle East on that date, and from August 1944, it was serving back in the U.K..

5. The Ceylon Garrison Artillery (C.G.A.) was formed in 1918 by the amalgamation of the Ceylon Artillery Volunteers and the Town Guard Artillery. The post-First World War function of the C.G.A was to man coastal artillery batteries at Colombo and Trincomalee. With the outbreak of the Second World War in the Far East in December 1941, the C.G.A. was mobilised and expanded. The 1st Coast Regiment comprised one field and four coast batteries around Colombo. The 2nd Anti-Aircraft Regiment was formed at Trincomalee, and it was equipped with the 3.7" anti-aircraft guns. It came under the command of the 23rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade from 9 September 1942, until 30 January 1944. On that date, it transferred to the 24th Anti-Aircraft Brigade at Trincomalee, being redesignated as the 2nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, C.G.A. on 25 February 1944. On 3 January 1945, it reverted to the command of the 23rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade with the departure of the 24th Anti-Aircraft Brigade from Ceylon. It left this Brigade on 15 February 1945, possibly to disband with the end of the threat of Japanese air attack on the island. Lieutenant Colonel J. V. COLLINS was the Commanding Officer of the regiment, until he was replaced on 25 February 1944 by Lieutenant Colonel F. R. CONNOLLY.
6. This regiment was formed in December 1938 in the Territorial Army in the U.K.. It arrived in Colombo from the U.K. on 1 July 1942, and it was deployed in and around Colombo under command of the 23rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade. It was under command from 9 September 1942 until 30 March 1944. On 31 March 1944, it moved to Secunderabad, and it came under command of the 44th Indian Airborne Division. It remained in India for the rest of the war, with that division, which was never deployed operationally. Lieutenant Colonel G. D. HOLMES commanded the regiment, until he was promoted to command the newly raised 24th Anti-Aircraft Brigade. Lieutenant Colonel T. W. R. HILL replaced him with effect from 1 October 1942, and he in turn was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel, The Honourable, V. H. O. HERBERT on 31 January 1943. Finally, Lieutenant Colonel V. E. Le MARCHANT commanded the regiment until the end of hostilities.
7. 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. It was under the command of this brigade from 9 September 1942 until 11 September 1943. 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.

23rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade (1)

52nd (London) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery (2)
(H.Q., 155th (London), 159th (Lloyds) (City of London) & 271st Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

13th Indian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Indian Artillery (3)
(H.Q., 37th, 38th & 39th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Indian Artillery)

76th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery (4)
(H.Q., 226th, 227th & 228th Light Anti-Aircraft Batteries, Royal Artillery)

3rd Searchlight and Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Ceylon Garrison Artillery (5)

315th Searchlight Battery, Royal Artillery

9th Searchlight Battery, Ceylon Garrison Artillery

NOTES:

1. This is the order of battle for the Brigade in June 1944. By this date, the Japanese threat to Ceylon was diminished, and the British armed forces on the island were being scaled down. This Brigade was disbanded prior to August 1945, in Ceylon. Brigadier (Temporary) A. E. HUNT relinquished command of this Brigade on 11 January 1945, with Lieutenant Colonel F. R. CONNOLLY officiating until the Brigade disbanded.
2. See previous pages.
3. This regiment was formed in India on 1 June 1943. It arrived in Ceylon in March 1944, and it appears to have remained here until the end of the war. It was under command of this Brigade from 8 March 1944 until 27 December 1944. Lieutenant Colonel K. C. SHARPE was in command of the regiment from 1 June 1943, until he was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel SCOTT on 12 August 1945.
4. 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.
5. This regiment was formed as a joint Searchlight and Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment in the Ceylon Garrison Artillery. It was under command of this Brigade from 25 February 1944 until 26 December 1944. Lieutenant Colonel J. V. COLLINS was in command with effect from 25 February 1944, with Lieutenant Colonel F. F. SMALLWELL assuming command on 1 July 1944. The final commanding officer in wartime was Lieutenant Colonel C. H. BROWN, who assumed command on 29 May 1945.

SOURCES:

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Websites

1st Royal Marine Anti-Aircraft Brigade

<http://www.rothwell.force9.co.uk/burmaweb/RMIO-1st-RM-AA-Brigade.htm>

[Accessed 24 November 2022]

Please see: <https://www.librarything.com/catalog/RobPALMER>

Additional material kindly provided by Steve ROTHWELL in December 2025.