

THE HISTORY
OF THE
ROYAL MARINE FORCES.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO 1755.

1664. THE earliest period any reference can be found to an establishment of soldiers embarked on board the ships of the royal navy which can be traced in the records of the Admiralty, is the following Order in Council of His Majesty King Charles II., dated 26th October, 1664:—"Upon Report from the Lords Commissioners for the Affayres of His Majesty's Navy Royall and Admiralty of this Kingdom, this day read at the Board, His Majesty was pleased to order and direct (amongst other things) that twelve hundred land soldiers be forthwith raised, to be in readiness to be distributed into His Majesty's Fleets, prepared for sea; which said twelve hundred men are to be put into one Regiment, under one Collonell, one Lieutenant-Collonell, and one Sergeant-Major, and to be divided into six Companies,—each Company to consist of two hundred souldiers, and to have one Captaine, one Lieutenant, one Ensign, one Drum, ffoure Serjeants, and ffoure Corporalls, and all the souldiers aforesaid to be armed with good firelocks; all which arms, drums, and colours are forthwith to be prepared and furnished out of His Majesty's Stores: the care of all which is recommended to the Duke of Albemarle His Grace, Lord Generall of His Majesty's Forces."

1668. An order in Council, dated Whitehall, 1st April, 1668, sets forth—"It is this day ordered by His Majesty in Council, that his Grace the Duke of Albemarle, Lord Generall of His Majesty's Forces, bee, and he is hereby authorized and desired, to draw and furnish such numbers of souldiers out of His Majesty's Foot Guards for His Majesty's service at sea this summer as His Royal Highnesse the Duke of York, Lord High Admirall of England, &c. shall from time to time desire; to be delivered at Tower Wharfe on board such vessells as His Royal Highnesse shall appoynt to receive them, and thereupon his Grace doo cause the said Guards to be recruited as there shall be occasion."

Detachments from other regiments were occasionally embarked; and we find, in 1672, a company of the "Holland regiment under Captain Sidney" directed to proceed on board such ships as the Duke of York shall appoint. But the first regiment especially raised for sea service, was that of the Lord High Admiral of England, His Royal Highness the Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment of Foot, raised in 1664; and it is so described in the return of the general review on Putney Heath on the 1st of October, 1684, and was thus commissioned:

Colonel.—Sir Charles Littleton.

Lieutenant-Col.—Oliver Nicolas.

Major.—Richard Baggett.

Captains.—George Littleton, Sir Thomas Custer, Edward Nott, Francis Ezod, Edward Harris, Samuel Scuddamore, Chichester Wray, Charles Herbert, Edmund Plowden.

Lieutenants.—Robert Crawford, Edmund Yarborough, Thomas Blechenden, Edmund Wilson, Robert Lloyd, Francis Hoblen, Francis Butler, John Thorn, George Rooke, Henry Hewys, Thomas Whaley, William Oglethorpe.

Ensigns.—Philomel Powell, Arthur Townshend, William Pearson, James Man, John Hill, Alexander Ewin, Thomas Man, William Somers, George Littleton, Francis Ezod, Joseph Whaley.

Staff-Officers.—Richard Beauvoir, adjutant; Tobias Legross, quarter-master; Samuel Tathan, chirurgeon; John Tathan, chirurgeon's mate.

This regiment, which consisted of twelve companies, without grenadiers, had yellow coats lined with red; and their colours bore the Red Cross of St. George, with the rays of the sun issuing from each of its angles.

About this time, titles of distinction were given to several regiments: Dumbarton's (the 1st Foot) was styled the Royal Regiment; the 1st Tangier (now 2nd Foot) the Queen's Regiment; and the 2nd Tangier (now 4th Foot) the Duchess of York's. The 3rd was the Admiral's, or Duke of York's Maritime Regiment, which was sent to Holland in 1689, and incorporated with the 2nd Foot Guards. The Holland regiment, then designated "the Prince George of Denmark's," and the 4th in the British line, gained a step by the reduction of the 3rd, or Maritime regiment; and in 1708, on the death of His Royal Highness Prince George of Denmark, it took the name of the 3rd, or "Old Buffs," whilst the 31st regiment, raised in 1702, clothed in scarlet, with buff waistcoat, breeches, and stockings, was styled the "Young Buffs;" but the latter title has been long since laid aside. There is an exclusive privilege conferred on the "Old Buffs" by the city of London, which was acknowledged so recently as 1840, when the minister intimated his intention of passing troops through the city, and which is still retained by its descendants the Royal Marines, and the 3rd regiment of Foot. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to trace the origin of this honour, as most of the archives of the city were destroyed in the great fire in 1666; but it is very evident that the privilege was granted to the "Old Buffs," (who, we may presume, were so designated from their being clothed in yellow); and probably from their being raised from the train-bands of the city. Moreover, the 4th regiment is described as having *flesh*-colour facings in the army list of Nathan Brooks in 1684; and in the Antiquarian Repertory

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4 THE PRIVILEGE ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE CITY.

of 1686, "red, lined with *ash-colour*." Now neither of these descriptions give the Holland, or *4th regiment*, a claim to the appellation of "Buffs," nor do we find it so styled until 1708, when it assumed that distinction, and discontinued the title of "Prince of Denmark's." Another circumstance confirms the claim of the Royal Marines to the precedence of the present 3rd regiment in the British line, which is here transcribed from the military memoirs of Major Donkin, published 1777. "The 3rd regiment of Foot, *raised in 1663*, known by the ancient title of the 'Old Buffs,' have the privilege of marching through London with drums beating and colours flying, which the city disputes—not only with all other corps, but even with the king's Guards going on duty to the Tower. It happened in the year 1746, that a detachment of Marines beating along Cheapside, one of the magistrates came up to the officer, requiring him to cease the drum, as no soldiers were allowed to interrupt the civil repose. The captain commanding (an intimate friend of mine) immediately said, 'We are Marines.' 'Oh, sir,' replied the alderman, 'I beg pardon; I did not know it. Pray continue your route as you please.'" Here it is clearly defined to be the 3rd regiment of Foot *raised in 1665*, and not the Holland regiment, which became its successor in 1689, and which did not assume the designation of "Old Buffs" until 1708; nevertheless, as the Holland regiment was also raised by the city of London, the present 3rd regiment claims a similar privilege. The system of having soldiers exclusively for sea service, does not appear to have prevailed until 1693, when a draft for raising two marine regiments was presented to King William III.; who, by his order in Council of 22nd February, 1694, authorized their formation, subject to the following regulations:—

The number of officers, as well as their pay and that of the men, (with some trifling exceptions,) to be the same as those for the land forces.

The two regiments to be under the direction of the Lord High Admiral, or the Commissioners for executing that office.

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FORMATION OF TWO MARITIME REGIMENTS.

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None of the officers to be sea commanders, except the two colonels. When serving afloat, to be wholly under the command of the naval officers of the ships. Their cost and maintenance, &c. to be borne on the ordinary estimates of the navy.

Both regiments not to be on shore together: the regiment on shore to be quartered at or in the neighbourhood of the naval yards, in the following proportions:—four companies at Portsmouth, one at Sheerness, five at Chatham, two at Woolwich, two at Deptford, and one at Plymouth.

The men to be employed at the call of the commissioners of Chatham, Portsmouth, and Plymouth, and at the desire of the master attendant, or master-shipwright of the other yards where no commissioner resides; in heaving in or out of ballast, manning the cranes, removing goods and stores, laying cables and various other dock-yard duties; for which they were to receive sixpence a-day in addition to their pay. The captain of the ship in which they served was required to send yearly to the Admiralty a list of the “names of such soldiers as shall in any measure be made seamen, and how far each of them is qualified towards being an able seaman.”

Whilst serving on board, the men were to be borne on the books in a distinct list, and to be paid, as likewise on shore, by the captains of their respective companies, who were to receive the pay from their colonels.

There were several maritime regiments embodied between the years 1687 and 1698 subject to these regulations, but they were disbanded during the currency of 1697 and 1698. The expenses incurred by the maintenance of the maritime troops were classed with the estimates of the navy, and money was issued, from time to time, by warrant from the Lord High Treasurer to the Treasurer of the Navy, who placed it in the hands of a person especially appointed to receive it.

On the 18th January, 1697, an order in Council granted half-pay to the officers of Marines; but it was not defined if intended as a retaining fee, or as a reward for past services, nor has it been clearly ascertained up to the present day.

On the 4th May, 1702, war was proclaimed against France and Spain; and the French king having advanced his grandson the Duke of Anjou to the vacant Spanish monarchy, Queen Anne, who had ascended the British throne, espoused the claims of the Archduke of Austria upon the Spanish sovereignty, and resolved upon sending a powerful fleet into the Mediterranean.

One of the first acts of her reign was a revival of the corps of Marines. Her Majesty's order for levying this body was issued on the 1st June, 1702, and was to this effect:—"Our pleasure is, that six regiments of Marines, and six other regiments for *sea service*, do commence and take place from the respective times of raising. And our further pleasure is, that the order given by our dearest brother, the late King, deceased, and such orders as are or shall be given by us, touching the pay or entertainment of our said forces, or any of them, or any charges thereunto belonging, shall be duly complied with; and that no new charge be added to this establishment without being communicated to our High Treasurer, or Commissioners of our treasury for the time being."

In 1702, Her Majesty was pleased to establish six marine regiments; they were put upon a different footing from those which were thought necessary at the beginning, but discontinued before the close, of the last war; for as the soldiers were formerly discharged from the regiments and entered on the ships' books as foremast men, when they had qualified themselves to serve as such, and money allowed to the officers to procure others in their room, so now, when any of the marine soldiers died, or were otherwise missing, the companies were only made full by levy-money to the officers, without any regard to their being a nursery for seamen, which was one of the principal motives for the first raising of such a body of men. The charge of these regiments was defrayed by the navy, (as being part of the men voted by Parliament for sea service,) and money was issued out from time to time by the treasurer, by warrants from the Lord High Treasurer, to a person particularly appointed to receive and pay the same. The following articles

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REGULATIONS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.

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for the government and conduct of these regiments were framed and adopted by her Majesty in Council on the 12th July, 1702.

They were to be employed on board Her Majesty's ships as there should be occasion, and quartered at, or as near as might be, to the dock-yards when on shore, to guard them from embezzlements, or any attempts of an enemy. In all matters relating to their subsistence and clearings, when on board and on shore, they were to be paid in like manner as the land forces, and the same deductions to be made from them for clothing, and one day's pay, once a-year, from each officer and soldier for the hospital. They were to be allowed an equal proportion of provisions with the seamen, without any deductions from their pay for the same; and to have the same allowance for short provisions as the seamen, to be paid to themselves or their assigns.

Such regiments, or parts of them, as should be on shore, were to be mustered by a commissary or commissaries in the same manner as the land forces; excepting in this case, that they the said commissaries were obliged to allow at each muster on his or their rolls all such officers and soldiers as should appear to him or them, by authentic vouchers or certificates, to be put on board any of Her Majesty's ships or vessels; and that such part of the aforesaid regiments as should be at sea, might be paid while they were so. It was directed, that the commanding marine officer with them should, every two months, return to the commissary-general of the musters a perfect list of all the officers and soldiers on board each ship, signed by himself, and all the marine officers, expressing the times of entry, death, and discharge of each man; that so the commissary might compare the said lists with the monthly books sent to the Navy-office, and allow such of the officers and soldiers as should appear to him fit to be so allowed.

To prevent confusion, not less than fifteen marine soldiers, and with them an officer, were to be put on board of a ship at any one time, unless in cases of necessity. A particular paymaster

was appointed, with power to solicit the arrears of the regiments, and to receive all sums of money from the Treasurer of the Navy; and immediately upon the receipt thereof, to issue the same to the respective colonels or their agents. He was also required diligently and carefully to adjust all accounts relating to the regiments, according to such muster-rolls as should be delivered to him by the commissary or commissaries; and those muster-rolls were to be allowed of, as sufficient vouchers for the charges in the accounts, and for making out debentures and warrants.

To enable the aforesaid paymaster to keep an office, and to defray the charge thereof, and of clerks and other contingencies, he was allowed sixpence in the pound, pursuant to the subscription of the respective colonels, which he had power to deduct out of all moneys issued to him, in the same manner as the poundage was deducted from the land forces. For rendering such parts of the regiments as should be on shore the more useful, Her Majesty declared it should be left to herself, or the High Admiral, to dispose of them at such places nearest to the several dock-yards as might be judged most convenient. And since there might be occasion for labourers to despatch necessary works, Her Majesty empowered her High Admiral, or the commissioners for executing the office, to cause to be employed in the aforesaid dock-yards so many of the marine soldiers as might be judged fitting, and to make them such daily allowance for the same, besides their ordinary pay, as should seem reasonable.

Brigadier-general Seymour was appointed by the Lord High Admiral to superintend the establishment. His particular duties were, to observe that the men were comfortably quartered; that the officers were attentive in their respective departments; and that the marine soldiers, when embarked on board of ship, were supplied with proper sea-clothes, and other suitable necessaries. A number of independent companies of Marines were also raised for the express purpose of defending our West India possessions; to which quarter they were sent, and embodied into three regiments.

ATTACK UPON GIBRALTAR.

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1704. Charles, Archduke of Austria, being declared king of Spain, and acknowledged as such by England and her allies, Sir George Rooke was sent with a strong squadron of English and Dutch men-of-war to convoy His Majesty to Portugal. On his arrival at Lisbon on 25th February, after two days spent in adjusting the ceremonial, His Catholic Majesty was conducted on shore by the King of Portugal, and most of the royal family.

In compliance with the entreaties of King Charles III. the squadron embarked a division of troops under the command of the Prince of Hesse d'Armstadt, and sailed with a fleet of transports, under convoy, for the reduction of Barcelona, where they arrived on 18th May; and on the day following twelve hundred Marines, four hundred Dutch foot, a company of Catalans, and as many volunteers as made up a total force of two thousand men, were landed under the Prince of Hesse. After remaining on shore the whole night, during which the Dutch had bombarded the place with some effect, his Highness, under the apprehension of being attacked by a superior force, caused the force to be re-embarked.

On 21st May the fleet sailed; and having passed the Straits on the 14th June, was joined by the squadron under Sir Cloudesley Shovel in Lagos Bay on the 16th; when a council of war assembled to consider what service should be proceeded on; nothing decisive, however, was arranged, and Sir George again sailed for the Mediterranean. On the 17th July, when in the road of Tetuan, it was determined to make a sudden and resolute attempt upon Gibraltar.

On the 21st July the fleet arrived in Gibraltar Bay, and the Marines, English and Dutch, to the number of eighteen hundred, were landed under the command of the Prince of Hesse on the isthmus, to cut off all communication between the garrison and the continent. His Highness having taken post there, summoned the governor; who replied that he would defend the place to the last extremity. On the 22nd the admiral, at break of day, commenced a vigorous attack, and cannonaded the town with so

much spirit, that fifteen thousand shot were expended in the course of five hours. This produced a correspondent effect, and Sir George Rooke, perceiving that the enemy were driven from the works at the mole head, ordered Captain Whitaker to arm all the boats, and attempt to make himself master of the enemy's fortifications; justly concluding, that if these were once occupied, the town must immediately surrender. This order was no sooner issued, than Captains Hicks and Jumper, who were nearest to the mole, pushed ashore with their pinnaces; and having scrambled up into the fortifications, were actually in possession of them before the rest of the attacking party could arrive. The Spaniards, finding the works untenable, sprang a mine, by which explosion two lieutenants and forty men were killed, and sixty wounded. Notwithstanding this misfortune, the two captains maintained possession of the great platform until they were sustained by Captain Whitaker and the seamen under his command, who soon made themselves masters of a redoubt between the mole and the town. On this, the admiral sent in a letter to the governor; and on the 24th July, 1704, that officer having signed a capitulation, the Prince of Hesse with the Marines immediately possessed themselves of this important fortress.

This attack having been made on a Sunday, almost all the women belonging to the garrison were performing their devotions in a chapel about four miles distant from the rock, so that the besieging forces were between them and their families; and this circumstance hastened the fall of the place, for the citizens within strongly urged the governor to capitulate. The garrison was composed of two skeleton regiments only, but the strength of the fortifications, (the number of cannon mounted being upwards of one hundred pieces towards the sea,) and the two narrow passes of approach from the land, would have rendered it formidable to a less enterprising enemy. Our total loss was 61 killed, and 206 wounded.

The King of Spain being conscious of the importance of Gibraltar, obtained the assistance of a French fleet under M. de