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The Marines

History

British marines were first raised in 1664. From 1775 until 1802, fifty independent companies of marines were permanently in service. In 1802 they became the Royal Marines. Marines were 'sea soldiers' attached to the British Navy. In the 1780s they wore red and white uniforms and were divided into three divisions based on shore at Chatham (on the Thomas River in Kent), Portsmouth (Hampshire) and Plymouth (Devon).

A small party of 13 marines landed with Captain Cook at Botany Bay in late April 1770. They are listed in *HRNSW* Vol.1 Part 1, p.336.

Arrival in Sydney

Four companies of marines sailed from Portsmouth with the First Fleet in 1787 and after visiting Botany Bay, disembarked at Sydney Cove in the last week of January 1788. A number of wives and children accompanied the Fleet, their number being 10 per company. A total of 32 wives embarked and 31 landed in Sydney. 14 children embarked, ten were born on the voyage, one died and a total of 23 landed. [*Founders of Australia*, Gillen p.445].

In a return of the marines doing duty in New South Wales on 9 July 1788, there were 211 men including 160 privates. [*HRNSW* Vol. II, p.411]. There is a complete listing by name of all the marines mustered between 1 July and 30 September 1788.

In a return of the marines doing duty in NSW dated 10 November 1788, there were 196 men of all ranks, including 160 privates, plus 12 men absent. [*HRNSW* Vol. II, p.419].

Leaving Sydney

The marines were relieved by the arrival of the New South Wales Corps and most left on the ship *Gorgon* on 18 December 1791. The last of the Marines left Sydney with Governor Phillip on the ship *Atlantic* on 11 December 1792.

A number of marines remained as settlers and in a despatch from Governor Phillip, dated 15 December, these included 8 at Parramatta and 31 at Norfolk Island, others remained in Sydney, some had died and six had been executed.

In a despatch from Sydney dated 10 June 1790 Governor Hunter writes to the Duke of Portland he states "I shall now only trouble your Grace further by mentioning that there are a considerable number of the marines, who were the first troops sent to

this country, and who upon the recall of that corps from hence were allow'd to enlist for five years in the New South Wales Corps, some of them having completed this last engagement, are desirous of settling in the country and are entitled to a double proportion of land in consequence of a double tour of duty."

According to a return of the 73rd Regiment in May 1810, there were also some marines left at Hobart numbering 50 of all ranks plus nine wives of marine privates and 19 children. [*HRNSW* Vol. VII, p.534].

Later Marines

A small detachment of Royal Marines served at Melville Island (Northern Territory) from 1824 to 1829, and a similar force was stationed at Port Essington (NT) from 1837 until 1854. The last force of Royal Marines served at Cape York from 1862 until 1870.

On the BDA Database

Brief details of the marines who came to Sydney, are included on the Database. These are included in Appendix 10 http://www.bda-online.org.au/files/FF10_FirstFleet.pdf (Compiled by Yvonne Browning) taken from *The Founders of Australia - A Biographical Dictionary of the First Fleet* by Mollie Gillen (see under Further Reading below).

References
Some of the above details have been extracted from:

Dress & Insignia of the British Army in Australia & New Zealand 1770-1870
by R.H. Montague, p.28. Pub. by Library of Australian History, Sydney 1981.

Historical Records of New South Wales - Vol. I, Part II. (see its Index under Marines).

Further reading

The Founders of Australia - A Biographical Dictionary of the First Fleet by Mollie Gillen. Pub. by Library of Australian History, Sydney, 1989.

Military Forces in New South Wales - an Introduction - Part 1 1788-1904, 3rd edition by Ralph Sutton, Ken Thompson & Bill Storer. Pub. by The Army Museum Foundation, Paddington NSW, 2000.

The First Fleet Marines 1786-1792 by John Moore. Pub. by University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, QLD, 1987 .

My Ancestor was a Royal Marine by Ken Divall. Pub. by Society of Genealogists Enterprises Ltd., London, England, 2008.

Manuscripts in the British Isles relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, Editor Phyllis Mander-Jones. Pub. by Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1972. This volume lists many sources of regimental records under War Office starting at page 301.

Abbreviations

HRNSW - Historical Records of New South Wales.

List of all British Regiments that served in Australia

(see Military - British Regiments in Australia http://www.bda-online.org.au/sources/military/)

This Information Page was compiled by Malcolm Sainty & Michael Flynn, May 2013.

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