

# ROYAL MARINES MUSEUM

## ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

Governing Body: Royal Marines Museum Trust

Date approved by governing body: July 2005

Date at which policy due for review: 2010



### 1. EXISTING COLLECTIONS

#### 1.1 General

The collection is divided into distinct areas relating to subject disciplines.

It covers the history of the Royal Marines from the formation of the first marine regiment in 1664 to the present day. It encompasses the worldwide commitments of the Corps since that time.

Across the subject areas strong themes are evident - Campaigns overseas, amphibious warfare and the sea. The subject areas can be summarised as follows:

#### 1.2 Orders, Decorations and Medals

The Museum's medal collection consists of over 7,000 awards to Royal Marines. It is made up of the collections started in 1901 at Plymouth, and 1907 at Eastney being added to other Divisional collections, and the Museum collection that was started in 1958.

Awards of all types are presented - civil, military, gallantry, campaign, service and humanitarian. This includes all ten Victoria Crosses awarded to the Corps.

#### 1.3 Decorative Arts

This group of material includes silverware, ceramics, embroidery, bronze statuettes and busts from the Georgian era to the present. The silver collection ranges from ornate mess dining ware, to presentation pieces given to, or from, individuals. Some outstanding pieces include a cigarette box presented by the Empress of Russia in 1919, a large table piece called 'The Woolwich Folly' (1854) and an impressive item called 'The Rifle Range' (1868).

#### 1.4 Sport

This collection covers the wide range of sporting activities of Royal Marines during their service careers. Objects include medals, cups, trophies, sports equipment and clothing. The primary sports covered include swimming, fencing, football, cricket, tug-of-war and shooting.

Some individuals went on to win rugby caps for England, become league footballers, or participated in Olympic or Commonwealth Games.

## 1.5 Musical Instruments

The collection includes instruments from the 18th-21st Centuries used by Royal Marines musicians. Percussion, wind and strings are all represented. In addition there are non-Royal Marine instruments captured from enemy armed forces, including a Danish drum captured at the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801. The largest instrument is the Steinway piano from Queen Victoria's Royal Yacht.

## 1.6 Weapons.

This collection comprises some 1,500 weapons and accessories. There are edged weapons, pistols and revolvers, muskets and rifles, machine guns, artillery, rocket launchers and mortars.

This includes any official Royal Marine issue or, for the early period, privately bought weapons. In addition, a representative collection of weapons used against, or captured by, Royal Marines is also held.

## 1.7 Amphibious and Special Operations Vessels

This collection includes a selection of various types of canoes, including an example of a motorised submersible canoe, known as a 'Sleeping Beauty', dating from 1944.

The largest vessel is a Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel (LCVP) built in 1965. This example (F7) was deployed from HMS Fearless during the landings on the Falkland Islands in 1982.

## 1.8 Ship models

The wide variety of craft used by Royal Marines is also represented in the model ship collection, which covers sailing ships, landing craft and warships.

## 1.9 Uniforms and Textiles

The uniform collection contains ceremonial, utility and specialised clothing, headwear, shoes and boots, badges and insignia. Particularly rare examples of uniform are from the 18th century, including a bearskin mitre cap of the American War of Independence era (1775-6).

The Museum also has a collection of Colours, flags and pennants, which includes the earliest surviving portion of a Royal Marines colour.

## 1.10 Equipment

The wide range of Royal Marines activities whether it be in jungle, arctic or desert environments, gives this collection huge variety. This category includes belts, webbing, rucksacks, kit bags and trunks, respirators, map cases, water bottles, medical supplies, camping, skiing, diving and communications equipment.

## 1.11 Documents

This highly significant collection goes beyond the Royal Marines to include unique material relating to the British Empire; three centuries of conflicts in every Continent; national events; the social life within a military/naval culture; local history and technology.

There is also a large diary collection with an example from the American War of Independence, and many more covering the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

The collection of letters and manuscripts is also very important. These include letters from British Monarchs, political figures, military commanders and Heads of State.

Within the official documents such as unit commander's reports, there are collections of considerable historic value, relating to the development, training and administration of the Corps.

There are the full trial reports for amphibious vehicles and craft from 1943 to 1960. There are also plans of ships and crafts, maps and architects drawings.

#### 1.12 The Library

The library consists of 15,000 volumes and journals, dating from 1643 to the present day. Included in the collection are Navy lists from 1783 to date, Marine Officers lists 1755 to 1886 and Army lists dating from 1739. The books cover every campaign, social aspects, Marine Corps of the world, ships, music, biographies, medicine, law, casualty lists, weapons, medals, uniform and locations.

The journals contain such historical publications as the United Services Journal from 1829-1870, Naval Chronicle 1799 - 1818 and a run of the Annual Register 1758 to 1843.

#### 1.13 Film and Sound Recordings

Although the Museum does not house its' own film collection, on-site video and DVD reference copies are available of originals now held in the Wessex Film and Sound Archive.

The sound collection is comprised of oral history recordings, as well as recordings of the Royal Marine Band Service.

Recorded music is in the form of CD, 78rpm shellac, vinyl and audiotapes of varying formats. The collection covers the 1920's to the present day and constitutes a very substantial music library.

#### 1.14 Pictures

There are some 900 paintings, drawings, and prints ranging from miniatures to 15ft high oil paintings. There are watercolours, oils, lithographs, aquatints, and engravings and period sketches covering the period from the late 17th century to the present day.

The picture collection covers all aspects of Royal Marines history including personalities, places, uniform, ships, military and naval operations, humour and the Royal Marines Band Service.

Notable artists include Wyllie, Northcote, Rowlandson, Bateman and Stadden.

## 1.15 Photographs

There are about 2,000,000 images in the Museum's collection of prints, negatives and digital images. The earliest photographs are daguerreotypes and ambrotypes from the 1850's, while there are examples of nearly all the major nineteenth century photographic processes. Today many images for the Museum's collection are acquired in digital form.

All aspects of the Royal Marines are represented - operations, units, training, exercises, groups and personalities, the Band Service, ships, landing craft, weapons, ceremonial events, aircraft, helicopters and vehicles. There is a strong social history element to this record of Royal Marines' activities.

Landing craft and amphibious warfare themes are particularly detailed.

## 2. CRITERIA GOVERNING FUTURE COLLECTING POLICY

### 2.1 General Criteria

The Royal Marines Museum collects material in order to create a collection which is a definitive record of Corps history. It will be used for display, education, research, study and publication.

Only objects which satisfy the following criteria will be acquired for the permanent collections:

- (a) Objects relating to Marine and Royal Marine service from 1664 to the present day
- (b) Objects officially issued to Royal Marines whilst serving with the Corps
- (c) Objects awarded to Royal Marines whilst serving with the Corps
- (d) Objects with a Royal Marines connection relating to barracks and establishments
- (e) Objects from foreign military and terrorist forces that have fought against Royal Marines, relevant to Royal Marines history
- (f) Items relating to serving members, or former members of the Royal Marines relating to activities outside of the Corps, where relevant to Corps history (expeditions etc).
- (g) Generic material – required to fill gaps in the collection, or to illustrate specific themes

As a general rule material relating to Army Commandos of the Second World War will be referred to the National Army Museum, or the Imperial War Museum.

### 2.2 Orders, Medals and Decorations

The Museum will continue to accept all medals awarded to Royal Marines when they are offered as a gift. In cases of family collections of medals, where there are non Royal Marine recipients, judgement will be made on a case by case basis.

The Museum will acquire those medals identified on the “wants” list through purchase or donation.

### 2.3 Uniform and Badges

The Museum will continue to fill gaps in the collection. It will also continue to accept sealed pattern uniforms and badges, as they become obsolete.

### 2.4 Equipment (including musical instruments)

A representative sample of current or recently obsolete equipment will continue to be acquired. The Museum will also continue to collect specialist equipment relating to specific activities, both past and present e.g. Arctic, jungle, SBS, Commando, aviation, and the Royal Marines Band Service.

The Museum will informally liaise with the Corps on substantial changes to standard equipment and to acquire current issue items as appropriate.

The Museum will collect privately purchased, or modified items of equipment, where there is a sound Royal Marines provenance.

### 2.5 Weapons

The Museum will acquire examples of service pattern weapons issued to Royal Marines, acquire other types of weapons used by Royal Marines, and weapons captured, or collected by Royal Marines on operations.

The Museum will liaise with the MOD regarding the collecting of examples of weapons used by Royal Marines as they become obsolete.

### 2.6 Photographs and Pictures

The Museum will collect in the following ways:

- Receive copies of official photography relating to the Royal Marines, in various formats – negatives, print, digital etc.
- Collect privately taken, unofficial images relating to the Royal Marines.
- Acquire paintings in various media that relate to Royal Marines, subject to funds being available.
- Acquire copies of all prints relating to the Royal Marines as they are published.
- Commission artists to produce paintings on aspects of current Royal Marine activity on an occasional basis.
- Commission photographers to produce folios on specific themes (e.g. Commando Training) on an occasional basis.

## 2.7 Archives, Film and Sound

The RM Museum Archive collects both official and unofficial documents and ephemera relating to Corps history and development. In liaison with the Corps Historian (CORRO) and the National Archives (TNA) official records are reviewed prior to release, and those that are not selected by TNA are presented to the RMM Archive. Presented records have a disposal option that can be exercised by the RM Museum, by informing the TNA.

The RM Archive will also collect unofficial documents, letters and diaries, along with selected ephemera with a view for research or potential display. Duplicate material will only be collected for additional superior specimen, or for educational purposes.

The Museum's oral history programme will be further developed in partnership with the Royal Marines Historical Society and the Imperial War Museum.

Film will continue to be deposited with the Wessex Film and Sound Archive, with copies held by the Museum

### 3. LIMITATIONS ON COLLECTING

The Museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard.

The constraints on collecting are recognised as:

- limited funds for purchasing
- storage space (acquiring large collections and big objects)
- human resources available to manage and catalogue (re large collections)
- the conservation, or collections care resources, required by an object or collection.

At present no large objects can be collected due to the lack of suitable storage and display facilities e.g. vehicles, craft, aircraft. However, models and other images will be acquired as a substitute for the time being.

### 4. COLLECTING POLICIES OF OTHER MUSEUMS

The Museum will take account of the collecting policies of other Museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise, or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following Museum(s):

Royal Naval Museum  
Fleet Air Arm Museum  
Royal Navy Submarine Museum  
National Army Museum  
Royal Air Force Museum  
Imperial War Museum  
National Maritime Museum

## **5. POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE**

The Acquisition and Disposal Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

The South East Museums Libraries and Archives Council (SEMLAC) will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

## **6. ACQUISITIONS NOT COVERED BY THE POLICY**

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the Museum itself, having regard to the interests of other Museums.

## **7. ACQUISITION PROCEDURES**

### **7.1 Acquisition Methods**

The Museum acquires items in three ways – by purchase, donation and loan.

Purchases are made from a dedicated Grant-in-Aid Acquisition Fund and from the Museum's Trust Fund as necessary. The Ministry of Defence accepts that the Acquisition Fund derived from Grant-in-Aid can be cumulative.

Donations constitute the majority of all items received. Loans are not encouraged unless for a specific temporary exhibition, or in a small number of cases where an item is special or rare and will make an important addition to the Museum's displays e.g. a Victoria Cross (see RMM loans policy).

The Museum will adopt a pro-active policy to acquire material to enhance the collections, as identified in the collecting criteria, outlined in section two. It will take advantage of the Ministry of Defence guidelines for the acquisition of surplus MOD equipment by Museums.

### **7.2 General Provisos**

- a. The Museum will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the Museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- b. In particular, the Museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

- c. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the Museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by DCMS in 2005.
- d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the Museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.
- e. The Museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures, such as reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996 (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) or reporting finds through the Treasure Trove procedure (in Scotland).
- f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 8a, 8b, 8c, or 8e will only be because the Museum is either:
  - acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or
  - acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or
  - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
  - in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.
 In these cases the Museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.
- g. The Museum will only acquire ammunition and explosive devices where Free From Explosives (FFE) certification exists, or can be obtained.
- h. With respect to captured enemy equipment the Museum will adopt the MOD policy outlined in Defence Council Instruction 126 (2004). This conforms to NATO policy, the Hague Convention and the First and Third Geneva Conventions.

## **8. SPOILIATION**

The Museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national Museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

It will also comply with the 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principles and Proposed Actions', issued by the National Museum Directors' Conference in 1998, and report on them in accordance with the guidelines.

## **9. REPATRIATION AND RESTITUTION**

The Museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the Museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains, objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The Museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis, within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications.

## **10. MANAGEMENT OF ARCHIVES**

As the Museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

## **11. DISPOSAL PROCEDURES**

- a. By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body accepts the principle that, except for sound curatorial reasons, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the Museum's collection.
- b. The Museum will establish that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Any decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration.
- c. When disposal of a Museum object is being considered, the Museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant.
- d. Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds.
- e. Any monies received by the Museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions but in exceptional cases improvements relating to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases will be sought from MLA.
- f. A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the Museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.
- g. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift, exchange or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- h. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly, then the Museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other professional journals where appropriate.

- i. The announcement will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the Museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations.
- j. Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.