

ROYAL MARINES MUSEUM

ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY



Governing Body: Royal Marines Museum Trust

Date approved by governing body: 19th November 2008
Date at which policy due for review: 2013

1. MUSEUM'S STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The objects of the charity are as follows:

- (1) To educate the public and members of the Corps in the history and military accomplishments of the Corps and to encourage recruitment by public exhibition of the collection in a museum or museums; or such other public places as Trustees may decide; and
- (2) To conserve, restore, repair, re-construct and preserve items in the collection.

2. EXISTING COLLECTIONS

2.1 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:

2.2 Orders, Decorations and Medals

The Museum's medal collection consists of over 8,000 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.

2.3 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).

2.4 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.

2.5 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.

2.6 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.

2.7 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.

2.8 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.

2.9 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.

2.10 Equipment

This category includes many items of equipment exclusive to Royal Marines - belts, webbing, rucksacks, kit bags and trunks, respirators, map cases, water bottles, medical supplies, camping, skiing, diving and communications equipment.

2.11 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 19th and 20th 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 over 5,000 plans of ships and crafts, maps and architects drawings.

2.12 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.

2.13 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 Marines Band Service. Oral histories, include those to the present day.

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.

2.14 Pictures

There are some 1,500 paintings, drawings, and prints ranging from miniatures to large 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.

2.15 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.

3. CRITERIA GOVERNING FUTURE COLLECTING POLICY

3.1 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.

3.2 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. Particular attention is required to ensure post-World War II material is collected.

3.3 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.

3.4 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.

3.5 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.

3.6 Photographs and Pictures

The Museum will collect in the following ways:

- Through the receipt of Official photographs relating to the Royal Marines from the Fleet Regional Photographic Unit (East) in digital form.
- Collect privately taken images relating to the Royal Marines in all formats, including albums.
- Commission photographers to produce folios of material on specific themes on an occasional basis.
- Utilise the Photographs & Pictures Librarian to take images of specific events or themes in order to fill gaps in the collection.
- Purchase paintings and drawings in various media relating to the Royal Marines, subject to funds being available.
- Collect paintings and drawings in various media relating to the Royal Marines that are offered as donations.
- Commission artists to produce paintings or sketches on specific themes on an occasional basis.
- Acquire paintings, drawings and other imagery that becomes surplus to the requirements of the Corps Property Officer.
- Acquire copies of prints commissioned by the Corps or its Units as they become available.

3.7 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. Liaison and discussion with the Corps Historian and the Naval Historical Branch (NHB) concerning official records release, and Electronic Records Management (ERM) material is to be recommended, as the future decline of paper primary source material takes affect. 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, the Royal Marines Historical Society and the Imperial War Museum. Consolidation of media migration is to be recommended to aid access and preservation, as the original sound source mediums become obsolete.

Film will continue to be deposited with the Wessex Film and Sound Archive, with copies held by the Museum. The back up migration of video to digital medium can also now be facilitated.

4. 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.

5. 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 Museums:

- Royal Naval Museum
- Fleet Air Arm Museum
- Royal Navy Submarine Museum
- National Army Museum
- Royal Air Force Museum
- Imperial War Museum
- National Maritime Museum
- Portsmouth City Museums and Records Service

6. POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

The Acquisition and Disposal Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the Policy is next due for review is noted above.

MLA 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.

7. 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.

8. ACQUISITION METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

8.1 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. Additional grants and fundraising can also be used from time to time to augment the Acquisition Fund.

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 three. It will take advantage of the Ministry of Defence guidelines for the acquisition of surplus MOD equipment by Museums. It will make specific efforts from time to time to undertake contemporary collecting projects on a specific theme (training, operations, equipment, etc.) to try and balance the scope and content of the collections, especially where gaps exist.

8.2 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 1st 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. As the Museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the "Guidance for the care of human remains in museums" issued by DCMS in 2005.
- h. The Museum will only acquire ammunition and explosive devices where Free From Explosives (FFE) certification exists, or can be obtained.
- i. 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.

9. 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.

10. THE REPATRIATION AND RESTITUTION OF OBJECTS AND HUMAN REMAINS

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 (unless covered by the "Guidance for the care of human remains in museums" issued by DCMS in 2005), 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 and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 12a-12d, 12g and 12s below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the "Guidance for the care of human remains in museums".

11. MANAGEMENT OF ARCHIVES

As the Museum holds and intends to acquire 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).

12. DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

Disposal preliminaries:

- a. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- b. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- c. The museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.
- d. 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 and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

Motivation for disposal and method of disposal:

- e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 12g-12s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- f. In exceptional cases, the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below in paragraphs 12g-12m and 12s will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:
 - the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection,
 - the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit),
 - the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored.

The disposal decision-making process:

- g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making:

- h. 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 or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

Use of proceeds of sale:

- i. 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. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from MLA.
- j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

Disposal by gift or sale:

- k. 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 or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, 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 specialist journals where appropriate.
- m. The announcement relating to gift or sale 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 giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

Disposal by exchange:

- n. The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- o. In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 12a-12d and 12g-12h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 12p-12s.
- p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- r. Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be

acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Documenting disposal:

- s. 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 de-accession and disposal.