

Royal Army Medical Corps

The **Royal Army Medical Corps** (**RAMC**) is a specialist corps in the British Army which provides medical services to all Army personnel and their families, in war and in peace. The RAMC, the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, the Royal Army Dental Corps and Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps form the Army Medical Services.

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History

Medical services in the British armed services date from the formation of the Standing Regular Army after the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. This was the first time a career was provided for a Medical Officer (MO), both in peacetime and in war.^[2] For much of the next two hundred years, army medical provision was mostly arranged on a regimental basis, with each battalion arranging its own hospital facilities and medical supplies. In 1793 an Army Medical Board was

Royal Army Medical Corps



Cap badge of the Royal Army Medical Corps

Active	1898–present
Branch	 British Army
Role	Medical support
Part of	Army Medical Services
Nickname(s)	<i>The Linseed Lancers</i>
Motto(s)	<i>In arduis fidelis</i> (Faithful in adversity) ^[1]
March	Quick: <i>Here's a Health unto His Majesty</i> (arr. A.J. Thornburrow) Slow: <i>Her Bright Smile haunts me still</i> (J Campbell arr. Brown)
Anniversaries	Corps Day (23 June)
Commanders	
Colonel-in-Chief	The Duke of Gloucester KG, GCVO
Insignia	



Army surgeons carry out an operation during the Second World War

formed, which promoted a more centralised approach drawing on concurrent civilian healthcare practices.^[3] The Board set up five General

**Tactical
recognition
flash**



Military Hospitals, four in the naval ports of Chatham, Deal, Plymouth and Gosport (Portsmouth), and one (known as the York Hospital) in Chelsea; the hospitals received large numbers of sick and injured soldiers from the French Revolutionary Wars (so much so that by 1799 additional General Military Hospitals were set up in Yarmouth, Harwich and Colchester Barracks).^[4] The Board was criticised, for both high expenditure and poor management; by the end of the century the Board had been disestablished, and the General Hospitals were closed or repurposed not long afterwards.^[5]

In place of the Army Medical Board, the office of Director-General of the Medical Department was instituted, with James McGrigor serving in that role from 1815 to 1851.^[3] McGrigor, who has been called the Father of Army Medicine,^[6] had served as principal medical officer under the Duke of Wellington during the Peninsular War, during which time he had introduced significant changes in the organisation of the army's medical services, placing them on a far more formal footing.^[7] The regimental basis of appointment for MOs continued until 1873, when a coordinated army medical service was set up. To join, a doctor needed to be qualified, single, and aged at least 21, and then undergo a further examination in physiology, surgery, medicine, zoology, botany and physical geography including meteorology, and also to satisfy various other requirements (including having dissected the whole body at least once and having attended 12 midwifery cases); the results were published in three classes by an Army Medical School, which was set up in 1860 at Fort Pitt in Chatham,^[8] and moved in 1863 to Netley outside Southampton.^[9]

There was much unhappiness in the Army Medical Service in the following years as medical officers did not have military rank but "advantages corresponding to relative military rank" (such as choice of quarters, rates of lodging money, servants, fuel and light, allowances on account of injuries received in action, and pensions and allowances to widows and families). They had inferior pay in India, excessive amounts of Indian and colonial service (being required to serve in India six years at a stretch), and less recognition in honours and awards. They did not have their own identity as did the Army Service Corps, whose officers did have military rank. A number of complaints were published, and the British Medical Journal campaigned loudly. For over two years from 27 July 1887 there were no recruits to the Army Medical Department. A parliamentary committee reported in 1890, highlighting the doctors' injustices. There was no response from the Secretary of State for War. The British Medical Association, the Royal College of Physicians and others redoubled their protests.^[10] Eventually, in 1898, officers and soldiers providing medical services were incorporated into a new body known by its present name, the Royal Army Medical Corps; its first Colonel-in-Chief was Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught.^[11]

The RAMC began to develop during the Boer War of 1899–1902. The Corps itself lost 743 officers and 6130 soldiers in the war. However, far more of them, and thousands more of the sick and wounded they treated, would have died if it had not been for the civilian doctors working in South Africa as volunteers—such as Sir Frederick Treves, Sir George Makins, Sir Howard Henry Tooth and Professor Alexander Ogston—who, having seen how unprepared to deal with epidemics the RAMC and the Army itself were, decided that a radical reform was needed. Chief among them was Alfred Fripp, who had been chosen by the Imperial Yeomanry Hospital Committee to order all the necessary materials and medical personnel, and oversee the setting-up of a private hospital at Deelfontein to cater, initially, for 520 'sick and wounded.' The contrast between the smooth working of the IYH at Deelfontein with the chaos of the RAMC hospitals, where an enteric epidemic had overwhelmed the staff, led to questions in Parliament, mainly by William Burdett-Coutts. In July 1901 the first meeting of the Committee of Reform took place, with all the aforementioned civilian experts, plus Sir Edwin Cooper Perry, making up half the number; the rest were Army men, and included Alfred Keogh, whom the new Secretary of State for War, St John Brodrick, later Earl of Midleton, appointed Chairman of this

Committee and the subsequent Advisory Committee. Neither would have met so soon—if at all—but for Fripp's concern to limit unnecessary suffering, and for his ten years' friendship with the new King, Edward VII. Fripp showed him his plans for reform and the King made sure that they were not shelved by his government. Part of his plan was to move the Netley Hospital and Medical School to a Thames-side site at Millbank, London. Cooper Perry, Fripp's colleague from Guy's Hospital, was instrumental in making this happen, as well as using his formidable talents as an organizer in other services for the Reform Committee. Fripp and Cooper Perry were knighted for their services to the RAMC Committee of Reform in 1903.^[12]



The RAMC Memorial for the Boer War at Aldershot in Hampshire

During the First World War, the corps reached its apogee both in size and experience. The two people in charge of the RAMC in the Great War were Arthur Sloggett,^[13] the senior RAMC officer seconded to the IYH in Deelfontein who acquiesced in all Fripp's surprising innovations, and Alfred Keogh, whom Fripp recommended to Brodrick as an RAMC man well-regarded when Registrar of No.3 General Hospital in Cape Town.^[14] Its main base was for long the Queen Alexandra Military Hospital at Millbank, London (now closed).^[15] It set up a network of military general hospitals around the United Kingdom^[16] and established clinics and hospitals in countries where there were British troops. Major-General Sir William Macpherson of the RAMC wrote the official *Medical History of the War* (HMSO 1922).^[17]

Before the Second World War, RAMC recruits were required to be at least 5 feet 2 inches tall, and could enlist up to 30 years of age. They initially enlisted for seven years with the colours, and a further five years with the reserve, or three years and nine years. They trained for six months at the RAMC Depot, Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Church Crookham, before proceeding to specialist trade training.^[18]

RAMC general hospitals in the First World War

The corps established a network of home-country military hospitals for military casualties during the First World War. The hospitals were managed by Territorial Force personnel and were headquartered as follows:^[16]

London Command

- 1st London General Hospital: St Gabriel's College, Lambeth^[19]
- 2nd London General Hospital: St Mark's College, Chelsea^[20]
- 3rd London General Hospital: Royal Victoria Patriotic Building^[21]
- 4th London General Hospital: King's College Hospital^[22]
- 5th London General Hospital: St Thomas' Hospital^[23]

Eastern Command

- 1st Eastern General Hospital: on former Cambridge University cricket field^[24]
- 2nd Eastern General Hospital: Brighton Grammar School^[25]

Northern Command

- 1st Northern General Hospital: Armstrong College, Newcastle upon Tyne^[26]
- 2nd Northern General Hospital: Leeds Pupil Teacher College^[27]
- 3rd Northern General Hospital: City of Sheffield Training College^[28]



RAMC First World War memorial in St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh

- 4th Northern General Hospital: Lincoln Christ's Hospital School^[29]
- 5th Northern General Hospital: Fielding Johnson Building, Leicester^[30]

Western Command

- 1st Western General Hospital: Fazakerley Hospital, Liverpool ^[31]
- 2nd Western General Hospital: Central Higher Grade School, Manchester^[32]
- 3rd Western General Hospital: Cardiff Royal Infirmary^[33]

Southern Command

- 1st Southern General Hospital: The Aston Webb Building, University of Birmingham^[34]
- 2nd Southern General Hospital: Memorial Wing, Bristol Royal Infirmary together with Southmead Hospital^[35]
- 3rd Southern General Hospital: Oxford University Examination Schools together with Somerville College, Oxford^[36]
- 4th Southern General Hospital: Salisbury Road Schools, Plymouth^[37]
- 5th Southern General Hospital: Girls Secondary School, Fawcett Road, Portsmouth^[38]

Scottish Command

- 1st Scottish General Hospital: Aberdeen High School for Girls^[39]
- 2nd Scottish General Hospital: Craigleith Hospital and Poorhouse^[40]
- 3rd Scottish General Hospital: Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow^[41]
- 4th Scottish General Hospital: Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow^[41]

Current facilities

The military medical services are now a tri-service body, with the hospital facilities of Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy combined. The main hospital facility is now the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, a joint military-National Health Service centre. The former Royal Naval Hospital Haslar in Gosport became the tri-service Royal Hospital Haslar until it was decommissioned in March 2007. The majority of injured service personnel were treated in Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham prior to the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital's opening. There was press coverage critical of the standard of care during the surge of UK military commitments in the years following the second invasion of Iraq,^[42] but it was later reported that the care provided to injured troops had significantly improved.^{[43][44]}

Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth, Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, Friarage Hospital in Northallerton (near Catterick Garrison) and Frimley Park Hospital (near Aldershot Garrison) also have military hospital units attached to them but they do not treat operational casualties.^[45]

Units

Regiments

- 1st Armoured Medical Regiment – Reactive Force
- 2nd Medical Regiment – Adaptable Force. A written statement in December 2016 stated that this unit will be rationalised, with all manpower redeployed to other areas of the Army.^[46]
- 3 Medical Regiment – Adaptable Force – to support first new Strike Brigade^[47]

- 4 Armoured Medical Regiment – Reactive Force
- 5 Armoured Medical Regiment – Reactive Force
- 16 Medical Regiment – 16 Air Assault Brigade^[48]
- 225 Medical Regiment
- 253 Medical Regiment
- 254 Medical Regiment – Army Reserve
- 335 Medical Evacuation Regiment – Army Reserve

Brigades

- 2 Medical Brigade
 - Regular Army
 - 22 Field Hospital
 - 33 Field Hospital – a written statement in December 2016 stated that this unit will be rationalised, with all manpower redeployed to other areas of the Army.^[46]
 - 34 Field Hospital
 - Army Reserve
 - 201 (Northern) Field Hospital
 - 202 (Midlands) Field Hospital
 - 203 (Welsh) Field Hospital
 - 204 (North Ireland) Field Hospital
 - 205 (Scotland) Field Hospital
 - 207 (Manchester) Field Hospital
 - 208 (Liverpool) Field Hospital
 - 212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital
 - 243 (Wessex) Field Hospital
 - 256 (City of London) Field Hospital
 - 306 Hospital Support Regiment
 - Medical Operational Support Group

Insignia

The RAMC, like every other British regiment, has its own distinctive unit insignia:

- Dark blue beret, the default Army colour worn by units without distinctive coloured berets.^[49] The exceptions are members of 16 Medical Regiment, who wear the maroon beret, 225 Scottish General Support Medical Regiment (previously Field Ambulance) and members of 205 (Scottish) Field Hospital, who wear the traditional Scottish Tam o' Shanter headdress with Corps badge on tartan backing, and medical personnel attached to field units with distinctive coloured berets, who usually wear the beret of that unit (e.g. maroon for The Parachute Regiment and sky blue for the Army Air Corps). There is also a small attachment to Special Forces, the Medical Support Unit (MSU) who wear the sandy beret of the SAS.^[49]
- Cap badge depicting the Rod of Asclepius, surmounted by a crown, enclosed within a laurel wreath, with the regimental motto *In Arduis Fidelis* ("Faithful in Adversity")^[1] in a scroll beneath. The cap badge is worn 1 inch above the left eye on the beret. The cap badge of the other ranks must also be backed by an oval patch of dull cherry-red coloured cloth measuring 3.81 cm (1.5 inches) wide and 6.35 cm (2.5 inches) high sewn directly to the beret.^[49]

Colonels-in-Chief

Colonels-in-Chief have been:^[11]

- FM Arthur William Patrick Albert, 1st Duke of Connaught & Strathearn KG, KT, KP, GCB, GCSI, GCMG, GCIE, GCVO, GBE, VD, TD (1919–1942)
- Queen Mary LG, GCVO, GBE, GCSI (1942–1953)
- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother LG, LT, CI, GCVO, GBE, CC, ONZ, CD (1953–2002)
- The Duke of Gloucester KG, GCVO (2003–present)

Order of precedence

Preceded by <u>Royal Logistic Corps</u>	<u>Order of Precedence</u>	Succeeded by <u>Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers</u>
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Successive changes in title

- Medical Staff Corps (1855–1857) (other ranks only)
- Army Hospital Corps (1857–1884) (other ranks only)
- Army Medical Department (1873–1898) (officers only)
- Medical Staff Corps (1884–1898) (other ranks only)
- Royal Army Medical Corps (since 1898)

Officer ranks

Before 1873	1873–1879	1879–1891	1891–1898 ^[50]	From 1898 ^[51]
Inspector-General of Hospitals	Surgeon-General	Surgeon-General	Surgeon-Major-General	Surgeon-General
Deputy Inspector-General of Hospitals	Deputy Surgeon-General	Deputy Surgeon-General	Surgeon-Colonel	Colonel
		Brigade Surgeon	Brigade Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel	Lieutenant-Colonel
Surgeon-Major	Surgeon-Major	Surgeon-Major	Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel	
Surgeon			Surgeon-Major	
Assistant Surgeon	Surgeon	Surgeon	Surgeon-Captain	Captain
			Surgeon-Lieutenant	Lieutenant

Gallantry awards

Since the Victoria Cross was instituted in 1856 there have been 27 Victoria Crosses and two bars awarded to army medical personnel.^[52] A bar, indicating a subsequent award of a second Victoria Cross, has only ever been awarded three times, two of them to medical officers. Twenty-three of these Victoria Crosses are on display in the Army Medical Services Museum. The corps also has one recipient of both the Victoria Cross and the Iron Cross. One officer was awarded the George Cross in the Second World War. A young member of the corps, Private Michelle Norris, became the first woman to be awarded the Military Cross following her actions in Iraq on 11 June 2006.^[53]

One VC is in existence that is not counted in any official records. In 1856, Queen Victoria laid a Victoria Cross beneath the foundation stone of the Royal Victoria Military Hospital, Netley.^[54] When the hospital was demolished in 1966, the VC, known as "The Netley VC", was retrieved and is now on display in the Army Medical Services Museum.^[54]

Name	Award	Awarded while serving with	Medal held by
<u>Harold Ackroyd</u>	VC	Royal Army Medical Corps att'd The Royal Berkshire Regiment	<u>Lord Ashcroft Collection</u>
<u>William Allen</u>	VC	Royal Army Medical Corps att'd Royal Field Artillery	<u>Army Medical Services Museum</u>
<u>William Babbie</u>	VC	Royal Army Medical Corps	AMS Museum
<u>William Bradshaw</u>	VC	90th Regiment (The Cameronians)	AMS Museum
<u>Noel Chavasse</u>	VC and Bar	Royal Army Medical Corps att'd The King's (Liverpool Regiment) Bar: same	<u>Imperial War Museum</u>
<u>Thomas Crean</u>	VC	1st Imperial Light Horse (Natal)	AMS Museum
<u>Henry Douglas</u>	VC	Royal Army Medical Corps	AMS Museum
<u>Joseph Farmer</u>	VC	Army Hospital Corps	AMS Museum
<u>John Fox-Russell</u>	VC	Royal Army Medical Corps att'd The Royal Welch Fusiliers	AMS Museum
<u>John Green</u>	VC	Royal Army Medical Corps att'd The Sherwood Foresters	AMS Museum
<u>Thomas Hale</u>	VC	7th Regiment (The Royal Fusiliers)	AMS Museum
<u>Henry Harden</u>	VC	Royal Army Medical Corps att'd 45 Royal Marine Commando	AMS Museum
<u>Edmund Hartley</u>	VC	Cape Mounted Riflemen, SA Forces	AMS Museum
<u>Anthony Home</u>	VC	90th Perthshire Light Infantry	AMS Museum
<u>Edgar Inkson</u>	VC	Royal Army Medical Corps att'd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers	AMS Museum
<u>Joseph Jee</u>	VC	78th Regiment (The Seaforth Highlanders)	AMS Museum
<u>Ferdinand Le Quesne</u>	VC	Medical staff Corps	Jersey Museum
<u>Owen Lloyd</u>	VC	Army Medical Department	AMS Museum
<u>George Maling</u>	VC	Royal Army Medical Corps att'd The Rifle Brigade	AMS Museum
<u>William Manley</u>	VC <u>Iron Cross</u>	Royal Regiment of Artillery Awarded Iron Cross 1870	Private Collection
<u>Arthur Martin-Leake</u>	VC and Bar	VC: South African Constabulary Bar: Royal Army Medical Corps	AMS Museum
<u>Valentine Munbee McMaster</u>	VC	Royal Army Medical Corps Winning his VC during the relief of Lucknow, while serving with the 78th Highlanders	National War Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh
<u>James Mouat</u>	VC	6th Dragoons (Inniskilling)	AMS Museum
<u>William Nickerson</u>	VC	Royal Army Medical Corps	Privately held
<u>Harry Ranken</u>	VC	Royal Army Medical Corps att'd King's Royal Rifle Corps	AMS Museum
<u>James Reynolds</u>	VC	Army Medical Department	AMS Museum
<u>John Sinton</u>	VC	Indian Medical Service	AMS Museum

Although not serving with the RAMC, Irish born Surgeon [John Crimmin](#) VC, CB, CIE, VD is another military medic to win the country's highest award for gallantry. He won his medal in 1889 while serving with The Bombay Medical Service of The Indian Army in the Karen Ni Expedition. John Crimmin is buried in [Wells, Somerset](#). Contrary to other sources the medal is not held by The Army Medical Services Museum.

Trades/careers in the 21st century

RAMC officer careers:

- [Doctor \(Medical Officer\)](#)
- [Pharmacist](#)
- [Physiotherapist](#)
- [Environmental Health Officer](#)
- [Medical Support Officer](#)
- [Clinical Psychologist](#)
- [Technical Officer – Biomedical Scientist/Radiographer/Clinical Physiologist/Operating Department Practitioner](#)

RAMC soldier trades:

- [Clinical Physiologist](#)
- [Combat Medical Technician](#)
- [Registered Paramedic](#)
- [Operating Department Practitioner](#)
- [Pharmacy Technician](#)
- [Environmental Health Technician](#)
- [Biomedical Scientist](#)
- [Radiographer](#)

Military abbreviations applicable to the Medical Corps

Within the military, Medical officers could occupy a number of roles that were dependent on experience, rank and location. Within military documentation, numerous abbreviations were used to identify these roles, of which the following are among the most common.^[55]

ADMS	Assistant Director Medical Services
CMT	Combat Medical Technician (an army medic). Not necessarily a paramedic. There are some (mostly special forces) CMTs who are paramedic-trained, but the term 'paramedic' is protected in law and can only be used by those who are fully qualified and state-registered with the HCPC.
DADMS	Deputy Assistant Director of Medical Services
DCA	Defence Consultant Advisor (the lead clinician for each specialty)
DDGMS	Deputy Director General Medical Services
DDMS	Deputy Director Medical Services
DG	Director General (Medical Services)
DGAMS	Director General Army Medical Services (HQ AMD, Camberley / HQ Land Forces, Andover)
DGMS	Director General Medical Services
DMS	Director Medical Services
EMO	Embarkation Medical Officer
GDMO	General Duties Medical Officer (a junior army doctor attached to a field unit before commencing higher specialist training)
MCD	Military Clinical Director (a senior army Consultant)
MSO	Medical Support Officer (a non-clinical military officer who hold command and staff positions)
MO	Medical Officer
OMO	Orderly Medical Officer
PMO	Principal Medical Officer
RMO	Regimental Medical Officer (normally an army General Practitioner with additional training in Pre-Hospital Emergency Care and Occupational Medicine)
SMO	Senior Medical Officer (normally a senior army General Practitioner)

Journal

Since 1903, the corps has published an academic journal titled the *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps (JRAMC)*. Its stated aim is to "publish high quality research, reviews and case reports, as well as other invited articles, which pertain to the practice of military medicine in its broadest sense".^[56] Submissions are accepted from serving members of all ranks, as well as academics from outside the military. Initially a monthly publication, it is currently published quarterly by BMJ on behalf of the RAMC Association.^{[56][57]}

Museum

The Army Medical Services Museum is based at Mytchett in Surrey.^[58]

Notable personnel

- Category:Royal Army Medical Corps officers
- Category:Royal Army Medical Corps soldiers

See also

- Structure of the British Army: The services

- Combat medic

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- Army Medical Services Museum (<http://www.ams-museum.org.uk/>)
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- Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps (<http://jramc.bmj.com>)

- "Army 2020 units and sub-units of the Royal Medical Corps (Reaction/Adaptable Force Divisions)" (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428897/FOI04164_75055_A2020_Med_Corps_Units_Redacted.pdf) (PDF). Ministry of Defence. 18 May 2015.

Other links

- Major-General Joe Crowdy (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/military-obituaries/army-obituaries/5984517/Major-General-Joe-Crowdy.html>) – *Daily Telegraph* obituary
- Battle Hospital: Medics at War (<https://web.archive.org/web/20120315201338/http://www.ollylambert.com/page19/page19.html>) – documentary about 202 Field Hospital during Operation Telic

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