

SEA SOLDIERS OF PORTSMOUTH

John Ambler & Matthew Little

This new publication tells the story of the Royal Marines in Portsmouth from the date of the occupation of their purpose-built Barracks at Eastney to the recent past when the Barracks were converted to private dwellings and the Officers' Mess became the Royal Marines Museum. Unlike previous publications this one describes not only Eastney Barracks and Fort Cumberland but also shows the impact that the presence of the Royal Marines had upon a very large area of Portsmouth and the various contributions that they made to all aspects of local life. The first man to land an aircraft at Portsmouth was a Royal Marine, the development of modern amphibious warfare began at Eastney and Royal Marine Bands provided a large proportion of local entertainment in the days before radio became common-place. As well as the Barracks and Fort Cumberland the Royal Marines built, occupied or used St Andrew's Church, the swimming baths, local schools and playing fields and sports grounds as well as massive gun batteries and large expanses of Southsea sea-front.

Written by its own staff this book is profusely illustrated with pictures taken from the huge collection held by the Royal Marines Museum, most previously unpublished. It provides a valuable, interesting and entertaining history of an important, but sometimes overlooked, area of Portsmouth that will appeal to anyone with an interest in the area. Through its chronological layout it also provides the military historian or enthusiast with a history of the development of the Royal Marines, particularly the Royal Marine Artillery, and their weapons, uniform and equipment.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

An engineer by profession **John Ambler** is currently on the staff of the Royal Marines Museum where he holds the position of Photographs and Paintings Librarian with responsibility for almost three million images of all types. His duties include the conservation, administration and interpretation of the Collections as well as ensuring their continued growth. John is a past Chairman of the International Military Music Society UK Branch and an active Member of the Royal Marines Historical Society.

Matthew Little joined the Royal Marines Museum in April 1979 and has worked on, and expanded the Archive and Library collections since that date. He has assisted with most of the titles produced on the Royal Marines and has authored the Museum's publications *The Royal Marines Museum- the story of Britain's Sea Soldiers* and *The Royal Marines & The Victoria Cross*. He has recently co-authored *Tracing Your Royal Marine Ancestors* with Richard Brooks.

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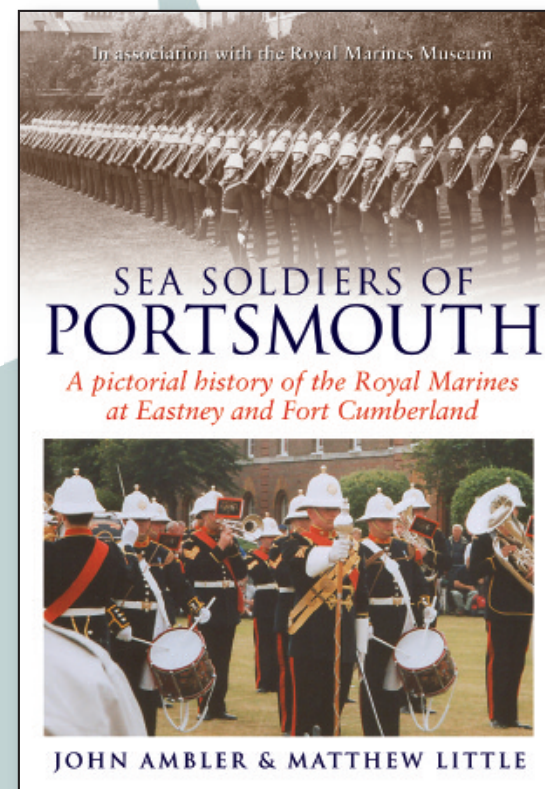
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The new 12 inch gun turret provides a suitable, and dramatic, backdrop to the members of a c.1912 sea service gunnery course.



Casual group of RMA officers on the steps of the mess at Eastney, with NCOs to the left. Note the original tiled approach to the stairs and the original lamps.



Men of the RM Siege Regiment manned some of the heaviest guns fired during World War II such as this 13.5 inch long range cross-channel rail-way gun. The gun having fired, the gun's crew close up to reload.

Frogman from the Amphibious School Royal Marines, at Fort Cumberland, training in Langstone Harbour.



Example of a double page spread



Above: Demonstration for senior officers of a 6 inch howitzer being hauled through Portsmouth Canal.

Left: General Sir Charles Menzies KH who was appointed the first Colonel of the Royal Marine Artillery Division on 28th March 1863.

Below: Eastney Fort West and the officers' accommodation (Teapot Row) from seaward during the 1950s.

