

# History in Brief

## 1890s

### 1894 Formation of Bermuda Rifle Corps (BVRC)

The BVRC was formed exclusively of volunteers to support the British Garrison, which was scattered throughout Bermuda's fortifications. Segregation was established in the organisation with the requirement that every soldier must be a member of a rifle club – which, at the time, offered memberships only to White people.



### 1895 Formation of Bermuda Militia Artillery (BMA)

The BMA was comprised of White officers and Black enlisted ranks. It was responsible for defending Bermuda's coastlines and harbour defences. Its role was critical in protecting the islands from naval threats.

## 1910s - 1940s

### 1914 - 1918 World War I

Both the BMA and the BVRC played crucial parts in the First World War at home and abroad – some 80 Bermudians never returned from overseas service between the two units and another ten died on home duty.

### 1939 - 1945 World War II

The forces also supported theatres in the Second World War, after which 35 would not return.



### 1949 BVRC renamed Bermuda Rifles

Bermuda Militia Artillery and Bermuda Rifles began to train more regularly together as the British garrison shrank.

## 1960 - 1970s

### 1965 Formation of the Bermuda Regiment

In a shifting social landscape, the BMA and Bermuda Rifles were officially amalgamated on 1<sup>st</sup> September. The merger reflected a desire for a stronger, more flexible force capable of handling a range of duties, from defending Bermuda to supporting community service.

The Bermuda Regiment, as it was called, played a key role as a unifier, bringing together Bermudians of all backgrounds as the first official organisation to desegregate. The Regiment continued as a conscripted (by ballot) force.



### Presentation of first colours

Late Royal Highness, Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, was the Regiment's first Colonel-in-Chief and presented the battalion with its first colours on 24th November 1965.

### Civil Unrest & Assassnation of Governor

Civil disturbances in 1968 and 1977 led to the Governor of Bermuda ordering the embodiment of the Regiment to support police.

In 1973 Sir Richard Sharples, the Governor, and his aide-de-camp Captain Hugh Sayers were assassinated in the grounds of Government House.

## 1980s - 1990s

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The battalion gradually defined its role on the island and, through the 1980s, from the General Strike of 1981 to the devastating Hurricane Emily in 1987, showed itself to be responsive in time of national crisis.



### 1990s

In the early 1990s, the Regiment was twice embodied for security and ceremonial services for Anglo-American summits between President George Bush and prime ministers Margaret Thatcher and John Major. The world's eyes were on Bermuda in 1996 when a Chinese fishing vessel, Xing Da, with 100 illegal immigrants entered Bermuda waters. The Regiment was embodied to provide cordon and search capabilities as well as humanitarian support.

## 2000s - 2010s

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Soldiers were embodied in 2001 in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. In 2003, the Regiment was embodied for Hurricane Fabian, the most severe hurricane in living memory. Two highly successful contingents were deployed in October 2004 and March 2005 to the Cayman Islands and Grenada respectively, following the devastation caused by Hurricane Ivan.

Twenty six Regiment volunteers joined a multinational force to provide security at the 2007 Cricket World Cup in Barbados. In 2008, soldiers were deployed to the Turks and Caicos Islands following Hurricane Ike.



### 2010s

Birgitte, Duchess of Gloucester, the Regiment's Colonel-in-Chief, presented the battalion with its existing colours in November 2010. In 2014, soldiers were embodied for ten days for the back-to-back hurricanes of Fay and Gonzalo.

During its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2015, the Regiment received the honour of a Royal title, and was awarded the freedoms of the Town of St George and the City of Hamilton. It put on a Trooping the Colour and, in October 2015, hosted HRH the Duchess of Gloucester at Warwick Camp and at the BR50 Tattoo. The latter attracted over 6,000 guests across three nights to see 400 performers from 11 local and international bands.

2016 saw the end of conscription for the Regiment which was officially announced with the passing of the Defence Amendment Act in the House of Assembly in 2018.

In June 2017 the Regiment supported the America's Cup by providing event security, search capability, maritime security and Explosive Ordnance Disposal support. In September, RBR personnel were deployed in support of Op RUMAN to provide relief to the Turks and Caicos Islands after Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

## 2020s

### Op SOTER and Formation of RBR Coast Guard

Op SOTER (the Regiment's military contribution to Bermuda's Covid response) became its longest operation since WWII.

In 2021, the RBR's Coast Guard began independent operations.

