

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 roles 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 1st September 1965. 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 & Assassination 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 on the grounds of Government House.

1980s - 1990s

1980s

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

2000s

In 2001, five soldiers went to Sierra Leone for six months as part of an International Military Advisory Training Team, to support government-led reconstruction efforts. Soldiers were also embodied that year in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks on the US. In 2003, the Regiment was embodied for Hurricane Fabian, the most severe storm in living memory. Contingents were deployed in October 2004 and March 2005 to the Cayman Islands and Grenada respectively, after devastation caused by Hurricane Ivan.

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



2010s

Birgitte, Duchess of Gloucester, the Regiment's Colonel-in-Chief, presented the battalion with its latest colours in 2010.

In 2011, joint patrols with the Bermuda Police Service began, focusing on maritime duties and events such as National Hero's Day weekend and Cup Match. A senior officer deployed to the London Olympics HQ in 2012 to help with planning, security and logistics. In 2014, soldiers were embodied for 10 days for hurricanes Fay and Gonzalo.

During its 50th 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, which became official with the Defence Amendment Act 2018.

In June 2017, the Regiment supported the America's Cup by providing security, search capability and explosive ordnance disposal support. In September, RBR personnel supported Op RUMAN, providing 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.

