

# ROYAL MARINES ASSOCIATION RULES

Nineteenth Series

November 2006

## SECTION 1- CONSTITUTION

1. The Title of the Association shall be the "**Royal Marines Association**". Branches of the Association shall be styled the ".....**Branch**, the **Royal Marines Association**". The abbreviated title of the Association shall be "**RMA**".
2. The conduct of the Association's affairs shall be in the hands of a Board of Trustees who shall be answerable to the Association at General Meetings.
3. The main structure of the Association shall consist of a Central Office and a number of Regions and Branches throughout the world. The number of Regions to be decided by Trustees.
4. The Term "Royal Marines" when used in these Rules shall be held to mean any person who is serving, or who has served in the Royal Marines, or the Royal Marines Reserve.
5. The RMA is a registered Charity under the Charities Act 1993. Registered Charity No: 206003.

## SECTION II - OBJECTIVES

6. To maintain and promote *esprit de corps* and comradeship amongst all Royal Marines, to keep them in touch with one another, and with the activities of the serving Corps and in furtherance of these main objectives to:
  - a. Advise members on any related Royal Marines or Association matter.
  - b. To forward for consideration to The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust via either SSAFA, The Royal British Legion or Central Office any case of hardship, or distress, in which direct financial assistance is sought, or other assistance is required. Ultimately the Royal Marines Benevolent Fund (RMBF) will contribute to these cases. Smaller cases, such as respite holidays and financial relief for mobility, can be sent to Central Office where the Corps Secretary will decide on its merits.
  - c. To establish and maintain contact with such other organisations that concern themselves with the welfare of the Armed Forces, to ensure that due consideration is given to the interests of Royal Marines.
  - d. To make donations to those Armed Forces charities which benefit Royal Marines.

## SECTION III - PRINCIPLES & POLICY

7. The RMA is a permanent body which is non-sectarian and non-political. In no circumstances will it, or any of its Branches, take sides as a body in any political or industrial dispute. Members are entirely free to act as their individual consciences may dictate, provided it is in the spirit of the Association.
8. The welfare of past and present Warrant Officers, NCO's and men of the Royal Marines, and their dependants, is vested by Royal Charter in the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust. The welfare of Officers shall be directed towards The Officers Association or other agencies concerned with Officers' welfare. The Royal Marines Corps Secretary is also to be informed, through Central Office, of all welfare cases involving serving and retired RMs, in

particular officers, in order that he can co-ordinate assistance from the RMBF. Due to the confidential nature of the information this is the only route to take in requesting assistance.

9. Branches shall not amalgamate with other societies, bodies or organisations, and should always aim to retain their complete independence, though close collaboration is encouraged with others whose policies are similar to those of the Association.

#### **SECTION IV - MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING RIGHTS**

10. There shall be four categories of Membership: Full, Associate, Affiliated, and Honorary.

- a. Full Membership. Full Membership shall be confined entirely to Royal Marines as defined in Rule 4 and to all members of the Royal Navy, and the former Women's Royal Naval Service, who have served on the strength of a Royal Marines Unit, Formation or Establishment.

These Members have full voting rights in connection with the affairs of the RMA and on committees to which they have been elected. They may hold office as a Trustee.

- b. Associate Membership. Associate Membership may be granted to:

- i Marines Cadets once they reach the age of eighteen.
- ii Members or former members of the Armed Forces who have served with a Royal Marines Formation, Establishment or Unit.
- iii Members or former members of any foreign marine corps or equivalent. Notables are: USMC, RNLMC, Fusiliers Marines.
- iv Members or former members of foreign armed forces who have served with a Royal Marines Formation, Establishment or Unit.
- v Members or former members of Police Forces who have special connections to the Royal Marines, such as the The Police Force of Northern Ireland.
- vi Serving or former members of the Royal Navy.
- vii Family members of Royal Marines as defined in Rule 4 and Royal Naval Personnel.
- viii Individuals who have been benefactors to the RMA as selected by the Trustees.

Associate Members may vote at branch meetings provided that they do not equal or exceed the numbers of Full members present. They may not hold office as a Trustee.

- c. Honorary Membership. Honorary Membership may be conferred by the Trustees, or a Branch Committee corporately, to anyone that is deemed worthy of this distinction. Special consideration should be given to people who have either supported the RMA significantly or is considered to be someone who would do so.

Widows, widowers or legal next of kin should be offered immediate Honorary Membership upon the death of a serving member.

Honorary Members may not vote at any meeting convened in connection with the affairs of the RMA.

- d. Affiliated Membership. Affiliated Membership may be granted to:

- i All Full Members of the RNA, RAFA and Army Associations. This includes those Army Associations that possess a strong historical connection with the Royal Marines, such as the Queens Regiment and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.
- ii Members of selected civil associations such as the Civil Service, Police Officers Associations and the Fire Brigade.

Affiliated Members are not eligible to vote.

11. <sup>1</sup>Full and Associate Members of the RMA, including Members of the Headquarters Roll, shall be regarded as Honorary Members of all Branches. Applicants who meet the Membership requirements, under Rule 10a and 10b, who are unable, or choose not to join a Branch, may be included in the Headquarters Roll that is maintained by Central Office. Branches will be given details of those HQ Roll Members who live close to them on an annual basis so that they can persuade them to join a branch.
12. Applications for Membership may be made to the Central Office on the form at Annex A. These forms will be held by all branches for issue. Neither RMA nor branch membership will be deemed to have commenced until the form has been filled in. Each member will be issued with a photo membership card that will be renewed biennially. Trustees or Branch Committees shall have full discretion to refuse or cancel the membership of any person subject to the correct grievance procedures. Branches are advised to seek guidance from the Central Office first.

Annex A includes a new form for modernising the Central Office database. This will allow Central Office to increase efficiency and speed up communication with both the Branches and the HQ Roll. This information is for the sole use of use of Central Office and the information therein will not be divulged to any organisation or person without the permission of the individual concerned.

*N.B. Life Membership was discontinued as an option for members from 1 January 2003. All existing Life and Subscribing Life members will continue to have their membership honoured along with their voting rights.*

#### **SECTION V – RMA MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS (RMAMS)**

13. RMA Membership subscriptions shall be set by Trustees, and ratified by a General Meeting.
  - a. Members over the age of 80 will have their RMAMS waived. Over 65s will have their RMAMS frozen at the rate on 1 January in the year their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday falls. In addition to RMAMS branch members may be charged an annual subscription, to be decided by the Branch at its AGM.
  - b. Overseas Branches are autonomous and may make an annual donation.
  - c. Serving Members shall pay a corporate subscription agreed by Corps Trustees.
  - d. RMA Membership Subscriptions (RMAMS) are to be paid by 28 February annually to cover that financial year's membership. This does not include those that pay by Standing Order.
14. No Member leaving the RMA shall have any claim upon the contributions or other moneys paid into the RMA.
15. Members who fail to pay their RMAMS shall have their membership terminated.

#### **SECTION VI - OFFICERS**

16. The Officers of the RMA shall consist of a Patron, Vice Patrons, President, and Honorary Advisors.
17. The President shall be confirmed at a General Meeting for a period of two years.
18. Honorary Advisors may be appointed for their expertise and need not be Full Members of the Association. The Honorary Treasurer is a member of the Board of Trustees but other

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<sup>1</sup>Local Membership: Branches may admit local members on such terms and for such purposes as the Branch Committee may decide. Local members shall not be eligible to serve on Branch Committees, nor to vote at any meeting convened in connection with the affairs of the RMA.

Honorary Advisers would only be invited to attend should their expertise be required for a specific item.

## **SECTION VII - BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

19. The affairs of the RMA shall be managed by a Board of Trustees under the terms of the Charities Act. The primary responsibilities of the Trustees are to:
  - a. Decide matters of general management and administrative policy.
  - b. Agree a Business Plan
  - c. Create sub-committees as considered necessary for the day to day business of the RMA.
  - d. Review such matters brought before it and to agree the items to be placed on the agenda of a General Meeting.
  - e. Determine any questions to which these Rules do not specifically apply.
20. The Board of Trustees shall consist of:
  - a. A Chairman
  - b. An Honorary Treasurer. (Wherever possible the Chairman and Hon Treasurer should be elected on alternate years.)
  - c. One Officer and one Warrant Officer or SNCO's, nominated by the Corps.
  - d. Two Trustees from each Region will be elected at a Regional General Meeting who will represent the views of the Region. They will serve for a period of two years beginning from the conclusion of the meeting at which they were elected. Retiring Trustees shall be eligible for re-election. Within seven days of the election of a Trustee the Regional Secretary shall inform the Chief Executive of the personal details of the newly elected Trustee and the date on which he was elected.
21. Any seven Members of the Board of Trustees shall form a quorum.
22. Trustees may co-opt any other Full or Associate Member to attend meetings to advise on any particular point, but the said co-opted Member shall not be entitled to vote.
23. Trustees shall meet approximately two months before the date of a General Meeting and at other times at the discretion of the President, or Chairman.
24. A record of the proceedings of each Trustees Meeting shall be made and circulated to all Trustees, Regions (including Presidents) and Branches.
25. Trustees shall have the power to appoint representatives from its own members, or from any branch of the RMA, for purposes connected with the lawful affairs of the RMA.
26. The expenses of Trustees attending meetings shall be met from General Funds.
27. Trustees shall be entitled to suspend for a period, or expel, any Branch which has ceased to fulfil the requirements of these Rules.
28. Trustees shall appoint a Chief Executive and such staff as may be necessary.

## **SECTION VIII - REGIONS**

29. Trustees may group a number of Branches into a Region. It should be the endeavour of such Branches to make the Region an active organisation. Regional Officers may be appointed by the Branches concerned.
30. Each Region may appoint a President, Chairman and a Committee and any other such Officers as may be deemed appropriate. They shall elect two representatives as Trustees. (See Rule 20d)
31. Minutes of Regional meetings are to be circulated to all Branches within its Region, to all other Regions and to Central Office.

#### **SECTION IX -BRANCHES**

32. Each Branch shall elect a Committee, consisting of a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, and at least two Full or Associate Members, whose duty it shall be to exercise a controlling oversight of the affairs of the Branch, and to carry out any constitutional direction given to it by the Branch or Trustees.
33. Each Branch may also elect a President.
34. A General Meeting should be held at the end of the Branch Financial Year where Officers and Committee for the ensuing year shall be elected. Their names and addresses are to be reported to the Chief Executive. The minutes of the AGM are to be copied to the Branch's Region and to Central Office.
35. Branch Officials may be paid expenses from the Funds of the Branch concerned.
36. Branches shall not be opened or closed without Regional consultation and the approval of Trustees.
37. Serving members may apply to join a Branch of their choice whilst continuing to pay their RMAMS through the Corps Subscription for administrative convenience.
38. Branches may form a Club within and associated with their Branch. The responsibility for the administration, finances and general running of any such Club shall rest solely with the Branch concerned and no expenses or any losses can be met from General Funds.

39. Any Branch having requested and received authority to close, shall forward to the Chief Executive:
- a. Audited statement of the Branch Accounts
  - b. The cash balance remaining in the Branch Funds
  - c. All ledgers and cash books relating to these funds together with all duplicate subscription receipts
  - d. The Branch Standard.

#### **SECTION X - STANDARDS**

40. Branches are to make every endeavour to obtain a Standard for their Branch. The design, details and manufacturers are held by the Chief Executive, together with details of dress as shown in the Standard Bearers' Handbook.
41. The Branch Standard shall be regarded as the Colours of the Branch and a symbol of the comradeship and *esprit de corps* for which the RMA stands. It should be kept in a safe and fitting place and only be paraded or displayed on occasions or functions which are appropriate and in keeping with its dignity.
42. The cost of purchase and maintenance of Branch Standards shall be borne by the Funds of the Branch concerned.
43. Each year there will be a Standard Bearers Competition to determine who will be the National Standard Bearer for the following year. This is a prestigious honour that includes leading the Standard at events such as Reunion and Graspan and the Annual Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. Rules for this competition are at Annex B.

#### **SECTION XI - GENERAL MEETING**

44. A General Meeting of the RMA shall be held annually at the Commando Training Centre during the annual Reunion which is normally held in September. The President, or in his absence the Chairman, shall preside. A quorum for the AGM is more than half the UK branches in attendance or voting by post.
45. The business to be transacted by a General Meeting of the RMA shall include:
- a. Considering reports and accounts for the past year.
  - b. Ratifying RMAMS increases agreed by the Trustees.
  - c. Endorsing any revised Rules decided upon by the Trustees.
  - d. Confirming Officers and Trustees.
  - e. Approving matters of general policy.
46. Notice shall be given in writing to the Chief Executive of all resolutions, propositions and nominations for Trustees by the end of June annually. The Agenda, once agreed by Trustees, shall be issued to Branches, together with nominations for Trustees and proposed Rules amendments at least two months prior to the AGM.
47. Resolutions not included as Agenda items shall not be voted upon unless the President declares the subject a matter of urgency. This Rule does not preclude general discussion on other urgent matters.
48. Each Branch is entitled to be represented by one voting delegate at the Meeting.

49. The expenses of the President and Trustees attending a General Meeting shall be met from the General Funds.
50. Branch delegates may claim up to half their travelling expenses from the General Fund.
51. Trustees shall be entitled to take part in all discussions but only delegates may vote.
52. All decisions of the General Meeting shall be decided by votes of Branch delegates; a simple majority is needed. In the event of a tie, the President, or the Chairman if presiding, shall have the casting vote.
53. Trustees may convene an extraordinary General Meeting at any time if requested by no less than half the fully constituted Branches of the RMA.
54. New Branches will only be authorised by the Trustees if they do not clash with existing Branches, which will have forged strong links with the local community that should not be undermined. For cities and large towns the distinction is obvious and boundaries can be easily identified. For country branches the Trustees will make their decision based on a reasonable car journey to attend meetings and functions. In the latter case dialogue with existing Branches will be important for a decision by the Trustees to be made.

## **SECTION XII - FUNDS**

55. The General Funds of the RMA shall be invested, or applied in the purchase of, or at interest, upon security of such stocks, funds, shares, securities or other investments of whatever nature and whereinsoever situate as shall be thought fit to the intent that the RMA shall have the same full and unrestricted powers of investing and transferring investments in all respects as those of a beneficial owner absolutely entitled.
56. Trustees may delegate the management of investment (including power to appoint and delegate to an investment Fund Manager in accordance with Rule 57) to a Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP) which shall consist of:
  - The Chairman of Trustees
  - The Honorary Treasurer
  - Three Trustees
57. a. Trustees may appoint as the Investment Manager for the RMA a person whom they are satisfied after inquiry is proper and competent to act in that capacity and who is either:
  - i. an individual of repute with at least fifteen years experience of investment management who is an authorised person within the meaning of the Financial Services Act 1986 or,
  - ii. a company or firm of repute which is an authorised or exempted person within the meaning of that Act otherwise than by virtue of s45 (1) (j) of that Act;
- b. Trustees may delegate to an Investment Manager so appointed power at his discretion to buy and sell investments for the RMA on behalf of the Trustees, in accordance with the investment policy laid down by Trustees. Trustees may only do so on terms consistent with this Rule.
- c. Where Trustees make any delegation under this Rule they shall :
  - i. inform the Investment Manager in writing of the extent of the RMA's investment powers;

- ii. lay down a detailed investment policy for the RMA and immediately inform the Investment Manager in writing of it and any changes to it;
  - iii. ensure that the terms of the delegated authority are clearly set out in writing and notified to the Investment Manager;
  - iv. ensure that they are kept informed and review on a regular basis the performance of the investment portfolio managed by the Investment Manger and on the exercise by him of his delegated authority;
  - v. take all reasonable care to ensure that the Investment Manager complies with the terms of the delegated authority and;
  - vi. review the appointment at such intervals not exceeding 12 months as they see fit.
- d. Where Trustees make any delegation under this Rule they shall do so on the terms that:
- i. the Investment Manager shall comply with the terms of his delegated authority;
  - ii. the Investment Manager shall not do anything which Trustees do not have the power to do;
  - iii. Trustees may with reasonable notice revoke the delegation or vary any of its terms in any way which is consistent with the terms of this Rule; and
  - iv. Trustees shall give directions to the Investment Manager as to the manner in which to report to them all sales and purchases of investments made on their behalf.
  - v. A meeting between the F&GP Committee and the Investment Manager to discuss investments and investment management policy, should take place at least once a year.

58. The investments of the RMA shall be vested in the names of the Board of Trustees as Holding Trustees for the RMA, or in the name of the corporate body as nominee for the RMA.

59. A separate fund, known as The President's Fund, shall be held within the General Funds from which the President may authorise grants, donations or expenditure to be made in cases of exceptional merit or urgency, without the prior approval of Trustees.

60. From 1 January 2006 RMAMS will be collected in any number of different ways. This can be by Branches collecting the money from individuals and forwarding it to the Central Office to the use of Standing Orders. However it is the aim to move to a Standing Order system throughout the whole RMA. Branches should liaise with Central Office over how they wish their RMAMS to be collected. Branch subscriptions shall be retained, and accounted for, by Branches.
61. The Financial Year of the RMA shall be from 1 April to 31 March.
62. The accounts of the RMA will be audited annually by a qualified Accountant. An abridged copy of the Accounts shall be sent to all Regions and Branches. Full copies of the accounts to be available upon request.
63. Branches are to forward to the Chief Executive a copy of their audited statement of accounts, and Branch Report immediately following the end of the financial year in March. This is a Charity Commission requirement.
64. Financial control will be exercised by the Trustees through the F&GP Committee, which will oversee the day-to-day financial management of the RMA. An annual Budget will be presented to Trustees for the following financial year.

### **SECTION XIII - CORPS LINKS**

65. The President will be nominated by CGRM and will be a member of the Corps Council. The Chairman will attend the RM Welfare Fund meetings. The Chief Executive will be a member of The Globe and Laurel Management Committee and a Trustee of the Royal Marines Museum.

### **SECTION XIV – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

66. Members having a complaint in connection with the Association should bring it to the attention of the Chief Executive. Should they be dissatisfied with his response they may appeal to the Board of Trustees. If they are dissatisfied with their decision they may appeal to a General Meeting of the Association.
67. Branch members having a complaint about their branch should bring it before the branch committee. Should they be dissatisfied with their decision they may appeal to a General Meeting of the branch. If that does not give satisfaction then a member may appeal to his Region and then to the Trustees, culminating in an appeal to the AGM. The Chief Executive holds a copy of the RMA Grievance Procedures for consultation if required. All parties are strongly advised to approach the Chief Executive first before instigating any complaint or hearing with a branch committee because legal implications may often be involved, no matter how trivial the matter.
68. In all areas the decision of a General Meeting will be final.