

## **158 PROVOST COMPANY** **3<sup>rd</sup> REGIMENT ROYAL MILITARY POLICE**



### About The Unit

The origins of 158 Pro Coy 3 RMP, can be traced as far as those of the Corps of Military Police during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1855 an establishment of one officer, one staff Sergeant, one Sergeant and 18 Privates with 20 horses was created to police the newly formed Aldershot military encampment. This establishment was both the beginning of the mounted troop once stationed with 160 Pro Coy and 158 Pro Coy. However such unit titles did not appear until the end of World War II.

With the expansion of the home base Army following the Cardwell Reforms, the United Kingdom was divided into Commands containing 3 districts. These were Aldershot which covered Hampshire and parts of Berkshire and Surry; Salisbury plain which covered Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and the remainder of Berkshire; and Southwest District which covered the rest. Both Aldershot District and Salisbury Plain with its Headquarters at Bulford Camp had their own district Pro Companies at the outbreak of World War II. Aldershot District maintained the largest mounted element although both Companies were issued with horses until the advent of mechanisation in 1930. Military Police Aldershot was the name given to the fore runner of 158 Pro Coy. It was located in Provost Road, Stanhope Lines off Queen's Parade in Aldershot until the rebuilding of the military town. Until mobilisation in 1939, the strength of the unit was approximately 150 all ranks, 40 of whom were mounted. During divisional training each summer, detachments of approximately 12 were found for each division. Primarily their duties were disciplinary, but there was a limited requirement for traffic control. Horses were normally only used for disciplinary patrols within the garrison with traffic control usually carried out on motorcycles.

After the war in 1946, the British Army began to demobilise and consequently this led to the restructuring of the Corps of Military Police and the appearance of unit titles such as 158, 160 and 163. Two years later in 1948, again

restructuring reductions took place with the disbandment of 163 Pro Coy RMP leaving 158 and 160 to police the whole of the Southern Command.

Spring 1950 saw the arrival in Stanhope Lines; Aldershot of 16 Para Bde Pro Unit RMP from the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) and for effective purposes the enlargement of 158 Pro Coy RMP. At this time the unit was commanded by a Captain in the Royal Artillery.

In summer 1950, detachments in Southampton and Portsmouth were established followed in 1951 by a detachment in Bordon, Hampshire.

In 1952, a further detachment was established at Barton Stacey and the Coy moved from Stanhope lines to Lille Bks, Aldershot.

In 1959 160 and 158 amalgamated with the Coy HQ at Bulford and detachments at Aldershot and Taunton. The mounted section and the newly established Southampton Port Section were enlarged to cover military districts between Lands End and Bisley Camp, therefore enabling every military policeman on the Coy strength to have a "beat" of one hundred square miles!

In 1964, 158 Pro Coy RMP lost Aldershot district which once again became 160 Pro Coy RMP.

During spring of 1973, the Coy was re-housed in temporary accommodation moving from the 1930s brick building and several huts built in 1901 to huts which were all originally constructed in 1901 this was to allow the construction of the purpose built accommodation in Gordon Barracks.

At the end of summer 1975, 3 Div Pro Coy Royal Military Police amalgamated with 158 Pro Coy RMP on the disbandment of Headquarters 3 Division Salisbury Plain. This fact meant that 158 Pro Coy RMP gained the Ace Mobile Force (Land) Platoon since 3 Armd Div reformed as part of BAOR restructuring where it was supported by 115 Pro Coy RMP. The final integration of the AMF(L) Platoon was not completed until its return from Norway in March 1976. On 18 October 1975 the Coy occupied new purpose built accommodation in Gordon Barracks, Bulford where it was collocated with the Intelligence Corps.

On 28 Dec 1990, the United Kingdom Mobile Force (UKMF) Platoon deployed on Op GRANBY returning to Bulford Camp in March 1991.

In 1992, a section from 158 Pro Coy was deployed on Op WARDEN to the Gulf to assist with the Kurds and no fly zone in Iraq. Also during that year more restructuring took place with the changes from Districts to Divisions and the disbandment of South West District and the reforming of HQ (UK) Div who arrived from BAOR. The UKMF also changed its role at this time and became 1 Mech Bde although still based at Tidworth. This change resulted in the renaming of the RMP UKMF platoon to 1 Brigade Provost Unit (1 BPU).

In 1994 a section was also deployed on Op GRAPPLE to Yugoslavia, the fore runner to Ops HANDEN, RESOLUTE and LODESTAR. At the end of this year the Coy gained further real estate from the Int Corps and completely took over building 52 within Gordon Barracks, later renamed Kiwi Barracks. The Coy has remained in these barracks to this day.

On 1 April 2000 158 Pro Coy became one of three original Coys under the newly formed 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment RMP a Divisional Military Police Regiment under 3(UK) Division. It continued its role of direct support to 1 Mech Bde based down the road in Tidworth. Also in that year the Coy was deployed as part of Op PENINSULA to parts of southwest England to assist the Ministry of Agriculture and farming during the Foot and Mouth epidemic.

2002 saw 158 Pro Coy 3 RMP deploying once again to the Former Yugoslavia this time as a Pan-Balkans Coy with elements in Bosnia and Kosovo. 2002 also saw the AMF(L) Platoon disbanding following restructuring.

From April to November 2003 the entire 158 Pro Coy 3 RMP deployed to Iraq in support of 1 Mech Bde on Op TELIC 4.

Between April 2007 and November 2007, 158 Pro Coy 3 RMP, deployed again to Iraq in support of 1 Mech Bde on Op TELIC 10. This was another successful mission lost Cpl Christopher Read who was killed in action.