

80th LIGHT ANTI-AIRCRAFT REGIMENT, ROYAL ARTILLERY

The Regiment, then, the 1st Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, was formed in 1940 by the amalgamation of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Light Anti-Aircraft Batteries, which since 1936 had been armed with Lewis guns. Armed with the Bofors 40 m/m guns, Batteries fought as independent batteries in Norway and France. After the fall of Norway and France, the Batteries were amalgamated to form the Regiment and took part in the defence of London at the end of 1940. Early in 1941 the Regiment moved overseas to join the 7th Armoured Division (The Desert Rats) in the Western Desert. It remained with this Division until March 1942, having accompanied many Jock Columns and fought at SIDI REZEGH where heavy casualties were incurred. Later the Regiment joined the 5th Indian Division, fighting from KNIGHTS-BRIDGE to EL ALAMEIN. During the eighteen months fighting in the Desert the Regiment destroyed 25 tanks and over 150 aircraft. In September 1943, the Regiment took part in the Combined Operations in the DODECANESE, where the Regiment's guns arrived by air, transport ships and submarine.

Awards for Gallantry included 1 DSO, 5 MCs and 5 MMs.

The Regiment has been with 1st Infantry Division since March 1945 serving in Palestine, North Africa and Egypt.

When the Regiments of the Royal Artillery were re-numbered in 1947, the title became the 80th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, the Batteries being re-numbered 219, 225 and 226 respectively.

The searchlights at the Tattoo are being operated by personnel of 80th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. The "Gunners" took over the operation of searchlights from the "Sappers" in 1939 and today a large proportion of Light Anti-Aircraft Regiments have been converted to Light Anti-Aircraft/Searchlight Regiments.