



215 (Scottish) Multi-Role Medical Regiment

(Formed by amalgamation of 205 (Scottish) Field Hospital with 225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment in December 2023)

Introduction

215 (Scottish) Multi-Role Medical Regiment was formed under the British Army's Future Soldier programme by the amalgamation of **205 (Scottish) Field Hospital** with **225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment** on 2 December 2023.¹

These two units became squadrons (**157 Hospital Squadron** in Edinburgh, **252 Hospital Squadron** in Aberdeen, **225 Medical Squadron** in Glenrothes and Dundee, and **205 Support Squadron** in Glasgow, each maintaining the lineage of their predecessors) within the new formation, which has its Regimental Headquarters in Glasgow.² 215 MMR is now the only Army Reserve medical unit in Scotland.

Future Soldier re-organisation (2023)

Major changes occurred in the Army Medical Services from 28 February 2023 under the Future Soldier programme, with a reduction in the number of Close Support Regiments and the formation of Multi-Role Medical Regiments (MMRs), with field hospitals merging with medical regiments to form single units under a unified command.³ Four of the ten Reserve field hospitals were merged, and nine MMRs were created in

¹ See the detailed illustrated histories of **205 (Scottish) Field Hospital** and **225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment** on the Friends of Millbank website, to complement this brief history: <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/previous-units/>

² **215 (Scottish) Multi-Role Medical Regiment**. British Army website <https://www.army.mod.uk/learn-and-explore/about-the-army/corps-regiments-and-units/royal-army-medical-service/215-scottish-multi-role-medical-regiment/> (accessed 2 March 2025).

³ Future Soldier (programme published 25 November 2021; British Army Website <https://www.army.mod.uk/learn-and-explore/army-of-the-future/readiness/future-soldier/> (last accessed 25 February 2025). Future Soldier Guide https://www.army.mod.uk/media/15057/adr010310-futuresoldierguide_30nov.pdf)

the Army Reserve.⁴⁻⁵ The newly established Royal Army Medical Service (formed on 15 November 2024) now has two Regular and nine Reserve MMRs, in addition to four Regular Medical Regiments and three Nationally Recruited Reserve units.⁶⁻⁷ 2 Medical Brigade has been re-designated as 2 Medical Group, still based in Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Strensall, near York.

Formation Parade

The Formation Parade of 215 MMR was held on 2 December 2023 on the Esplanade at Edinburgh Castle, attended by dignitaries including the Governor of Edinburgh Castle, Major General Alistair Bruce of Crionaich OBE DL VR, and the Honorary Colonel of 215 (Sc) MMR, Dame Katherine Grainger DBE. Also present were General Officer Scotland, Major General Robin Lindsey CBE, and Surgeon General, Major General Tim Hodgetts CB CBE KHS OStJ DL.⁸

The parade was followed by a service at the Scottish National War Memorial, led by The Reverend Louis Kinsey QVRM TD VR, previous Padre of 205 Field Hospital, and supported by The Band of 6 SCOTS.⁹ The Commanding Officer, Lt Col Edd Gordon MStJ, had the honour of wearing the sword of Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse, VC & Bar, MC, medical officer with the Liverpool Scottish, who was the only person awarded the Victoria Cross twice during the First World War, and one of only three recipients of the VC & Bar.



Formation parade of 215 MMR at Edinburgh Castle, 2 December 2023

⁴ The four Reserve Field Hospitals that merged were 201 with 212, and 207 with 208. See Previous Unit histories on the Friends of Millbank website.

⁵ The nine Reserve MMRs are numbered 202, 203, 206, 210, 214, 215, 243, 254 and 256 MMRs respectively.

⁶ The Royal Army Medical Service was formed by amalgamation of the three corps of the Army Medical Services (the Royal Army Medical Corps, the Royal Army Dental Corps and the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps).

⁷ See Current Units, on Friends of Millbank website <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/current-units>

⁸ History made for Army Reserve medics as new Scottish regiment is formed. *BFBS Forces News*, 4 December 2023 <https://www.forcesnews.com/military-life/scotland/history-made-army-reserve-medics-new-scottish-regiment-formed> (last accessed 14 November 2024)

⁹ Formation Parade for new medical regiment. Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, 14 December 2023. <https://www.hrfca.co.uk/public-news/formation-parade-for-new-medical-regiment/> (last accessed 14 November 2024)

157 Hospital Squadron, in Edinburgh – a very brief history

157 Hospital Squadron traces its lineage through **205 (Scottish) Field Hospital** and various amalgamations of Edinburgh and Glasgow units to the Glasgow-based **157 (Lowland) Field Ambulance** of the First World War, and through that to the 2nd Lowland Field Ambulance (Glasgow) which was formed when the Territorial Force was established in 1908, and its preceding Volunteer Infantry Brigade Bearer Company [attached to the Glasgow Brigade]. *(See 205 Support Squadron below for more detail).*

252 Hospital Squadron, in Aberdeen – a very brief history

252 Hospital Squadron traces its lineage through **205 (Scottish) Field Hospital** and the merger of **205 (Scottish) General Hospital RAMC (V)** with **252 (Highland) Field Ambulance** in 1995. Its antecedent in the Highland Division (created in 1908 as part of the Territorial Force) was the **1st (tbc) Highland Field Ambulance** in Aberdeen, renamed **153 (Highland) Field Ambulance** in 1921. The Division served in France as the 51st Highland Division during the First World War and returned there in January 1940 for the Second. Most of the Division was forced to surrender at St Valery-en-Caux on 12 June 1940.¹⁰ The re-constituted 153 (Highland) Field Ambulance joined the 15th (Scottish) Infantry Division, and accompanied it to France in June 1944, remaining with it until the end of the War.¹¹

153 (Highland) Field Ambulance was renamed **152 (Highland) Field Ambulance** in 1947 when the Highland Division changed around the numbers of the brigades under command, and therefore of their constituent field ambulances. Following the re-organisation of the Territorial Army as the Territorial and Army Voluntary Reserve (TAVR) in 1967, there was wholesale renumbering of surviving units to reflect their new readiness and commitment status. The new '200' series identified Independent units with their own TA Centres. 152 (Highland) Field Ambulance was thereby renamed **252 (Highland) Field Ambulance (Volunteers)**. *(See 205 Support Squadron below for more detail).*

225 Medical Squadron, in Glenrothes and Dundee – a very brief history

225 Medical Squadron traces its lineage through **225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment** back through **225 (Highland) Field Ambulance RAMC** and its predecessors, including 152 (Highland) Field Ambulance and 153 (Highland) Field Ambulance, to the Territorial Force **3rd Highland Field Ambulance** raised on 5 May 1908 from the Black Watch Volunteer Bearer Company in Dundee, the regimental home of the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment). The Regimental HQ of 225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment was at Dundee, with individual Squadrons based in Glenrothes, Dundee and Stirling.

At the beginning of the First World War, the 3rd Highland Field Ambulance was mobilised in support of 153 Brigade within the Highland Division, now mobilised as 51 (Highland) Division. The Division arrived in France in May 1915 and first saw action near Festubert, when 500 wounded passed through the unit's Dressing Station in just two days. The unit also saw action on the Somme, Beaumont Hamel, Vimy, Arras, Cambrai,

¹⁰ Official 51st Highland Division and Museum website <https://51hd.co.uk/> (accessed 26 September 2024)

¹¹ Alistair Macmillan. Scotland the Brave: The story of 225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment. RAMC Reunited Newsletter, August 2018. https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/downloads/225-Med_Reg_History-Aug%2024.pdf

Ypres (Passchendaele, 1917), the German 1918 Spring Offensive, and finally the Hundred Days Offensive leading to the end of the War in November 1918.

The Territorial Force was renamed the Territorial Army in 1921, and the Field Ambulances were re-numbered in parallel with the three constituent brigades of their parent Division. The 3rd Highland Field Ambulance became **152 (Highland) Field Ambulance**, and the senior in its Division by virtue of its location. It became the sole Field Ambulance in the Highland Division after financial cutbacks in 1922, until 153 and 154 (Highland) Field Ambulances were reformed in Aberdeen under the gathering clouds of war.

The unit was mobilised as **152 Field Ambulance** when the Second World War broke out. It deployed to France in January 1940 with the 51st Highland Division as part of the British Expeditionary Force, until most of the Division was forced to surrender at St Valery-en-Caux on 12 June 1940. As a result, the Territorial 9th (Highland) Division was re-named the 51st (Highland) Division, integrating those who had escaped. However, this Division retained its original Field Ambulances (174, 175 and 176), so the reconstituted 152, 153 and 154 Field Ambulances went on to serve in different areas. 152 (Highland) Field Ambulance went out to Egypt as part of the newly formed 78th Infantry Division, supporting it during the North Africa campaign, including the Battle of El Alamein, followed by the invasion of Sicily and then of Italy, ending the War in Austria. 153 (Highland) Field Ambulance joined the 15th (Scottish) Infantry Division, and accompanied it to France in June 1944, remaining with it until the end of the War.

Following the re-constitution of the TA in 1947, the Highland Division changed around the numbers of the brigades under command, resulting in their field ambulance numbers also swapping around. Thus 152 (Highland) Field Ambulance in Dundee swapped number with 153 (Highland) Field Ambulance in Aberdeen, with the Dundee unit being renamed **153 (Highland) Field Ambulance** attached to 153 Brigade, 51st Highland Division.

The major re-organisation of the TA in 1967, and its renaming as the TAVR, resulted in the Highland Division being disbanded. 153 (Highland) Field Ambulance was reformed and renumbered, initially as **225 (Highland) Field Dressing Station RAMC (V)**, before being re-designated as **225 (Highland) Field Ambulance RAMC (V)** in 1969.

The post 9/11 Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns resulted in the Army's main effort switching from a Divisional focus to supporting the Brigades deploying on these campaigns. All surviving Field Ambulances, both Regular and TA, were converted or amalgamated into Medical Regiments. The unit was initially re-designated as **225 Divisional General Support Medical Regiment (Volunteers)**, and then **225 General Support Medical Regiment (Volunteers)** on 1 April 2006, before being re-designated as **225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment (Volunteers)** on 1 April 2008. The 'Volunteers' designation was dropped in 2013.

Ten years later, under the Future Soldier programme, the unit amalgamated with 205 (Scottish) Field Hospital, becoming **225 Medical Squadron** within 215 MMR on 2 December 2023.

205 Support Squadron, in Glasgow – a very brief history

205 (Scottish) Field Hospital was one of ten field hospitals in the Army Reserve prior to the radical transformation under Future Soldier. Its Regimental HQ and a Detachment were in Graham House, Glasgow, and its other Detachments (previously Squadrons) were based in Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, and Inverness. It was formed in 1967 as **205 (Scottish) General Hospital RAMC (V)** by the amalgamation of

5 (City of Glasgow) General Hospital with 50 (Scottish) Casualty Clearing Station in Edinburgh. It had the distinction of being the first Territorial Army unit to deploy overseas since the Second World War (to Saudi Arabia in 1991 during the First Gulf War). It was restructured as a field hospital in 1995, and since then it has deployed again to both Iraq (2005) and Afghanistan (2010).

The unit motto was 'Cuir and dewitie', taken from the exhortation by Mary, Queen of Scots to her surgeons before the Battle of Langside in 1568, to 'do their cuir and dewitie, to the wounded of both sides this day'.

The unit traces its lineage back to the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps (VMSC) Companies which formed in Edinburgh in 1886, Aberdeen in 1888, and Glasgow in 1893-94. Their Active Service Companies served in the South African (Second Boer) War of 1899-1902. The VMSC Companies became RAMC (V) Companies on formation of the Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers) in 1902.

The completely separate Volunteer Infantry Brigade Bearer Companies (which were affiliated with their local Regiments) became Field Ambulance units when the Territorial Force (TF) was established in 1908. Within the 52nd Lowland Division there were three such units: 1st and 2nd Lowland Field Ambulances (Glasgow) and 3rd Lowland Field Ambulance (Edinburgh).

During the First World War, the 1st and 2nd Lowland Field Ambulances (Glasgow) and 3rd Lowland Field Ambulance (Edinburgh) were renumbered as 156, 157 and 155 (Lowland) Field Ambulances respectively, seeing service with their Division in Gallipoli (1915), Egypt, Palestine and finally France in 1918.

The 2nd Scottish General Hospital TF was based at Craig Leith (now the Western General Hospital), Edinburgh, and deployed a detachment to set up a hospital at St. Omer, France from 1917 to 1919.

After the War the Territorial Force was much reduced, and in 1921 was renamed the Territorial Army (TA). The surviving Scottish Lowland Medical Units were both Edinburgh-based: 155 (Lowland) Field Ambulance TA and 11 (2nd Scottish) General Hospital TA. The Glasgow units went into suspended animation, only to be hastily reformed in 1938.

During the Second World War, the three field ambulances (155, 156 and 157) deployed briefly with the 52nd Lowland Division to the Cherbourg Peninsula in June 1940 as part of the Second British Expeditionary Force, to cover the withdrawal of Allied Forces from Cherbourg following the Dunkirk evacuation. The Division then returned to the United Kingdom and prepared for the expected German invasion, before beginning mountain warfare training in the Scottish Highlands for possible operations in Norway. Instead, in 1944 the 52nd Lowland Division landed on Walcheren Island in Holland and advanced across northern Germany to take Bremen, finally moving into Norway to cover the German surrender.

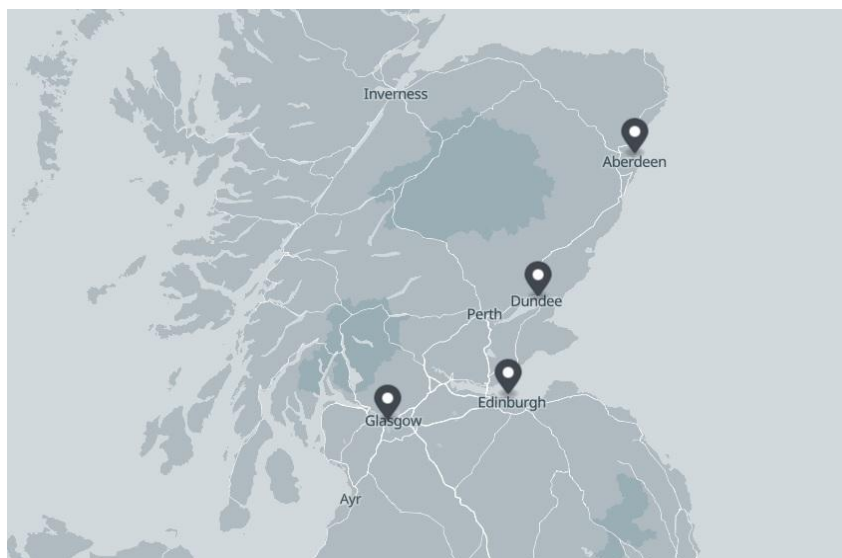
The 11 (2nd Scottish) General Hospital TA mobilized as 23 (Scottish) General Hospital RAMC and served in Palestine and UK, before providing medical support for the Normandy landings in 1944. It then advanced through France to Germany as the 21st Army Group's General Hospital, ending up near Bad Oegnhaven.

After this War, the Territorial Army reformed in 1947, with 2nd (Scottish) General Hospital and 155 (Lowland) Field Ambulance forming at Edinburgh, and 156 and 157 (Lowland) Field Ambulances at Glasgow, Hamilton, and Ayr. Further reductions and amalgamations followed in 1961, with 155 (Lowland) Field Ambulance joining the 2nd (Scottish) General Hospital in Edinburgh to form **50 (Scottish) Casualty Clearing Station (CCS)**.

In Glasgow the original 157 (Lowland) Field Ambulance was amalgamated with 154 (Highland) Field Ambulance to form **5 (City of Glasgow) General Hospital**. The original 156 Field Ambulance was renamed 157 Field Ambulance in 1961 and then disbanded in 1967.

The major TAVR re-organisation in 1967 saw the amalgamation of 5 (City of Glasgow) General Hospital with 50 (Scottish) CCS to form **205 (Scottish) General Hospital RAMC (V)**.

Following the end of the Cold War, general hospitals were restructured as field hospitals, under a major TA re-organisation initiated in 1991. In 1995 the unit was re-designated as **205 (Scottish) Field Hospital (Volunteers)**, merging with **252 (Highland) Field Ambulance** at Aberdeen. The Regimental Headquarters and Squadron at Glasgow, and the Edinburgh Squadron, were thereby joined by two new Squadrons: one in Aberdeen, formed from 252 (Highland) Field Ambulance, and one at Dundee alongside the independent 225 (Highland) Field Ambulance (V). The four Squadrons of '205' were thereby linked to Scottish cities with medical schools and teaching hospitals (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, and Aberdeen).



205 Field Hospital - Squadron locations, 1995.¹²

The unit dropped the 'Volunteers' designation in 2013 as a result of the Future Reserves 2020 plan, under which the Territorial Army was renamed as the Army Reserve.¹³

Under the Future Soldier reorganisation, **205 (Scottish) Field Hospital** amalgamated on 2 December 2023 with 225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment to form **215 (Scottish) Multi-Role Medical Regiment**.

And thus began another chapter in the history of the Army Reserve medical units of Scotland.

¹² Sourced from: 205 Field Hospital. British Army website: <https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/army-medical-services/205-field-hospital/> accessed 14 November 2024; no longer available 2 March 2025.

¹³ The 'Future Reserves 2020' (FR2020) plan was outlined in Parliament by Defence Secretary Liam Fox on 18 July 2011. It was followed by the Army 2020 plan in July 2012, which announced a major restructuring of the British Army, and finally by a White Paper presented to Parliament by Liam Fox's successor, Philip Hammond, in July 2013: **Reserves in the Future Force 2020: Valuable and Valued**. It was confirmed in this White Paper that the TA would be renamed the Army Reserve.

Notes for researchers

This brief history of 215 (Scottish) Multi-Role Medical Regiment should be read in conjunction with the detailed histories of its predecessors, 205 (Scottish) Field Hospital and 225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment, published on the Friends of Millbank website, <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/previous-units>.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance with this unit history: Brigadier Alistair Macmillan, Brigadier (Retd) Glynne Jones OBE (former Commanding Officer), Lt Col Helen Singh (former Commanding Officer), Col Robbie Paterson (former Commanding Officer), Lt Col Edd Gordon MStJ (first Commanding Officer 215 MMR), WO1(RSM) Barry Cuthbert, and Terry Hissey (Historical Branch Army). The author apologises for any errors or omissions.

The histories of current and previous units of the UK's Defence Medical Services are available from the Friends of Millbank website: <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/current-units> and <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/previous-units>

If you notice any errors or wish to contribute to future updates, please contact the author at chairman@friendsofmillbank.org

Published by Friends of Millbank.

Supporting the Museum of Military Medicine.