



253 (North Irish) Medical Regiment

(To merge and restructure as 210 (North Irish) Multi-Role Medical Regiment in 2023)

Introduction

253 (North Irish) Medical Regiment is an Army Reserve medical unit, co-located in Hydebank, Belfast with the other such unit in Northern Ireland, **204 (North Irish) Field Hospital**. It was formed on 1 April 2009 by the re-designation of 253 (North Irish) General Support Medical Regiment (Volunteers), which traced its lineage through 253 (North Irish) Field Ambulance (Volunteers) to the Territorial Force Field Ambulances of 36 (Ulster) Division in the First World War. Under the Future Soldier programme, the unit will amalgamate by September 2023 with 204 (North Irish) Field Hospital to form the new **210th (North Irish) Multi-Role Medical Regiment**.¹

The unit insignia

In March 1900 Her Majesty Queen Victoria, in recognition of the bravery of the Irish soldiers who had fought in the Second Boer War, instituted a tradition which has been continued by British and Irish soldiers to this day, despite partition in 1921:

*'Her Majesty the Queen is pleased to order that in future on Saint Patrick's Day all ranks in Her Majesty's Irish regiments shall wear as a distinction a sprig of shamrock in their head-dress to commemorate the gallantry of Her Irish soldiers during the recent battles in South Africa.'*²

Shamrock is the Irish word for young clover, and Saint Patrick reputedly used the shamrock as a metaphor for the Holy Trinity. It has been used as the symbol of Ireland since the 18th century, and

¹ Future Soldier (programme published 25 November 2021; British Army Website <https://www.army.mod.uk/our-future/>. Future Soldier Guide https://www.army.mod.uk/media/15057/adr010310-futuresoldierguide_30nov.pdf)

² Natal Army Orders, 14 March 1900. Quoted in: Saint Patrick's Day and the Sprig of Shamrock; Royal Irish website <http://www.royal-irish.com/events/saint-patrick%E2%80%99s-day-and-the-sprig-of-shamrock> (accessed 9 December 2014)

after the 1801 Act of Union between Britain and Ireland the shamrock was incorporated into the Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom, alongside the rose and the thistle.

The Lineage of 253 (North Irish) Medical Regiment and its Squadrons

1914-1915	1922-1967	1967-1998	2005-07	2008 (Improved Medical Support to Brigade concept)	2014 (Army 2020)
The 36 th Ulster Division, raised September 1914 - 1915		253 (North Irish) Fd Amb(V)	253 (North Irish) Div GS Med Regt(V)	253 (North Irish) Med Regt(V)	253 Med Regt
	107 (Ulster) Fd Amb formed 1947			107 Med Sqn (V)	107 Med Sqn
108 th Field Ambulance (TF)				108 Med Sqn (V)	108 Med Sqn
109 th Field Ambulance (TF)				109 Evac Sqn (V)	109 Med Sqn
110 th Field Ambulance (TF)				Sp Sqn (V)	110 Sp Sqn
76 th Sanitary Section RAMC					
Divisional Train RASC					
48 th Mobile Veterinary Section					

Unit Lineage kindly provided by WO1 (RSM) Colin Jess³

³ Information extracted from: NAMING OF AMS UNITS AND SUBUNITS - Directive to Director General Army Medical Services by Director Medical Capability (Brigadier John McIntosh), AMD18/118, dated 21 June 2013. Annexes: 1. AMS Unit and Subunit Naming; 2. Lineage of Medical Regiments and their Squadrons.

253 (North Irish) Field Ambulance (Volunteers)

This TA unit was formed in 1947 and can trace its roots back to the field ambulances of 36 (Ulster) Division during the First World War. The unit was static in Northern Ireland between 1947 and 2005 in a predominantly Cold War role, consisting of a Forward Medical Squadron and a Rear Medical Squadron with a detachment in Londonderry.

On 22 September 2003 a squadron consisting of sixty personnel plus attached individuals deployed to Bosnia to provide medical cover to UK and NATO forces on peacekeeping duties on Operation OCULUS, from October 2003 - April 2004. The unit also deployed individual augmentees to Iraq on Operation TELIC, with thirteen clinicians from the unit being mobilised for Op TELIC 1.⁴



*Commemorative painting by Robert D Beattie of 253 (North Irish) Field Ambulance (Volunteers)
(courtesy of Colonel (retd) John Richardson L/RAMC)*

253 (North Irish) Divisional General Support Medical Regiment (Volunteers)

On 1 April 2005 the field ambulance was restructured and became **253 (North Irish) Divisional General Support Medical Regiment (Volunteers)** with a Medical Squadron in Belfast and an Evacuation Squadron in Londonderry. In addition, a new detachment was

⁴ RAMC Magazine December 2004, p.54

raised in Enniskillen. The Unit came under the operational command of 1 (UK) Division in Germany and exercised that year in Sennelager.

253 (North Irish) General Support Medical Regiment (Volunteers)

On 1 April 2007 the Unit expanded and was re-titled, becoming 253 (North Irish) General Support Medical Regiment (Volunteers), and was tasked with raising an additional Medical Squadron. Due to the number of Unit medics in the Londonderry area, the Evacuation Squadron in Londonderry was re-roled to create the second Medical Squadron, and a new Evacuation Squadron was raised in Belfast. The detachment in Enniskillen was assigned as the Ambulance Troop of 108 Med Squadron based in Londonderry.

253 (North Irish) Medical Regiment

On 1 April 2009 the Unit was restructured into a Reverse Hybrid Medical Regiment (primarily Reserve with a small Regular component) under the operational command of 102 Logistics Brigade and was re-designated as **253 (North Irish) Medical Regiment**. Its TA squadron structure did not alter significantly but a regular medical squadron based in Preston was re-subordinated from 5 Medical Regiment and designated as 63 Medical Squadron. Soon thereafter, 63 Medical Squadron deployed to Afghanistan on an Op HERRICK tour and a number of individuals deployed separately as augmentees.

On 1 April 2011, 63 Medical Squadron was re-subordinated to 3 Medical Regiment in Catterick and the regiment reverted to a purely TA medical regiment, falling under the operational command of 38 (Irish) Brigade. The Unit continued to send individual augmentees on Op HERRICK.

In 2014, under Army 2020 reforms, the Unit underwent further changes with 109 Evacuation Squadron re-rolling to form a third medical squadron. The Unit temporarily fell under operational command of 1 (UK) Division in summer 2014 before reverting to the operational command of 102 Logistics Brigade in December 2014.

Previous insignia



Discontinued in 2013

Published histories

1. **The History of 253 (North Irish) Field Ambulance RAMC (Volunteers)** Colonel Arthur Eakins, Late Honorary Colonel, 253 Fd Amb (V) (published 1998)

Unpublished histories

1. **History of 253 Fd Amb (V)** (2008), copy held by Museum of Military Medicine
2. **253 (NI) Med Regt – Very Brief History** (provided by RSM Colin Jess, 2014)