

# HOLT'S

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**Fine Modern & Antique Guns and Related Items**

**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014**



## **SMALL ARMS SCHOOL CORPS**

The Small Arms School Corps (SASC) is a specialist unit in the British Army. They are responsible for overseeing training with Infantry weapon systems for all three services in the Armed Forces and the MOD Police. They are approximately one hundred and fifty in strength including reserves. Soldiers who wish to join the SASC have to be a serving soldier with Skill at Arms qualifications. Transfer into the Corps comprises of a six month selection process and demands a specialist level of instructional ability. The lowest Corps rank is Sergeant, which is attained immediately on completion of selection and a career in the Corps provides the opportunity for promotion to Lt Col. All Officers in the SASC are commissioned from the ranks.

The SASC can trace its history back to the introduction of the new Minie rifle which was on issue to the British Army. The Officers responsible for the Introduction of the Minie were the Marquis of Anglesey, the Master-General of the Ordnance until 1850 and Lord Hardinge.

An Officer of distinction, Lord Hardinge was announced as the Master-General of the Ordnance on the fifth of March 1852. Hardinge understood the need for a Rifle to be issued to all ranks of the Infantry and not just specialist units. The new rifle posed its own set of problems, in particular how best to train with it. In 1853 Lord Hardinge obtained authority to set up an establishment to study the scientific use of the rifle, to evolve doctrine and

develop a uniform system of Instruction to be passed on to soldiers in the ranks. The authority was granted by the Military Secretary, who, on the Twenty third of March 1853, directed that a sum of a £1000 should be included in the Army estimates for such a purpose.

From this the establishment for the Instruction of musketry was formed and it was named the 'School of Musketry' and would reside in the Cinque port of Hythe. On the sixth of June 1853 Colonel G.C Hay Commanding Officer of the 19<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot assumed command of the School of Musketry, taking with him Colour Serjeant John McKay, also of the 19<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, who assumed the position of Staff Serjeant first class.

The School continued to deliver Skill at Arms training under the guise of the School of Musketry until 1919 where upon it was renamed the Small Arms School and changing in 1926 to become the Hythe Wing. During this time a Machine Gun School was raised, and in October 1915 formed up in Grantham. In 1926 the Machine Gun School was absorbed into the Small Arms School and relocated to Netheravon. Hythe Wing continued until 1950 when it changed once again and became the Small Arms Wing of the School of Infantry. Within this time the Corps of Instructors, which was the collective name of those assigned to Hythe, changed name and became the Small Arms School Corps, the name it holds today.

In 1969 the Corps left Hythe after a one hundred and sixteen year affiliation to the town. The Corps relocated to Warminster where its Headquarters resides today, although the main concentration of SASC personnel is located at the Infantry Battle School, Brecon, the modern day equivalent of the School of Musketry. Members of the Small Arms School Corps are deployed worldwide in support of the British Army, continuing to fulfil their mission 'To deliver marksmanship standards, provide instructional expertise and manage lethal risk to guarantee operational effectiveness.'