

141st Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps
Terminology & Abbreviations Guide

[Unofficial title - 141st Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps (The Buffs)]



The Army loves an abbreviation, an acronym, or an obscure phrase. Today's modern army is awash with these but even the British Army of 1939-1945 had enough to warrant a printed guide to the formal ones. The main source of information on abbreviations was contained within the *Field Service Pocket Book*. These were small, approx., 4" x 6", pamphlets that covered the essentials for any army officer or warrant officer.

AP	Armour piercing - the main 75mm gun on the Churchill could fire AP and HE. AP used against tanks and bunkers.
BESA	A type of machine gun commonly found on British tanks including the Churchill.
bde	Brigade
BLA	British Liberation Army - the name given to the liberating forces. The BLA evolved into the BAOR (British Army of the Rhine) post-war.
Bn	Battalion
Brass up	Slang reference to firing one of the tank's machine guns at a target.
Brewed up	A term the men themselves used to describe a tank that had been knocked out and caught fire. Although quite often the term was used to described a badly knocked out tank that hadn't caught fire.
BUFFS	Official abbreviation for any battalion of - The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment)
Capt.	Captain
CO	Commanding Officer (see also OC)
CDS	Corps Delivery Squadron - one of several unit types responsible for providing tanks and reinforcements to the regiments at the front line.
D Sqn	In many regiments, a holding squadron for reinforcements.
Echelon	The support element of a tank regiment. Broken down into A Echelon and B Echelon. In simple terms A went forward to where the tanks were harboured for the night and B stayed further back but could still be within the range of enemy guns. Elements of Echelon were - Fitters, fuel truck, water truck, baggage trucks, etc.
FDS	Field Delivery Squadron - one of several unit types responsible for providing tanks and reinforcements to the regiments at the front line.

Field Force Number	Separate from the USN was the Field Force Number. Each regiment in the British Army was assigned a number by the War Office as a form of index number. This was commonly used when a regiment was shipped or entrained. The number would be chalked/stencilled/painted onto vehicles and kit to aid identifying which part of a convoy it should be in. The number for 141RAC was 29526. See also USN.
Fitters	The mechanics with the regiment who dealt with common and smaller scale problems. Bigger issues would be dealt with by REME at a workshop.
FTF	Flame Thrower Fuel
Funnies (aka Hobart's Funnies)	The nickname given to specialised armour developed for the assault on France. Major-General Sir Percy Hobart formed and led the 79 th Armoured Division which oversaw the development and deployment of these vehicles.
Goon skin	Less common nickname for the winter tank suits, officially named Oversuits, Tank Crews.
GSGS	Geographical Section, General Staff. Maps are often referred to by their GSGS number. E.g. GSGS 4250 was a main set of maps used by tank regiments in Normandy. An excellent resource with scans of nearly all the Normandy maps is Normandy War Guide . An example from 15 th July in 141RAC's diary is a four-digit map reference 9562 (Sheet 7/F1) - this is a square due east of Baron , north of Esquay. A four-digit ref of 946616 indicates buildings adjacent to the cross-roads of Le Bon Repos (not marked on this scale of map), north-west of Esquay.
H	Hour
HE	High Explosive - the main 75mm gun on the Churchill could fire AP and HE. HE used against soft targets but also against tanks to disturb and distract the crew.
HQ	Headquarters
i/c	In command
LO	Liaison Officer
Lt	Lieutenant
Lt-Col	Lieutenant-Colonel (commander of the regiment)
Maj.	Major (commander of a squadron)
MiD	Mentioned in Despatches
MO	Medical Officer
OC	Officer Commanding - subtle difference from CO in that OC is more generic and typically refers to command of a sub-unit. (see also CO)
OCA	Old Comrades Association
OCTU	Officer Conversion Training Unit
OR	Other Rank
Pixie suit	Common nickname for the winter tank suits, officially named Oversuits, Tank Crews.
tk	Tank
tp	Troop - the smallest element of a tank regiment, typically comprising three tanks.
tpr	Trooper
REME	Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. Damaged and unserviceable vehicles would be dealt with by the

	REME at mobile or fixed workshops progressively further back from the front line.
rod	The flame jet itself was referred to as a rod. In certain photographs a dark black solid line can be seen, this is the rod.
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major
rv	rendezvous
scheme	A training exercise, scheme was the word commonly used by the military.
SP or SPG	Self-propelled / Self-propelled Gun
Sqn	Squadron - varied but in 141RAC there were five Troops per Sqn and three Sqns - A, B & C, plus HQ Sqn. That was until October/November 1944 when shortages in personnel started to bite in 21 Army Group. One Troop was disbanded and spread amongst the others in each Squadron, refer to the Regimental Summary document for more information on the composition of the regiment.
SSM	Squadron Sergeant Major
tac	Tactical - e.g. Tac HQ - the element of regimental HQ close, or at, the front line.
USN - Unit Serial Number	Each regiment in the British Army was assigned a number in conjunction with a coloured background square that was used to identify the regiment on the battlefield and provide simple signage to point to overnight harbours, etc. The USN for 141RAC was 993 on a green background with a white diagonal bar to indicate GHQ or Command troops. (USN is sometimes erroneously referred to as AoS - Arm of Service number.) See also Field Force Number.
x	Common notational abbreviation for yards.
Zoot suit	Common nickname for the winter tank suits, officially named Oversuits, Tank Crews.

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