

The Commandant General today

The correct title of the “chief” RM officer is Commandant General.. From 1914 to 1944 his title was Adjutant General, for a short period until July 1945 it was General Officer Commanding Royal Marines and was then changed to Commandant General.

CGRM was normally appointed from amongst the Major Generals and was promoted Lieutenant General on appointment. He was then normally promoted General after a year. (He was usually awarded a KCB after two years and retired after three). The last full General to be Commandant General was in fact General Sir Peter Whiteley who was CGRM from 1975 to 1977. However he did not actually serve as CGRM in the rank of General, because he was relieved early in order to take up the NATO appointment of CINCNORTH in Jan 1977 (due to the sudden death of the previous CINCNORTH). His predecessor as CGRM was General Sir Ian Gourlay who of course retired in 1975. General Whiteley’s relief was Lieutenant General Sir John Richards who was not promoted General. CGRM continued to hold the rank of Lieutenant General until Lieutenant General Sir Robert Ross retired in 1993. Since then the post has only warranted the rank of Major General. It should be borne in mind that the post is “double hated”, in that CGRM is also COMUKAMPHFOR (Commander UK Amphibious Force), with the day to day running of the Corps being carried out by the Director Royal Marines, a full Colonel.

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