

British Army Succession of Titles: Intelligence



During the Nineteenth Century, intelligence operations were conducted by the War Office, but the outbreak of the First World War required a formalised structure of new highly specialised units. As well as the formation of the first Intelligence Corps in 1914 – which examined and interpreted the Royal Flying Corps' aerial photographs of enemy positions – other wartime tasks were assigned to numbered 'Sections' and included intercepting and deciphering enemy communications, censorship and counter-espionage.

Following its disbandment in 1929, the Intelligence Corps was re-established in July 1940, and in 1985 was reclassified as a frontline 'Arm' rather than a supporting 'Service'.

Military Intelligence Sections

Nineteenth Century	Pre-First World War	First World War	Interwar Years	Second World War	Cold War	Post-Cold War
		Military Intelligence, Section 1 (1914-19) MI1	Government Code and Cypher School (1919-46) GC&CS		Government Communications Headquarters (1946-present) GCHQ	
		Military Intelligence, Section 8 (1914-45) MI8				
	Secret Service Bureau (1909-16)	Military Intelligence, Section 5 / Security Service (1916-present) MI5				
		Military Intelligence, Section 6 (1916-20) MI6	Secret Intelligence Service (1920-45) SIS		Secret Intelligence Service (1945-present) SIS	
	Military Intelligence, Section 2 (1914-41) MI2		Military Intelligence, Section 3 (1941-45) MI3			
	Military Intelligence, Section 3 (1914-41) MI3		Military Intelligence, Section 14 (1941-43) MI14			
			Military Intelligence, Section 16 (1945) MI16			
Depot of Military Knowledge (1803-57)	Topographical and Statistical Department, War Office (1855-57) then Topographic Department, War Office (1858-74) then Intelligence Branch, War Office, Section 'F'	Military Intelligence, Section 4 (1915-40) MI4				...see the Photographic Development Unit (PDU) below
Topographical and Statistical Department, War Office (1855-57)	(1874-88) then Intelligence Division, War Office, Section 'F' (1888-1901) then Directorate of Military Operations, War Office, Section 'F' (1904-15)					
	Directorate of Special Intelligence (1915/16)	Military Intelligence, Section 7 (1916-18) MI7	Military Intelligence, Section 7 (1939/40) MI7			

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Nineteenth Century	Pre-First World War	First World War	Interwar Years	Second World War	Cold War	Post-Cold War
				Military Intelligence, Section 9 (1939-45) MI9		
				Military Intelligence, Section 10 (1940-61) MI10		
				Military Intelligence, Section 11 (1939-45) MI11		
				Military Intelligence, Section 12 MI12		
				Military Intelligence, Section 15 (1942/43) MI5		
				Military Intelligence, Section 17 (1943-45/46) MI17		
			Originally MI9a	Military Intelligence, Section 19 (1941-48) MI19		

Intelligence Corps [Military Intelligence Museum](#)

1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
			Intelligence & Security Group (Germany) (1965-93) Int & Sy Gp (G)		1 Military Intelligence Battalion (1993-present) 1 MI Bn	
			Intelligence & Security Group (UK) (1972-96) Int & Sy Gp (UK)		2 Military Intelligence Battalion (1996-2014) 2 MI Bn	2 Military Intelligence (Exploitation) Battalion (2014-present) 2 MI Bn
						4 Military Intelligence Battalion (2001-present) 4 MI Bn

Regional, Specialist and Tri-Service Units

1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
			British Commanders'-in-Chief Mission to the Soviet Forces in Germany (1946-93) BRIXMIS			

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				Military Reaction Force (1971-73) MRF			Force Research Unit (1982-2007) FRU	Joint Support Group JSG Defence Human Intelligence Unit DHU
					Special Reconnaissance Unit (1972-2005) SRU <i>also known as</i> Intelligence & Security Group (NI) Int & Sy Gp (NI) 14 Field Security and Intelligence Company 14 Int Northern Ireland Training and Advisory Teams (Northern Ireland) NITAT NI Joint Communications Unit Northern Ireland JCU-NI			Special Reconnaissance Regiment (2005-present) SRR

1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Defence Intelligence and Security Centre (1996-2015) then DISC						Joint Intelligence Training Group (2015-present) JITC <i>also referred to as</i> Defence Intelligence Training Group DITC
Photographic Development Unit (1940) PDU Photographic Interpretation Unit (1940/41) PIU Central Interpretation Unit (1941-47) CIU	Joint Air Photographic Intelligence Centre (UK) (1947-53) JAPIC (UK) Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre (UK) (1953-56) JARIC (UK)	Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre (UK) (1956-80) JARIC (UK)		Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre (1980-2000) JARIC		Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency (2000-05) DGIA National Imagery Exploitation Centre (2005-12) Defence Geospatial Intelligence Fusion Centre (2012-14) DGIFC Defence Intelligence Fusion Centre (2014-present) DIFC
Directorate of Military Survey (1943-91) D Survey					Military Survey (1991-2000)	Defence Intelligence Fusion Centre (2014-present) DIFC
Joint School of Photographic Interpretation (1952-2005) JSPI						Medmenham Training Wing <i>part of the Defence College of Intelligence</i> (2005-present)