

1854 – 1873 ROYAL NAVAL COAST VOLUNTEERS

The Royal Naval Coast Volunteers [RNCV] was created by Act of Parliament in 1853 and established in January 1854. This force was comprised of up to 10,000 seafaring men living in the vicinity of the coast 'who have led a seafaring life or have been accustomed to boats or fishing pursuits' who could be called upon to serve in the Royal Navy in case of war, but who could not be sent anywhere beyond 100 leagues (300 miles) outside the shores of the United Kingdom.

The volunteers were paid a bounty of £6 for five years and were protected from the Militia or service in any other of the armed forces. Every volunteer was required to carry out 28 days' consecutive service aboard the local District Coast Guard Ship [from 0830 until 1130 and 1330 to 1530 daily] in 'exercise at the great gun, musket, rifle, cutlass or pistol'. Those 'who shown great zeal' might be advanced to Petty Officer and be paid 2 shillings per day.

From 1857, the local [Milford] District covered an area from Gloucester to Caernarvon and the Coast Guard Ship was HMS BLENHEIM based at Milford Haven. The area was extended in 1865 to include the West Coast of Cornwall with Headquarters in HMS REVENGE based at Pembroke Dock.

The District was disbanded in 1869 and the remaining RNCV was amalgamated into the Royal Naval Reserve in 1873.