

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

2 FEBRUARY 2012

SUBJECT:	FREEDOM OF ENTRY CONSIDERATION: A. 234 (WIRRAL) TRANSPORT SQUADRON ROYAL LOGISTIC CORPS (VOLUNTEERS); AND B. 107 (LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE) FIELD SQUADRON ROYAL ENGINEERS (VOLUNTEERS)
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR JEAN STAPLETON
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report recommends conferring the Freedom of Entry to the Borough on the 234 (Wirral) Transport Squadron Royal Logistic Corps (Volunteers); and the 107 (Lancashire & Cheshire) Field Squadron Royal Engineers (Volunteers), both with Centres in Wirral in recognition of the service provided by each of them. These Squadrons have given support to the Authority and residents of the Borough, during times of conflict and in peacetime. The Council has maintained a close relationship with them over many years, however the Freedom of Entry to the Borough has not been granted to them.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 The cabinet is asked to consider recommending to the Council: That

(1) in accordance with Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, it places on record its high appreciation of, and the debt of gratitude of the Borough to:

(a) the 234 (Wirral) Transport Squadron Royal Logistic Corps (Volunteers); and

(b) the 107 (Lancashire & Cheshire) Field Squadron Royal Engineers (Volunteers);

and in the light of the long and close association between the Borough and these Squadrons, it resolves that the Freedom of Entry to the Borough be conferred on them both and that they be granted, the right, privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the streets of Wirral on all ceremonial occasions with drums beating, bands playing and flags flying;

(2) the Freedoms of Entry to the Borough be granted at a public/community ceremony to be held in Hamilton Square, Birkenhead on 21 April 2012; and

(3) the ceremony at (2) above be followed by a Medal Parade, officiated over by the Mayor, and a Civic Reception at Birkenhead Town Hall.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

3.1 To recognise both Squadrons' service to the country and the local men and women who have served in them in the past and who are serving in them today.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Freedom of the Borough is the highest honour that the Council can bestow on any citizen or body. The Freedom of Entry for a military unit bestows the same honour and respect as conferring the Freedom on an individual. This allows the unit to march through the town and bear arms.

4.2 Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Council to confer the Freedom of Entry upon service units which have rendered conspicuous service and have close links with the Borough.

5.0 234 (WIRRAL) TRANSPORT SQUADRON ROYAL LOGISTIC CORPS (VOLUNTEERS)

5.1 234 Transport Squadron's role is to move combat supplies around the theatre of operations. It is equipped with the latest modern vehicles, from motor cycles, landrovers and fuel tankers, to all terrain fork lift trucks. As part of 156 (North West) Transport Regiment RLC (Volunteers) it supports 1 Logistic Support Regiment in Gutersloh, Germany by providing trained and motivated soldiers to augment the regulars as necessary.

5.2 Its main bulk carrying vehicle is the Leyland-DAF DROPS (Demountable Rack Off and Pick up System) MMLC (Medium Mobility Load Carrying) truck, which is capable of being able to load and carry 15 tons of stores or equipment across country, which can be doubled by the coupling of a trailer.

5.3 To enable the Squadron to operate the Hi-tech vehicles and equipment its soldiers are highly trained and skilled in a wide variety of trades, these include: Driver (C&E), Communication Specialists, Chefs, Clerks and Combat Medical Technicians.

5.4 Two members of the Squadron are currently deployed in Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK 15, along with 25 other personnel from the wider Regiment. They are serving with soldiers from 1 Logistic Support Regiment as

part of the Close Support Logistic Regiment which provides logistic support to British forces across Helmand province through Combat Logistic Patrols.

6.0 THE 107 (LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE) FIELD SQUADRON ROYAL ENGINEERS (VOLUNTEERS)

6.1 107 Field Squadron is a unit numbering some 120 personnel. It is based in the Borough of Birkenhead and is under the command of 75 Engineer Regiment based in Warrington. It was originally formed in 1859 as a militia and was based in Church Road in Tranmere prior to its move to the TAC in Harrowby Road Birkenhead on 11 May 1907. The Unit changed from a militia following the formation of the Territorial Army in 1908. It remains' the senior TA unit within the Borough of Birkenhead.

6.2 The unit's official war role is to support its parent unit 75 Engineer Regiment to meet its commitments to its partnered regular unit 21 Engineer Regiment in Ripon, North Yorkshire, through augmentation for Major Combat Operations. However, in light of current stabilisation operations, its primary role is to provide trained and motivated soldiers to support Regular Royal Engineer regiments deploying to Afghanistan, as well as to other Army units on operations around the globe. It has, in the last ten years, deployed over 68% of its soldiers on operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Cyprus and the Balkans. There are currently four soldiers in Afghanistan and another 28 soldiers training for mobilisation in May 2012. It also has a permanent role to assist the civil authorities in times of crisis, such as floods and foot and mouth disease.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 There are no risks associated with the proposals.

8.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 The other option is not to agree the recommendations.

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 The Cabinet is being consulted via this report and if it makes recommendations to the Council that the Freedom of Entry to the Borough be conferred on these Territorial Army Units a specially convened Council meeting will be arranged and the recommendations will only be agreed if a resolution to do so is agreed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting at the meeting.

9.2 The Territorial Army Units concerned have been consulted and are happy for the honour to be conferred on them.

10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

10.1 The Territorial Army Units concerned are made up of volunteer soldiers.

11.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

11.1 The cost of each scroll is expected to be in the region of £800 and the cost of a modest Civic Reception can be met from the Civics budget.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising directly out of this report.

13.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no discrimination issues associated with the recommendations.

13.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required?

No

(b) If 'yes', has one been completed?

Yes (specify date) / No (*delete as applicable*)

14.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

14.1 (*Carbon usage implications? Any other relevant environmental issues?*)

14.2 There are none arising directly out of this report.

15.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are none arising directly out of this report.

REPORT AUTHOR:

Shirley Hudspeth

Democratic Services Manager

telephone: (0151) 6918559

email: shirleyhudspeth@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Local Government Act 1972.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date