

**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE – 11th JANUARY 2010
REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
CIVIC HONOURS - 41 (PRINCESS LOUISE'S KENSINGTON)
SQUADRON 38 SIGNAL REGIMENT**

This report informs the Committee of the disbandment of 31 (City of London) Signal Regiment (Volunteers) (a Unit bearing Civic Honours) on 31 March 2010 and that from 1 April 2010 its Civic Honours will be held by 41 (Princess Louise's Kensington) Squadron, 38 Signal Regiment.

FOR INFORMATION

1. Introduction

1.1 There are two ways in which a borough can mark its links with Units of the armed forces. The first is to confer Civic Honours. These are bestowed in much the same way as the Freedom of the Borough is bestowed upon an individual. It is a signal honour, marking an exceptional record of service and the contribution which a Unit makes to the defence of the realm, as well as its close ties with the local area. It accords the privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the streets on all ceremonial occasions with colours flying, bands playing and bayonets fixed. The second way in which a borough can mark an affiliation is by adopting a Unit. This is not only an acknowledgement of the association between the Unit and its local community, but of the service given by it and its members.

1.2 The following Units currently bear Civic Honours or are adopted:

Civic Honours

- 31 (City of London) Signal Regiment (V)
- D (London Irish Rifles) Coy, The London Regiment
- 10 Coy, 4 Battalion, The Parachute Regiment
- 21 Special Air Services Regiment (Artists) (V)
- 256 (City of London) Field Hospital (V)
- The Royal Yeomanry
- The Royal Hospital Chelsea

Adopted Units

- University of London Air Squadron (V)
- University of London Royal Naval Unit

2. 31st (City of London) Signal Regiment (V)

- 2.1 31st (City of London) Signal Regiment (V) (31 Sig) has the Freedom of the Royal Borough and can trace its roots, via 41 (Princess Louise's Kensington) Signal Regiment and Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment, to the Kensington Volunteers, a group raised in the late 18th century in response to the threat from France. The Presentation of their first Colours in 1799 is captured in a painting in the Mayor's Parlour and in May 1999 the Mayor hosted a reception, in the presence of H.R.H. The Duchess of Gloucester, to mark the 200th anniversary of the presentation of those Colours.
- 2.2 Until the closure of the Duke of York's Headquarters in the late 1990s, 31 Sig had one Squadron based there. Its Regimental Headquarters (RHQ) is in Wandsworth, its other London locations are in Croydon and Kingston and out of London it has squadrons in Oxfordshire and Sussex.
- 2.3 Although it no longer has a physical presence in the Royal Borough, the Regiment does continue to have close links. Through its 41 Squadron it is the successor of the former Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment (PLK) (which fought as two infantry battalions in both World Wars). 41 Squadron continues to bear the PLK designation and its members wear PLK insignia. In October 1996 the Regiment exercised the rights arising from its Civic Honours by parading through Chelsea. On 18th July 2009 the Regiment marked the centenary of the Presentation of 41 Squadron's Colours to Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment, again by marching through the Royal Borough. One of the consequences of the move from the Duke of York's Headquarters was that the P.L.K's memorials from the first and second world wars required re-housing. They are now mounted in the entrance to the children's library area of the central library and each year the Regiment and members of the PLK Regimental Association hold an act of remembrance on the weekend before Remembrance Sunday.

3. Reorganisation

- 3.1 During 2009 the Territorial Army Signal Regiments were reorganised and a consequence of this was that 31 Signal Regiment will cease to exist from 31st March 2010. Many of its Squadrons will be absorbed within existing Signal Regiments. 41 (Princess Louise's Kensington) Regiment

becomes a part of 38 Signal Regiment (V), which has its RHQ in Yorkshire.

- 3.2 The Commanding Officer of 38 Signal Regiment (V) (Lt. Col. A.J. Parsons) has indicated that he and those under his command, would very much wish to maintain the link with the Royal Borough, both for historical reasons and because of the Council's continuing kindness and generosity to the Regiment. It is felt that the most appropriate way to achieve this would be, for Civic purposes, to identify 41 (Princess Louise's Kensington) Squadron of 38 Signal Regiment (V) as the successors of 31 (City of London) Signal Regiment (V) and for the Civic Honours held by 31 Signals to be held by 41 Squadron from 1 April 2010.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4. There are no financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5. By Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, a Borough, Royal Borough or City Council may admit "persons of distinction and persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Borough, Royal Borough or City" as Honorary Freeman. Once granted, a Freedom remains valid and exercisable by the Unit or any new Unit into which that Unit is incorporated.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6. There are no personnel implications for the Council arising from this report.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7. There are no equalities implications for the Council arising from this report.

CONCLUSION

8. The Administration Committee is asked to note that the Civic Honours and Freedom conferred on 31 (City of London) Signal Regiment (V) will be held from 1st April 2010 by 41 (Princess Louise's Kensington) Squadron, 38 Signal Regiment (V) and to so inform the Council.

DEREK MYERS

Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Background papers used: None

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