



The Rifles Regiment March at the Freedom of Wellington

On the 17th of June 2023 Riflemen from the Fifth and Sixth Battalions of The Rifles, which are based in Bulford, Wiltshire and the Southwest of England, will receive the Freedom of the Town of Wellington. They will march through the town accompanied by The Salamanca Band and Bugles along with local cadets, reservists, and veterans. After the parade, a reception will be held at Wellington School for local dignitaries including the Mayor and Councillors of Wellington, the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Somerset as well as representatives from The Rifles Regiment.

The honour to march is entirely ceremonial and was granted because of The Rifles' historic ties to the town and as a token of appreciation for their long and dedicated service. The privilege is steeped in history and dates as far back as Roman times. The Freedom of Wellington allows The Rifles to march through the town with 'bugles sounding, bands playing and swords fixed' – a right which the regiment is proud to have bestowed upon them.

The Rifles have seven battalions sited across the United Kingdom; 5 RIFLES is based in Bulford, Wiltshire as an Armoured Infantry battalion, equipped with the Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicle. As one of the most potent war-fighting infantry battalions, it is a part of the 20th Armoured Infantry Brigade within 3rd (UK) Division. 6 RIFLES are Headquartered in Exeter and as a reserve battalion are Light Role Infantry, with Company locations across the Southwest.

Commenting on the event Major (Retd) Rory McCaffrey, RIFLES Regional Secretary Southwest, said; "This is a very special moment for the Regiment and we are grateful to the Mayor and people of Wellington for allowing us to parade. It further strengthens the ties between The Rifles and the surrounding area where many of our Riflemen are recruited from."

The Mayor of Wellington added; "Wellington has a long association with The Rifles and its predecessor regiments stretching back many years. We are incredibly proud to grant them the Freedom of the Town and are grateful for everything they do on behalf of the Southwest Region and the country as a whole."

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Notes to Editors:

The Rifles was formed in 2007 and is the British Army's largest infantry regiment with seven battalions based across the United Kingdom. It's Colonel-in-Chief is Her Majesty The Queen.

With a motto of Swift and Bold, the regiment holds a record 913 battle honours including 117 Victoria Crosses. The Rifles was involved throughout the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns and more recently was deployed to Estonia in June 2022.

Riflemen first emerged in the late 1700's where the concept of infantrymen, dressed in green uniform, armed with rifles rather than muskets, operated across the battlefield on their own initiative and who were separate to the red coated line infantry regiments. Drummers were unable



to communicate instructions across the wide distances and noise of battle and instead the bugle, with its clarion call, was selected for use by Riflemen. For that reason, The Rifles' uniquely Sound Retreat, rather than Beat Retreat like the rest of the British Army.