



REPORT OF: Leader of the Council
TO: Council Forum
ON: 28th January 2010

SUBJECT 93 (East Lancashire) Signal Squadron (Volunteers)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform Members of the disbandment of the 93 (East Lancashire) Signal Squadron (Volunteers) and to recommend that the Squadron be awarded the Civic Medal in recognition of their dedicated service both home and abroad.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Civic Medal be awarded to the 93 (East Lancashire) Signal Squadron (Volunteers) in recognition of their dedicated service to the people of Blackburn with Darwen and in support of military deployments both home and abroad over a 40 year period.

3. BACKGROUND

The Squadron will be disbanded at the end of March 2010 as part of the reorganisation of the 38 Signal Regiment. For the Borough the disbandment will end 40 years of association with the Royal Signals and 140 years of association with the Army at the Canterbury Street barracks. The award of the Civic Medal would be a fitting way to mark the long association the Squadron shares with the Borough.

4. RATIONALE

Due to changes in Army operational priorities the Squadron will be disbanded at the end of March 2010 as part of the reorganisation of the 38 Signal Regiment.

The Squadron was formed in October 1969 and since then has formed strong links with the local community, and many of the volunteer soldiers have been deployed on active service overseas including deployments in Afganistan, Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo and Northern Ireland.

Deployments in the UK include the recent floods in Carlisle, assistance during the Foot and Mouth Crisis, Fireman's strikes, the Commonwealth Games and supporting all Political Party Conferences held in the North West.

The Squadron has supported numerous activities, organisations and events in the Borough, including Remembrance Sunday, Civic Sunday, Darwen Gala, Blackburn

College, Blackburn Army Cadet Force Blackburn Sea Cadets and supporting various Mayor's charities amongst others. Charitable support has also been provided via fund raising activities for many charities, including the Blackburn branch of the Royal British Legion, Blackburn Guide Dogs, Blackburn Multiple Sclerosis Minibus Appeal and the Blackburn Scanner Appeal.

In recognition of the dedicated service of the Squadron it is recommended that it be awarded the Civic Medal. The Civic Medal is an honour that has been awarded on an occasional basis since 1953 to those who have rendered outstanding service to the Borough and has been awarded to such organisations as Blackburn Music Society and Blackburn Rovers Football Club and to individuals who represented organisations such as the Salvation Army, the Scouts/Girl Guides, St John's Ambulance, and WRVS and rendered distinguished service. The Civic Medal was last awarded in 2006, to the late Councillor Frank Gorton.

If Members agree to the awarding of a Civic Medal, a presentation ceremony will be held in March (possibly Saturday 20th March 2010 or Saturday 27th March 2010), which will involve a parade by the Squadron and will end with a Civic Reception for the soldiers and their guests.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The main financial implications relate to the Civic Reception, in terms of food, drinks and venue hire, and officer time in organising the event.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

As outlined in Financial Implications.

9. CONSULTATIONS

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Date: 8th January 2010

Background Papers: Correspondence with the 93 (East Lancashire) Signal Squadron and Civic Medal File