

**Ballymoney Borough Council
Council Meeting No 934 – 4th January 2011**

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BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of Council Meeting No 934 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney on Tuesday 4th January 2011 at 6.50 pm.

IN THE CHAIR: Councillor B Kennedy, Mayor

PRESENT: **Aldermen**
C Cousley, MBE
J Simpson
F Campbell

Councillors
J Finlay
R Halliday
M McCamphill
P McGuigan
T McKeown
A Patterson
E Robinson
I Stevenson
M Storey, MLA

APOLOGIES: **Councillors**
A Cavlan

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Head of Corporate & Development Services
Committee Clerk

Press**934.1 NOTICE OF MOTION – FREEDOM OF BOROUGH**

The Mayor apologized for being delayed and explained the meeting was convened to consider the following motion, in accordance with the notice given by Alderman Cecil Cousley.

Alderman Cousley proposed the motion, as follows:-

“That the 152 (Ulster) Transport Regiment of the Royal Logistics Core of the Territorial Army, and the Royal Irish Regiment are given the Freedom of the Borough of Ballymoney as acknowledgement and thanks to those who have served and continue to serve their country with great distinction at home and abroad.”

Speaking in support of the motion Alderman Cousley said “the Territorial Army is the part-time volunteer force of the British Army, and is part of Britain’s reserve land forces. There are around 35,500 soldiers within the ranks and as such forms about a quarter of the overall

manpower strength of the British Army. FA soldiers serve on operations either with TA units or as individuals attached to regular units. Over 1000 TA soldiers are deployed each year the highest ranking of which is at Major General level.

Volunteers have formed a vital part of British ground forces for hundreds of years; they were often raised during times of crisis or perceived threat, early volunteer units usually comprised infantry, artillery and yeomanry; just such a unit earned a battle of honour for an action on British soil as early as 1797.

Although the history of such units can be traced back to the late 18th Century it was in 1907 that Parliament passed legislation which saw the regularisation of volunteers into the Territorial Army, the first units were stood up on 1st April 1908 and this date is accepted as the birth of the TA.

Mobilisation took place in August 1914; in 1918 units were disbanded but were reconstituted in 1920 as the Territorial Army. After action during World War 2 within the regular army the TA was established as the part-time reservist force within the British Army. During the 2nd half of the 20th Century the TA continued to serve when needed and was generally regarded as home defence units.

Within the Royal Irish Regiment the 2nd Battalion is a Territorial Army battalion with company locations across the Province. Together with the regular reserve the TA provides support to the regular army at home and overseas. In keeping with the general long and distinguished history of other TA units the story of this troop goes back to the North Irish Horse through the Royal Signals Regiment, and 152 Ulster Ambulance Regiment all while serving within Ballymoney and was affectionately known as 'C' troop 211 squadron.

Although often unrecognized as a fighting unit it was a truly interdenominational troop. During the first Gulf War the unit was recognized as a meaningful reserve for the regular forces and at that time a number of soldiers from the North West including Ballymoney were compulsorily mobilized. Together with other TA units their success during this period was recognized and this mobilization carries on to this day.

211 squadron including 'C' troop has been engaged in foreign fields such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Cyprus (as part of a United Nations force) and the Falkland Islands showing bravery and readiness to engage to the fullest extent. Although 'C' troop is stationed at Coleraine it still relies heavily on recruitment from within the Ballymoney Borough.

Under a Ballymoney born officer Commander Major A.W. Patrick, who headed up an International Company with soldiers from the Northwest and Belfast area together with Argentinian, Slovakian, and Hungarian soldiers they fulfilled a role within the United Nations as a mobile force reserve with the responsibility of the security of the buffer zone green line within Cyprus 1,3 and 4. That task was carried out with the full integration of the Company with the Leadership of the soldiers from Northern Ireland including those from Ballymoney. A Force Commanders Commendation was awarded to 8 soldiers within the company, 3 of whom were soldiers from the Northwest. In fact one soldier from Ballymoney has been recommended for G.O.C. commendation for outstanding professionalism.

A number of soldiers, who served in Iraq had the responsibility of over-seeing the 1st Democratic Elections within the town of Isabyer while serving with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers battle group.

Commenting on the Royal Irish Regiment Alderman Cousley continued:

“From its origins in 1689 right up to the present day the Royal Irish Regiment and its antecedent regiments have been engaged in the front line of British international military engagements.

The Ulster Defence Regiment was raised in April 1970 to protect the Border and the State against terrorism and armed attack in Northern Ireland. On 1st July 1992 The Royal Irish Rangers, the last Irish Infantry Regiment of the line, merged with The Ulster Defence Regiment to form The Royal Irish Regiment.

The Royal Irish Regiment is unique in the British Army. It consists of one Air Assault battalion (1R IRISH), liable for service world wide, and one Reserve battalion (2 R IRISH) who were part-time soldiers based in Northern Ireland and provide our Reserve when required. 2R IRISH are an integral part of our ability to deploy in the world anywhere, at short notice, and provide a capable fighting force.

Its antecedent regiments have played a significant role in world affairs for over 300 years from Waterloo, the Indian Mutiny and the Boer War to the battles of the Somme, Dunkirk, Normandy and Korea. More recently the 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment has been on operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, the Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Regiment has a proud and distinguished record of service in several operational theatres and was recently awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross by the Queen for its commitment to Northern Ireland.

The Royal Irish Regiment seeks to recruit soldiers of Irish origin or background to serve in the 1st Battalion. They will accept suitable recruits from across the whole of Ireland, Great Britain and Commonwealth Countries.

1st Battalion the Royal Irish Regiment served in Kosovo at the lead of the NATO led intervention force. 1 R IRISH deployed in order to stop the ongoing Ethnic Cleansing of the civilian population getting worse. In the first 5 days in Pristina the Battalion arrested 40 terrorists and criminals in the middle of committing crimes. This prevented several murders and saved lives. They have served with great bravery and distinction in Iraq and Afghanistan. And as we know some have paid the ultimate sacrifice. With the most recent death of Royal Irish Regiment's Ranger Aaron McCormick. Here in Northern Ireland we too owe them a great debt of thanks. Their bravery stood between the population and terrorism. They are deserving of recognition from the entire community. And it is fitting that we take this step her tonight.

Members, with such a distinguished record within this country's history I must recommend that this body of gallant men and women should be offered The Freedom of this Borough.

I recommend the motion to you.”

Members joined the meeting during presentation of the case for the motion.

***Councillor McLaughlin (6.55 p.m.).**

***Councillor McCamphill (6.56 p.m.).**

***Councillor McGuigan (7.05 p.m.).**

The motion was seconded by Councillor Robinson.

At this point the Mayor asked that a recorded vote be taken.

On being put to the meeting voting was as follows:

FOR (11)

Councillor Patterson
Councillor Robinson
Councillor Halliday
Councillor Stevenson
Councillor Finlay
Alderman Campbell
Councillor Storey
Alderman Simpson
Councillor Cousley
Councillor Kennedy
Councillor McKeown

AGAINST (3)

Councillor McCamphill
Councillor McLaughlin
Councillor McGuigan

The Mayor declared the motion passed.

The meeting ended at 7.05 p.m.