

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC REPORT

Report to:	COUNCIL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Report of:	CITY SOLICITOR
Date of Decision:	20 MARCH 2017
SUBJECT:	FREEDOM OF THE CITY – ROYAL MARINES
Wards affected:	ALL

1. Purpose of report:

To consider whether Full Council should be recommended to confer the privilege of the right to march through the city upon the Royal Marines.

2. Decision(s) recommended:

- 2.1 That it be recommended to the City Council that the privilege of having the right to march through the city be conferred on the Royal Marines.

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Signature:

Chief Officer(s):

Dated:

List of Appendices to this Report:

Royal Marines Birmingham Detachment

3. Relevant background/chronology of key events:

Request for the Corps of the Royal Marines to have the Right to March Through the City

- 3.1 The City Council has, in the past, conferred the privilege of marching through the City upon various sections of the Armed Forces. This has been done by a resolution of the full Council which has referred to the privilege of '*honouring the City by marching through its streets with drums beating, bands playing, colours flying and bayonets fixed*'.

The privilege has been conferred on a total of 15 occasions since the Second World War. The recipients and the years in which the privilege was conferred are:-

<u>RECIPIENT</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
Royal Warwickshire Regiment	1946
268 (Warwickshire) Regiment, Royal Artillery TA	1966
35 th (South Midland) Signal Regiment, Royal Corps of Signals	1970
Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	1975
HMS Birmingham	1978
Queen's Own Hussars (known as the Queen's Royal Hussars)	1983
HMS Forward (Royal Naval Reserve)	2002
The West Midlands Regiment	2002
202 (Midlands) Field Hospital (V)	2002
26 th Regiment Royal Artillery	2008
HMS Daring	2008
23 rd Special Air Service Regiment (TA)	2009
The Birmingham County Royal British Legion	2010
The Guards division	2011
'The Rifles'	2012

- 3.3 In every case, the conferment of the privilege has been in recognition of some close association between the Regiment (or other section of the Armed Forces) and the City of Birmingham, either by name and/or by the fact that a significant number of Birmingham Residents have served within it.

- 3.4 On 12 February 2013 Council Business Management Committee agreed the following criteria for the conferment of the privilege in Birmingham:

- There must be a close association between the relevant section of the Armed Forces and the City of Birmingham, either by name and/or by the fact that a significant number of Birmingham residents have served in it.
- The privilege must coincide with a significant anniversary/occasion/event etc.
- The privilege is to be bestowed no more than once every 4 years, other than in exceptional circumstances.

- 3.5 The Royal Marines trace their origins back to 1664 and the Second Anglo-Dutch War; the Birmingham Detachment was formed in 1957.

The Royal Marines have extremely strong ties with Birmingham; from Birmingham born Sergeant Norman Finch, awarded the Victoria Cross in 1918 after the raid on Zeebrugge; through to Lance Corporal Matthew Croucher being awarded the George Cross after his tour in Afghanistan in 2008. Matthew Croucher is a member of the Birmingham Detachment of Royal Marines Reserve, as was Marine Jonathan Crookes, the first Royal Marine reservist to be killed in action in Afghanistan in 2010.

The Royal Marines participate in the City's Remembrance Day Service each year providing a marching contingent and providing displays at the City's Armed Forces Day celebrations, the Lord Mayors show along with other events such as Birmingham Celebrates Sport.

The Birmingham Detachment also involves itself in numerous charitable events in Birmingham including abseiling down the Hyatt Hotel and conducting a 'death slide' from the roof of Baskerville House in Royal British Legion and the Poppy Appeal, as well as performances at numerous Help for Heroes events, Troop Aid and others in the city. During the celebrations of the Royal Marines 350th Anniversary in 2014 the Lord Mayor greeted the final leg of the Midlands 1664 Challenge charity run at the Council House which raised thousands of pounds for charity.

The Birmingham Detachment also engages in outreach work with underrepresented ethnic minority groups and women suffering domestic violence in addition to youth groups, cadets and local businesses.

- 3.6 The exercise of the privilege has normally been timed to coincide with significant anniversaries and such like. Whenever it is exercised, there are costs to the Council in terms of road closures, erecting grandstands, stewarding and catering which will be met from the Lord Mayor's Office events budget. 2018 will be a significant moment for the City to cement and formalize its relationship with the Royal Marines, being the 100th anniversary of the award of the Victoria Cross to Sergeant Norman Finch, Royal Marines.

Further details of the deeds and service of Sergeant Finch, Lance Corporal Croucher and Marine Crookes is appended to this report, along with further information about the Birmingham Detachment.