



British Army News Release

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WILTSHIRE BATTALION MARCH THROUGH MARLBOROUGH

Over 100 soldiers and officers from 4 Military Intelligence Battalion (4MI) based in Bulford, Wiltshire marched through the historic market town of Marlborough, Wiltshire yesterday, Thursday 7 September 2021.

The parade marked a decade since 4MI were granted the Freedom of Marlborough in June 2011, and it 'exercised its freedom' with a ceremonial march through the town to celebrate 20 years since the battalion's formation.

Holding the Freedom of a Town or City is the greatest honour that can be bestowed on a unit within the Armed Forces and the Freedom entitles the battalion to exercise a right to march through the town with colours flying and bayonets fixed.

The tradition dates from when fortress walls were necessary to protect its inhabitants from outlaw bands and the attacks of feudal lords.

Stepping off at Marlborough College the three ranks marched down the High Street, one of the widest in the UK, accompanied by the Army Band Tidworth before forming up in front of the Mayor and Mayoress, councillors and members of the public.

The salute was taken by Major General Ben Kite OBE, who held the post of Commanding Officer ten years ago when the battalion received the prestigious honour; The first British Army unit to have been awarded the Freedom of Entry since Marlborough was given its Royal Charter in 1204.

He said:

"It is a real pleasure to be here, I remember with great affection the partnership with Marlborough.

"It's really good to witness a Freedom Parade, it is important for the soldiers and officers on parade to get a sense of whom they serve when they put on the Queen's uniform. We serve the Head of State, and we serve the people of this country who occupy the towns and villages across this great nation of ours.

"I think they are important from the town's perspective; You are giving them the Freedom to march through your streets. And you should have an opportunity to get the measure of the men and women from 4MI, and judge whether they meet the standards Marlborough should rightly expect from your battalion.

"Best wishes to Marlborough and thank you so much for what you have done over the last decade, and I hope in decades to come that relationship deepens and strengthens."

The service personnel recognisable by their distinctive green berets have shared a close friendship with the town since the battalion was formed in 2001.

Mayor of Marlborough, Councillor Mark Cooper said:

“The Town Council and the people of Marlborough are incredibly proud of the strong links that have been forged with 4 Military Intelligence Battalion. The freedom parade recognizes the fantastic work that they do on behalf of the people of Marlborough and the country in general.

It is an honour and privilege for Marlborough to host the freedom parade, and we thank them for all the incredible work that they do.”

4 Military Intelligence Battalion provides Intelligence Support to the British Army’s Warfighting Division and its subordinate Formations as well as the Light Infantry Brigades. Over the last 12 months 119 of its service personnel deployed overseas to 13 different countries ranging from Estonia to stabilisation operations in Africa. They were also involved in supporting Operation RESCRIPT the Government’s response to COVID-19.

ENDS

Notes To Editors

- The Intelligence Corps are responsible for information gathering and intelligence analysis and are the cornerstone of modern military operations. As one of the smallest Corps in the British Army it was formally established with the consent of King George VI on the 1st July 1940 but can trace its history back to Wellington’s Peninsula Campaign.
- <https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/intelligence-corps/>
