

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Committee: Constitutional and Nomination Committee

Date: 8 December 2010

Subject: Freedom of the City of Manchester

Report of: The Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To ask the Committee to recommend that a special meeting of the Council be convened for the purpose of adopting a resolution granting Freedom of the City of Manchester to 207 (Manchester) Field Hospital (Volunteers) in recognition of their distinctive and eminent service.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council be requested to convene a special meeting on 2 February 2011 for the purpose of adopting a resolution, to be proposed by the Lord Mayor and seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor, that 207 (Manchester) Field Hospital (Volunteers) be granted Freedom of the City of Manchester in recognition of the Field Hospital's distinctive and eminent service.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR REVENUE BUDGET:

Relevant costs will be contained within the Civic Hospitality budget.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR CAPITAL BUDGET: N/A

WARDS AFFECTED: N/A

IMPLICATIONS FOR:

Antipoverty, Equal Opportunities, Environment, Employment: N/A

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: 207 letter of 8 Sept 2009; extracts from BM Journal 18 June 1960 & 27 Jan 1962

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Name: Marilyn McGuinness
Position: Assistant to the Chief Executive
Telephone: 0161 234 3201
E-mail: m.mcguinness@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Anita Scallan
Position: Head of Lord Mayor's Office
Telephone: 0161 234 3375
E-mail: a.scallan@manchester.gov.uk

1. Background

207 (Manchester) Field Hospital (Volunteers) ("207") is one of 11 Territorial Army (TA) Field Hospitals in the country. It is also the oldest Field Hospital, with roots established in Manchester in 1885.

207's primary role is to provide medical and surgical support to the Regular Army in times of war and national emergency. It is currently staffed by some 174 TA Volunteers, the majority of whom are drawn from NHS hospitals across Greater Manchester.

The Hospital has recently deployed to Afghanistan to the main British Hospital at Camp Bastion for a six month tour of duty. A request has been made for the Council to consider granting Freedom of the City to 207 and permission to exercise that Freedom by marching through the City when it returns from Afghanistan in late Spring.

2. History of 207 Field Hospital

There has been a volunteer military medical organisation in Manchester since 1885 when Colonel, later Sir William, Coates raised a company of Volunteer Medical Staff Corps (VMSC) and "a house, 98 Burlington Street, rented, and equipment, such as stretchers, haversacks bandages etc purchased." Coates enterprise, building on the lessons learned from the Crimea, received a letter of approval, now in the British Museum, from Florence Nightingale. Coates was a leading figure in the medical world in Manchester and a doctor with a remarkable record in organising the recruitment of volunteers for the army medical services. He practiced as a GP in Moss Side where he lived for almost 80 years until 1962.

The Volunteer Staff Corps was taken over by the War Office in 1887 and subsequently incorporated into the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1898. By June 1902, the Manchester companies VMSC had expanded to seven companies and became the largest volunteer military medical unit in the country. In 1903, the Regimental HQ, which is still in use, was built on Kings Road, Manchester. Following Local Government boundary changes, it is now just outside the city boundary. However, its close links to Manchester over many years remain.

Over the last hundred years, 207 has seen active duty in the Boer War and First World War (Gallipoli, Sinai, Mesopotamia (now Iraq) and Flanders). On the Home Front, it formed the 2nd Western General Hospital in Manchester (Whitworth Street and Princess Street), the biggest such hospital in the country, treating a quarter of a million casualties over the course of the First World War. The Unit served extensively overseas during the Second World War, the Cold War, first and second Gulf Wars and in Bosnia and Kosovo. In 2004, 207 was deployed to Iraq to run the military Hospital near Basra. It is now deployed in Afghanistan.

3. Summary

The 207 (Manchester) Field Hospital (Volunteers), together with its predecessors,

has served at home and abroad as a valuable medical corps for some 125 years. It originated in Manchester and has a close and continuing association with the City. The majority of the volunteers come from NHS hospitals in the Manchester area. The standard and sophistication of their medical practice and the clinical and leadership skills that they bring back with them from their operational service, provides great benefit to the treatment of NHS patients in the region.

4. Recommendation

In recognition of their work, it is recommended that the service and sacrifice given by 207 Field Hospital be recognised by granting the Unit Freedom of the City of Manchester.

HOWARD BERNSTEIN
Chief Executive

29 November 2010