

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Constitutional and Nomination Committee – 27 October 2020

**Subject:** Freedom of the City of Manchester for Battery 209 (The Manchester Artillery)

**Report of:** The City Solicitor

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**Summary**

To ask the Committee to recommend that a special meeting of the Council be convened on 25 November 2020 for the purpose of adopting a resolution granting Freedom of the City of Manchester to 103 Royal Artillery Battery 209 (The Manchester Artillery) in recognition of their distinctive and eminent service.

**Recommendation**

That the City Council be requested to convene a special meeting on 25 November 2020 for the purpose of adopting a resolution, to be proposed by the Lord Mayor and seconded by the Leader of the Council, that 103 Royal Artillery Battery 209 (The Manchester Artillery) be granted Freedom of the City of Manchester in recognition of the Battery's distinctive and eminent service.

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**Wards Affected:** All

**Financial consequences - Revenue**

Any costs arising will be met from the Civil and Ceremonial budget allocation.

**Financial consequences - Capital**

None

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**Contact Officers**

Name: Paul Marshall  
Position: Strategic Director for Children and Education Services  
E-mail: p.marshall1@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Donald Connolly  
Position: Head Governance and Scrutiny Support  
E-mail: donald.connolly@manchester.gov.uk

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan supports Manchester City Council (MCC) ambition to create and maximise opportunities to raise the profile of the City's support for the armed services and the contribution of our residents to past and continuing defence of the nation.

## **2. History of 209 Battery**

- 2.1 The Battery was established in 1804 as a local volunteer militia force raised across the Manchester area in response to the Napoleonic threat. It was then re-established in 1859 as the United Kingdom moved to establish a standing volunteer army. From 1860 it was garrisoned at Ardwick Green and in 1881 officially awarded the honour title 'The Manchester Artillery'. It has since enjoyed a close and continuing association with the city as a regular army unit, a territorial unit and now as part of the UK's expanding professional military reserve, based in Gorton.
- 2.2 Over the subsequent one hundred and forty years, the Manchester Artillery has seen active duty in the Boer War and the First World War served at Gallipoli, Sinai and the Western Front.
- 2.3 The Unit served extensively overseas during the Second World War as part of the initial expeditionary force and following extensive fighting in defence of France, during which five officers were killed, was evacuated from the Dunkirk beaches. Members of the unit subsequently served across in the Middle East, in the Italian campaign and the subsequent D Day landings", moving into Belgium and Holland where they took part in operation "Market Garden".
- 2.4 Following the restoration of peace the Manchester Artillery returned to its territorial and subsequent army reserve role. In 1947 a recruiting campaign was launched, and many old Dunkirk veterans filled the ranks. Recruit 'Number One' is ex-Sgt Fred Bowker MM, who won his Military Medal at Dunkirk as the 205 Battery Signaller, Manchester Artillery.
- 2.5 The current 209 Battery which now carries the courtesy title has continued to recruit and train Manchester citizens in readiness for the defence of this country at home and abroad. In 2004 members of the battery were deployed to Iraq on Operation TELIC 4 and in again, in Iraq in 2007, Sgt Crowley (209 Battery) became the first soldier from the Manchester Artillery to command and fire an artillery gun in action since 1945.

## **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 In recognition of their work, it is recommended that the service and sacrifice given by the men and women of the Royal Artillery Battery be recognised by granting the Unit Freedom of the City of Manchester.