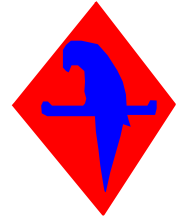




BRITISH ARMY NEWS

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SOLDIERS PREPARE TO MARCH THROUGH THE CITY OF WORCESTER

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters), who have spent the last six-months in Afghanistan, will march through the streets of Worcester this week.

The people of Worcestershire are invited to line the route on Thursday 3rd December when around 500 soldiers from the Regiment's 2nd Battalion will march through the city following a service at Worcester Cathedral which is due to commence at 11.00 hrs, then at around 11.45 hrs, the soldiers will step off from the Cathedral to start the parade which will take them from College Green, moving on though the arch to Coll street, turning left at the roundabout and then onto High Street. The Lord Lieutenant, the Mayor and the Deputy Colonel of the Regiment will take the salute as the soldiers pass the Guildhall. Afterwards the Mayor will host a special Civic Reception at the Guildhall for local soldiers, their families and civic guests.

Major Jim Turner, Second in Command of the Battalion, said: "I hope the people of Worcester will put aside half an hour to line the streets from Worcester Cathedral to the Guild Hall to show their support to soldiers from the city.

"It has been a testing year for both the soldiers and their families. We are extremely grateful for all the support that the local community has shown over

this period and very much appreciates Worcester City Council marking our return with this event”.

The Battalion took part in heavy fighting during their six month tour and engaged many times with the enemy. The Battalion was responsible for the training and mentoring of the Afghan National Army, giving them the skills they need to enable them to take over responsibility for security, stability and reconstruction and improve the day-to-day lives of the Afghan people. Whilst this training was being conducted, two Rifle Company’s each of 110 men took the fight direct to the Taliban whilst fighting along side the Light Dragoons Battle group; playing a leading role on some of the most ferocious fighting this summer.

This was the Battalion’s third tour of Afghanistan in five years. During the six month tour five members of the Battalion were killed: Private Jason Williams, of Worcester, Private Robbie Laws, of Bromsgrove, Lance Corporal Kieron Hill, of Nottingham, Private Gavin Elliott, of Worksop, and Acting Sergeant Michael Lockett MC, of Monifieth, Angus.

Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Simon Banton concluded “We thank our families, friends and the wider members of the public for their support during what has been a testing tour. We are proud of what we have achieved and we hope that the people will take to the streets of Worcester on the 3rd December to show their support to all our soldiers and demonstrate that the people of Worcester are proud of what they have achieved and appreciate the sacrifices that they and our fallen soldiers have made”.

NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS:

For further information or to arrange interviews with local soldiers please contact Major Tony Seager on 0782 4607 539

