



**Statement from the Hon. Wayne Caines, JP, MP  
Minister of National Security**

Yesterday (March 12), I presented a comprehensive Budget Brief for the Ministry of National Security.

The Ministry's Budget presentation outlined some key facts and provided significant updates regarding the Ministry's budget allocation, services and programmes.

A critical aspect of the National Security Budget Brief was the overview of the Royal Bermuda Regiment (RBR). This is important because much of the information contained in this year's presentation highlighted our vision for the future of the RBR.

It's also important because it addressed some of the comments shared recently by the "Nine Colonels".

This Government has made it quite clear that we do not support Conscription. In fact, the Royal Bermuda Regiment hasn't conscripted in four years.

Furthermore, I am of the view that discussing matters to do with the RBR, including conscription via a press statement without in the first instance discussing it with the Minister was very unfortunate.

Simply put, the "Nine Colonels'" view regarding conscription is myopic, and their conclusions are outdated and factually inaccurate.

As I shared in the Ministry's brief, total funding for Defence for the coming year is \$7,208,885; a decrease of \$63,267. This new cash limit represents a decrease of point eight seven percent (0.87%) for Defence.

I also shared in yesterday's Ministry Budget presentation, the Regiment's role is to provide operational capacity to support the civil authority. It performs a number of significant functions including natural and man-made disaster relief, internal security, state ceremonial activity, routine and specialist support to the Bermuda Police Service, military training, social cohesion and youth development.

At this time, the Regiment is conducting an internal Strategic Review so that a five year plan can be produced to restructure and organize the Regiment for its current and for potential missions and tasks.

We envision an RBR which will eventually evolve. We see a small, more streamlined full time battalion of up to 200 manned specialized roles, which includes ceremonial duties, humanitarian relief and a coast guard. In fact we are looking to position the RBR as a career choice for interested individuals, where we will provide a pathway for specialized education and training.

Our vision of the RBR is also of one where we are recruiting multiple times throughout the year.

The analysis carried out thus far, supports the development of three distinct areas that the RBR should consider professionalizing:

- Humanitarian Aid & Disaster Relief (HADR),
- Coast Guard (a full time Coast Guard is currently being developed this fiscal year); and
- Military Aid to Civil Authority (MACA).

The aforementioned capabilities would be delivered by full time officers and soldiers; underpinned by a bespoke and accredited education/training package.

The RBR will seek to find compensating reductions in the RBR budget for fiscal year 18/19, in order to invest in an operationally focused Coast Guard, in addition to a HADR and MACA capability.

We continue to transition to a volunteer intake and this year we will have a second Recruit Camp in July 2018.

Our young (and not-so-young) have been answering the call of service in large numbers and as a result of their rewarding experience and the benefits of Regimental service individuals have been re-enlisting way past their discharge date.

The Regiment Command Group is working together with the Ministry for the lead Regimental Maritime Role which will see 14 new posts created, establishing a Hybrid Maritime Unit with the BPS in order to fully take over using a phased approach for the complete maritime inshore policing around Bermuda. We will be working with the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service and are exploring the possibility of soldiers being trained as Auxiliary Firefighters.

The Regiment is thus well set to provide valuable services to Bermuda as it moves through its second half century and will continue to receive strong support from this Government.

Finally, the RBR will continue to invest in our people allowing them to reach their full potential, professionalize and expand the roles and capabilities of the Regiment on land and at sea.

Ultimately, by 2025 the RBR will be better manned and offer a path to a professional career and unparalleled personal development opportunities on and off island through a mix of full time and part time services. We will be effectively trained and able to secure Bermuda's maritime domain, maintain the safety and security of the people of Bermuda and respond to disasters firstly at home and in the region by working on our own or with our regional partners.

The RBR plays a vital role in the life, safety and unity of the country, and all of Bermuda should be proud of our soldiers and the service they provide the people of this Country.

Lastly, the Ministry of National Security's board room has a table that seats ten, we remain available to meet with the "Nine Colonels" should they wish to discuss our future plans and vision for the RBR.

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