



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By

**Minister of National Security,
The Honourable Wayne Caines, JP, MP**

ROYAL BERMUDA REGIMENT – UPDATE

December 7th, 2018

Mr. Speaker, since my last update on the Royal Bermuda Regiment (RBR) four months ago, the RBR has been hard at work, focused on transforming into a modern day organization, fit for purpose in Bermuda. I would like to provide this Honourable House with an update.

Mr. Speaker, after consultation with the Ministry of National Security and Government House, the Regiment's Strategic Review Working Group concluded its work and made several key recommendations. The first of these recommendations is that the Regiment must redouble its efforts to invest in its people. To this end, the Regiment is reinforcing its Training Wing so that training is delivered to a higher standard and externally validated where possible. Soldiers will pick up more qualifications and have greater opportunities to attend courses both overseas and in Bermuda.

Secondly, **Mr. Speaker**, the Regiment aspires to offer learning credits to soldiers who are in good standing in order to further their education and development. Growing the capability of the men and women who make

up the Regiment can only result in growth of the capability of the Regiment as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, the third recommendation is that the structure of the Regiment change to better reflect its operational output and its volunteer status. In November, the Regiment reduced from five to three companies to form two operational companies of about 100 soldiers each, supported by a Logistics Company and Training Wing. Internal security in support of the Bermuda Police Service is the focus of A Company, while B Company has a dual focus on Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief, both locally and overseas, and on ceremonial duties, including Band Displays.

Mr Speaker, in the absence of any direct hits by major storms during the just concluded hurricane season, the Regiment has been able to direct its focus on enhanced training. There were two camps held this fall. A Company, the Band and Signalers completed the second half of their local camp in October. Over the course of camp, A Company honed internal security drills, the band participated in school engagements, and the Signalers received on island training from British Army Signalers. The Boat Troop also held their two-week camp. Features of this year's camp included oil booming with Rubis, navigation training, boarding drills and port security training.

Mr. Speaker, the Royal Bermuda Regiment continues to offer soldiers opportunities for military, professional and personal development. During this period soldiers and officers attended a variety of courses

overseas. Three officers attended courses at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom at Shrivenham with two completing the Advance Command and Staff Course and one completing the Intermediate Command and Staff Course. Four soldiers successfully completed the All Arms Basic Drill Course at Catterick, UK. One soldier will soon attend the Warrant Officer's Course at the Caribbean Institute of Professional Military Education at Moneague Training Camp in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, this fall also saw the conclusion of the Junior Non-Commissioned Officers Cadre and the promotion of several soldiers. The Cadre comprised of two phases, a tactics phase which concluded with a test exercise at Camp Lejeune North Carolina in May, and the Defense Instructional Techniques phase which concluded this fall. The Cadre is the first rank a soldier can obtain. It teaches soldiers how to command, administer and teach a section of up to twelve soldiers. In November, fourteen soldiers completed the course and were promoted to Lance Corporal.

Mr. Speaker, additional promotions within the RBR included six soldiers promoted to Corporal, five soldiers were promoted to Sergeant and three soldiers promoted to Colour Sergeant. All promotions were recognized and celebrated at a Commanding Officer's Parade. These promotions are an excellent indicator of the dedication of RBR soldiers to service to their country and their own personal development.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the military and command courses offered to soldiers, the Regiment has been delivering a General Education Diploma (GED) course. There are currently eleven soldiers participating. Four soldiers have already obtained their GED certificate through the programme. The courses are taught at Warwick Camp by experienced instructors. In 2019, the Regiment intends to expand the education and development opportunities available to its soldiers. These subsidized further education opportunities make the Regiment more attractive to potential recruits and in turn produces higher quality soldiers with demonstrated investment in their own advancement.

Mr. Speaker, one of the benefits of joining the Regiment is gaining skills that can be transferred to civilian life. Earlier this year, four Regiment medics completed the St. John's Ambulance Emergency Medical Responder Course. These new medics will complement the handful of doctors, nurses and EMTs already serving within the RBR. This fall, the medics attended the St. John's Ambulance First Aid Instructors Course. Having completed the Instructors Course, the medics will be able to deliver the eight-hour St John Ambulance First Aid Course to the entire Regiment in 2019.

Mr. Speaker, if you have been to any major event in the lead up to the holiday season it would have been impossible for you to miss the Royal Bermuda Regiment Band and Corps of Drums. Starting with Remembrance Day observances in November to the annual Santa Clause parade, various tree lightings, and walkabouts, the Band has been ever-

present and in fine form. Furthermore, the RBR band has been lending support to various school music programs and has in turn benefited from 10 Student Bandsmen bolstering its ranks.

Mr. Speaker, 2018 has been a turning point for the Regiment with respect to the formal end of conscription. Looking forward, 2019 will be the year when the seeds of change bear fruit. The renewed offer to our soldiers of enhanced training and increased education and development will be a key feature. The Regiment will continue to market itself as a feasible long-term career, and will provide leadership and management training for enlisted ranks and junior officers.

Mr. Speaker, In July 2018 the Regiment held its first summer recruit camp. This camp was the first camp run specifically for a platoon sized intake and aimed to cover less material but to a higher standard. This model proved to be one of the most successful recruit camps in recent memory. In 2019 the Regiment will follow the two intake model with the first intake in 2019 starting on February 17th and the second on June 30th. Any person interested in joining can call 238-1045 or visit the Regiment's website at RBR.BM. In 2019 the Regiment will have in place a framework to recruit year-round which will allow soldiers to start training immediately.

Mr. Speaker, work continues to stand up the much anticipated Coast Guard Unit. The Regiment has taken possession of Watford House on Watford Island and, pending final approvals, a floating dock and fencing will be installed. Early in the New Year, a Royal Navy training team

will be on island to review the work done to date to ensure that the proposed training pipeline is UK Maritime and Coast Guard Agency compliant. The training team will also review implementation timelines for feasibility. It is the intent that the new Regiment Coast Guard will work jointly with the Bermuda Police Service during the first year to enable training to be completed and for Coast Guard personnel to gain experience.

Mr. Speaker, early in the New Year the Regiment will roll out its new five-year plan. The plan provides a medium-term roadmap for realizing the changes the Regiment intends to take toward modernization. Change will not happen overnight, but the Royal Bermuda Regiment is up to the challenge. The Commanding Officer and his staff are motivated and committed to developing a first class Regiment that is able to quickly adapt and respond to the island's security and protection needs. As a small and isolated island, the Regiment plays a central role in maintaining our autonomy and independence in the face of disaster and the unknown. It is hoped that in 2019, with the evolution of the Royal Bermuda Regiment Coast Guard, the Regiment will provide an even greater benefit and service to the people of Bermuda.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**