



Ministerial Statement

By

The Hon. Michael A. Weeks, JP, MP
Minister of National Security

Royal Bermuda Regiment – 60th Anniversary

September 26th, 2025

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate, with this Honourable House, the sixtieth anniversary of the Royal Bermuda Regiment and the proud legacy of service it represents. The Regiment's story began on 1 September 1965, when the Bermuda Militia Artillery and the Bermuda Volunteer Rifle Corps were amalgamated to form one unified force.

Mr Speaker, the two units reflected the segregated era in which they were raised: the Bermuda Militia Artillery was predominantly Black, while the Bermuda Volunteer Rifle Corps was almost entirely white. In the spirit of progress and with a view to strengthening Bermuda's defence capability, they were brought together to create an integrated Regiment, a single force in service to all of Bermuda.

Over the decades, **Mr. Speaker**, more than 11,000 Bermudians have worn the Regiment's uniform. These men and women, citizen soldiers from every parish and walk of life, have given their time, talent and courage in the best tradition of service. They have built skills that last a lifetime: discipline, leadership, teamwork and resilience. The Regiment's values

remain evident not only on parade, but in our businesses, schools, churches and neighbourhoods.

Mr. Speaker, the Regiment's Junior Leaders programme continues to thrive, shaping tomorrow's leaders through adventure training, community service and character development for young people aged twelve to eighteen. Recent intakes and camps have shown strong interest and impressive growth, underscoring how this pathway builds confidence, civic responsibility, and future leadership for Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, the Royal Bermuda Regiment has answered the call in moments that tested our community's strength and resolve. In December 1977, during the disturbances that followed the executions of two men convicted in the Governor's assassination, soldiers were embodied to help restore calm at a moment of great tension and turmoil in our Island's history. A few years later, in May 1981, the Regiment was again placed on alert during the general strike, when thousands of workers across the public and private sectors walked out over wages and work conditions. On both occasions, the Regiment stood ready to support the civil authorities and protect the community, underscoring its vital role in maintaining the stability of our Country.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will no doubt recall that the Regiment has also provided security support in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. It has valiantly responded to the carnage caused by major hurricanes, among them Hurricane Emily in

1987 and Hurricane Fabian in 2003, both of which inflicted widespread damage across Bermuda. In the aftermath of these destructive storms, the Regiment delivered vital assistance alongside our emergency services to return our Country to normality. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Regiment was embodied to support Bermuda's public health efforts. Two hundred soldiers helped staff Community Advisory Points across the island, acted as COVID marshals, assisted in managing testing centres, and supported vaccination clinics.

Mr. Speaker, the Regiment's service extends beyond our shores. In the spirit of regional solidarity, soldiers deployed to the Cayman Islands in 2004 and to Grenada in 2005 to assist with immediate recovery and long-term rebuilding efforts after Hurricane Ivan. The Regiment has also supported the Turks and Caicos Islands during hurricane response operations following Hurricane Ike in 2008, and Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. In addition, Bermudian officers and soldiers have contributed to international assistance, internal security, and training missions, including in Sierra Leone and Barbados, the latter involving the ICC World Cup tournament. These deployments reflect the competence and professionalism of our soldiers, as well as Bermuda's commitment to help our neighbours in times of need.

Mr. Speaker, this diamond jubilee year brings special celebrations. The Regiment has launched a year-long programme marking sixty years of service, culminating in a Presentation of Colours at The Keep, National

Museum of Bermuda in Dockyard, on Saturday, October 18, 2025, followed that evening by an all-messes Colours Ball. These events honour the service of past and present soldiers and renew our shared commitment to the future.

Mr. Speaker, we are further honoured by the forthcoming official visit of Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Gloucester, the Regiment's Colonel-in-Chief, from October 16 through 20. During her visit, Her Royal Highness will support the Regiment's sixtieth anniversary celebrations, including the Presentation of Colours, and will undertake a programme that includes cultural engagements such as a visit to Masterworks. This will be the Duchess's fourth official visit to Bermuda. On behalf of the Government and people of Bermuda, we extend a warm welcome to Her Royal Highness.

Today, **Mr. Speaker**, we salute the thousands who have served, the families who have supported them, and the employers who continue to make service possible. We acknowledge the leadership of the Commanding Officer and the Regiment team, and the stewardship of the Governor and Commander-in-Chief. We also recognize the enduring partnership with our regional and international counterparts, whose collaboration strengthens our operational capability and effectiveness.

Mr Speaker, as we celebrate sixty years of service to this Country, we recommit to supporting the Regiment's operational readiness, its role in disaster relief and aid to the civil authority, and the development of our

next generation through the Junior Leaders. The Royal Bermuda Regiment remains a pillar of unity, service and national pride. May its Colours continue to inspire the very best of Bermuda for the next sixty years and beyond.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**