



# Call of duty

Forming the Guard of Honour today is the oldest regiment in the Army, the Honourable Artillery Company



## Lieutenant Colonel Howard Wilkinson, Commanding Officer:

"It is a huge privilege for me to command the Honourable Artillery Company as the regiment celebrates its 475th anniversary – and with the Band celebrating its own 250th anniversary too. The regiment is as active today as it has been at any time in its illustrious history with 16 soldiers currently serving in Afghanistan. It is also immensely proud of its ceremonial role within the City of London and it is a great honour in this, the year of the Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympic Games to provide the Guard of Honour at Mansion House and to lead the Lord Mayor's Procession."



Photographer: Johnny Burrell

As the new Lord Mayor travels to be sworn in at the Royal Courts of Justice, his State Coach will be accompanied by members of the 475-year-old regiment.

The Honourable Artillery Company (HAC) dates back to the Middle Ages, but its significant date is 25 August 1537 when Henry VIII granted a charter to a Fraternity or Guild of Artillery of Longbows, Crossbows and Handguns. Since then, regiments, battalions and batteries of the Company have fought with distinction in wars, including the Boer War and both World Wars.

More recently, HAC personnel have served in the Balkans and Iraq, and 16 are presently deployed in Afghanistan. This year, 45 officers and soldiers were

mobilised for Operation OLYMPICS – the Armed Forces' contribution to London 2012 security. The regiment also provides Guards of Honour in the City and fires the Gun Salutes at the Tower of London.

With headquarters on City Road, the HAC has always had strong connections with the City of London. It currently has 2,400 members, 400 of whom serve in the regiment, which is a part of the Territorial Army. Many members work in the City and the Lord Mayor and Aldermen are honorary members of HAC's Court of Assistants. Lieutenant General Sir Barney White-Spunner is the Colonel Commandant and His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent GCVO is the Royal Honorary Colonel.

Present at today's parade from the Active Unit are several mounted officers including the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Howard Wilkinson. Behind them are the HAC's ceremonial Light Guns, the Band and a marching detachment which includes the Regimental Colour. Finally, dressed in the Army's new personal clothing system, are additional soldiers from the Active Unit.

In addition, HAC is represented by its own detachment of Special Constables (part of the City of London Police), the Company of Pikemen and Musketeers (which provides the Lord Mayor's bodyguard under a Royal Warrant) and the Light Cavalry (which provides the escort to the Lady Mayoress).