

## **Bailiff's Speech at Armed Forces Day**

**Saturday 26th June 2010**

*From hand written notes*

1. It is a great honour for me to have been asked to open this first Armed Forces Day in Jersey.
2. We British have traditionally been very good at paying tribute to past heroes, past sacrifices and past historic events. One thinks only of Remembrance Sunday, D-Day, VE Day and in the case of Jersey, Liberation Day. However, until recently we have not been so good at acknowledging publicly our gratitude and appreciation of the sacrifices of our present day heroes.
3. That is the purpose of Armed Forces Day. It is a national event. Last year Jersey joined the Fly a Flag campaign which is the pre-cursor to Armed Forces Day, and this year I had the honour of being present on Monday at the Cenotaph in order to open the Fly a Flag campaign this year. Last year, Jersey held its Veterans Day in August but now we have moved to join the United Kingdom in celebrating Armed Forces Day in June.
4. We owe an incredible debt of gratitude to the brave men and women of our Armed Forces. They are the ultimate protectors of our peace and security and indeed of our whole way of life.
5. We are gathered here today in this wonderful sunshine. We expect to have an interesting and relaxing day enjoying the festivities here or taking our family to a beach. It is sobering to think that at this very moment, men and women of the Armed Forces are on patrol in Afghanistan where at any moment they may come under fire or may be the subject of a roadside bomb. Indeed this

week contained the sad news that the 300th member of the British Armed Services had died in Afghanistan and of course that takes no account of the substantial numbers who have been wounded.

6. In this connection it is fitting to acknowledge the work of Holidays for Heroes and I am delighted to welcome them here today and in particular welcome one of the few surviving holders of the Victoria Cross Mr Bill Speakman.
7. The Armed Forces are of course not just made up of professionals. Approximately 15% of the Armed Forces are constituted by volunteer reservists. They are ordinary civilians who are willing to contribute to the security of their country by serving. In Jersey we have the Jersey Field Squadron and it is fitting to note that there are 4 members of the Squadron at present in Afghanistan and others have served in Iraq and Afghanistan before.
8. It is also important to recognise the wider contribution of the Armed Services, in particular in relation to the cadet organisations. These equip youngsters to achieve success by accepting discipline and acquiring a sense of purpose. They would not operate without the adult volunteers and I pay tribute to them.
9. So this Armed Forces Day gives us the opportunity publicly to show our support for the brave men and women of our Armed Forces. They have our respect, our admiration and our gratitude.
10. Today would not have happened without the hard work of many and I would like to pay tribute and thank Greg Menzies and his team together with all those who have put together events to participate in today's show. I very much hope you all enjoy it and have great pleasure in declaring this first Armed Forces Day event in Jersey officially open.