

Induction of the 215th Deputy Constable of Dover Castle

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On 5th December 2019, an induction ceremony was held in Constable's Tower of Dover Castle for the 215th Deputy Constable of Dover Castle. Although Deputy Constables no longer reside at Dover Castle, they continue to use the Constable's Tower for a number of ceremonial and social events each year enabling some historic traditions, associated chiefly with the Confederation of the Cinque Ports, to be maintained.

The last Deputy Constable to be resident at Dover Castle was Brigadier Christopher Claydon MBE, Commander 2 (South East) Brigade, who held office from 2013 to 2015. The latest Deputy Constable is Brigadier Peter Rowell MBE, who succeeded Brigadier Matt Bazeley, and presiding over the induction ceremony was the Constable of Dover Castle, the Lord Warden of the Confederation of the Cinque Ports and Admiral of the Fleet, the Lord Boyce KG GCB OBE DL. In attendance, by invitation of the Lord Warden, were Mayors of the Cinque Ports and two Ancient Towns, colloquially known as "the chain gang", Officers of the Confederation, including the Lord Warden's Chaplain, the Registrar and Seneschal, the Surrogate Judge and the Admiralty Sergeant, as well as a Lord Lieutenant and numerous Army personnel including the Commanding Officer and Military Chaplain of 1 RSME Regiment, SNCOs and JNCOs from the Regiment and the HQ of the RSME Group. Dover's Right Worshipful Town Mayor,

Councillor Gordon Cowan, was present for this ceremony.

For many centuries the Cinque Port towns harboured the ships and men that guarded the South East coast of England from attack and such ships were also available for Royal duties. In return for their loyal service, the Ports were granted numerous special privileges and a Lord Warden presided over the Confederation of these Cinque Ports towns, providing a link between the Ports and the Monarch. Since the 13th Century, the offices of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and Governor (or Constable) of Dover Castle have been held by the same person. Because the Lord Warden's commitments often entailed his absence from Dover, a commander was required to be in place for the safety and security of the town's important castle and to be ever ready to repel invasion. Hence the appointment of a Deputy Constable to serve under the Lord Warden and be responsible for defending the Castle and the South East approaches.

Since 1868 the office of Deputy Constable has been held, ex-officio, by the officer commanding the local infantry brigade of the British Army, whose official residence was at the Constable's Tower in Dover Castle. Following a major reorganisation of the Army in 2014, there is no longer an infantry brigade with its headquarters in Kent or Sussex, so the office of Deputy Constable is now held by the

Commandant of the Royal School of Military Engineering, in Chatham. Although no longer resident in Constable's Tower, when the Deputy Constable uses the building for functions during the year his standard is flown from the flagpole on top of the Tower. During the ceremony of induction, the new Deputy Constable's standard was raised over Constable's Tower for the first time and Brigadier Rowell was handed the 'Key to England' and the Scroll of the Statutes of Dover Castle. Brigadier Rowell, as Deputy Constable of Dover Castle, will deputize for the Lord Warden and Constable in relation to his military responsibilities.

The simple ceremony of induction commenced after a procession led by the

Admiralty Sergeant carrying the Silver Oar of the Confederation and followed by the Lord Warden, Brigadier Rowell and his wife, the Registrar and Seneschal of the Cinque Ports, the Chaplain to the Lord Warden and the Padre from 1 Royal School of Military Engineering Regiment, who all entered the Great Hall. After words of welcome from the Lord Warden, his Chaplain said a prayer followed by the Army Padre with another prayer. After a bible reading read by Lt Col Adam Foley, the Chief of Staff to Brigadier Rowell, the Lord Warden gave an address focussing on the history of the Cinque Ports and he pointed out all the standards of previous Deputy Constables on the walls of the Great Hall. The Registrar and Seneschal read and presented to Brigadier Rowell the Lord Warden's Appointment of him as



Lord Warden (centre), Brig Peter Powell, his Wife Lynn, Lord Warden Sea cadets. Dep Constable Induction 2019

Deputy Constable. Following the Scroll and the Key being handed to Brigadier Rowell, he signed the Deputy Constable's Book and, with his standard now flying over the Constable's Tower, he said a few words of acknowledgement and appreciation of his appointment before kneeling to receive a blessing from the Lord Warden's Chaplain. Following the Lord's Prayer, said by those present, the procession left the Great Hall and all attending the ceremony were invited to sign the Record of Induction in the Deputy Constable's Book. A light lunch reception was held for all who attended the event.

The new Deputy Constable Peter Rowell will, no doubt, become a familiar figure at various official functions in the next few years until his deployment elsewhere. So, who is this latest holder of this ancient post? Peter left his native Zimbabwe to join the British Army where, following a short period in the ranks, he was commissioned into the Royal Engineers. As a subaltern he had postings to Cyprus and Northern Ireland, where he spent most of his time on construction or public order operations.

When in command of Power Troop, he deployed with HQ ARRC to Kosovo. His time as a Battlegroup Engineer included exercises in the UK and Canada, and a second deployment to Kosovo. As Regimental Operations Officer for 21 Engineer Regiment he had to turn his hand to planning and controlling emergency fire cover for the county of Lancashire during the 2003 Fire-fighter strikes (Op FRESCO). He then moved to become Adjutant of 21 Engineer Regiment.

Peter's time at staff started with a short period in the General Staff at the Ministry of Defence and was followed by nearly two years in the Commitments Division of HQ LAND. Moving to command in 2006, he led

31 Armoured Engineer Squadron on training in Germany, Poland and Canada and on operations in Iraq (Op TELIC 12). For his time as Deputy Chief of Staff for 4 Mechanized Brigade, which included training in the UK and Canada and deployment on operations in Afghanistan (Op HERRICK 12), he was honoured with the award of an MBE. A year as the chief of staff of the engineer branch of HQ 3 (UK) Division included divisional headquarter exercises in the UK and Germany.

Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, Peter attended the Advanced Command and Staff Course. The following two years were spent writing concepts on the future of warfare and the role of the Army therein. He commanded 32 Engineer Regiment, initially based in Hohne, Germany, before they re-based to Catterick, North Yorkshire. During his time in command, the 'Assault Engineers' deployed on construction tasks in Canada, Cyprus, Germany and the Falkland Islands; and on combat engineering training in England, Germany, Spain and Kenya. The Regiment also played a key role in providing resilience to flood response in the North East and North West. He has been the Assistant Head of Capability Strategy and Force Development in the Army Headquarters, responsible for the Army's research and experimentation programme and designing the Army of the future. Peter has been the Commandant of the Royal School of Military Engineering Group and Head of Profession of the Royal Engineers since September 2019.

Peter is married to a practising veterinary surgeon, also from Zimbabwe. They have a son and daughter. Peter is a Christian and enthusiastic sportsman particularly enjoying running, racquet sports and kayaking. We wish him and his family well in the new post to which he was inducted.