

Press release: Armed Forces Day 2019 to be held in Salisbury

The announcement will come as over 300 events are set to be held today to mark this year's Armed Forces Day, from the national event in Llandudno to street parties and military parades across the country to say thank you to our sailors, soldiers and airmen and women.

Following the nerve agent attack, military teams worked tirelessly, alongside the emergency services, to help ensure the city is safe and can return to normal for visitors, businesses and everyone to enjoy. Their work to safely remove contaminated vehicles, testing the nerve agent and their ongoing efforts supporting the recovery, has enabled the city to return to the vibrant and welcoming place it is.

As well as this heroic response, Salisbury is a city steeped in military history, home to many Army bases including Bulford Camp and Tidworth Camp. While Salisbury Plain, one of the UK's biggest military training areas, has been used for more than a century.

Prime Minister Theresa May is due to say:

Armed Forces Day is a way to thank our incredible servicemen and women for their dedication, for the many sacrifices they make and for their extraordinary service and courage. I can think of no more suitable a place than Salisbury to show our gratitude next year.

The military response to the nerve agent attack here has been remarkable. In the days immediately following the attack, expert military teams helped to safely move contaminated vehicles, the Defence Science and Technology Library at Porton Down then expertly tested the nerve agent and today around 200 specialist military personnel from the Army and RAF continue to support the recovery.

By holding Armed Forces Day here next year, we are also celebrating the tremendous resilience and great spirit of Salisbury and showing clearly it is open for business. It's a great city, enriched by military history and a wonderful place to visit.

It is expected hundreds of thousands of people will descend on the city for the day, supported by a £25,000 grant from the Ministry of Defence to host the event. This is on top of the £2.5m given to support businesses, assist with tourism and meet unexpected costs involved in the recovery effort in Salisbury.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson is due to say:

Salisbury was a natural choice to host Armed Forces Day in 2019.

The city has a historic link with our Armed Forces and our troops demonstrated once again their bravery, dedication and skill during the central role they played following the reckless nerve agent attack here this year.

Our extraordinary service men and women continue to help Salisbury and the people of this beautiful cathedral city through the clear up and investigation, and it's extremely fitting that next year the city and the entire nation will be able to thank them here for their commitment and unwavering service to protecting our nation from the deadliest of threats.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE, leader of Wiltshire Council, is due to say:

I am absolutely delighted that Salisbury has been selected to host the Armed Forces Day national event next year. Wiltshire is proud to be a military county and the armed forces and their families make up a significant proportion of Wiltshire's population. This is a fantastic opportunity, on behalf of the whole country, to recognise and celebrate what they do.

It will also be an opportunity to all say thank you for the work they have undertaken in Salisbury to ensure that the city is safe and can return to normal.

The event is the national focal point for celebrations and recognises the hard work and sacrifice of those that serve this country.

During recent months in Salisbury, we have seen how strong the links are between the city and our armed forces community. To be selected to host the national event in 2019 is a wonderful way to thank our service men and women for their contribution and for the job they do to keep us all safe.