

Citation for HMS Prince of Wales, Freedom of the City (Military)

Freedom of the City is held by the following military units:

1. Gloucestershire Regiment (1958)
2. HMS Bristol (1974)
3. HMS Flying Fox (2002)
4. Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment (2002)
5. The Rifles (2008)
6. 57 (City and County of Bristol) Squadron, Royal Corps of Signals (Volunteers) (2009)
7. 266 (Gloucestershire Volunteer Artillery) Battery, Royal Artillery (Volunteers) (2009)
8. 39 Signal Regiment (2020)

- The Freedom of the City, in military terms, is an honour conferred by a local authority upon a military unit, which grants that unit the privilege of marching into the city "with drums beating, colours flying, and bayonets fixed".
- The City and County of Bristol has been affiliated with HMS Prince of Wales (PWLS) since 2016, an honour shared with Liverpool, and it's a relationship that will last for 50 years. The affiliation was accepted by the City Council.
- PWLS is a fifth-generation aircraft carrier and its role includes disaster relief, humanitarian aid and diplomacy. In Autumn 2022, PWLS was due to conduct important sea trials and work closely with the USA, as part of Westlant 22 (USA East Coast). Unfortunately urgent engineering work prevented this and PWLS now prepares for deployment from Portsmouth for Westlant 23, a similar programme outline to 2022. This supports preparations for 2024, where PWLS will take over from HMS Queen Elizabeth as the UK's Very High Readiness Strike Carrier. The Ship's Company (crew) has representatives from across the UK and Commonwealth.
- Bristol related activities with the Ship are managed and overseen by the HMS Prince of Wales Affiliation Board. The Board is led by HM Lord Lieutenant as president and made up of business representatives and other organisations, including Cllr Helen Holland as the City Council's Armed Forces Champion.
- Several visits have taken place to the Ship by members of the Board over the last few years and there are plans to build relationships with local schools to promote STEM and sport.
- The Affiliation Board has worked with the Ship to decorate it's Bristol Suite (there's also a Liverpool Suite), and the Ship's Crest is displayed City Hall. Representatives of the Ship's company support Bristol's Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service and the White Ensign has been blessed by Bristol Cathedral and laid up to mark the affiliation.
- If awarded Freedom of the City, the Ships Company will exercise their Freedom by way of a parade in Summer 2023