

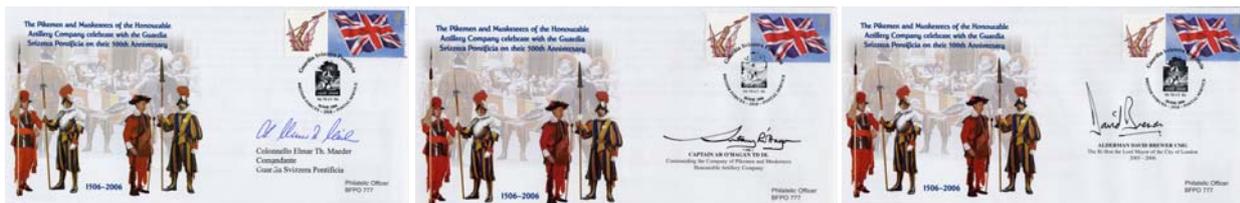
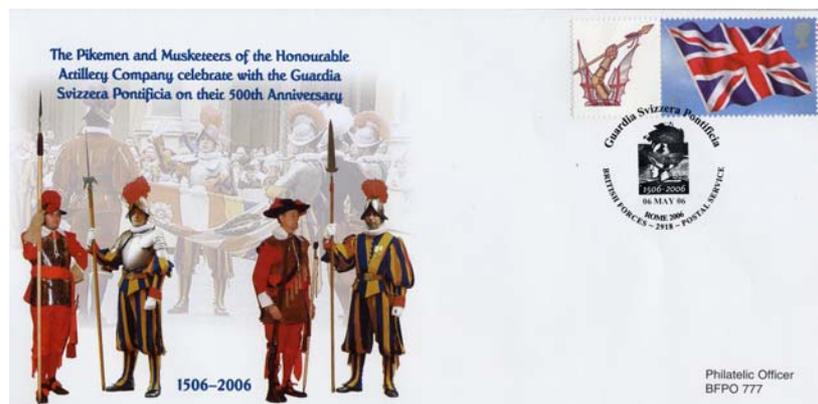


# Honourable Artillery Company

The Honourable Artillery Company is a unit of Britain's Territorial Army. Its origins date back to 1537 when King Henry VIII granted a charter to the Guild of St. George, which subsequently changed its name to the Honourable Artillery Company (HAC). It is the second oldest military unit in the world. The HAC's Company of Pikemen and Musketeers are all former serving soldiers in the HAC and their uniforms date back to the soldiers at the time of the English Civil War (1641). The Company of Pikemen and Musketeers are the official bodyguard of the Lord Mayor of the City of London.

The Company of Pikemen and Musketeers were asked to join the oldest military unit, the Swiss Papal Guard in the celebration of their 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in May 2006. In recognition of this honour and in conjunction with the British Forces Post Office, the HAC decided to mark the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Papal Guard by issuing a number of special covers. To further mark this event, HAC produced 90 sheets of customised Rule Britannia Smilers stamps and labels featuring the crest of the Honourable Artillery Company coat of arms. Of the 90 sheets printed, the majority of sheets were broken up to service special covers. There appear to have been four variants of these covers:

- Unsigned, hand-stamped 06 May 2006
- As above, signed by Colonnello Elmar Th. Maeder, Comandate, Guardia Svizzera Pontificia
- As above, signed by Captain AR O'Hagan TD DL, Company Commander, Company of Pikemen and Musketeers
- As above, signed by Alderman David Brewer CMG, The Rt. Hon Lord Mayor of the City of London



Of the original 90 sheets printed, around 12 whole sheets are thought to have survived intact and eagerly sought by Smiler sheet collectors, changing hands for up to c. £500 late 2006.

