

# PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Provost's Sub-Committee of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee  
28 October 2013

## UNVEILING AND SERVICE OF DEDICATION OF WAR MEMORIAL AT BLACK WATCH CORNER, YPRES, BELGIUM

Report by Head of Democratic Services

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report relates to an invitation to the Provost to attend a Service of Dedication to mark the unveiling of a memorial to commemorate the sacrifice of over eight thousand members of the Black Watch who lost their lives and over twenty thousand wounded during World War 1.

### 1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Black Watch was granted the Freedom of the City of Perth in 1947. The traditional home of the Black Watch has long been viewed as Perth and the area's history associated with this prestigious Regiment is well documented.
- 1.2 The Black Watch Association is planning to erect a monument 3 miles east of Ypres in Belgium, at a place to be known as Black Watch Corner, to commemorate all those who served in the Black Watch Regiment during World War 1.
- 1.3 The sculptor is Mr Alan Herriot, who also sculpted the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division Monument on the North Inch, Perth. The statue will stand on a 6 foot high block of granite and measures over 7 feet in height. A photograph of the statue is attached as Appendix 1 and an artist's impression of the statue in situ is attached as Appendix 2.
- 1.4 The Black Watch Association has asked Perth & Kinross, Dundee City and Angus Councils to each contribute £500 towards three wooden benches to be positioned at Black Watch Corner. A photograph of the style of bench is attached as Appendix 3.
- 1.5 The three Councils have agreed to donate £500 each towards three wooden benches, each inscribed with their civic crest, at Black Watch Corner.
- 1.6 The Black Watch Association has invited the Provosts of Perth and Kinross and Angus Councils and the Lord Provost of Dundee City Council to attend a battlefield tour and a ceremony at Menin Gate on the morning of Friday 2 May 2014 and a Service of Dedication in Ypres on the afternoon of Saturday 3 May 2014. A copy of the invitation is attached as Appendix 4.
- 1.7 The Provost of Angus Council and the Lord Provost of Dundee City Council have indicated that they intend to attend the event over the weekend of 2 to 4 May 2014.

## 2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Provost's Sub-Committee agree to accept the invitation and approve the visit to Ypres, Belgium from the 2 – 4 May 2014, to take part in the Service of Dedication which is due to take place on Saturday 3 May 2014, with the Council being represented by the Depute Provost, supported by the Council Officer.

## 3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This invitation provides the Council with the opportunity to support the Black Watch Association to commemorate all those who served in the Great War.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Provost's Sub-Committee:
- a) Agrees that the invitation from the Black Watch Association to attend the unveiling of the statue and the Service of Dedication in Ypres, Belgium be accepted;
  - b) Agrees that the Council is represented by the Depute Provost, supported by the Council Officer.

### Author

Name	Designation	Contact Details
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### Approved

Name	Designation	Date
David Burke	Depute Chief Executive	08/10/13

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Council Text Phone Number 01738 442573

## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes / None</b>
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>Yes</b>
Workforce	<b>No</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	<b>No</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>No</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<b>No</b>
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	<b>No</b>
Legal and Governance	<b>No</b>
Risk	<b>No</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	<b>Yes</b>
External	<b>No</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>No</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### 1.1 Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

The draft Perth and Kinross Community Plan 2013-2023 sets out five strategic objectives. The proposals in this report support the achievement of these objectives.

#### 1.2 Corporate Plan

Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2013-2018 sets out five strategic objectives. The proposals in this report support the achievement of these objectives.

### 2. Resource Implications - Financial

#### 2.1 The costs associated with the visit to Ypres, Belgium by the Depute Provost, supported by the Council Officer are anticipated to be :

Flights for Depute Provost and Council Officer	£ 260
Accommodation	£ 440
Transport (Ypres)	£ 200
Misc expenses	<u>£ 200</u>
<b>Total estimated costs</b>	<b><u>£1,100</u></b>

- 2.2 The estimated costs associated with the visit to Ypres, Belgium will be met from the 2014/15 civic hospitality budget
- 2.3 The Head of Finance has been consulted on the financial implications for the proposals and has indicated his agreement.

### **3. Consultation**

- 3.1 The Provost and the Chief Executive have been consulted in the preparation of this report.







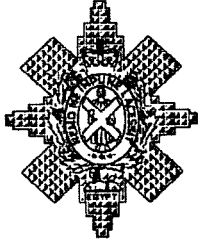




### Appendix 3





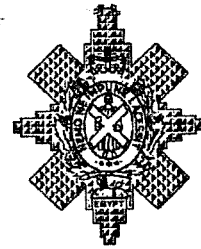


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Councillor Liz Grant  
Provost of Perth and Kinross  
Civic Office  
Perth and Kinross Council  
2 High Street  
Perth PH1 5PH

BWA/A/6

28 August 2013

*Dear Provost*

**SERVICE OF DEDICATION**

**BLACK WATCH CORNER – BELGIUM - 3 MAY 2014**

I am sure you are aware that The Black Watch Association are planning to erect a memorial to commemorate the over eight thousand members of the Regiment who lost their lives, the over 20,000 who were wounded and to all those who served in the Regiment during the Great War.

The monument will stand at a place known as Black Watch Corner which is 3 miles east of Ypres. I have enclosed a short history that will help explain why this spot was chosen as well as an image of the statue. The sculptor is Mr Alan Herriot who has completed a number of other military statues such as the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division monument on the North Inch in Perth. Our statue will stand on a 6 foot high block of granite and measures over 7 feet in height. It is truly impressive.

Whilst the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2014 is a long time away, the Association are keen to let you know about the event and to establish whether you would consider joining us in Belgium?

We have invited our Patron, His Royal Highness, The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay but we will not know whether he can attend the service until later this year however, our current President, Brigadier Melville Jameson is kindly going to join us.

Finally, we are encouraging as many of our serving and retired officers and soldiers to travel to Belgium and we have booked a travel company to carry Association members and their wives/partners/carers from Scotland, to Ypres by bus. If you are able to join us you should consider arriving by Friday morning (2 May) to take part in a battlefield tour, to attend the ceremony at the Menin Gate and then on Saturday to take part in the Service of Dedication which is currently scheduled to start at 3 pm.

Scottish Charity SC 016423

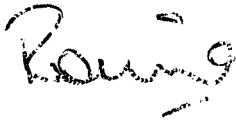
<http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/charities/theblackwatchassociation>

If you are able to come, I can send you further details but I would suggest that you consider booking your accommodation sooner rather than later.

We are truly grateful for you considering a donation towards the benches.

Yours sincerely

Major Ronnie Proctor MBE

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Ronnie', with a horizontal line underneath.

Secretary  
The Black Watch Association

Encl:

**R.S.V.P.**

## WORDING FOR BLACK WATCH CORNER INFORMATION BOARD

*It was here that the battle was won. It was here that the battle and war itself was very nearly lost.*  
Lynn MacDonald, 1914; *The Days of Hope*

On 13 August 1914, 31 officers and 1,031 soldiers of the 1st Battalion The Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) embarked for France as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and took part in a series of battles and fighting withdrawals, while the German Army pressed forward relentlessly.

During October and early November, having suffered a large number of casualties, the 1st Battalion The Black Watch, as part of 1st (Guards) Brigade took part in three separate battles which made up the First Battle of Ypres:

Langemark (21–24 October)  
Gheluvelt (29–31 October)  
Nonne Bosschen (11 November)

By 11 November, despite receiving some reinforcements, the strength of the battalion had been reduced to 9 officers and 228 soldiers who, as part of the BEF holding the Ypres area, numbered only about 7,850, including reserves. They were to face twenty-five battalions of the Kaiser's elite Prussian Guard, numbering 17,500 men. The main assault came just north of the Menin Road and fell upon The Black Watch, Scots Guards and Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.

The contemporary Black Watch history and other records describe the battle: 'Between 6.30 am and 9 am on 11 November, the heaviest bombardment so far experienced by the British forces broke out; as it lifted, a Division of the Prussian Guard, ordered by the Kaiser to break the British line at all costs, attacked the front. Under cover of the bombardment, a strong enemy force drove back D Company and the two platoons of A Company entrenched at the south west corner of Polygon Wood. C Company under the command of Lieutenant Anderson and in a strong point (*point d'appui*) 380 yards from the south and west corner of Polygon Wood held out firmly. This split the attack into small parties of 20–30 Prussians, many of whom were soon lost in the woods behind. As they emerged from the back of the woods the guns of 41 Brigade Royal Field Artillery, sited one thousands yards west of Nonne Bosschen Wood, opened direct fire on the enemy at a range of 300–400 yards.

The effect was devastating and the German attack faltered. At 3 pm a counter attack by the 2nd Battalion The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, supported by the Royal Field Artillery, destroyed the remnants of the Prussian Guard and the line between the Menin Road and Polygon Wood was re-established. At 3.30 pm three Companies of the 1st Battalion The Northamptonshire Regiment, supported by parties of The Black Watch and Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, advanced from Nonne Bosschen Wood to retake the south west corner of Polygon Wood. This corner was known on all later maps as Black Watch Corner. Originally, however, it was the C Company "strong point" south west of Polygon Wood which was given that name.'

On 12 November 1914, the day after the battle, the strength of the 1st Battalion The Black Watch had been reduced to 2 officers and 109 soldiers; the 1st Battalion Scots Guards to 1 officer and 69 soldiers and the 1st Battalion The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders to 2 officers and 140 soldiers.

The First Battle of Ypres was arguably the most critical defensive battle fought by the British in the Great War and, with the added support of French artillery batteries, the German attempt to break through to the Channel Ports was halted.

Between 1914–1918 over 50,000 men served in twenty-five battalions of The Black Watch; over 8,000 were killed and over 20,000 wounded.