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Press Release

Britsburgh World War I Centennial Appeal for Veterans Launch

BRITSBURGH



WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL APPEAL

Pittsburgh, PA, October 31, 2017: Non-profit British-American Connections Pittsburgh is excited to announce the launch of the “**Britsburgh World War I Centennial Appeal.**” Britsburgh has set a lofty goal of raising **\$1,000,000 for Veterans** from November 11, 2017 to November 11, 2018 - the centennial anniversary marking the last year of World War I.

Through our collaboration with Prime Stage Theatre, Allegheny YMCA, Veteran’s Breakfast Club of Pittsburgh, Senator John Heinz History Center, University of Pittsburgh, Duquesne University, Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum and others on the "Pittsburgh in World War I" series, Britsburgh and its partners seek to honour those who gave their lives in defense of freedom, the veterans of all wars who remain, and increase awareness such that the youth of today will remember and learn from the great sacrifice made on their behalf.

Upcoming events include:

- Nov 3rd-12th – Prime Stage Theatre perform “All Quiet on the Western Front”. The Britsburgh performance and VIP Pre-Show featuring Michael Kraus, historian, curator at Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall and Museum is on Nov 12th, 1-4.30pm;
- Nov 11th - a service of remembrance at the Veteran’s Breakfast Club of Pittsburgh;
- Nov 12th - Remembrance Sunday service at the 23rd Ward World War I Memorial on the North Shore at 11am;
- Nov 12th - The Red Triangle - The YMCA in World War I. Britsburgh History Society and the Allegheny YMCA recreates London's famous World War I Eagle Hut, a relief and recreation canteen providing a little bit of home for American soldiers on leave, during the centenary of the American entry into the war;
- Sept-Nov 2018 – ‘Pittsburgh Remembers’ poppy installation. Location to be determined.

See appendix for more detail or visit Britsburgh.com

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Britsburgh receives acknowledgment from Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace, 22nd September, 2017 (extract)

“It was most thoughtful of you to wish to make The Queen aware of your intention to hold a series of memorial events beginning on 11th November in commemoration of The Great War, and I think you would like to know that Her Majesty is second to none in her admiration of those who put their lives at risk in the service of their country and for the loved ones they leave at home.

The Queen was deeply touched that you should wish to share your plans with her.”

‘Pittsburgh Remembers’ poppy installation

The Poppy is globally recognised as the symbol of remembrance, but in recent years has become less known in the United States. Britsburgh intends to change that!

Through the **World War I Centennial Appeal** and our planned Pittsburgh in World War I series of events, Britsburgh hopes that the people of Pittsburgh will re-embrace the Poppy as a symbol of remembrance. Beginning immediately, we will offer Royal British Legion poppies to the public in exchange for a small donation (suggested \$1). These can be worn with pride as we remember the sacrifice of our veterans.

More ambitiously, Britsburgh intends to work towards recreating a massive installation of poppies at a location to be determined such as one of Pittsburgh’s parks or at an appropriate war memorial such Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall and Museum in Oakland. We are in very early discussions with the later to see if it is even feasible at this location. As a result of this effort, this project could potentially raise significant funds for veterans from all wars.

About Britsburgh (www.britsburgh.com)

Britsburgh is a brand of BACP, a nonprofit 501c6 focused on "Building bridges across communities by driving growth in British-American culture, education, history, tradition and trade in Pittsburgh". During 2017, BACP intends to establish a 501c3 charitable organization to better facilitate its mission.

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‘The Tower of London Remembers’ marked the centenary of the outbreak of World War I with the installation of 888,246 hand-made poppies, one for each British and Colonial soldier who perished during World War I.

Britsburgh intends to borrow this idea and create a similar memorial commemorating the end of World War I with an installation of 53,402 hand-made poppies, one for each United States soldier who died in battle during World War I. The installation will begin during the **Fourth Annual Britsburgh Festival**, September 4-9th, 2018, culminating on Sunday November 11, 2018 – Armistice, exactly 100 years on.

Each poppy will be made to a standard specification but will be hand-made and therefore each poppy will be unique. The poppies will be made by local artists from donated materials. “The intention would be then to sell each poppy for approximately \$50, which would raise over \$2.5m for veterans” says Robert Charlesworth. “This is an immense undertaking for Britsburgh but a worthy one. We are up for the challenge but will need a lot of help from local businesses and artists.”

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A call to arms!

Britsburgh needs help over the next year. We need:

- Local and national artists to donate their time and talent to make 53,402 poppies;
- Local and national businesses to donate materials for the poppies;
- Space to house the manufacture and storage of the poppies;
- A lead local artist and project manager to design and implement the installation;
- Local and regional government to support the undertaking e.g. provision of security 24/7 at the installation location from September to mid-November, 2018;
- A national carrier to deliver the poppies to 53,402 homes across the US and internationally.



These are just a few key requests with which Britsburgh will need help. If you can help with any of these items or want to be involved generally, please contact Britsburgh at poppyappeal@britsburgh.com

Who will benefit from the Britsburgh World War I Centennial Appeal?

We are still in the process of selecting 4 or 5 veterans' charities who will receive a share of the appeal fund. However, this will certainly be a mix of local and international veterans' charities.

Our Charity Partners (in process of being selected):

- Veteran's Place in Pittsburgh - <http://www.veteransplace.org/>
- The Veteran's Breakfast Club of Pittsburgh - <http://veteransbreakfastclub.com/>
- Veterans of Foreign Wars - <https://www.vfw.org/>
- The Royal British Legion - <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/>



The Story of the Poppy

During the First World War (1914–1918) much of the fighting took place in France and Belgium, which became known as the Western Front. Previously beautiful countryside was blasted, bombed and fought over, again and again. The landscape swiftly turned to fields of mud: bleak and barren scenes where little or nothing could grow. Bright red Flanders poppies (*Papaver rhoeas*) however, were delicate but resilient flowers and grew in their thousands, flourishing even in the middle of chaos and destruction.

In the spring of 1915, shortly after losing a friend in Ypres, Belgium, a Canadian doctor, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae was inspired by the sight of poppies growing in battle-scarred fields to write a now famous poem called “In Flanders’ Fields”. After the First World War, the poppy was adopted as a symbol of Remembrance.

McCrae’s poem led an American academic, Moina Michael, to make and sell red silk poppies which were brought to England by a French woman, Anna Guérin. The (Royal) British Legion, formed in 1921, ordered 9 million of these poppies and sold them on 11 November that year. The poppies sold out almost immediately and that first ever ‘Poppy Appeal’ raised over £106,000, a considerable amount of money at the time. This was used to help WWI veterans with employment and housing.

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WORLD WAR I
CENTENNIAL APPEAL

APPENDIX

UPCOMING "PITTSBURGH IN WORLD WAR I" SERIES EVENTS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11

10:45 AM — 11:15 AM

**A service of remembrance for the *Veteran's Breakfast Club of Pittsburgh*
*Duquesne University***

In collaboration with the Veteran's Breakfast Club of Pittsburgh, Britsburgh will replicate the traditional Remembrance Sunday service during the Veteran's day breakfast for Veterans held at Duquesne University by the Veteran's Breakfast Club of Pittsburgh.

This incorporates the last post, poetry and song, the chimes of Big Ben and a 2-minute silence at 11am in remembrance. The service does not contain religious content.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12

10:45 AM — 11:15 AM

Remembrance Sunday at Pittsburgh World War I Memorial - 23rd Ward

To commemorate the start of the Centennial year of World War I, we will hold a traditional short service at the 23rd Ward North Shore War Memorial (near the New Hazlett Theatre) including 2-minute silence at exactly 11am, the Last Post will sound and we will lay a wreath of poppies. The service does not contain religious content.

Lest We Forget!

10:00 AM — 2:00 PM

Britsburgh History Society: The Red Triangle - The YMCA in World War I
Allegheny YMCA

Join us as Britsburgh and Allegheny YMCA recreates London's famous World War I Eagle Hut, a relief and recreation canteen providing a little bit of home for American soldiers on leave, during the centenary of the American entry into the war.

From its beginnings in mid-20th Century London, its present day worldwide reach serving some 2 billion persons in 125 nations, the YMCA has been dedicating to fostering a healthy "body, mind, and spirit" among its beneficiaries, as symbolized by the three angles of the Red Triangle that serves as its logo. During World War I, the "Y" was active not only in the US, including here in Pittsburgh, but in Europe, including in major cities and towns and along the infamous Western Front, providing relief and recreation services to soldiers on leave from the trenches.

BRITSBURGH



WORLD WAR I
CENTENNIAL APPEAL

We encourage Veterans, their families and the general public to join us for this memorial recreation in commemoration of the United States, and in particular Pittsburgh's involvement in World War I. Please bring family artifacts from WWI to share stories of family members who served.

What to expect?

Step back through time and image yourself as an 18-year-old soldier set off to the Western Front, experience the living hell of fighting in the trenches and then on your leave experience the relief and sanctuary of the YMCA huts. A place to meet up with friends, your wife or husband and relax for a few hours before returning to the Front. Over 5 million people were killed on the Western Front and a further 8 million were wounded.

Come experience the YMCA hut for yourself. We will have:

- Pancakes and coffee served in Gymnasium
- World War I exhibits on display. The exhibits include copies of Pittsburgh family scrapbooks provided with the kind permission of The Heinz History Center - Detre Library & Archives and artifacts courtesy of the University of Pittsburgh Archives and Special Collections.
- World War I reenactors circulate.
- Period music is played over sound system.
- World War I-era YMCA corn hole game

Noon - 1pm - Pittsburgh and YMCA involvement in World War I. Speakers include: Elizabeth Williams (historian), Joseph Richel (historian), Lisa Horton (YMCA Associate Vice President, Membership)

1:00 PM — 4:30 PM

**Britsburgh Performance of “All Quiet on the Western Front” & VIP Pre-Show
New Hazlett Theatre**

Prime Stage Theatre presents the US Premiere adaptation of “All Quiet on the Western Front” that brings to life the poignant novel of World War I by Erich Maria Remarque. Paul Baumer, a student of nineteen, shares the lives, victories, tragedies and kinship of young soldiers who faced fighting for their country as German soldiers in the trenches of the Western Front.

The book was first adapted for the stage by Englishman, Robin Kingsland and was first performed at The Nottingham Playhouse, UK on 11 February 2006. Through the direction of Scott P. Calhoun, the US premiere promises to captivate, move and shock you; special effects will drive home the graphic nature of war and yet you will find yourself laughing from time to time. At our recent event "An

BRITSBURGH



WORLD WAR I
CENTENNIAL APPEAL

Evening with "All Quiet on the Western Front" we were treated to a glimpse of the majesty of this production. This is a must see show!

Join us for a VIP pre-show remembrance and a look at the role Pittsburgh and its citizens played in World War I from 1-2pm on Sunday, November 12th. The event includes light fare. We will listen to special guest and military expert Michael Kraus, historian, curator at Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall and Museum and military advisor to Hollywood films, for this fascinating discussion about WWI and the myriad roles played by Pittsburgh in support of the war effort. Listen to taped well wishes from Robin Kingsland. The event immediately precedes the Britsburgh performance of "All Quiet on the Western Front", performed by Prime Stage Theatre.

Programme:

1-2pm - VIP pre-show Remembrance of World War I & the Pittsburgh Connection

2.30-4.30pm - Britsburgh performance of "All Quiet on the Western Front"

All Quiet on the Western Front runs from November 4-12, 2018