

POPPYSCOTLAND HELPS TURN PET BUSINESS DREAM INTO REALITY

(Issued on behalf of Poppyscotland)

A Stirling businesswoman has become the first person to benefit from a new initiative designed to help veterans start their own business. Poppyscotland, the charity behind the Scottish Poppy Appeal, awarded Denise Ward a £3,500, interest-free loan to enable her to start Pet Royale Ltd, a professional pet care service.

Denise, from Whins of Milton, was eligible for the Small Business Loan Scheme as she served in the RAF as an Assistant Air Traffic Controller for six years. She will use the money to buy equipment and publicise her home-based business, which offers boarding for dogs, cats and small pets and provides services such as grooming and a pet taxi service.

The revolutionary loan scheme is the first of its kind to be operated in Scotland. Veterans who apply for a loan are given access to a business advisor, who helps them complete a business plan, which is then presented to the Poppyscotland panel. If the applicant can demonstrate a sound business proposal and cash-flow forecast, they are awarded a loan of up to £7,500.

CEO of Poppyscotland, Jim Panton said: "Poppyscotland offers assistance to veterans and their dependants in a variety of different ways. One of our key goals is to help ex-Servicemen and women re-adjust to civilian life by successfully building new lives and new careers. The Small Business Loan Scheme is an exciting new initiative designed to help them do just that.

"I hope that the scheme will prove popular amongst the veterans' community and I look forward to presenting cheques to more people like Denise. I would also like to wish her the very best of luck with her new business, which I'm sure will be a great success."

Denise Ward, Director of Pet-Royale Ltd, said: "The Poppyscotland Small Business Loan Scheme has been invaluable in providing a strong foundation for the successful launch of Pet-Royale.

"The loan has given me an immediate and positive cash flow with which to invest in the necessary insurances, safety equipment and marketing. The financial backing of the scheme has given me peace of mind on a personal level and has enabled the company to project a professional image and to be seen as a true market competitor from day one. I am indebted to Poppyscotland for their continued support."

Those interested in finding out more about the scheme, can contact Dot Pringle at Poppyscotland on 0131 550 1568 or email d.pringle@poppyscotland.org.uk to discuss their business idea.

Notes to Editors

- Poppyscotland's **Small Business Loans Scheme** is operated in partnership with the Royal British Legion, which operates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, to ensure that veterans receive access to the service, irrespective of where they live in the UK

- Poppyscotland raises money through the Scottish Poppy Appeal and other fundraising activities. Money raised is spent in the following ways:
 - Direct financial assistance to individuals
 - Funding an advice service for the veterans' community, including war pension claims and appeals
 - Support to organisations that deliver specialist services to veterans in Scotland
 - Supporting the employment of veterans with disabilities

To find out more visit www.poppyscotland.org.uk