

NEW INITIATIVE TO CHANGE THE WAY PUPILS LEARN ABOUT VETERANS

Poppyscotland, the organisation behind the Scottish Poppy Appeal and Learning & Teaching Scotland, today launched a new series of educational materials that will revolutionise the way pupils learn about veterans. Entitled, 'Sowing the Poppy seed', the materials will be used in Scottish schools to educate pupils about the importance of Remembrance and the issues that affect veterans in their communities today.

The package, which can be downloaded from the internet, has also been designed to dispel some of the misconceptions that exist about veterans. Recent research has shown that many young people in Scotland are confused about the history behind Remembrance traditions, with 75% having no idea what the abbreviation 'VE Day' stands for.* A number of pupils are also unaware that veterans are not only elderly men who served in WWII, but can be young men and women from recent conflicts. The resources have been designed to address this and to make sure that pupils in Scotland are better informed.

Jim Panton, CEO of Poppyscotland, said: "As well as the important messages of Remembrance that are taught in schools, we feel that it is important to educate children about the thousands of veterans living in Scotland today.

"Veterans make up a significant part of Scotland's population. They come from a broad age group, with some as young as 18, and have a very valuable contribution to make to our society. It is therefore vital that the country's young people are taught about this and made aware of the welfare issues that many veterans face today."

The new materials were designed by Poppyscotland and Learning and Teaching Scotland in conjunction with Determined to Succeed, Lady Haig's Poppy Factory, Royal British Legion Scotland and the Scottish Screen Archive, National Library for Scotland. The project will develop over three years, with current materials suitable for children aged eight to 14. Materials for younger and older children will be added in year two.

The materials reflect the new Curriculum for Excellence and include activity guides and research activities to support teachers. The packages are accompanied by an image library, new documentary and sourced archive footage which will be available online but will also be sent out to schools in a DVD, along with a set of posters.

Some of the other themes addressed include the significance of the poppy, the poppy's history and why conflicts arise. Another important element is a section on enterprise and the charitable sector, which focuses on how funds are raised to support veterans and promotes an 'enterprising' approach.

Neil McLennan, a teacher at Tynecastle High School in Edinburgh, where the materials were launched, said: "This is an excellent resource that will help teachers to bring new life to their lessons about Remembrance and the important themes that surround these traditions.

“The multi-media materials are also a fantastic way to engage pupils in a fun way, whilst making sure that serious messages such as the impact of conflict are conveyed at the same time.”

Sowing the Poppy Seed can be downloaded from www.poppyscotland.org.uk/education

Notes to Editors:

Poppyscotland (formerly The Earl Haig Fund Scotland) was founded in 1921 to provide practical help to ex-Service men and women and their dependants living in Scotland.

Money raised from its annual Scottish Poppy Appeal and other fundraising activities is spent on:

- Providing direct financial assistance to individuals
- Funding an advice service, including pension claims and appeals
- Supporting employment of veterans with disabilities in Lady Haig's Poppy Factory
- Grants and research for organisations that deliver specialist support to veterans

To find out more about Poppyscotland, see www.poppyscotland.org.uk

The **Curriculum for Excellence** is the new guidelines for learning and teaching in Scotland. It aims to create world-class learning experiences for every child, 3-18, preparing them with the skills needed for life and work in the 21st century. The Scottish Government, Learning and Teaching Scotland, Scottish Qualifications Authority and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education are working in partnership to develop Curriculum for Excellence for implementation in August 2009.

*-Source- Royal British Legion Survey, 2006