

ROTHESAY WAR MEMORIAL – ADDITIONAL INSCRIPTION REQUEST

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council has received a request for an additional inscription to be added to the Rothesay War Memorial. This in recognition of Margaret Davidson of Arden Craig Cottage, Bute, who is listed among the Scottish Voluntary Aid Detachment Casualties of WW1 commemorated on the Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle. Margaret, who is honoured on British national memorials, is not remembered officially on Bute. This report seeks to remedy this and include Margaret's name on the Rothesay War Memorial.
- 1.2 The Council has responsibility for maintenance of certain war memorials across Argyll and Bute. The Rothesay War Memorial is one of those memorials for which the Council has responsibility for.
- 1.3 It is recommended that Members approve the request for the additional inscription and instruct Roads and Amenity Services to arrange for the inscription to be added.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Council has received a request for an additional inscription to be added to the Rothesay War Memorial.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members approve the request for the additional inscription and instruct Roads and Amenity Services to arrange for the inscription to be added.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The Council received a request, the detail of which is as follows:

“Margaret Davidson of Arden Craig Cottage, Bute, is listed among the Scottish VAD Casualties of WW1 commemorated on the Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle. A member of the Women’s Services, her unit name given as Scottish Branch of the British Red Cross Society. She is also memorialised in York Minster on a beautiful window and screen dedicated to the women of the Empire who fell in the Great War. The inscriptions, which were carefully investigated and not approved until the mid-nineteen-twenties, list her among the members of the Voluntary Aid Detachments who lost their lives on active service. And in Rothesay she is remembered on a plaque in St Paul’s Episcopal Church. “In grateful remembrance of the men of St Paul’s who fell during the Great War.” The church, on the corner of Dean Hood Place, is often open and the plaque can be seen on the wall towards the altar on the left side. You find her name given last, out of alphabetical order.

Margaret Davidson died on 19th August 1917 of a cerebral embolism, valvular heart disease and rheumatism. She was twenty-one years old. Whatever theatre of war she was working in she must have had a very hard time. Each of these conditions on their own would have

debarred her if present when she joined the Red Cross. The funeral rolls of St Paul's Church record her burial on 22nd August 1917. On her gravestone in the graveyard of the High Kirk is written: Sacred to the memory of Margaret Wood Davidson 16655 Red+, VAD Died 19th August 1917 aged 21 years.

Below her are listed her two younger brothers. John James had emigrated to Canada, joined the 96th Canadians and died in an epidemic of spinal meningitis in Camp Hughes, Manitoba, on 13th July 1916. He was eighteen years old and four months into his initial training. Unlike Margaret, John, not having died on active service is not listed on the Scottish National War Memorial. He is listed, however, on the Rothesay Memorial and the commemorative book held in the Bute Museum.

Under their names, their parents have written, THEY DID WHAT THEY COULD.

George, six years younger than Margaret, also emigrated, and I believe, joined a Latin American country's Navy - possibly Brazil which operated in the north Atlantic. He is honoured on the Rothesay Second World War memorial, his death given as 28th January 1941.

Of the three who gave their lives, only Margaret, who is honoured on British national memorials is not remembered, officially, on Bute. Perhaps, in this centenary year, it is time to remedy this.

Their parents, John Joseph, a gardener at Arden Craig and his wife Barbara Janet had a youngest child, also Barbara, who married and moved to England. John Joseph and Barbara Janet outlived their three older children by many years. On the death of her husband in 1947, Barbara Janet moved to live with her remaining daughter. She died aged ninety in 1960. Her daughter died aged ninety four in 2004, eighty seven years after her elder sister, Margaret.”

- 4.2 The Council has made contact with both the Royal British Legion and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to advise them of this request. Both of these organisations have not raised any objection for the inscription to be progressed. Both organisations have confirmed they have no remit at this location.
- 4.3 Local Members have been consulted on the proposals, no objections have been received.
- 4.4 The Community Council have also been contacted but at the date of writing, have not responded.
- 4.5 If agreed, Roads and Amenity Services would appoint a specialist contractor to carry out the works required. The works are not expected to exceed £500. The costs would be met from existing budget.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This report provides an update on a request for an additional inscription to be added to Rothesay War Memorial. This report recommends that the inscription is added to the war memorial. Consultation has been carried out with the Royal British Legion, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the Community Council and local Members.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – none known
- 6.2 Financial – as detailed in report, costs to be met from existing budgets
- 6.3 Legal – none known
- 6.4 HR – none known
- 6.5 Equalities / Fairer Scotland Duty – none known
- 6.6 Risk – none known
- 6.7 Customer Service – none known

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