

Media Release

22 March 2018

Courage of the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry Remembered

One hundred years ago this month, the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry faced its toughest challenge and its heaviest losses at the Battle of the Lys.

A memorial service organised by the Royal British Legion will be held at the Sunken Gardens on Sunday 15th April to mark the courage and sacrifice of those men. The short service will be conducted by the Dean of Guernsey and will commence at 11.30am. The Lieutenant-Governor, Deputy Bailiff, members of the Court and representatives of the States of Guernsey will attend. Members of the public are welcome to attend and should be seated by 11.20am.

At the culmination of the service, a memorial to all men who served in the RGLI will be unveiled. This has been organised and funded by the RGLI Charitable Trust and complements the memorial at Masnières erected last November to mark the Battle of Cambrai.

The Deputy Bailiff said,

“There is no Guernsey memorial dedicated specifically and solely to the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry. The memorial which will be unveiled during the service is therefore welcome recognition of the brave men of the RGLI who fought and died in the First World War and especially at the Battle of the Lys where they were virtually wiped out.

I hope that people whose relatives were in the RGLI will wish to be at this special service in their memory.”

The Battle of the Lys took place during the German Spring Offensive of March-April 1918, the German’s final determined attempt to win the war before American forces built up sufficiently to tip the war in the Allies’ favour. A series of desperate defensive actions finally halted the attack. The RGLI fought a fighting withdrawal around the villages of Doulieu between April 11th and 14th in which they took crippling losses. The first roll-call after the

battle revealed just 3 officers and 55 men still fit to fight. It was the last action of the RGLI, the survivors being given duties behind the lines for the rest of the war.

End

Note to Media

The Great War Working Party was established to commemorate the centenary of the Great War (First World War), from its outbreak in 1914 to the final return of the troops and celebration of peace in 1919. The working party includes representatives from the States of Guernsey, the Royal Court, Government House, the Cadet force, ex-servicemen, educational groups and volunteers with a special interest in the period.

For further information about the memorial service please contact Bob Place, place@guernsey.net

For further information about the RGLI Charitable Trust, please contact Chris Oliver chris@armstrong-continuity.com

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