

# Press release: Welsh Secretary to commemorate 100 years since the end of the First World War

The debt of gratitude that we owe to the generations of Armed Forces personnel is immeasurable, Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said today as he prepares to join the millions of people across the UK attending events and services of remembrance on Armistice Day (11 Nov 2018).

The Secretary of State will represent the UK Government at a service of thanksgiving at Llandaff Cathedral where he will join guests including the Their Royal Highnesses The Earl and Countess of Wessex to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War.

In 1918 at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month the First World War Armistice was signed in a railway carriage stationed in the Forest of Compiègne in Northern France by military personnel representing France, Germany and Great Britain. 100 years on, thousands of members of the public will march past the Cenotaph on Whitehall to mark the centenary as part of The People's Procession. At the same time, people are being encouraged to ring bells around the world, as the UK Government seeks to replicate the spontaneous outpouring of relief that took place in 1918.

## **Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

On Sunday, people from all walks of life will gather at services of remembrance across the UK to mark one of the most significant moments in our nation's history.

As the centenary commemorations draw to a close, our priority must be to make sure we continue to keep the history of the First World War alive. The UK Government's ambition has been to deliver a truly national commemoration, providing a foundation upon which to build a cultural and educational legacy, and to ensure that the sacrifice and service of a hundred years ago is still remembered in a hundred years' time.

I'm proud to represent the UK Government and to share in this special moment of reflection at Llandaff Cathedral today. Let us all take the time to stop to remember those who are no longer with us and those whose sacrifice and bravery that will be honoured long after we are gone.

The centenary year falls in the year that the UK Armed Forces Day was hosted in Llandudno and in the year that the Secretary of State for Wales visited Afghanistan to see the 260 soldiers of the Welsh Guards based in the Afghan

capital Kabul.

UK Government in Wales Minister Nigel Adams was also in attendance at the opening of the Field of Remembrance in Cardiff earlier this week to honour the memories of those that have died during conflict by planting a wooden cross bearing his own personal tribute to those who have given their lives.

Sunday's services will mark the end of the four year centenary programme from the UK Government where commemorative events have consistently sought to tell the story of all nations involved in the First World War. The largest volunteer army was the British Indian Army which provided an estimated 1.3million soldiers of various faiths. Representatives from the India Centre will be in attendance at Llandaff Cathedral this Sunday to mark this significant contribution to the war effort.

### **Alun Cairns added:**

It has always been the UK Government's aim to ensure that commemorative activity captures the contributions from across the Commonwealth, and is relevant to people of all ethnicities and faiths whose forebears were involved in the conflict. I hope there are now many more people who will be aware of the contribution their own relatives made to First World War. I also hope that many more will know just how many people – of all ethnicities, races and faiths – fought for the freedoms we all enjoy today.