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CABINET SECRETARY HELPS LAUNCH SPECIAL CENTENARY POPPY

Keith Brown MSP visited Lady Haig's Poppy Factory, in Edinburgh, earlier today to help launch a stunning new commemorative poppy, which will be distributed and worn during the 2018 Scottish Poppy Appeal.

As part of the leading Armed Forces charity's programme of activity to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, Poppyscotland has commissioned a **Centenary Poppy**, which has the text "1918-2018" embossed in gold across the traditional and iconic red paper poppy. It will be the first change to the poppy in decades.

Mr Brown, Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work and Minister for Veterans, met staff at the Poppy Factory and posed for pictures with the striking new poppy. The team of 41 veterans employed at the historic factory hand-make more than five million poppies each year, and, this year, 2.3 million of them will be Centenary Poppies.

Mr Brown, who served in the Royal Marine Commandos during the Falklands War, said: "Today's launch of the Centenary Poppy commemorates the appalling loss of life which Scotland, like so many other nations, suffered during the Great War. The devastation had a profound effect on every community in the country, and its impact continues to be felt to this day – 100 years later. Working with Poppyscotland, the Scottish Government wants to ensure that the lessons learned from that conflict, and the people who gave their lives, are never forgotten."

Charlie Pelling, Manager at Lady Haig's Poppy Factory, said: "The Centenary Poppy is the single biggest design change of the poppy for more than a generation. The poppy has not really altered much conceptually since its inception more than 90 years ago when it was created by Lady Haig – wife of Field Marshall Earl Haig – in 1926. For the traditionalists among us, there will still be millions of 'regular' poppies available during the Appeal, but the symbol of Remembrance is unchanged whether you are wearing a traditional poppy or the Centenary version."

And Mr Pelling admitted: "I love the Centenary Poppy, but, as I helped design it, I admit I am somewhat biased! However, I do feel that it makes a bold statement in this special centenary year which commemorates the end of the First World War."

The Scottish Poppy Appeal is Scotland's largest annual street collection. More than five million poppies and 60,000 collecting tins are distributed around Scotland ahead of the event in October and November. Money raised from the Poppy Appeal (and Poppyscotland's year-round fundraising) enables the charity to deliver support to members of the Armed Forces community in Scotland by providing tailored funding and assistance. It is hoped that interest surrounding the Centenary Poppy will encourage the public to dig deeper this year, which will, in turn, provide a further boost for the life-changing support provided by Poppyscotland to the Armed Forces community in Scotland.

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Notes to editors

- For further information please contact David A. Findlay, PR Manager at Poppyscotland, on **0131 550 1580** or **079797 35611**, or email at d.findlay@poppyscotland.org.uk.
- Picture credit (where appropriate): **M Owens/Poppyscotland**
- For more information about **Lady Haig's Poppy Factory** please visit: www.ladyhaigspoppyfactory.org.uk/.
- Please note that we are known as "**Poppyscotland**", and not "PoppyScotland" or "Poppy Scotland". For more information, please visit us at: www.poppyscotland.org.uk.