MEDIA RELEASE

New grant to help tell the stories of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Runnymede Air Forces Memorial

- The Commonwealth War Graves Foundation announces £60,000 Biffa Award Grant, as part of the Association of Independent Museums History Makers programme.
- The award will be used to tell the story of Second World War Secret Agent Noor Inayat Khan, at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission’s Runnymede Air Forces Memorial.
- Working with young women and girls from local Girlguiding groups, the story of Noor will be bought to a new generation

The Commonwealth War Graves Foundation (CWGF) is delighted to announce today that it has secured a £60,000 grant from Biffa Award; in connection with the Association of Independent Museums. The grant, which is part of the History Makers programme, will enable CWGF to develop a digital exhibition for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission’s Runnymede Air Forces Memorial.

The new exhibition will tell the story of Noor Inayat Khan, a Second World War secret agent and one of the most highly decorated women in British military history, who is commemorated on the memorial. In addition, the exhibition will help visitors to better understand the memorial and discover more about the other 20,000 Airmen and Women who were lost during operations from bases in the United Kingdom and North and Western Europe, who have no known grave.

CWGF will work with young women and girls from the Girlguiding organisation, to reinterpret the story of Noor, helping to make it relevant and engaging for a younger generation of visitors.

The History Makers scheme funds museums to create new exhibitions that will inspire the public through the lives and achievements of extraordinary, historical figures. The scheme is managed by the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) and Biffa Award, a multi-million-pound fund that helps to build communities and transform lives through awarding grants to communities and environmental projects across the UK as part of the Landfill Communities Fund.

Noor Inayat Khan was born in Russia in 1914. Her father was reputed to be a descendent of the last Mogul Emperor of southern India, and her mother was Anglo-American. She grew up in London and Paris. When the German army invaded France in May 1940, Noor escaped to Britain as a refugee. In 1940 Noor enlisted in the
Women’s Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) aged 26 years old. With experience in producing Children’s radio, she trained as a wireless operator. In 1943 she was recruited into the Special Operations Executive (SOE) and on 16 June became the first female wireless operator sent into France.

Every other British radio had been discovered, only Noor’s remained, yet she continued to transmit to London. She was ordered to leave Paris but refused. After over three months, Noor was arrested by the Gestapo. After making two attempts to escape, she was eventually sent to Dachau concentration camp where she was killed.

Julian Evans, Director of International and Public Engagement said: “This grant will enable us to explore the story of the CWGC Runnymede Air Forces Memorial in a way that engages young people. We want to work with young women to share Noor’s Scientific and Technical achievements and inspire them though her bravery and sacrifice.”

For more information, images and spokespeople please contact:
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Ends.

Notes for editors:

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission and Commonwealth War Graves Foundation

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) commemorates the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during the two World Wars. It also holds and updates an extensive and accessible records archive. The Commission operates in more than 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries.

The Commonwealth War Graves Foundation is the charitable arm of the Commission. Its role is to highlight the work of the CWGC by telling the stories of the 1.7m people the CWGC commemorates.

Get to know the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Read: http://www.cwgc.org/

Follow: https://twitter.com/CWGC

Like: https://www.facebook.com/commonwealthwargravescommission

Watch: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuyv7WCJv_NYL04eKG3oyVA
Since 1997, Biffa Award has awarded grants totalling more than £156 million to thousands of worthwhile community and environmental projects across the UK. The programme administers money donated by Biffa Group Ltd through the Landfill Communities Fund. www.biffa-award.org

Landfill Communities Fund

The Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) is an innovative tax credit scheme enabling operators (LOs) to contribute money to organisations enrolled with ENTRUST as Environmental Bodies (EBs). EBs use this funding for a wide range of community and environmental projects in the vicinity of landfill sites. LOs are able to claim a credit (currently 4.2%) against their landfill tax liability for 90% of the contributions they make.

Since its inception in 1996, over £1.4 billion has been spent on more than 51,000 projects across the UK. For further information please visit www.entrust.org.uk or see HMRC’s general guide to landfill tax.

Association of Independent Museums (AIM)

The Association of Independent Museums (AIM) is a national charitable organisation which helps independent and independently spirited museums, galleries and heritage sites prosper by connecting, supporting and representing them.

AIM’s membership ranges from voluntarily run community organisations to some of the largest museums in the country and includes museums, historic houses, heritage organisations, ships and historic railways as well as museum consultants and commercial suppliers.

AIM provides an independent viewpoint based on operational and business experience of running successful enterprises for public benefit. New members are always welcome to join AIM’s thriving network to learn from their colleagues and to share their expertise.