

Contalmaison remembered



The centenary of the Battle of the Somme will be commemorated at Edinburgh Castle overnight with a vigil in the Scottish National War Memorial there.

There are further remembrance events at Contalmaison in France where so many men from Edinburgh died. More than a million men were wounded or killed during the battle there, and almost half of those were in the British Army. On the first day 57,470 casualties fell and 19,240 of those died.

The First Minister, who will be attending the remembrance event at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing in France, said:

“It is now exactly one hundred years since the start of the Battle of the Somme – the opening day of which has gone down in history as one of the bloodiest in the history of armed conflict.

“Fifty-one Scottish battalions were involved, and the losses suffered by those units – and those from the other countries involved – were on an almost unimaginable scale.

“Barely a single community in Scotland was left untouched by the battle. Across Scotland communities are now remembering those who gave their lives, and a whole century on from the devastation and suffering of the Battle of the Somme, we should all reflect on the horrors of the Great War and give thanks that our continent now lives in peace.”

Commemorating the first day of the Battle of the Somme in Contalmaison, where the 15th and 16th Battalions of the Royal Scots fought, Veterans Secretary Keith Brown said:

“The courage and sacrifice of those who fought in the Battle of the Somme should never be forgotten. The McCrae’s Battalion

Trust is to be congratulated for its commitment to and dedication in honouring those of the Edinburgh 15th and 16th Battalions of the Royal Scots who fell in the battle. Today we reflect on and remember the supreme sacrifice of McCrae's Battalion and the others who lost their lives at the Somme."