The Highlanders Museum celebrates armed forces day with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund

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The Highlanders Museum is based within the historic Fort George barracks near Inverness and explains the history of the Highlands and Islands Army Heritage. It has been given a massive boost of a £¾ million grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland.

The Museum whose campaign to raise £3million was launched in November last year by Hollywood Actor Hugh Grant, is set to greatly improve their Museum by upgrading their facilities to 21st century standards. They have now raised over £2.5million.

Fort George itself receives over 66,000 visitors per year and the museum is the main attraction. The comprehensive development will cost in the region of £3million and transform the museum into a state of the art interactive education and learning facility with full disabled access. An independent economic impact assessment has outlined that after the project is complete the museum will contribute an additional £400,000 into the regional economy each year as well as supporting the equivalent of eight new full time jobs.

The museum holds a rich a varied collection of around 12,000 objects extending over three floors. The redevelopment will include a new genealogical research and archive centre, corporate entertainment suite, family facilities and a retail/gift shop. The grant of £750,000 from HLF takes the museum very close to their target of £3million and follows a very competitive assessment process which took several months. It will ensure that the museum will become an even more significant historic asset for locals, tourists and the current Battalion who are on active service in Afghanistan.

Chairman of the Highlanders' Museum, Major General Seymour Monro, said: "HLF's award is a tremendous endorsement of the project as our application has been through the most rigorous scrutiny. It means the creation of a superb Highland military heritage centre with the Queens Own Highlanders historic collection at its heart.

Our sincere thanks go to HLF and all those others who have supported us including HIE, Highland Council, Inverness Common Good Fund, European Regional Development Fund, Ardersier & Petty Community Council, Highland LEADER Programme, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and many Regimental and private donors.

I now appeal to the people of the Highlands to help us raise the final £500,000. They can find out how by visiting our website. "

Colin McLean, Head of the HLF Scotland, said: ""Our military heritage is not a collection of dusty relics but has been an important element in the history of Scottish communities for generations.

"HLF believes that this project will transform Fort George from a traditional military museum to one which engages visitors in a modern and exciting way as they learn about life as a soldier over the past two hundred years.

As we mark Armed Forces day, we can celebrate that this important part of our Scottish history is going to have a

museum of which we can be proud, bringing income and jobs to the economy of the Highlands."

Notes to editors

The Highlanders' Museum tells the history of the Highlanders Regiments for the last 300 years until the present day. It is home to the largest Regimental collection outside of London and attracts over 65,000 visitors per year.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 26,000 projects, allocating more than £1/2billion across Scotland.

Further information

Heritage Lottery Fund: Shiona Mackay on 01786 870 638 / 07779 142 890 or Jon Williams on 020 7591 6035.

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