

Army veteran's 'very generous' donation to Highlanders' collection's cause



Bill Munnoch who is selling his medals to help the Highlanders' Museum at Fort George.

Medal haul to make money for museum

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A FORMER Army veteran is to sell his medals to raise money for the Highlanders' Museum at Fort George.

Bill Munnoch, who served with the Queen's Own Highlanders for more than 20 years and was injured while on active service, made his generous gesture after hearing that regimental silverware will be auctioned next month to help raise money to conserve museum exhibits.

The museum is inviting bids for items ranging from sporting trophies to clocks and candlesticks to raise £193,000.

Last year Hollywood actor Hugh Grant helped launch a £2.9 million appeal to revamp the museum and it has almost reached that target.

Mr Munnoch has offered to sell six service medals from his time with the regiment which

included service in Borneo, Brunei, Malaysia, Northern Ireland.

He also served in the Aden conflict where he received injuries to his knee and legs which eventually resulted in him accepting an honourable discharge rather than taking a desk job.

The 71-year-old, who lives with his wife, Maureen, in Falkirk, has two sons and one daughter, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Although he had intended to pass on his medals to his grandchildren, his family have given their approval.

"The museum is a favourite place of mine to visit — all my family have been up there," he said. "It's something very close to my heart. It always brings back happy memories."

Mr Munnoch, whose father served with the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders for 30 years, did his basic military

training in 1960 at Cameron Barracks in Inverness.

He was later posted to Singapore and was involved in operations in Borneo and Brunei during uprisings in the early 1960s.

Having risen to the title of Provost Sergeant — a role which involves responsibility for the maintenance of good order and discipline in a regiment — he left the Army in 1984 and became sales manager for Rover cars.

Having discussed the sale of his medals with the regimental secretary, Major Maurice Gibson, Mr Munnoch is planning to sell them through a specialist in East Yorkshire rather than putting them into next month's auction.

He insists he has no qualms about his decision. "I have thought this through," Mr Munnoch said.

"Not by any stretch of the imagination will I miss these

medals. If they raise a few hundred pounds, I would be absolutely delighted."

Major Gibson described Mr Munnoch's gesture as "very generous".

He has also suggested to Mr Munnoch retains the mature versions of his medals which are about one-third size of the main medals — wear on special occasions.



Bill Munnoch (far right), aged 20, with a group of fellow soldiers at Selarang Barracks in Singapore, 1961.

Bill's medals

- Bill Munnoch's medals include the Pingat Jasa Malaysia which translates as the Malaysian Service Medal.
- It was introduced by the Government of Malaysia in 2005 and awarded to British and Commonwealth veterans who served in the conflict in Malaya in the late 1950s and 1960s.
- It is in recognition of "distinguished chivalry, gallantry, sacrifice, or loyalty" in contributing to the freedom of independence of Malaysia.