

June 16th, 2010

A dedication ceremony was held on Monday for Robert McBeath, a native of Kinlochbervie, Scotland, who joined the Vancouver Police Department in the 1920s and subsequently died in the line of duty. The tribute and cairn unveiling was held at new Vancouver Police Tactical Training Centre.

The memorial was attended by a VPD honour guard, The Vancouver Police Pipe band, a contingency of Kinlochbervie High school students and escorts, distinguished members of VPD, Freemasons, and the press.

MCBEATH'S STORY

November 20th 1917. World War 1 was raging in Europe. Entrenched in bitter warfare at the Battle of Cambria in France, a regiment of Seaforth Highlanders was pinned down by intense machine gun fire. Lance-Corporal Robert McBeath, from the small Sutherland village of Kinlochbervie, Scotland volunteered to attack the guns alone, armed only with a Lewis gun and revolver.

Joined by a tank, McBeath attacked five machine gun nests in succession, capturing three officers and thirty enemy soldiers. For this heroic action Robert McBeath was awarded the Victoria Cross.

McBeath returned home to a hero's welcome. He married Barbara MacKay and soon after, emigrated to Vancouver, Canada, where he joined the Vancouver Police Department.

October 9th, 1922 Constable Robert McBeath was fatally shot while engaging in an arrest.

McBeath's funeral was one of the largest ever in Vancouver history. All stores and banks were closed and thousands of attended to pay their respect. The procession took twenty minutes to pass, and was led by Vancouver Police Inspector George Hood on horseback. He was followed by the Vancouver Police Pipe Band, the widow Barbara, the mayor and council members, 300 Masons, 80 Vancouver Police, 100 Vancouver Fire Fighters, 12 Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 50 Seaforth

Highlanders, a contingent of Irish Fusiliers, Several hundred WW1 veterans, 40 members of BC Electric Railway, 12 of the Canadian Pacific Police, several hundred members of the Foresters, St. Andrews, and Caledonia Societies.

OUR STORY

This memorial caps an adventure which began last year, when Tiller's Folly singer Bruce Coughlan was commissioned by the Village of Kinlochbervie, Scotland to commemorate their local hero, Robert McBeath VC in song. Bruce attended a cairn unveiling last September in Kinlochbervie, where he debut the song on a wet, blustery Sutherland day. A line from the song is engraved in the cairn: "A Brave Sutherland Man"

Bruce then contacted the Vancouver Police Department and the project took on a life of its own. The song become a collaboration with the Vancouver Police Pipe Band (who raised the funds for the Kinlochbervie visitors). Tiller's Folly recorded the song Robbie McBeath with Juno Award-winning producer Joby Baker on a track featuring the Vancouver Police Pipe Band.

Tiller's Folly will be touring Scotland this summer in support of Robbie McBeath.

Tiller's Folly remains committed to promoting Scots-Canadian history through song, at festivals, concerts (over 1000 educational performances alone), online and at events all over the world. And now, through our new multimedia production *Stirring Up Ghosts*, we've taken that history one step further.

Please follow this link to view our online tribute to Robert McBeath: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lx4vAxRpuXE>

You can visit the band online at www.tillersfolly.com

Thank-you