

Thursday, 19 December 2013

Mr Hastings, Dear Mark,

Thank you for given us an update on your remarkable "journey" to **Passchendaele** 2017.

We fully support your endeavour to make this great project come true.

Therefore I enclosed a letter of support "To Whom It May Concern" and as stated in that letter Flanders House UK is ready to help you with this initiative and opens its door for any other assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Geert DE PROOST

Representative of the Government of Flanders in the UK



## To whom it may concern

I have the pleasure to write in support of the project **Passchendaele 2017**, which brings together a concept by London Fire Fighter and WW1 enthusiast Mr. Mark Hastings to honour those that fell in the WW1 and to mark the centenary. The aim is to unite the nations on both sides of the battle in remembrance of the fallen in the Ypres Salient to promote peace for the future by observing the lessons of the past.

Mr. Mark Hastings/Passchendaele Tommy has been known to us for 2 years since he started working on the project known PASSCHENDAELE 2017. He has acted with the utmost honesty and integrity during this time whilst working on the above project and has nothing but good intentions for this event. This project now has real substance due to his hard work and diligence. This has been enforced in October when he led a small team to prove the event time line between Poperinge to Zonnebeke via leper and on to Passchendaele. The project now has been 90% (approximately) completed with detailed timings, route and placements of all support needed along the route there is very little left to do. Considering there is over 3 years left to finish the detail we consider this to be a small issue.

The sentiment of 'the fallen and missing' in the Salient helping the retired Commonwealth soldiers of today (old guard) to collect money during the memorial march for soldier's charities thus helping injured veterans and families of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars' is a very strong one and we whole heartedly support it. The event will be a truly international event with retired soldiers from both sides of the battle meeting in Zonnebeke and Passchendaele for the centenary on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

Passchendaele 2017 is a two days memorial march in November 2017, replicating the march to the front by the troops of the commonwealth from Poperinge through Ypres and on to Passchendaele, the front line. Representing the troops of the conflict will be ex-service men from the armed forces of the commonwealth forces of today and those of the German forces, together with uniformed re enactors and military bands. This living memorial will recapture the spirit of 1917.



There has been much interest in the concept of Passchendaele 2017 through discussions, both directly with key organisations and through social media and the internet. We, Representation of Government of Flanders in the UK, therefore fully support this initiative. We encourage the Belgian and British government, Commonwealth, WW1 memorial organisation in the UK and Belgium and sponsors to fund and provide necessary support to Passchendaele 2017 and wish every success to the project.

We hope and wish that this event's succeeds and should a meeting place be required to formally start this event proper then Flanders House in London is ready if needed.

Yours faithfully,

Geert DE PROOST
Representative of the Government of Flanders in the UK

