Stirling Highland Games has a Night at the Museum

Monday 3 July, 2023

Stirling Highland Games attended The Black Watch Castle and Museum in Perth on June 22 to receive their prestigious Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Silver award.

The reception and presentations, hosted by Highland RFCA, formally recognised the support the 29 organisations give to the Armed Forces community.

On the night, 25 organisations were on hand to collect their awards for 2023 from Major General Bill Wright, General Officer Scotland, the Army's senior representative in Scotland.

Among the other military representatives were Commander Gary Farmer RN from HMS Caledonia, Colonel Tony Philips and Major Heather Lawrie of 51st Infantry Brigade and HQ Scotland, and Group Captain Derek Johnston and Wing Commander Archie McCallum from the RAF.

The evening began with employers and their guests being piped into the venue by Cadet Hay and welcomed by Highland RFCA Chief Executive Brigadier (Retd) Mark Dodson. An opportunity for networking followed before guests were invited outside to enjoy an outstanding musical performance from the Pipes and Drums of The Black Watch Battalion Army Cadet Force, under the guidance of Connor Pratt.

Stirling Highland Games President, Matt McGrandles, who was in attendance explained "We have been working towards the Silver Award since the start of the year, so it was amazing to get the email advising us we had succeeded and had been invited to the Awards Ceremony here at The Black Watch Castle and Museum. What a fantastic venue to host the Awards and an honour to speak with Major General Wright and the other Silver Award winners. Even though we are the only highland games that have signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant, I am sure others will follow."

Prior to the presentations, Major General Wright said: "I am delighted to have been invited to present the awards to you tonight and have a chance to meet you all.

"The success of our Armed Forces in delivering defence capability is entirely dependent on our relationship with the society from which we come. Key to this relationship is the role played by employers, who not only support members of the volunteer reserve forces, but also the wider armed forces family including veterans, spouses and partners; as well as the adult volunteers who are so important to the viability and vitality of our service cadet organisations.

"We are here this evening, to give recognition to Employers as part of the Defence Employer Recognition (ERS) Scheme. You may be interested to know that the number of companies joining the Scheme is rising rapidly – the milestone 10,000th Armed Forces Covenant was signed in April of this year and the number continues to rise. There are now over 1,000 Silver award holders, and 29 are being awarded in HRFCA's area this year – a record number. We hope that now you too have reached the Silver standard you will go on to become advocates to other businesses and organisations on behalf of the Defence family and thereby qualify to be considered for the Gold level award.

"So, on behalf of Defence, I thank you for your commitment and for all that you are doing for us."

This year's Stirling Highland Games event takes place at Stirling Sports Village on Saturday 19th August. There will be a packed day of entertainment including highland games competitions, over 40 traders and several creative arts showcasing throughout the day. Tickets can be purchased online in advance or at the gates on the day.

The 2023 Silver Awards winners were:

- 20/20 Business Insight Limited
- Andron Facilities Management
- BEAR Scotland
- BRAVEHOUND

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