



WALK ON WALES
Captain Jan Koops

After a full year of organisation, Walk on Wales was launched from the steps of the Senedd in Cardiff by Lord Guthrie, our President, following the blessing of the baton at Llandaff Cathedral. The ensuing ten weeks saw the beautiful baton, engraved with the names of the 50 Welsh Guardsmen killed in active service since WWII, travel the entire length of the stunning Welsh coastline.

Starting with Team 1, the baton was passed on to each of the eleven teams as the Walk progressed round Wales, with local events taking place during each stage, co-ordinated by each of the teams. The Walk would never have achieved all it did without the selfless and inspiring leadership that these Team Leaders demonstrated.

Each morning, often with family members in attendance, one of the names on the baton was commemorated during a drumhead service before the walkers set off. In this way each day of the Walk had its own special focus which, when combined with many colourful, interesting walkers

and the diversity of the beautiful coastline, gave everyone who took part a sense of joy and contentment.

From the start, the Walk was supported by an impressive flow of new and diverse walkers, all brought together under our wonderful family 'umbrella'. Each and every town and village that we passed through did their bit to support the walkers and the two charities, the Welsh Guards Afghanistan Appeal and Combat Stress, for whom we were raising money. The village of Aberporth gave us the most humbling welcome with school children, along with their families and friends, lining the streets, singing and

cheering us on our way. The hospitality that all participants were shown by the local and wider communities touched us all very deeply and is something we will both cherish and never forget.

Inevitably, as our team of walkers entered its final stages, numbers began to swell with up to 160 walkers joining daily. The days were filled with laughter and chatter as old friends were reunited (often after up to 30 years apart) and the banter flowed, embracing everyone on this magical journey. And mention must be made of the very kind invitation by the Prime Minister to attend a reception in 10 Downing Street on Tuesday 29 October where Jan Koops and Dai Graham were able to explain to

Mr Cameron what the walk was all about.

So, to the final day where over 400 people arrived in Sully for the drumhead service. As Sam Bossi's team lead us through Penarth and past the pier, so the numbers of walkers grew and as we were led by the Band of the Welsh Guards up to the steps of the Senedd, there were over 700 walkers, stretching back across the Barrage. It was a truly wonderful and inspirational sight.

Over the duration of the Walk we have managed to raise over £350,000 with further funds still being collected. It is not too late to donate, which you are able to do by going to the home page of our website at www.walkonwales.org and clicking on the 'Donate' button.



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