



Subject:	Request re USAF Memorial Commemoration
Date:	12 th April 2019
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Director of Neighbourhood Services Ryan Black, Neighbourhood Services Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update members of a request from the Oldpark/Cavehill Royal British Legion Branch to lead on an event on 1 st June 2019 at the USAF Memorial at Belfast Zoo. The event is being held to commemorate the 75 th anniversary of the air crash involving an American B-17 crew in which all 10 members lost their lives.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked consider the request in the following context: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The event on 1st June 2019 at the USAF memorial to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the air crash on Cavehill should be coordinated by Council.2. The level of support which Council can contribute bearing in mind there has been no budget set aside for this type of event and the SP&R Committee has previously agreed not to consider requests for ad hoc funding until the end of June 2019.

3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	On June 1st 1944, only five days before D Day B-17 Flying Fortress no 42-97862 had flown from the US via Reykjavik and was preparing to land at Nutts Corner and was due to fly onward to Anglesey in Wales in preparation for deployment in the Allied war effort.
3.2	The plane never managed to reach its destination due to fog shrouding Cavehill, obscuring its course with such fatal and tragic consequences for the aircrew on board, their comrades and their families.
3.3	A memorial at Belfast Zoo was unveiled by the then Lord Mayor, Councillor Wallace Browne on Thursday June 1st 2006. The service included a colour guard from US Military, a service conducted by Very Reverend Dr. Houston McKelvey, an address by the US Consul General and by an assistant air attaché at the US Embassy in London, Taps and a flypast by a WW2 aircraft.
3.4	Since the unveiling and dedication of the memorial, the Oldpark/Cavehill RBL branch have organised and held regular services and a wreath laying at the memorial on June 1st and the Friday preceding Remembrance Sunday of each year.
3.5	The Secretary of the Oldpark/Cavehill branch has written to Council to advise that he had recently met with Dawn and Alfie Montgomery. Alfie Montgomery was the person who found the wedding ring that belonged to the pilot. The ring was eventually returned to the deceased pilot's family and this story was subsequently made famous by Richard Attenborough in the film 'Closing the Ring.'
3.6	Permission has been granted under delegated authority for the regular service to take place on 1 st June 2019, with arrival at 9.15am, the service taking place at 9.30am and finishing prior to the Zoo opening at 10am. Those taking part usually drive to the memorial given its location within the Zoo.
3.7	The organisers have been in touch with Alison Fleming from UTV who has agreed to cover the story and at the time of writing this report 12 family members of the crew are confirmed to attend.
3.8	In the meantime, the secretary of the RBL branch has written to advise the following:

- That the authorisation to access the memorial before the Zoo opens on June 1st is unrealistic from a number of points not least of all the fact this is five days before the 75th anniversary of the D Day landings.
- The group have only been given from 9.15am until 10am before the Zoo opens. They wish to have the service at 10.30am which was the time that the plane crashed. They did ask if there was a possibility the Zoo could be closed for the duration of the service.
- They have made a request for a civic dignitary to participate.
- There are a number of relatives of the aircrew who have indicated their intention to travel to Belfast to participate in any commemoration.
- There will be a US Consular presence on the day.
- They have spoken informally with a colleague at the MOD Press Office at Thiepval who has indicated that there would be an interest in attending, possibly a representative(s) of the RAF. (The MOD have indicated that commemorations for D-Day on 6th June will take place in Normandy and there are no plans for any other events).
- There will be a number of representatives from other local RBL branches and from RBL NIDC.
- Given where the memorial is situated, they would also need assistance with logistics to ensure all guests could be transported to and from the memorial.

3.9

Furthermore, Council has been advised that Alfie Montgomery is currently in the final stages of completing a book which relates to his childhood experiences up to and beyond the finding of the ring. He is hoping to launch at Belfast Castle in the lead up to the commemorations. Members are asked to note that he has provided a permanent display of artefacts and background information about the tragedy at Belfast Castle.

3.10

The RBL has also highlighted that the Lisnabreeny Memorial Garden (the site of the original USA cemetery, where the aircrew were buried prior to final repatriation to the US in

	<p>the late 1940s is now in the ownership of BCC and there is certainly an opportunity to highlight this unique event for the City.</p> <p>3.11 Officers have been advised that the number of people attending is anticipated to be around 50.</p> <p>3.12 Request for Support from Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to and from the grounds of the zoo; • Transport to and from the memorial; • Erection of a 'temporary' flagstaff to facilitate the flying of a US Flag at the memorial; • Possible reception either at the zoo or at Belfast Castle for guests; • Provision of US military vehicle from WW2 era; • Provision of personnel in period uniform; • Provision of bugler; • Provision of flypast by 'Sally B';; • Provision of appropriate security arrangements and discussions with appropriate agencies. <p>3.13 The group are requesting that the event be coordinated by Council with Officer support required to deliver the event and providing liaison among the different parties involved. A resource/s would need to be identified for this.</p> <p>3.14 In relation to the flypast, costs have been estimated at £15,000. Officers have been advised that there is a small window of opportunity for this as the aircraft will be required for other D Day events and flight plans need to be submitted as soon as possible.</p> <p>3.15 Members may wish to note that the group could potentially be signposted to the NI War Memorial Museum who may be able to assist in accessing the US Military vehicle or personnel in period uniform. However, the feasibility of placing vehicles at the site would have to be explored with the Zoo.</p>
3.16	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The group is requesting that this be a Council led event with Officer support required to deliver the event and providing liaison among the different parties involved which would require significant input and is not within current workplans.</p>

	<p>There is no budget set aside for this event in current Council budgets and the SP&R Committee has previously agreed not to consider requests for ad hoc funding until the end of June 2019.</p> <p>In relation to financial costs, the flypast would be in the region of £15,000 and a tea/coffee and scones reception at Belfast Castle could be in the region of £360 based on 50 people attending. It is difficult to put a cost on transport at this stage, as previously organisers have used their own cars to access the memorial but increased numbers could present an issue for parking, health and safety etc.</p> <p>However, should the event affect public access to the Zoo, this could have a financial impact on the service and would require timely communication.</p>
3.17	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The commemoration event led by Oldpark/Cavehill RBL has been taking place since 2006 and there have been no good relations or equality implications identified with the customary event.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Copy of the request from Oldpark/Cavehill Royal British Legion.