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National Campaign to Reduce War Memorial Theft

A national project to identify, record and protect Britain's estimated 100,000 war memorials has been launched to coincide with the upcoming centenary of the First World War in 2014.

The nation's valued war memorials are under increasing threat from thieves and vandals attempting to steal metal from monuments. Despite the metal having relatively little monetary value it is estimated that on average one war memorial a week is being targeted by thieves looking to illegally remove bronze, copper or other metals to sell on for scrap.

[In Memoriam 2014](#) is a partnership between War Memorials Trust and the SmartWater Foundation. The project is seeking to offer greater protection to war memorials across the UK. It aims to prevent anymore communities witnessing the desecration of their memorials.

Thousands of caring custodians already spend considerable effort on maintaining monuments through the country and In Memoriam 2014 will be calling on those volunteers to unite under its banner, as well as pushing for even more willing hands to join the effort to protect those memorials which risk being forgotten.

Among the organisations offering crucial support to the project are the UK's tri-service cadet forces, which will involve members in the huge task of locating and recording memorials, many of which may be small and hard to find, due to development in the years since they were placed.

To combat the threat of theft each monument will be forensically marked with SmartWater, assigning them with a state-of-the-art forensic signature that can only be seen under UV light. Once applied SmartWater is virtually impossible to remove and can withstand burning, sand blasting and long term exposure to UV.

War Memorials Trust's Director, Frances Moreton, said: "In Memoriam 2014 is a very special project to protect war memorials in communities across the UK. War Memorials Trust seeks to both protect and conserve this unique part of our national heritage and it is delighted to be involved. The Trust encourages everyone to take an active interest and ensure the custodians of your local war memorials are taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity to protect war memorials free of charge."

Sir Keith Povey QPM, Chairman of the SmartWater Foundation, said: "As the centenary of the First World War approaches, In Memoriam 2014 encourages communities to reconnect with their local war memorials and remember the sacrifice that so many people made for their country. The SmartWater Foundation is pleased to be partnering with War Memorials Trust in this project and I hope that the community will embrace it by taking an interest in locating and preserving these symbols of our commemoration."

Anyone wishing to take part in this project or register a war memorial can visit www.inmemoriam2014.org for more information.

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For more information, please contact **Mark Waugh**, Be Bold Public Relations, on 01952 898121, email mark@beboldpr.com or visit <http://www.inmemoriam2014.org/>

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The SmartWater Foundation is donating a unique SmartWater forensic solution for the exclusive use of the 'In Memoriam 2014' project at no cost and is also funding the cost of creating the national database.
- The dramatic increase in the price of metals such as copper has been caused by soaring demand around the world, but especially in nations such as China.
- Metal theft is currently estimated to be costing the UK economy in excess of £700million every year
- Cash-strapped local authorities are paying out hundreds of thousands of pounds a year to repair damage caused by metal thieves who have targeted historic buildings, including schools, churches and cemeteries.
- SmartWater solution has been used to convict many criminals for crimes ranging from armed robbery to metal theft throughout the UK (for more information, visit www.smartwater.com).

About War Memorials Trust

War Memorials Trust works for the protection and conservation of war memorials in the UK. They provide advice and information to anyone with a war memorial enquiry as well as running grant schemes for the repair and conservation of war memorials. It is a registered charity with relies entirely on voluntary contributions to undertake its work. For further information visit www.warmemorials.org or telephone 0300 123 0764.

About The SmartWater Foundation

The SmartWater Foundation Ltd is a not for profit company established and funded solely by SmartWater Technology Ltd. The Foundation provides charitable donations of equipment and services to the UK law enforcement agencies in support of local crime reduction initiatives within hard-pressed communities.

