

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WWII US Marines Plaque returns to Guildhall
in 75th anniversary year of arrival of US Marines in Derry**

A visit to Derry this week by Military Historical Tours of Woodbridge VA was used as an opportunity to fulfil a promise made in 1943 to the United States Marines by the Mayor of Londonderry Corporation.

In 1943 the U.S. Marine Corps had paraded in Guildhall Square to celebrate the first anniversary of their landing in Northern Ireland on May 12 1942. At that first anniversary parade, their commanding officer, Col Lucian Burnham, presented Mayor Frederick Simmons with a plaque, forged in the US Navy Ship Repair Yard on the banks of the Foyle. The Mayor had declared to the worldwide media that the Marines Plaque would be displayed in the Mayor's Parlour as an eternal reminder of the bonds forged between the US Marines and the people of Derry. This doesn't appear to have happened and the plaque is now in the safekeeping of the Base One Europe Museum at the Beech Hill Country House Hotel, having been loaned to them by the daughter of Lt Col James J Dugan, a Marine Corps officer who had served in Derry during WWII.



Photo Caption 1

Mrs Patsy O’Kane, Chairperson of Base One Europe Museum at Beech Hill holding the original WWII Marines Plaque with Cllr John Boyle, Deputy Mayor, Derry City and Strabane District Council, Carlton W. Fulford, Retired General USMC, and Gerard J Boyle, Retired Colonel USMC holding a replica of the Marines Plaque and a photograph of the 1st Anniversary Parade in Guildhall Square in 1943 at which the original plaque had been presented to the Mayor. Photocredit: Lorcan Doherty Photography

So in the 75th anniversary year of the arrival of the US Marines, the volunteers behind the Base One Europe Museum were determined to close the circle on this unfulfilled commitment made during WWII. With the help of the specialist engineers at the Ulster University's Centre for Renewable Energy at Magee, a replica of the Marines Plaque was cast and incorporated within a framed display to explain its significance. Guests of Military Historical Tours were drafted in to help present it to the Deputy Mayor and were willing witnesses of a renewed promise that the recast Marines Plaque would be displayed within the Guildhall.



Photo Caption 2

Mrs Patsy O’Kane, centre, Chairperson of Base One Europe Museum at Beech Hill holding the original WWII Marines Plaque with from left Gerard J Boyle, Retired Colonel USMC, Dave Wall, Retired Colonel USMC and MHT Tour Leader, Carlton W. Fulford, Retired General USMC, Cllr John Boyle, Deputy Mayor, Derry City and Strabane District Council, and Dr Malachy Ó Néill, Provost, Magee Campus, Ulster University. At the front is the framed presentation which includes a replica of the WWII Marines Plaque and a photograph of the 1st Anniversary Parade in Guildhall Square in 1943 at which the original plaque had been presented to the Mayor.

Photocredit: Lorcan Doherty Photography

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