



Statue of Wojtek the soldier bear unveiled in Edinburgh

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On Saturday, 7th November 2015 in Princess Street Gardens, central Edinburgh, a statue of Wojtek the bear - famous comrade of the soldiers of the General Anders` Free Polish Army (Polish allies troops fighting in the WW II), has been officially unveiled.

A statue shows Wojtek accompanied by a marching soldier. It symbolizes the journey made by Wojtek the bear with General Anders' Army and is also a tribute to the Polish-Scottish relations. Princess Street Gardens is a place where heroes are commemorated.

Despite of the bad weather numerous citizens of Edinburgh attended the ceremony. Lord Provost of Edinburgh said "It celebrates the ties that have been established in Edinburgh and Poland between our communities and strives to further strengthen this bond over time."

The ceremony of unveiling the statue was the result of a long-running campaign by the Wojtek Memorial Trust to keep the memory of the bear and the Polish troops alive. The Foundation raised money to achieve this noble goal.

Wojtek , a Syrian brown bear was rescued as a cub in Syria by the Free Polish Army in 1943 and quickly bonded with the troops becoming an unlikely mascot and friend to the soldiers. When he grew up he even helped carry ammunition. Wojtek accompanied the Polish troops in the famous Battle of Monte Cassino in 1944 and was awarded a rank of corporal.

After the war he travelled to Scotland with the Polish demobilized soldiers and spent his last years in the Edinburgh Zoo where he died in 1963.

Krakow being Edinburgh's twin city also has the statue of Wojtek the soldier bear. It was unveiled on the 18th May 2014 on 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino.