Press Release

7 November 2025

Avanti West Coast poppy train carries wreath on poignant journey to mark Remembrance

- *Avanti West Coast joins Royal British Legion to build wreath during poignant journey from Glasgow to London*
- *Local veterans, reservists and volunteers take part in unique tribute to highlight railway's connection to military*
- *Pendolino adorned with poppy design provides moving act of remembrance*

Avanti West Coast has joined the Royal British Legion and Poppyscotland to create and transport a wreath to London on its specially decorated train ahead of Remembrance Day.

The unique tribute, created by Cheshire East Poppy Appeal and the intercity operator, will see veterans, reservists, and volunteers assemble a poppy wreath as it travels by rail from Glasgow to London.

To mark the occasion, Avanti West Coast worked with the UK's leading train supplier, Alstom, to wrap the cab ends of Pendolino 390151 with a design featuring poppies – the symbol of Remembrance – at Glasgow Traincare Centre.

The Pendolino, which is named 'Unknown Soldier' will make the poignant journey from Scotland to the capital – stopping at 13 stations along the route where veterans who work for Avanti West Coast and Royal British Legion (RBL) supporters will greet the train and present posies of poppies.

The initiative is designed to highlight the railway's connection to the military and encourage donations to the Poppy Appeal, which provide vital support to serving and ex-serving personnel and their families.

Before its departure from Glasgow Central at 08:00, the plain wreath was decorated with its first tribute by a veteran from Avanti West Coast. A bagpiper sent off the Pendolino service from the platform.

Representatives from the RBL's Poppy Appeal, who have been fundraising on the west coast, are travelling on the train to help deliver the tribute to the stations where posies will be added.

Armed Forces personnel past and present who have connection to the railway or the charity, as well as representatives from industry partners including Alstom and British

Transport Police will join the train during its journey to London – travelling in a carriage adorned with poppies.

A small welcome party, including representatives from Network Rail, will greet the train at London Euston before the wreath - representing tributes from colleagues and RBL supporters along the West Coast Main Line - is carried to the station's memorial as part of a procession.

It will be laid as part of a small service hosted by a local chaplain – marking the beginning of the station's Remembrance events. A replica wreath will be laid at the cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday.

Dean Duthie, Engineering and Infrastructure Director at Avanti West Coast, who served in the military for eight years, said: "We're proud to be joining the Royal British Legion and industry partners to recognise the railway's connection with the Armed Forces. Bringing together veterans, serving personnel and communities local to our route through this poignant initiative is especially pertinent as the UK marks 200 years of the modern railway. This Pendolino will also act as a lasting and moving reminder of remembrance across the West Coast.

"I'm incredibly proud of our employees, including Armed Forces personnel past and present, for their efforts to pay tribute to those who have served and sacrificed, while raising vital funds for the Poppy Appeal."

Poppy Appeal Manager, Vicky Lawson, from the Royal British Legion said: "The Poppy Express is a journey of remembrance, reflection, and gratitude - a moving tribute to those who have served and sacrificed for our democratic freedoms and way of life. We are deeply grateful for the continued support of passengers, partners, and colleagues at Avanti West Coast who make this special service possible. For over 100 years, remembrance has been part of the fabric of society - it continues to unite people across all backgrounds, communities and generations, and this journey allows us to celebrate the enduring spirit of remembrance that unites communities across the nation."

Siobhan Lennine, Project Manager at Alstom's Glasgow Traincare Centre, said: "My time in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) instilled in me discipline, resilience and a deep respect for teamwork – qualities that continue to shape how I lead projects at Alstom today. The mindset of service and pride in doing things right is something I carry with me every day.

"It's incredibly meaningful to be part of Avanti West Coast's Poppy Train tribute for Remembrance Day," added Siobhan who is also part of Alstom's Armed Forces Network.

"The gesture of collecting posies at each station to form a wreath between Glasgow and London is a beautiful symbol of unity and remembrance – showing how every community along the route plays a role in honouring those who served. It's also a poignant reminder of the railway's historic connection to the Armed Forces. I'm proud to be part of a company that recognises and supports veterans through initiatives like Alstom's Armed Forces Network. These groups provide a vital space for connection and support, and reinforce that our experiences are valued – not just within Alstom and Avanti West Coast, but across the wider rail industry", she added.

Amanda Webster-Uz, Head of Euston Station Operations at Network Rail, said: "Euston station has a proud tradition of honouring the Armed Forces, and we're privileged to play a role in this year's Remembrance tribute. Welcoming Avanti West Coast's Poppy Train and attending the memorial is a poignant moment for our team. It's an opportunity for us to reflect, pay our respects, and support the Royal British Legion's vital work. We're proud that Euston station can be the final stop on this symbolic journey, bringing together tributes from the length of the West Coast Main Line."

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Located around two miles south-east of Glasgow Central railway station, Glasgow Traincare Centre – known as Polmadie Depot – is home to Avanti West Coast's fleet of Alstom-built Class 390 Pendolinos, and where up to 17 trains are maintained and cleaned every day by over 100 staff who provide a round-the-clock service.

About Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion (RBL) is the UK's largest charity dedicated to supporting the needs of the Armed Forces community, past and present and their families. The RBL is the champion of Remembrance and safeguards the Armed Forces Covenant. It is well known for the annual Poppy Appeal and its emblem the red poppy. For further information, visit rbl.org.uk

About Avanti West Coast

Avanti West Coast, operator of intercity rail services on the West Coast Main Line, is a joint venture between FirstGroup and Trenitalia, delivering a cleaner, greener railway that drives the West Coast forward. Avanti West Coast serves key UK cities, including London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow as well as North Wales.

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We're on a mission to be the transport of choice – connecting customers and communities along the West Coast. Our award-winning Pendolino refurbishment programme transformed the UK's hardest working fleet with all 56 of the iconic trains providing best-in-class comfort.

Our Evero fleet, which offers more seats, improved comfort, and a substantial cut to carbon emissions, was introduced in June 2024 and is the result of a £350m investment in sustainable travel. Built by Hitachi, the 23-strong fleet, consisting of 10 seven-carriage electric trains and 13 five-carriage bi-modes, serves routes from London to the Midlands, Chester, North Wales and the North West.

We want to make a positive difference to the people and places we serve – helping to drive economic growth, green travel, and break down barriers. Our efforts to contribute to society and enable people to benefit from the opportunities rail offers through purpose-led initiatives including Feel Good Field Trips and award-winning female driver recruitment campaign has seen us create over £1billion in social value impact.

We're tackling climate change wherever we can, from reducing energy and water use to training drivers in eco-driving techniques and sourcing food and drink from local suppliers. Our goal is to be net zero carbon by 2031. We're on track.

For the latest news, visit the Avanti West Coast Media Centre: https://newsdesk.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/

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