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COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
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.....
ANNUAL REPORT
2019-2020
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**THE COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION**
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**COMMONWEALTH WAR
GRAVES FOUNDATION
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Captain Jay Singh-Sohal

Mr William Shawcross CVO

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HIGHLIGHTS
2019-2020
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A SELECTION OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR'S NUMEROUS
ACHIEVEMENTS CELEBRATED IN THIS REPORT.



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ONCE IN A GENERATION
The remarkable restoration of an architectural gem in Liverpool.



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TELLING OUR STORY
The award-winning CWGC Experience in France – our first visitor centre.



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A WOMAN OF CONSPICUOUS COURAGE
A ground-breaking education initiative about Second World War heroine Noor Inayat-Khan.

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GREEN FINGERS
Recycling our organic waste is a key element of our environmental policy.



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PROGRESS IN IRAQ
A promising start on the long road to restoring our cemeteries in Iraq.

FOREWORD BY THE VICE CHAIRMAN
LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR BILL ROLLO KCB CBE



I welcome this opportunity to re-introduce the Annual Report which the Commission has previously produced to record formally its work over the year.

One of the reasons why it was paused was that the Commission's work to provide 'fit commemoration' for 1.7 million war dead, and 'to maintain appropriate records' did not change a great deal from year to year, and that therefore there was little different to report. If true then it is certainly not true now, and, while this is a document of record which has to contain some statistical information, I hope that you will find something of interest on every page.

2019-20 began conventionally with significant anniversaries for events in the Second World War in 1944 - Monte Cassino, D-Day, Imphal and Kohima, Arnhem, commemorated memorably in and around our cemeteries. During the winter our internal debates focused on the one hand on climate change and sustainability, on drought and flooding, on ways to reduce our use of chemicals, conservation and the restoration of Thiepval, and on how best to bring forward a new generation of gardeners; and on the other on work to develop our digital strategy, produce our new website, rebrand, and support the work of the Foundation in broadening our engagement with future generations.

Vice Chairman Sir Bill Rollo with
CWGC President HRH The Duke of
Kent at the 700th meeting of the
Commission in London.

▶ Read more on **page 22**

In common with the rest of humanity the 'small black cloud no bigger than a man's hand' which is Covid-19 grew steadily larger and overtook our world in the first 3 months of 2020. I would like to record my and the Commission's appreciation for the way our staff have responded. Remote working for the Head Office was a swift reality, and our regional teams quickly developed safe ways of working wherever local regulations allowed. As a result in most of the world our cemeteries are in very good condition. Where they are not work is in hand to restore them. You will find more detail in the pages that follow but it has been a remarkable effort by all concerned.

In amongst these events there has been both continuity and change in our leadership. We were able to mark the 50th anniversary of the tenure of our President, HRH The Duke of Kent, at our 700th meeting on the 11th March 2020. The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP has taken over from the Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP as our Chairman. The Vice Chairman, Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence and Mr Edward Chaplin have retired as Commissioners. In their place we have welcomed Vice Admiral Peter Hudson and Sir Tim Hitchens. The High Commissioner for India, HE Ms Ruchi Ghanashyam has been replaced by HE Mrs Gaitri Kumar, and HE the Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae, High Commissioner for New Zealand, by HE Mr Bede Corry. I'm very grateful to them all for their contributions to our work.

Within the Commission Mrs Victoria Wallace departed in July after a remarkable tour as Director General, which has included the many high profile events of the Centenary period, and, amongst much other work, significant and positive changes in the Commission's approach to public engagement.



The Commission has benefited greatly from her energy, imagination and leadership. Mr Barry Murphy is the Acting Director General pending the appointment of her successor.

Looking ahead, and within the dynamic circumstances of Brexit and Covid, we are focused firmly on maintaining our standards, ensuring that our staff can work safely, and being conscientious stewards of the resources provided for us by our member states, while we continue the process of adaptation that every organisation must undergo within the rapidly changing environment we find ourselves in. ■

Edging the borders at Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery, The Netherlands

"I WOULD LIKE TO RECORD MY AND THE COMMISSION'S APPRECIATION FOR THE WAY OUR STAFF HAVE RESPONDED [TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS]."

INTRODUCTION FROM BARRY MURPHY, ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL



It is a great pleasure to introduce this annual report of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's activities from 2019 to 2020.

This report aims to capture and highlight the key operations of our organisation and demonstrate our ongoing commitment to commemoration of the war dead. Over the coming pages, we will give you an insight into the enormity and impact of our work and the people who make it possible.

It has been a year like no other and whilst we are all too well aware of the restrictions the current global pandemic has imposed upon us, as this report makes clear, it is remarkable how much has been achieved. Credit for this naturally and quite rightly belongs to our people based around the world, whose dedication to their work and pride in what they do truly stands out. Whether working in our cemeteries or office based, we have all had to adapt to new ways of working both safely and effectively.

Of course, working effectively and efficiently also involves working with many other individuals, groups, organisations and governments and in this we benefit strongly from our strong relations within our host nations around the world. Of particular mention here would be the ongoing partnership with the Flanders Government in Belgium and with the planning and

conservation authorities in France. Closer to home we have an excellent relationship with Historic England, one that has enabled us to work productively together protecting our Estate and, with an eye to the future, to how we can keep our commemorative fabric clean without recourse to chemicals.

I would also like to pay personal tribute to our previous Director General, Victoria Wallace. Under her stewardship key anniversaries served to both highlight our role and to encourage tens of thousands of people to visit our sites around the world. Digital communication and engagement with future generations was increased, helped by the creation of our own Foundation. And she championed conservation and the new more sustainable approach to horticulture. Whilst the recruitment of her successor is ongoing, she will truly be a hard act to follow.

I trust you enjoy reading about our progress and hope you feel inspired to support our work by joining our Foundation or one of our public engagement activities. Whilst our core purpose remains the same the manner in which we carry out our duties constantly evolves. As the launch of our new website and new logo earlier this year demonstrated, we have forever been a forward-looking organisation but one that is, at the same time, rightfully proud of its history. ■



Above: Director General, Barry Murphy (left) with Flemish Minister of Heritage, Matthias Diependaele (centre) and WEA-C Area Director, Geert Bekaert (right) at the signing of the funding agreement.

➤ Read more on [page 27](#)



“WORKING EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY ALSO INVOLVES WORKING WITH MANY OTHER INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, ORGANISATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS AND IN THIS WE BENEFIT STRONGLY FROM OUR STRONG RELATIONS WITHIN OUR HOST NATIONS AROUND THE WORLD.”
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THE ANNUAL REPORT

Welcome to this annual report of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's activities from 2019 to 2020. This report aims to capture and highlight the key operations of our organisation and demonstrate our ongoing commitment to commemoration of the war dead. Over the coming pages, we will give you an insight into the enormity and impact of our work and the people who make it possible. We are proud of our people and our achievements. We hope you enjoy reading about our progress and perhaps feel inspired to support our work by joining our Foundation or one of our volunteering roles.

Mombasa (Mbaraki) Cemetery, Kenya



A BRAVE NEW WORLD?

No account of the past twelve months would be complete without dealing with the unprecedented impact the Coronavirus pandemic continues to have on society. Almost overnight, countries closed borders, populations were put on lockdown, social distancing measures were introduced, and entire workforces were sent home. Naturally, our work was not immune.

Our Mediterranean Area was the first operational hub affected by the pandemic but globally we implemented measures to safeguard our staff, the public and our operations. This involves adapting to the often very specific advice within each country in which we work.

Our main visitor centres in Ieper and Beaurains were shut and our newly trained interns – so eager to start their experience with us – were brought home. They will have first refusal to take up their posts when the situation allows. Staff who could work from home were encouraged to do so, while our IT department worked hard in the background to ensure our operations could continue as seamlessly as possible. Video conferencing became our new norm as colleagues around the world rose to the challenge and plans were adapted to a virtual world.

Against this backdrop, most of our cemeteries remained open. Initial concerns about how we might cope with an enforced maintenance absence – after all, the grass still grows – were abated when our teams



in the UK, France and Belgium were able to maintain an operational hold on routine maintenance, albeit with appropriate PPE and social distancing in place.

Elsewhere this proved to be more challenging and nowhere more so than for our colleagues in the Africa, Asia and Pacific Area (AAPA). In the Far East, many of our staff were quarantined and our sites closed. Wild boar and poisonous snakes made themselves at home in our cemetery in Singapore, while in India, the iconic tennis court at Kohima War Cemetery temporarily disappeared under long grass. Parts of the African continent were also declared off limits. With staff returning to full operations, much of the work to restore our sites is now complete or well underway but visitor numbers remain low. ■



Top: Social distancing at the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium. Bottom: Covid precautions at the CWGC Experience, France

NOT THE
LAST POST



The Last Post at the Menin Gate in Ieper pre (left) and post pandemic. With precautions the nightly act of remembrance continues

The operational side of our work was not the only thing to suffer. Almost overnight, ceremonies and anniversaries, some years in the planning, were cancelled or came under threat. This included perhaps the most famous act of remembrance, the nightly sounding of the Last Post at the Menin Gate in Ieper, Belgium.

Working with our partners in the Last Post Association, we agreed to the unusual stance to ask the public to stay away from the memorial – although the ceremony itself continued after receiving special dispensation from the Belgian authorities. By 1 July there was something of a return to normality as restrictions eased. The public, albeit in limited numbers and observing strict social distancing guidelines, were welcomed back. The ceremony was live streamed on our social media platforms and proved hugely popular.

At the time of writing, restrictions remain in place, particularly on international travel, but our centres in France and Belgium are open, our work goes on and our staff are returning to our offices, albeit in cohorts to ensure their safety. What the future may hold, only time will tell, but we remain confident in our ability, and the dedication of our teams, to rise to the challenge. ■

ALMOST OVERNIGHT,
CEREMONIES AND
ANNIVERSARIES, SOME
YEARS IN THE PLANNING,
WERE CANCELLED OR
CAME UNDER THREAT.

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MAN MADE CHALLENGES

Covid-19 was not the only challenge we faced. Bad weather, changing climate patterns, vandalism and even war can impact on our work. Although there were several incidents of vandalism, some of them significant, we would not wish to give the impression this is a widespread problem. Given the scale of our work, incidents are relatively rare, but no less distressing when they do occur.

Just ahead of events to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands in 2019, two separate attacks occurred at Mierlo War Cemetery, with key cemetery features and headstones being daubed with graffiti. The attack generated widespread media coverage and both official and public condemnation. As importantly, we acted quickly to rectify the problem. Upon being notified of the incident, one of our Works Teams travelled from Leper and alongside their Dutch colleagues, worked tirelessly over the weekend to restore the cemetery to its pristine condition ahead of the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Arnhem on 17 September.

Although incidents like this are frustrating, the public response is always encouraging. Many of those touched by our work contacted us via our enquiries team or on social media to offer their thanks. ■

ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SEVERAL INCIDENTS OF VANDALISM, SOME OF THEM SIGNIFICANT, WE WOULD NOT WISH TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THIS IS A WIDESPREAD PROBLEM.



Our staff restored the cemetery to pristine condition (top) ahead of the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Arnhem commemorations

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UNDER
FIRE
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*Before, during and after photos
of the work to restore Aleppo War
Cemetery in Syria*
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Parts of the Middle East remain highly volatile and yet we try to maintain our operations there as best we can against backdrops of civil unrest, insurgency and, on occasion, open conflict.

Since 2013, the fighting in Syria made it impossible for us to maintain Aleppo War Cemetery. Our sites in the country are cared for through local contractors, but as the situation deteriorated, we gave them strict instructions not to put themselves at risk.

Over that period the cemetery inevitably suffered, but miraculously avoided the devastation wrought on so much of the city.

In late 2018, our maintenance contractor, Ossama Al Mouallem, reported that the situation had calmed significantly, and he was able to access the cemetery. Over the next few weeks, he visited several times, taking photographs for colleagues in our Mediterranean Area Cyprus HQ so they could evaluate the scale of the task and decide on the next steps.

In early 2019, Ossama and his colleagues cleared away the overgrowth and damaged trees, partially restoring the site. They inspected the headstones – all present and correct – and although some repair work to the wider cemetery will be needed, it has withstood our enforced absence remarkably well. Just as importantly, we were delighted to learn that Ossama, his colleagues and their families were safe. ■

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PROGRESS
IN IRAQ
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THE COMMISSION'S CURRENT STRATEGY WITHIN IRAQ IS TO GRADUALLY SECURE AND CLEAR ITS SITES IN ORDER TO RE-ESTABLISH A FULL OPERATIONAL FOOTPRINT.
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Far left and below: Contractors put the finishing touches to Habbaniya War Cemetery, Iraq. Left: Colleagues from CWGC's AAPA pay their respects at the Basra Memorial



Barely a day goes by when Iraq is not in the news. This troubled country is home to one of our largest commitments outside of Western Europe where our 19 sites commemorate more than 54,000 Commonwealth war dead. Years of enforced absence, combined with an almost daily changing security situation, has meant that many of our sites have deteriorated. The situation is not all doom and gloom however.

The Commission's current strategy within Iraq is to gradually secure and clear its sites in order to re-establish a full operational footprint. Following earlier success at Kut and around Basra, in 2019 we took steps to renovate another location – including the replacement of almost 300 headstones – this time at Habbaniya War Cemetery. Using in-country expertise and trades people, and with the help of the Iraqi authorities and British Embassy, we completed this complex project in early 2020. ■

CLIMATIC CHALLENGES

Many of us are fascinated by the weather – checking the forecast each day before choosing what to wear or if our social or professional plans can go ahead without a soaking! But elsewhere, the climate, or rather weather extremes, can be more serious – impacting upon our operations and structures.

Pemba Cemetery is one of our more remote sites in South East Africa. It sits precariously on the coast of Northern Mozambique and is subject to the full force of the weather and storm systems that emanate from the Indian Ocean. With 120 First World War casualties buried there, it remains a difficult destination for our Kenyan team to reach.

Our dedicated Nairobi staff renovated the entire location in time for Remembrance Day in 2019 and completed the whole project in less than a month. No mean feat given the location and lack of local resources. They also erected three new Special Memorial Headstones to commemorate the graves of casualties that are known to be buried at Beira Christian Cemetery (also in Mozambique) but that are now unmaintainable. In January 2020, the site was hit by a cyclone. Fallen trees damaged the cemetery wall and one headstone but the team were able to take remedial action.

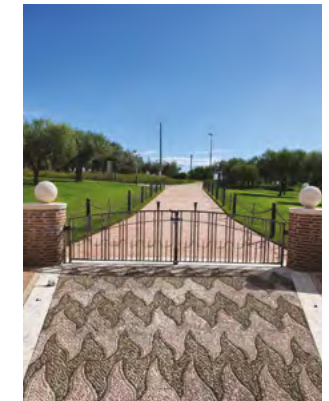
In Italy, one might not immediately make the connection between repointing an entrance feature and climate change but that was the case at Sangro River War Cemetery. The cemetery is located on the Adriatic coast and, traditionally, the winter climate



is kind and mild. However, in the last five years, the winters have become very harsh with heavy snowfalls and frosts.

The entrance feature is predominantly made from brick, a porous material that absorbs water. Over time, rainwater seeped into the joints and, with the arrival of cold weather, the water froze, causing expansion that damaged both the bricks and joints. In addition, the joints were originally filled with cement-based mortar instead of the lime-based mortar that we use today that allow the joints to “breathe.”

Given the long-term potential deterioration of the entrance, the decision was taken to restore the feature – replacing the bricks that were damaged beyond repair and remaking all of the joints. The whole project had to be completed without impacting upon the hugely impressive “Temple” feature that makes up the entrance of this stunning cemetery. Once finished, our Italian colleagues turned their attention to improving the drainage at the cemetery so that it can cope with the expected weather extremes in the future. ■



Top: Cleaning headstones at Pemba Cemetery, Mozambique. Bottom: The restored entrance feature at Sangro River War Cemetery, Italy

➤ Read more on [page 23](#)

ALL HANDS ON DECK

Although the Covid-19 pandemic put our plans to start phase two of the major restoration of the Thiepval Memorial on hold, our colleagues around the world were kept busy on numerous other projects. In the UK it was a case of all hands on deck as we renovated several of our iconic maritime memorials.

Commemorating more than 24,000 Commonwealth men and women who died during the two World Wars with no known grave, the Portsmouth Naval Memorial is one of three, near identical naval memorials in the UK built and cared for by CWGC. The memorial, sited on Southsea Common and directly facing the sea, is exposed to everything the coastal climate can throw at it. Inevitably, it sometimes requires a bit of TLC from our United Kingdom and Northern Area (UKNA) colleagues.

The memorial is Grade I Listed, which brings with it certain conditions and limitations on what can be done and the processes, materials and methods used. Having identified the need to repaint the shelter building ceilings, re-bronze the name panels, re-point more than two kilometres of paving and realign 74 square metres of paving, the programme for the work was set for September 2019.

However, in early spring 2019 a decision was taken to add Portsmouth as an official venue for the 75th Anniversary commemorations of the D-Day landings.



The memorial would provide the backdrop for an event hosted by HM The Queen attended by world leaders and veterans of the landings. Our UKNA colleagues revised the programme, bringing the entire schedule forward to ensure the work would be completed in time. Led by Ian Brown, Chargehand Stonemason, the team worked tirelessly to complete the tasks and deliver the project on schedule.

The newly restored memorial became the backdrop for the launch of a rather innovative bit

Left: Re-bronzing the name panels at Portsmouth Naval Memorial, UK. Above: Official launch of the D-Day 75 "talking bench"

of CWGC kit, as Blind Veterans UK's Ron Cross MBE and Bob Jones, both D-Day veterans, unveiled our newly created talking bench!

The bench, actually a specifically created sound installation, was pre-loaded with the stories of those who served, or were affected by, some of the major battles of 1944. The stories are triggered when visitors sit down on the bench. The bench was part of a wider campaign – *Voices of Liberation* – designed to encourage the public to share with us the stories of the "greatest of generations" for our first ever sound archive. A second bench was deployed at Bayeux War Cemetery for the ceremonies there before travelling onward to events at Arnhem. ■

RESTORING A HIDDEN GEM

Restoring the roof of the Grade I listed Tower Hill Memorial, London. The First World War section of the memorial commemorates almost 12,000 Mercantile Marine casualties who have no grave but the sea

In the heart of London, just a stone's throw from the world-famous Tower of London, stands the hidden architectural gem that is our memorial to the thousands of civilian sailors killed in the World Wars – The Tower Hill Memorial.

The Grade I listed First World War section of the memorial has suffered from water ingress almost since it was inaugurated in 1928. Over the decades several solutions were tried, with varying degrees of success, to solve the problem. In 2019, in one of the largest UK restoration projects we have ever undertaken, we took the decision to effectively disassemble the roof structure, conserve all of the elements in their original state, remove the defective bitumen waterproofing membrane and replace it with a modern waterproof barrier. At the same time, we would re-bronze all the name panels, and sympathetically clean the structure.

The modern materials at last made possible the waterproofing plan of the memorial's original architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens. At the time of building, the available materials meant his proposals ultimately failed and posed the dilemma of finding a solution without altering the overall design of a listed heritage asset. The project was managed by Nigel Stevens, and has ensured this stunning memorial to these sometimes overlooked heroes of the World Wars will stand for decades to come. ■



IN ONE OF THE LARGEST UK RESTORATION PROJECTS WE HAVE EVER UNDERTAKEN, WE SUCCESSFULLY SOLVED A PROBLEM THAT HAD EXISTED FOR DECADES.

.....
AND
ELSEWHERE...
.....



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*Restoring bronze plaques
in Thailand (left and right)
ahead of horticultural
renovation (below)*



Another timely project saw the restoration of bronze name plaques in Thailand ahead of the 75th Anniversary of Victory over Japan (VJ) Day. Across five countries – from India to Japan – our colleagues in Africa, Asia and Pacific Area (AAPA) maintain some 35,000 bronze plaques which are used to mark the graves instead of headstones. It is a huge ongoing challenge to maintain so many individual plaques across five countries but this year our team in Thailand completed an extensive project in Kanchanaburi War Cemetery to renovate some 1,000 of those which were in most need of repair. The majority of those buried at the cemetery died in the construction of the infamous “Death Railway.” ■

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ONCE IN A
GENERATION
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16
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*The intricate task of hand-carving the globes
for the Liverpool Naval Memorial, UK*
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Every now and again, our staff pull off something truly remarkable.

In Liverpool, two half-tonne Portland stone globes were carefully recreated by our stonemasons after decades of exposure to the elements caused damage to these unique features. As no blueprints for the globes existed, our stonemasons spent two weeks carefully tracing every millimetre of the intricate designs to hand-carve like for like replacements.

Following more than four months of stonework they were installed in January 2020 at our Liverpool Naval Memorial, preserving the stories of 1,400 Merchant Navy men killed in the Second World War while serving under Royal Naval command.

Congratulations go to Jamie Clarke, Gary Cook, Steve Sargeant, Alastair Goodall, Simon Leach and Ian Brown for delivering the project.

The work at Liverpool also afforded the opportunity to launch a Joint Policy Statement with Historic England which sets out how both organisations will continue to work closely to secure the future of England's commemorative heritage. The new statement establishes a shared understanding of how the sites and buildings in the CWGC's care in England are looked after now and, in the future. It also establishes a common appreciation of the CWGC's on-going responsibilities. ■

PRESERVING THE STORIES
OF 1,400 MERCHANT NAVY
MEN KILLED IN THE SECOND
WORLD WAR

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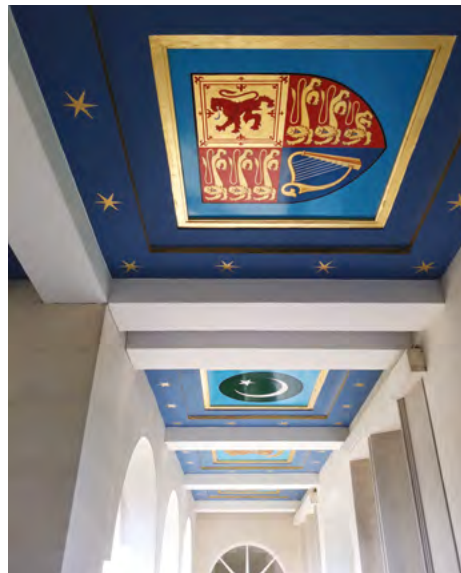
.....
TO THE
STARS
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THIS WORK IS A REMINDER OF WHY WE UNDERTAKE SO MUCH RESEARCH BEFORE ANY CONSERVATION PROJECT, TO ENSURE WE NEVER DETRACT FROM THE HISTORIC MONUMENTS IN OUR CARE.
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Restoring the ceilings of the Runnymede Memorial in the UK revealed some previously "lost" features



Not every project our UKNA team undertook this year had a naval theme! The Runnymede Memorial (sometimes known as the Air Forces Memorial) is one of our most visited sites in the UK. Yet despite its prominence we still learned something new about the site during the latest work to conserve the memorial's intricately painted and gilded ceilings.

During investigations at the start of the project it was found that some of the finer details on the cloister ceilings had been lost to time – stars. It's believed these stars surrounding the heraldic shields had been mistakenly covered in the 1970s.

Today we hold ourselves to extremely high conservation standards and with the help of expert restorers, reinstated the original features. This work is a reminder of why we undertake so much research before any conservation project, to ensure we never detract from the historic monuments in our care. ■

GLORIOUS MUD

A wall is a wall is a wall – correct? Well, apparently not if it is at Mud Corner Cemetery in Belgium, where an initially straightforward renovation turned complex while presenting some hands-on development opportunities for our Belgian colleagues.

Boundary walls are a key feature of constructed CWGC sites. They delineate the cemetery area, keep local wildlife out, and through the expert application of our original architects, lend each site its own shape and nature.

At Mud Corner, near Messines, an inspection identified that the cemetery's wall needed urgent help. Past attempts at repair, when it was common to use cement-based mortar to repoint the wall, had resulted in a patchwork appearance and damaged joints. Some of the corners of the boundary walls were cracked and there were sections with loose bricks. Surprisingly the bricks themselves were still in good condition. With careful removal and cleaning they could be recycled.

Horticultural colleagues were consulted to ensure the cemetery's trees would not be adversely affected by the work – as some of the tree roots went under the wall's foundation and would require cutting to allow access to the lower masonry.

As our team, led by Hans Caignie, began work it became clear the wall, mortar joints and foundations were in a far worse state of repair than first thought. And then the Belgian weather lent a hand. After a wet weekend the high groundwater table became evident – making it impossible to remove the old foundations.



Mud Corner Cemetery in Belgium lived up to its name. All of the burials, save one, are of New Zealand or Australian forces

Based on this discovery we had to adapt our original plans from a pure restoration project to a rebuilding one, with a budget to match. It was also clear that our original timetable was insufficient and that this single project should not deflect from our other work in the area. So, we decided to use an external contractor to restore the foundations, while the brickwork will be done by our own teams. This will allow us to take advantage of the project to train our staff in brick masonry skills. ■



BOUNDARY WALLS ARE A KEY FEATURE OF CONSTRUCTED CWGC SITES. THEY DELINEATE THE CEMETERY AREA, KEEP LOCAL WILDLIFE OUT, AND THROUGH THE EXPERT APPLICATION OF OUR ORIGINAL ARCHITECTS, LEND EACH SITE ITS OWN SHAPE AND NATURE.



Recycling our organic waste helps the environment and is part of our best gardening practice



EFFECTIVE RECYCLING OF ORGANIC WASTE IS A KEY ELEMENT OF OUR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY.

We are one of the world's largest gardening organisations and this work is central to the special look and feel our cemeteries have. Inevitably, our everyday horticultural operations involve a great deal of green waste. It makes sense that this matter should be processed to make compost, which we also need in enormous quantities.

The effective recycling of organic waste is a key element of our environmental policy and in northern Europe, where our gardening activity is at its most concentrated, we have several dedicated compost farms producing tons of compost each year. At Bedford House Cemetery in Belgium, our team compost on an industrial scale, and have changed the way that they are cultivating compost in order to strengthen the soil "food web" and restore the beneficial biology in the soil.

Through photosynthesis, plants make sugars which go into the soil. These sugars attract fungi and bacteria, The fungi create a symbiotic relationship with the roots which helps the plants absorb nutrients from the bacteria. The protozoa and nematodes which eat the bacteria and fungi are in turn eaten by arthropods (insects and spiders). Worms move through the soil in search of food, creating pathways that allow air and water to enter and leave the soil. Properly made compost contains the entire complement of soil food web microorganisms: fungi, bacteria, protozoa, archaea and nematodes. It is also full of organic matter, and it should smell earthy and fresh and have a dark coffee colour. If it smells bad it's a sure sign that it is anaerobic (i.e. has no oxygen).

Each row of compost is turned, on average, three times a week, as air is needed by the beneficial soil organisms that break down the green waste. We have adopted a scientific approach and now monitor the temperature, moisture, oxygen and carbon dioxide levels to promote the growth of the soil food web microorganisms inside the compost.

Recently, our compost expert Bart Storme, was joined by leper-based blacksmith, Danny Delplace. They worked together to invent a new way of keeping the compost moist whilst turning it. Together with Horticulture Supervisor Jimmy Clynckemaillie their creation, made from a recycled water barrel, inputs a steady flow of water directly to the compost turning machine (known as a Backhus). This has proven to be very successful and a typical example of the ingenuity of our staff and their commitment to sustainability. ■

.....
MONITORING
AND
MAINTAINING
THE
STANDARD
.....



20

WE HAVE DEVELOPED
AND ROLLED OUT OUR
PERFORMANCE QUALITATIVE
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
TO ALL OUR OPERATIONAL
AREAS – SUPPORTED
WITH TRAINING.
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To the untrained eye, the horticulture in our cemeteries always looks stunning. But for our professional gardeners and managers, being able to identify potential issues, or areas of improvement, is key to maintaining the standards for which we are well-known. Our operational colleagues needed a system that enabled them to keep track of our work, to ensure standards are being met and maintained, and to see that we are applying our resources where they are needed most. It is also important that any system is consistent – objective rather than subjective.

To do so, we have developed and rolled out our Performance Qualitative Management System (PQMS) to all our operational Areas – supported with training.

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Being able to use the new PQMS methodology on their mobile devices ensures our horticultural colleagues can capture their evaluations on the spot

The PQMS methodology measures horticultural performance in all our cemeteries, marking and collating data in a common format so we can compare like with like and year on year. The system also looks at the cemetery as a whole – including the structural features – thereby recognising the symbiotic relationship between structures and gardens and ensuring our staff have as complete a picture as possible for each location. It is already proving a great success. ■



MEET THE TEAM



The Commission is often praised by a grateful public, both for the nature and the quality of the work we do. But any organisation is only as good as the people it employs, trains and cares for. That dedication starts right at the top. ■

Worldwide we employ almost 1,300 staff, with a diverse range of skills and backgrounds and nationalities, but all dedicated to the same task – remembering the war dead

.....
FIFTY NOT
OUT
.....

IN MARCH, HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF KENT CELEBRATED FIFTY YEARS AS OUR PRESIDENT.
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.....
HRH at the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey for the 100th Anniversary of CWGC in 2017 (top) and at Canada House in London (above and left) for the 700th meeting of the Commission in 2020

In March, His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent celebrated 50 years as our President. The Duke was presented with a long service medal and a photographic album depicting some of the highlights of his 50 year Presidency by CWGC Vice Chairman Sir Bill Rollo in recognition of his unstinting service and support for us, and the high regard in which His Royal Highness is held by our staff around the world.

His Royal Highness is not the only CWGC member of staff to clock-up so long a watch. Previously, HRH had presented fifty-year long service medals to Dennis Pluck and William Moody. Senior Head Gardener Dennis followed in his father's footsteps, becoming a gardener for the Commission in 1966. He has worked across sites in Northern France. William is currently the Sector Supervisor in Western France. However, he has also worked at sites in Tunisia, Germany and Greece over the course of his career. Both his son and nephew have taken roles with the Commission, continuing a family tradition.

Having such experience within the organisation is invaluable but we must also identify and recruit the gardeners of tomorrow. To do so in France we piloted an apprenticeship, designed to help us source a new, rich vein of people wanting to start on a career with us, all within a structured, external training programme, giving employees the specific skills we need. One of the two original apprentices, Marlene Delaide, has now started a permanent role as a qualified gardener in Lens. A further ten apprentices are due to start work this Autumn. ■

THE SEARCH
FOR TALENT



Above: The Nairobi Team. Right: The newly installed Special Memorial at Pemba

Read more on [page 12](#)

Over the last 12 months, we have significantly developed our staff capability within our Nairobi Hub – which now manages the huge East and North East African Operation encompassing nine countries, stretching from Ethiopia all the way down to Zimbabwe. We have put greater emphasis on identifying, recruiting and developing local and regional talent around the globe and we have started this by embedding a new Regional Manager, Daniel Achini, in Nairobi. We have also recruited and appointed another three key team members to provide technical support (both works-based and horticulture) as well as a permanent staff administrator. This new model will greatly increase our ability to manage and maintain our commitment across this vast area of the African continent. ■



WE HAVE PUT GREATER
EMPHASIS ON
IDENTIFYING RECRUITING
AND DEVELOPING LOCAL
AND REGIONAL TALENT
ACROSS THE GLOBE.

MANAGING
OUR PEOPLE

WITH SUCH A DIVERSE
WORKFORCE, OUR KEY
CRITERIA WHEN CHOOSING
THE NEW SYSTEM WAS
THE ABILITY TO WORK IN
MULTIPLE COUNTRIES.

As part of the strategic plan, our HR team is currently implementing a global Human Resources Information System (HRIS). With such a diverse workforce, our key criteria when choosing the new system was the ability to work in multiple countries, both in terms of language and in relation to country specific employment conditions and terms of employment. The aim is to unify our employee data to enable us to streamline internal processes and ensure regulatory compliance.

We are approximately six months into the project and envisage that we will start actively using the system in the second quarter of 2021. When the system is fully functional, the HR and management teams will have access to essential employee data to aid workforce planning. Centrally, we will have the ability to create a global dashboard of our key HR metrics. Eventually, the system will be rolled out to all staff, after which they will be able to view their data, book leave and access their training records. This greatly simplifies many of our, currently, paper-based processes. ■

.....
TELLING OUR
STORY
.....



THE CWGC EXPERIENCE IS
A UNIQUE NEW VISITOR
ATTRACTION THAT SHINES
A LIGHT ON OUR WORK TO
REMEMBER THE WAR DEAD.
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For the last few years, we have been gradually repositioning our organisation to better meet the challenges and needs we will face in our second century of caring for the war dead. Although our operational and core functions continue unabated, the gentle shift to a heritage organisation model ensures we are better placed to engage a public in who we are, what we do and why we are still important.

Telling our story – the fact that the work to remember the war dead is a day in, day out activity for us and our staff – was a driving factor in the creation of our first ever visitor centre at our Beaurains operational hub in France.

The CWGC Experience is a unique new visitor attraction that shines a light on our work to remember the war dead. For the first time, visitors can look behind-the-scenes at the work that is needed to commemorate the 1.7 million Commonwealth casualties from both World Wars.

To realise the centre we had to completely transform a working office into a class-leading visitor attraction, while at the same time allowing the office to function as a place of work. We also had to take the staff on that journey, as they were to be the “stars” of the new centre – with them, and their work on show for all to see. Understandably a little nervous at first, they soon embraced the idea and have become the wonderful ambassadors for our work we were sure they would be.

The award-winning CWGC Experience visitor centre is helping us to tell our story more widely. Top right: HRH The Princess Royal is introduced to CWGC staff by former Director General Victoria Wallace at the opening of the CWGC Experience

Transforming the office meant moving machinery, creating a new works building and remodelling the existing office to create a narrative and flow through in which visitors can peer into the workshops of our headstone production unit, blacksmiths and carpenters to see what it takes to maintain our cemeteries and memorials. In addition to the workshops a dedicated and sombre area explains the role we play in the ongoing recovery and identification of human remains. The project was made possible with the support of a £700,000 LIBOR grant, backed by the UK government.

The CWGC Experience was unveiled on 25 June 2019 by HRH The Princess Royal. Just months after opening its doors to the public, we were delighted to be awarded the Best Tourism Project in Europe at the British Guild of Travel Writers' International Tourism Awards.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted upon the centre, visitor numbers prior to the enforced restrictions on travel were excellent – peaking at 300 a day. We are currently focusing our efforts on attracting our local French audience, and in particular schools, but look forward to the day when the centre will again welcome people from all over the world.

The CWGC Experience is not the only source of Commission information on the former Western Front. Just metres from the Menin Gate is our Leper Information Centre. Opened in 2017 it is an excellent jumping-off point from which people can explore our many sites in the area.



The centre is regularly updated to keep it fresh. A new temporary exhibition 'From Recovery to Remembrance' was developed in partnership with the local tourism authority (Westtoer) to tell the story of the post war construction programme. One of the star attractions, proving hugely popular with visitors of all ages, was a specially built Lego Menin Gate! ■



.....
THE HUMAN
REMINDER
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Each year the former battlefields of two World Wars yield the remains of those who died and were lost – powerful human reminders of why our work is as important today as it ever was. In recent years, the sheer number of remains recovered has reached record levels as several major developments, including a new hospital at Lens in France, have commenced.

The Covid-19 pandemic put a hold on any reburial ceremonies in 2020, but in October 2019 we were honoured to participate in the reburial of 13 soldiers at Wytschaete Military Cemetery in Belgium. The soldiers were discovered in 2018 as part of an archaeological excavation of a First World War battlefield, known as 'Dig Hill 80'.

In 1914, Hill 80 in the village of Wytschaete was the scene of heavy fighting. Moving forward to today, the site was earmarked for development, and so local archaeologist, Simon Verdegem, launched a crowdfunding project to explore the site and catalogue any finds before the developers moved in. Over the course of the dig, Simon and his team discovered an incredibly well-preserved trench system and the remains of 110 individuals from the UK, Germany and even South Africa.

Sadly, despite everyone's best efforts it proved impossible to identify the British soldiers by name, but on 10 October they were afforded the burial with full military honours their sacrifice so richly deserves. ■



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HAVE COMMENCED.



.....
More than a century after their death, the remains of 13 soldiers are buried with full military honours at CWGC's Wytschaete Military Cemetery

.....
WITH A
LITTLE HELP
FROM OUR
FRIENDS
.....

THE GRANT RECOGNISES THE
HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND
COMMEMORATIVE SIGNIFICANCE
OF OUR CEMETERIES AND
MEMORIALS IN THE FORMER
YPRES SALIENT.
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Although we are ably supported by our six Commonwealth Member Governments, the value of our work is often recognised by other partners. In 2017 we signed a multi-year funding agreement with the Flemish Government that enabled us to restore features and enhance visitor parking/access at 24 of our cemeteries.

The grant recognises the historical, cultural and commemorative significance of our cemeteries and memorials in the former Ypres Salient, and our work in maintaining them to a standard of excellence. This generous support is a vital component in our ongoing work to care for these places – ensuring they remain a fitting tribute to those who died and places to visit and remember for generations to come.

In July 2020, Flemish Minister of Heritage, Matthias Diependaele visited some of our cemeteries in the former Ypres Salient to see the work for himself. He also signed the fourth year of the five-year agreement – releasing a further €354,291 in funds. Thanks to the funds received, restoration work was completed at La Laiterie Military Cemetery, La Brique n°2 Military Cemetery and La Clytte Military Cemetery. ■



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Bottom right, Matthias Diependaele, Flemish Minister of Heritage, visited Hospital Farm Cemetery to see the work their grants has made possible

▶ [Read more on page 4](#)

THE
COMMON-
WEALTH
WAR GRAVES
FOUNDATION
(CWGF)



From digital exhibitions at Runnymede to supporting our CWGF Interns, the Foundation helps us to grow the ways we engage the public with our work

Founded during our centenary year in 2017, in response to the growing need to educate and engage people with our work and the stories of the men and women we commemorate, The Commonwealth War Graves Foundation (CWGF) is playing an increasingly important role.

Through the Foundation we can offer a programme of innovative educational and engagement activities, that help us inspire, inform, educate, involve and engage people, particularly the young, with stories of sacrifice that must never be forgotten.

Joining and supporting the Foundation makes a real difference to our public engagement activities and makes it possible for us to run programmes like the ones highlighted below. ■

EYES ON, HANDS ON

Once trained, *Eyes On, Hands On* volunteers can monitor the condition of war graves in their local area, and help supplement our own maintenance cycles

In addition to our core activity, the creation of our charitable arm, The Commonwealth War Graves Foundation, has enabled us to proactively seek funding for projects that support both our operational and community engagement needs.

While many people know about our work in France and Belgium, there are more than 160,000 war graves spread across Great Britain which are often less known about. These will become the focus of a dedicated GB campaign this Autumn, but in 2019, with the generous support of Annington, we launched a brand-new volunteering opportunity for the British public – *Eyes On, Hands On*.

The *Eyes On, Hands On* project allows us to take advantage of the huge wellspring of support that exists among individuals and communities across the UK while also enabling those volunteers to reconnect with the history and heritage on their doorstep. This is in addition to helping the CWGC ensure that the war graves – scattered across more than 12,500 locations – are well-tended.



Once trained, our volunteers are encouraged to visit churchyards and burial grounds near to where they live. We equip them with the know-how to spot the isolated graves which come under our care and how to inform us of any remedial action we may need to take. This information will ensure our professional teams can be better directed.

After an overwhelming response to our initial appeal on our social media channels, sadly the programme had to be suspended due to the Coronavirus pandemic. However, we will restart the project this Autumn and would like to thank our partner, Annington, for their patience, and all those who have already shown such a keen interest in supporting us. ■



A WOMAN OF CONSPICUOUS COURAGE



The CWGC Foundation enables us to explore opportunities not covered by CWGC's Royal Charter that are increasingly important for the long-term future of our organisation. Nowhere is this truer than in the realm of education.

In March, The Commonwealth War Graves Foundation (CWGF) marked International Women's Day by launching a new interactive way for families and young women to explore the story of the remarkable Noor Inayat-Khan.

The digital exhibition was developed with the help of young women from the Girlguiding Association in Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, who turned the story

Noor Inayat-Khan, truly a woman of conspicuous courage – using digital technology we can retell her inspiring story to tomorrow's female pioneers

of this inspiring female heroine of the Second World War into a ground-breaking experience and learning resource for young women, shaped by young women.

Armed with a false passport and a pistol, Noor became the first female radio operator to be sent to Nazi-occupied France. Noor was an unlikely candidate to engage in espionage but she did so with a "steely strength of will". During her mission she was captured and tortured for information but never gave anything

away and was eventually executed by the Nazis. In 1949 Noor was posthumously awarded the George Cross, the highest civilian award for bravery.

The harrowing tale of how she came to die for her country is available at our Runnymede Air Forces Memorial near London, in a new digital exhibition called *Noor Inayat-Khan: A Woman of Conspicuous Courage*. The exhibition was made possible with funding from the AIM Biffa Award History Makers Scheme. The Scheme is managed by Biffa Award, a multi-million-pound fund that helps build communities and transform lives through awarding grants to communities and environmental projects across the UK as part of the Landfill Communities Trust.

Visitors to the memorial can use their mobile devices to access a specially created local network before being invited to self-guide themselves around the iconic memorial that remembers more than 20,000 air forces personnel killed in the Second World War, who have no known grave. For younger visitors, there are puzzles and interactives too.

With the onset of the Covid-19 lockdown, we moved the exhibition online to allow people to discover and experience her remarkable story for themselves from the comfort of their own homes. ■

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WHAT A
DIFFERENCE
A YEAR
MAKES
.....



Normally, our annual reports demonstrate a gentle evolution from one year to another, but the past twelve months have been anything but normal. The unprecedented impact of the Coronavirus, at a time when we and partners were planning to mark some of the most important anniversaries of the two World Wars, caused us to devise several alternative solutions to the traditional remembrance event. ■

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Above: CWGF Interns join Normandy veterans to unveil a unique sound installation at Bayeux War Cemetery amid D-Day 75 commemorations
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.....
Burak Gundogan on his solo tour of remembrance in Gallipoli, laying flowers on behalf of our Commonwealth community
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.....
LONE TRIBUTE
AT LONE PINE
.....

When plans to mark the annual ANZAC Day (25 April) commemoration fell victim to Coronavirus, one of our colleagues stepped into the breach. In an ANZAC Day like no other, our Country Supervisor in Turkey, Burak Gundogan undertook a solo pilgrimage of the Gallipoli peninsula to lay wreaths on behalf of those who would have attended this year's cancelled ANZAC Day commemorations.

Burak laid wreaths at Lone Pine Cemetery, Chunuk Bair (New Zealand) Memorial and the Helles Memorial – his pilgrimage made all the more poignant by the fact that both his great grandfathers fought at Gallipoli and lost their lives. ■



.....
A FITTING
TRIBUTE
.....

In June 2019 the world turned its attention to the stunning Normandy coastline as we looked to mark the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings. Once more our sites would host remembrance events both large and small – from national commemorations to private acts of remembrance. And, perhaps for the last time, those events were made special by the attendance of many veterans of the campaign.

The anniversary saw the establishment of a new British Memorial to all those lost during the campaign. Created by the Normandy Trust, and located above Gold Beach, our experts were on hand to advise as the memorial took shape. CWGC will have a watching brief over the new memorial when it is completed.

Just 12 months later and Bayeux looked very different as a small socially distanced event, attended by the British Ambassador to France and a handful of local dignitaries, marked the occasion.

Conscious that this would be a very different year, we decided to help those who could not make the annual pilgrimage to Normandy by creating a tribute that our gardeners would lay on their behalf. The



biodegradable tributes bore the famous inscription 'Their Name Liveth For Evermore' chosen by the Commission's first literary advisor, Rudyard Kipling, and inscribed at CWGC sites the world over. Requests were processed online, alongside a message to be displayed on our digital *Wall of Remembrance*, which we created for the VE Day commemorations in May. People could leave their tribute directly on our website or use the hashtag #ShareYourTribute on our social media pages. ■



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What a difference a year can make: above, visitors to the D-Day 75 commemorations, right, CWGC gardeners lay tributes in place of the cancelled D-Day 76 events



CONSCIOUS THAT THIS WOULD BE A VERY DIFFERENT YEAR, WE DECIDED TO HELP THOSE WHO COULD NOT MAKE THE ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO NORMANDY BY CREATING A TRIBUTE THAT OUR GARDENERS WOULD LAY ON THEIR BEHALF.

NEVER FORGOTTEN – VJ DAY 75



IF VETERANS COULD NOT COME TO US, THEN WE WOULD BRING THE SITES TO THEM.

The shift to a virtual world continued for the commemorations of VJ Day in August as our plans to host groups of Royal British Legion (RBL) veterans in our sites in the Far East became impossible.

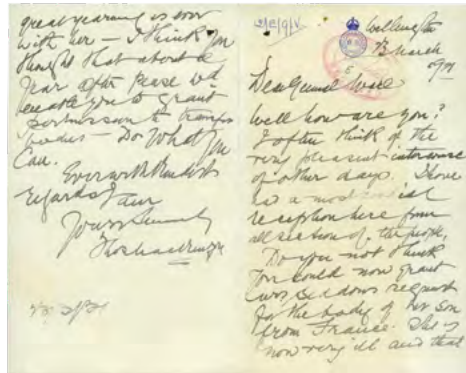
Working with the RBL we decided that if the veterans could not come to us, we would bring the sites to them. Through our fantastic staff in the Far East we filmed several short video tributes which we then shared with veterans and descendants who'd registered for the pilgrimages. We also filmed their reactions to the tributes – which often meant not a dry eye in the house! These were shared on our social media channels and media partners – generating huge coverage and interest.

We also worked with the Tri-Service museums in the UK – The National Army Museum, Royal Air Force Museum and The National Museum of the Royal Navy – to deliver a series of virtual events from debates to shared content. The level of partnership working was very pleasing and something we hope to build on for the future. ■

Above, surviving Far East POW Albert Warne shares his memories at home for VJ Day 75, while left, a socially distanced ceremony takes place at the Rangoon Memorial



IT'S A DIGITAL WORLD



With so much of the public working from home, we kept them informed and entertained with a series of podcasts and live events on our digital channels. Weekly events, often with special guests, have covered topics as varied as the start of the Second World War and how war has been portrayed in popular culture.

We also kept budding family historians and researchers engaged thanks to newly released archive material. The launch of our Enquiry Files (or e-files as they are known internally) online meant that the heart-breaking stories of thousands of families' search for closure after the First World War were revealed for the first time.

The never-before-published files contain thousands of letters, pictures and other papers sent between the Commission and the next of kin of First World War dead. Among them is the story of Charles Dickens' grandson and the hunt for the grave of one of the only Indian fighter pilots of the First World War. The records are part of a collection of nearly 3,000 files that can be viewed via our new online portal at www.cwgc.org



The emotional stories contained in our historic enquiry files (e-files) can now be accessed by the public thanks to a large-scale digitisation project

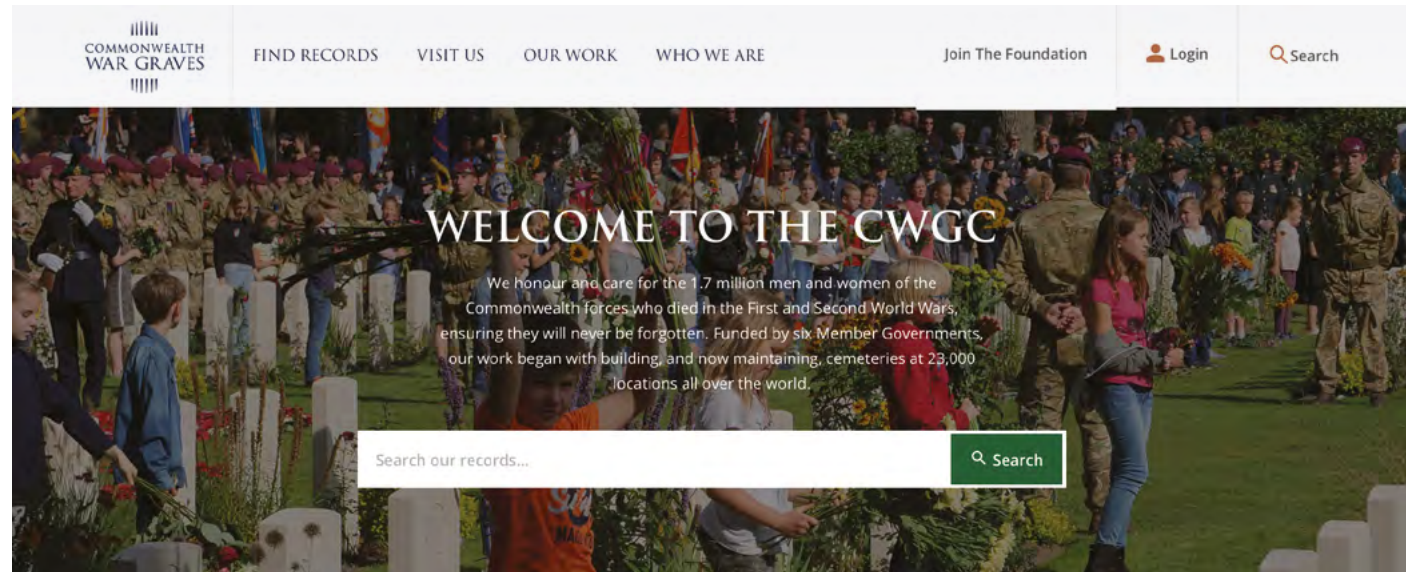
WE ALSO KEPT BUDDING FAMILY HISTORIANS AND RESEARCHERS ENGAGED THANKS TO NEWLY RELEASED ARCHIVE MATERIAL.

A NEW LOOK

We have changed a lot since our founding in 1917. We're using increasingly creative ways to welcome people to our sites and today engage with people on a wide variety of digital platforms. Our website is at the heart of our public engagement and this year we took the step to relaunch it alongside a new visual identity.

The improved platform is designed to make it easier than ever before for the public to explore the stories of the World Wars with us. We have improved the search tool that lets you explore the 1.7 million people we remember and the sites where they're commemorated. We have tried hard to ensure people with only partial details, or perhaps new to our world, get better results from our "fuzzy" search options, while a cleaner new design will mean that it is easier to navigate and learn more about the projects and stories of our work. Visitors also benefit from improved mobile functionality for using the website while out and about. Behind the scenes, the new platform makes it far easier for our web team to keep the website up to date and engaging – adding new content or sections as required.

Alongside the new website is a new identity designed to give us a more modern feel but one that still reflects our remarkable heritage and journey. The new logo draws on the symbol of the Commonwealth, a core part of our identity. The pillars represent our six member nations standing together in a common cause. The curved top is reminiscent of the headstone shape we're known for, yet it's interrupted in the middle, just as two generations were during the World Wars. ■



ALONGSIDE THE NEW WEBSITE IS A NEW IDENTITY DESIGNED TO GIVE US A MORE MODERN FEEL BUT ONE THAT STILL REFLECTS OUR REMARKABLE HERITAGE AND JOURNEY.



Looking ahead to the next chapter: a new visual identity for a new phase in CWGC's history

.....
A HARD LOOK AT HISTORY
.....



.....
*The restoration of the Mombasa Memorial
required 3D scanners to help restore the
striking bronze work*
.....



While the physical work in Mombasa is complete, work continues into researching the challenging aspects in our commemorative records



Many people are unaware that the first and last shots of the Great War were fired in Africa, let alone the contribution and sacrifice of men and women from the African continent. Our Askari monuments in Dar es Salaam, Nairobi and Mombasa are permanent reminders of that service and loss, but they do not bear the names of those who died. This is a direct result of several factors, not least the attitudes prevalent among the colonial and military authorities of the time. It is only in the last few years that this issue has come to the fore – part of a wider process of having a hard look at our shared history and shining a long overdue light on what was done and what can be done to rectify past mistakes. It is a matter of huge regret that the names of many of these men and women were never registered as war dead and we naturally wish to do the right thing and welcome the opportunity to address the challenge of where, historically, we did not provide the equality of treatment in commemoration we would now expect.



WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGE OF WHERE, HISTORICALLY, WE DID NOT PROVIDE THE EQUALITY OF TREATMENT IN COMMEMORATION WE WOULD NOW EXPECT.

In order to redress this a Special Committee has been formed, with expert participation from communities and academic institutions, to explore what the Commission can do to put these matters right both in Africa and elsewhere around the globe. The Committee’s mandate – agreed by our six member Governments – is to produce a report setting out the definitive position regarding the commemoration by name of all Empire war dead of the two World Wars; identifying gaps, and proposing how these can be rectified with the aim of ensuring that none of the fallen of the First and Second World War are unremembered – even if their commemoration cannot be identical. When complete, the findings will be made public together with plans detailing how we plan to take action. ■

.....
AND
TOMORROW?
.....

OUR ORGANISATION STANDS FIRM,
AS IT ALWAYS HAS AND ALWAYS WILL DO,
TO REMEMBER THE FALLEN.

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*The Menin Gate at night: despite the challenges
of today, our task, and our commitment to our
founding principles remain unchanged*

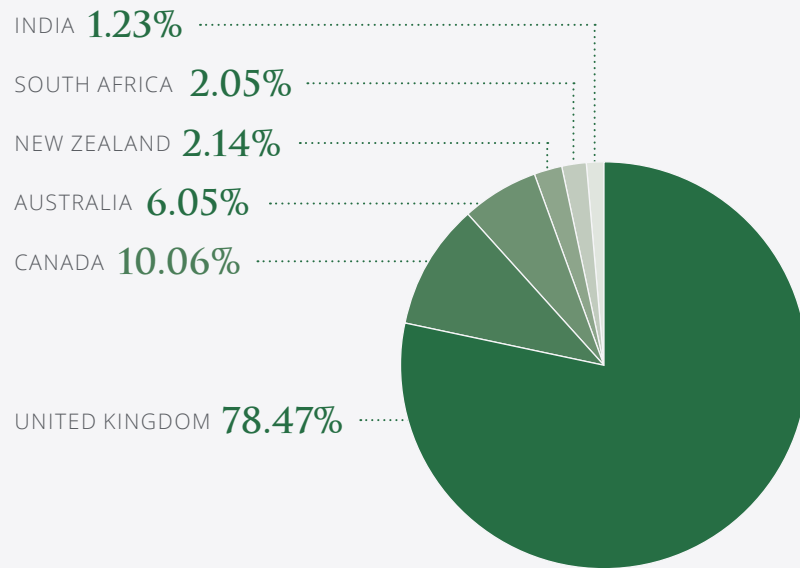
CWGC is a historic organisation with more than a century of expertise, but we are always looking to the future and the growing importance of our role in supporting visitors to return to our unique sites of remembrance.

Our world may still be in a state of flux, we may have to adapt our plans, but our organisation stands firm, as it always has and always will do, to remember the fallen. ■

CWGC FINANCIAL SUMMARY

£74.2M

TOTAL CONSOLIDATED INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 2020



PERCENTAGES OF CONTRIBUTIONS
BEING MADE BY
PARTNER GOVERNMENTS

The Commission was established by Royal Charter in 1917 and some £72 million was spent during the year in ensuring the 1.7 million war dead are commemorated in accordance with the obligations set out in the Charter. The money is spent ensuring that these cemeteries and memorials are maintained 'in fit provision'. Our member Commonwealth countries contribute to the funding of the Commission proportionate to their respective numbers of graves.

In more precise terms, our total consolidated income for the year ended March 2020 was £74.2m compared with £73.4m in 2019. Member government contributions comprised £64.8m of the year's total income. The Commission's consolidated expenditure increased year on year by 1.9% to £72.3m.

The financial result for the year was net income, before pension scheme adjustments, of £1.86m, which exceeded the budgeted target of £0.7m due to various underspends, much of which occurred in the final quarter resulting from COVID-19 impacting upon our activities.

The Commission's consolidated balance sheet position reports a net deficit of £5.3m. This deficit situation results from the pension scheme, which is reporting an accounting deficit of £26m. A funding plan will be agreed by the Commission with the pension scheme trustees to fund the pension scheme.

Our full accounts are available on the website at

www.cwgc.org ■

OUR COMMITMENT

BREAKDOWN OF NUMBERS OF WAR DEAD BY FORCES

Nationality	1914-1918 War		1939-1945 War		Both Wars		Overall
	Identified Burials	Memorials	Identified Burials	Memorials	Identified Burials	Memorials	Casualty count
Australian	39,116	23,201	28,600	12,093	67,716	35,294	103,010
Canadian	45,601	19,401	37,316	8,073	82,917	27,474	110,391
Indian	8,278	65,645	18,229	68,798	26,507	134,443	160,950
New Zealand	11,771	6,297	9,043	2,886	20,814	9,183	29,997
South African	6,754	4,794	10,028	1,884	16,782	6,678	23,460
United Kingdom	481,283	407,515	245,004	138,853	726,287	546,368	1,272,655
Total	592,803	526,853	348,220	232,587	941,023	759,440	1,700,463

There are 213,301 unidentified Commonwealth war burials, (188,925 from the First World War and 24,376 from the Second World War). This brings the total Commonwealth war burials to 1,154,324.

The names of 67,847 civilian of the Commonwealth, whose deaths were due to enemy action in the Second World War, are commemorated in the Civilian War Dead Roll of Honour located near St. George's Chapel in Westminster Abbey, London.

The Commission maintains, on an Agency basis, the graves of 64,327 Foreign Nationals within our cemeteries or elsewhere.

This includes:

German	19,885
French	7,365
Polish	4,458
Dutch	3,867
Belgian	712

Of the 64,327 Non War Graves, 57,885 are maintained on behalf of the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence.

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PRINCIPAL OFFICES
.....

HEAD OFFICE

Director General: Barry Murphy
**Commonwealth War Graves
Commission**
2 Marlow Road, Maidenhead,
Berkshire, SL6 7DX
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1628 634 221
Email: enquiries@cwgc.org
Website: www.cwgc.org

**UNITED KINGDOM &
NORTHERN AREA**

Director: James King
**United Kingdom & Northern Area
Commonwealth War Graves
Commission**
2 Marlow Road, Maidenhead,
Berkshire, SL6 7DX
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1628 507 200
Email: enquiries@cwgc.org

WESTERN EUROPE AREA (CENTRAL)

Director: Geert Bekaert
**Commonwealth War Graves
Commission**
Elverdingestraat 82, Ieper, B-8900
Belgium
Tel: +32 (0) 5722 4750
Email: contact.wea@cwgc.org

WESTERN EUROPE AREA (FRANCE)

Director: Xavier Puppinck
**Commonwealth War Graves
Commission**
5-7 Rue Angele Richard, CS10109,
62217 Beaurains
France
Tel: +33 (0) 3 21 21 77 00
Email: contact.wea@cwgc.org

AFRICA AND ASIA PACIFIC AREA

Director: Richard Hills
**Africa & Asia Pacific Area
Commonwealth War Graves
Commission**
2 Marlow Road, Maidenhead,
Berkshire, SL6 7DX
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1628 634 221
Email: aapaoffice@cwgc.org

MEDITERRANEAN AREA

Director: Ian Hussein
**Commonwealth War Graves
Commission**
5 Artemidos Avenue, 7th Floor,
PO Box 40970, TT 6308, 6020 Larnaca
Cyprus
Tel: +357 248 194 60
Email: maoffice@cwgc.org

CANADA & AMERICAS AREA

Director: David Loveridge
**Commonwealth War Graves
Commission**
66 Slater Street, Suite 1412,
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P4
Canada
Tel: +1 613 992 3224
Email: enquiries@cwgc.org

SOUTH AFRICA

Director: Juan Maree
**South African Agency
Commonwealth War Graves
Commission**
265 Zircon Street, Lyttleton Manor,
Centurion, Gauteng, 0157
South Africa
Tel: +44 (0) 1628 634 221
Email: enquiries@cwgc.org

INDIA

Honorary Liaison Officer:
Lieutenant General Sanjiv Talwar (Retired)
**c/o Africa & Asia Pacific Area
Commonwealth War Graves
Commission**
2 Marlow Road, Maidenhead,
Berkshire, SL6 7DX
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1628 634 221
Email: aapaoffice@cwgc.org

AUSTRALIA

Director: Paul Nothard
**Office of Australian War Graves
Department of Veterans' Affairs**
GPO Box 9998
BRISBANE QLD 4001
Tel: + 61 1800 Veteran (+61 1800 838 3726)
Email: wargraves@dva.gov.au

NEW ZEALAND

**Heritage Operations
Ministry for Culture and Heritage**
PO Box 5364, Wellington
New Zealand
Tel: +64 (0) 4 499 4229
Email: info@mch.gov.nz

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COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
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FRONT COVER IMAGE:
*Stonemason Alastair Goodall surveys his
work at the Liverpool Naval Memorial, UK*
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WITH THANKS FOR IMAGES

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission would like to thank all those who have contributed to the production of this annual report with information and/or images. Your help is greatly appreciated. Please note that some of the images used in this publication were taken before the Coronavirus pandemic and therefore do not show the current social distancing advice currently being followed.

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