



Historical Cases of Non-Commemoration Progress Report, Number Eight

This quarter, the Commission's Non-Commemoration programme began a new collaborative archival project with the Kenya Defence Force which is already providing valuable and exciting perspectives. Service records for the King's African Rifles, thought previously to be lost altogether, were uncovered and are now in the process of being digitised. These records include those who fought and died during the First World War as well as provide incredible detail for men in colonial service from the 1890s into the 1960s. It is hoped great insights as well as new names for commemoration will be drawn from the files. On our operations side, progress continues for the construction of memorials planned in Sierra Leone and South Africa in 2024.

Progress highlights are:

- New research work has begun in Nairobi, enabled by a British Library Endangered Archives Programme Grant. A specialist team is working with personnel from the Kenya Defence Force, the Uhuru Gardens Monument and Museum, the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service to digitise a sample of rare service records, recently uncovered by the military. This will provide the programme with further data and names.
- We remain unable to explore archives in Egypt and to date the total number of names found is 9008¹.
- Whilst the search for names continues, we are increasingly considering the challenge of how best to commemorate significant numbers of the dead who might never be named; we anticipate the plans for the Kariokor site in Nairobi and existing memorial sites will be central to this work.
- We have moved forward in partnership with the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) to undertake fieldwork at locations across Kenya. Trials have begun with the use of non-invasive land surveys at selected sites in-country. In August our project team undertook a drone-based survey of Voi Cemetery and nearby locations of interest.
- The use of ground-penetrating radar (GPR) to survey the target areas has been trialled with the support of Royal Engineers from the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK); its use will help our field research team understand how this technology might aid our work in identifying First World War burial sites in Kenya.

¹ Includes 1743 casualties from various South African Labour regiments and 11 from the Cold Project submissions of 384 casualties - 254 KAR, 13 Chinese Labour Corps, 1 Nigerian Regt, 3 Nyasaland Field Force, 1 Rhodesia Native Regiment and 112 Sierra Leone Carrier Corps.

- In Sierra Leone a detailed consultation has led us to provide an initial recommendation to construct a new memorial in the immediate vicinity of the 1931 cenotaph on George Street in Freetown. Bespoke heritage trails and education programmes will be delivered.
- In Malawi, we continue to move forward our discussions with key stakeholders in the country for the proposed designation of the King's African Rifles Memorial in Zomba as the official commemoration point for almost 1500 casualties we previously did not have names for. An operation visit is planned for September to develop plans in collaboration with key partners.
- We make progress towards the construction of the Cape Town Labour Corps memorial. Assuming no shifts in the timeline it is intended the earliest the memorial can be ready is September 2024.
- Our Principal Architect for the Cape Town Labour Corps memorial, Dean Jay, has provided designs for the memorial's centrepiece which are under review. We are working with a range of stakeholders to agree a fitting in-country epitaph and have agreed the principle for multi-language interpretation work in Afrikaans, English, and Xhosa.
- A senior team visit to South Africa in July has built further positive links for the memorial with senior government leaders and potential heritage partners, museums, foundations, and tourist association, as well as identifying continued opportunities for engagement and outreach.
- The new CWGC stories portal – *For Evermore: Stories of the Fallen* – will be used by our outreach and engagement teams as a valuable digital archive to allow the people and communities they meet with to upload more information about the individuals and stories they remember.
- Through valuable discussions with our advisory panel, and more widely, we have confirmed the scope of our educational engagement needs to be increased and driven via in-country resources. Our teams are currently piloting how best to deliver this as collaborative content and in partnership with experts in the affected areas. This workstream will receive continued focus as we move forward.

- Ends

Date of next report December 2023