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COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
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.....
ANNUAL REPORT
2020 - 2021
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Principal Offices

THE COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

PRESIDENT

HRH The Duke of Kent
KG GCMG GCVO ADC (P)

CHAIRMAN

The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP

VICE CHAIRMAN

Lt Gen Sir Bill Rollo KCB CBE

MEMBERS

The High Commissioner for Canada

His Excellency
The Hon Ralph Goodale PC

Air Marshal David Walker
CB CBE AFC

Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas
DBE

The High Commissioner for The Republic of South Africa

Her Excellency
Ms Nomatamba Tambo

Mr Vasuki Shastry

Dame Diana Johnson MP DBE

The High Commissioner for Australia

His Excellency
The Hon George Brandis QC

Rt Hon Philip Dunne MP

Vice Admiral Peter Hudson
CB CBE

The High Commissioner for India

Her Excellency
Mrs Gaitri Issar Kumar

Sir Tim Hitchens KCVO CMG

Ms Keryn James

The High Commissioner for New Zealand

His Excellency Mr Bede Corry

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES FOUNDATION TRUSTEES

Chair

Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas
DBE

Maj Gen Alastair Bruce OBE
VR KStJ

Lady Lucy French OBE

The Rt Hon Kevan Jones MP

Mr Terence Hewett

Sir Adrian Montague CBE

Captain Jay Singh-Sohal

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Director General Mrs Claire Horton CBE
Director of Operations Mr Barry Murphy
Director of Human Resources Mrs Jamie Redmond

General Counsel Mr Vincent Collins
Interim Director of Finance Mrs Jo Knowles
Director of External Relations Ms Liz Woodfield

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HIGHLIGHTS
2020-2021
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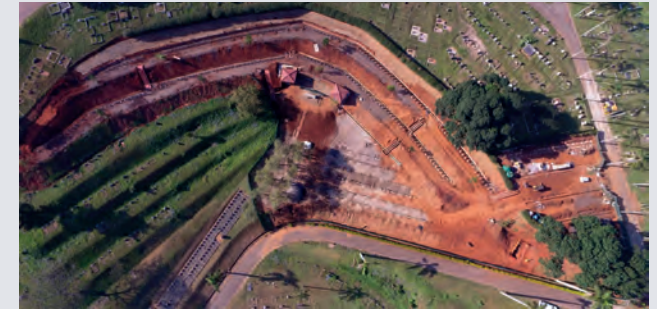
A SELECTION OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR'S NUMEROUS
ACHIEVEMENTS CELEBRATED IN THIS REPORT.



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SHINE ON

A very special
Armistice Day 2020



.....
FOREWORD BY THE VICE CHAIRMAN
LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR BILL ROLLO KCB CBE
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This report sets out formally the work of the Commission over 2020-2021.

The context for a global organisation remains dynamic, with Covid-19, Brexit and climate change all affecting our teams to a greater or lesser extent. I would again like to record my and the Commissioners' appreciation for the way our staff, both in Head Office and around the world, have worked through the sometimes very considerable difficulties these have caused. Continued emphasis on safe working practices has kept the incidence of illness remarkably low, while standards in the cemeteries have, with very few exceptions usually rapidly remedied when restrictions were lifted, remained high. How this has been achieved is set out in the following pages.

In terms of leadership Mrs Claire Horton CBE assumed the appointment of Director General on 25 January 2021, taking over from Mr Barry Murphy who served as Interim Director General over a challenging period of nearly 7 months, in which he used his great experience to good effect. Claire comes to us after 10 years at Battersea Dogs and Cats Home and a long and impactful career in the voluntary sector. She brings



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Left to Right: CWGC Director General Claire Horton CBE, HRH The Countess of Wessex, HRH The Duke of Kent, and CWGC Vice Chairman Sir Bill Rollo during the minute's silence at Brookwood Military Cemetery to mark the 76th Anniversary of VJ Day.
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Grass cutting at
Bedford House Cemetery, Belgium

with her a myriad of transferable skills in operations, communications and organisational development. Our Chairman has remained The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP, UK Secretary of State for Defence. Amongst the Commissioners Ms Keryn James has taken over from Mrs Ros Kelly, and HE Mr Ralph Goodale PC has taken over as High Commissioner for Canada from HE Mrs Janice Charette.

We were delighted to welcome HM The Queen to a service to mark the Centenary of the Royal Australian Air Force at Runnymede in March, and our President HRH The Duke of Kent then attended our inaugural War Graves Week in May, returning with HRH The Countess of Wessex to Brookwood in July.

Perhaps the most significant event in the Commission's recent history has been the publication of the Report by a Special Committee set up to examine instances of inequality in commemoration following the First World War, and the Commission's response to it. The report is carefully researched and closely argued. In essence it sets out how the Commission, so meticulous in maintaining equality of treatment in Europe, failed to maintain

the same standards in, in particular, the Middle East and Africa. The Report, and our response, were set out in a debate in Parliament led by our Chairman. The Commission is now working hard to remedy these inequalities within a five year plan, details of which are to follow. There are significant opportunities in the engagement with hitherto neglected communities which this will require.

Looking ahead, the Commission aims to continue its careful adaptation to the new world within which we are living, maintaining operational standards in a more environmentally sustainable way, and increasing our engagement with future generations through initiatives such as War Graves Week, the Eyes On, Hands On volunteer programme, and our charitable Foundation's work on education. There is much to do. ■

“PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENT IN THE COMMISSION'S RECENT HISTORY HAS BEEN THE PUBLICATION OF THE REPORT BY A SPECIAL COMMITTEE SET UP TO EXAMINE INSTANCES OF INEQUALITY IN COMMEMORATION FOLLOWING THE FIRST WORLD WAR, AND THE COMMISSION'S RESPONSE TO IT.”

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INTRODUCTION FROM CLAIRE HORTON CBE
DIRECTOR GENERAL
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It is a great pleasure to introduce this annual report of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's activities from 2020 to 2021.

This report is a snapshot of only a small proportion of the work that has been undertaken by this remarkable organisation over the last year, and what a year it has been. Covid-19 has dominated every agenda around the world since spring 2020, and I arrived as the new Director General of the Commission in January 2021, as countries around the world were facing winter lockdowns and continued hardship.

It is to the great credit of the acting Director General Barry Murphy and our teams around the world that the Commission has weathered the storm. My heartfelt thanks go out to them for their work during this unprecedented time.

Traditionally a new Director General would have been on the road in the first months of their appointment, visiting our cemeteries and memorials and meeting

our global teams on the ground, but that of course was impossible for me. Zoom was the order of the day and my introduction to the people of this organisation was through a screen. I have been struck most by the passion and commitment of our people. The upside of enforced lockdown is that I have been able to meet more people, more quickly, than I would have previously, and that has helped me enormously in getting to know everyone and learning in detail about every aspect of our work. As restrictions end, I look forward to meeting face-to-face as many staff on the ground as possible.

The pages of this report highlight the task at hand. Our core purpose to commemorate in perpetuity the fallen of the World Wars remains the same. Projects such as the restoration of the Thiepval Memorial and our steady return to sites in



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*Director General Claire Horton CBE during a visit to
Le Touret Cemetery and Memorial, France*
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Iraq showcase this ongoing commitment. The findings of the Special Committee into historic inequalities of commemoration published in April 2021, has shown the importance placed upon our commemorative task and I am proud to say that we have wholeheartedly committed to pursuing all avenues to right these historic wrongs.

Many of the challenges of the past however will not necessarily be the challenges of the future. The UK's exit from the European Union has required us to rethink many of our long-established working practices between the UK and Europe, while long-term issues such as sustainability and climate change must, and I'm pleased to say are, being addressed now not later.

Equally, if our commitment to commemoration in perpetuity is to ring true for another century, we must work to pass the torch of remembrance to the next generation. To this end you will see many wonderful examples in the following pages of the power of public engagement, from our first ever War Graves Week and

our ever-growing volunteer network, to youth engagement projects that have seen hundreds of young people learn for the first time about our work.

Finally, our charity, the Commonwealth War Graves Foundation (CWGF), continues to grow. Their projects such as Eyes On, Hands On, funded by Annington, and the Speakers Programme, funded by the Kantor Foundation, are having a remarkably positive impact on our work in the UK to care for scattered graves and to spread the word of our task as widely as possible.

I hope that you enjoy reading about our progress and are perhaps inspired to support us by joining our Foundation or one of our public engagement activities. I am confident that the future of the CWGC is bright, and I look forward to continuing my own personal journey as the head of this unique and very special organisation. ■

“THE PAGES OF THIS REPORT HIGHLIGHT THE TASK AT HAND. OUR CORE PURPOSE TO COMMEMORATE IN PERPETUITY THE FALLEN OF THE WORLD WARS REMAINS THE SAME.”



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HRH The Duke of Kent and CWGC Director General
Claire Horton CBE during War Graves Week
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THE ANNUAL REPORT
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Welcome to this annual report of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's activities from 2020 to 2021. This report aims to capture and highlight some of 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 immensely 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 the Foundation or one of our volunteering roles.

A HARD LOOK AT HISTORY

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE INTO HISTORICAL INEQUALITIES OF COMMEMORATION

More than 100 years ago, the establishment of the Commission forever changed the way we view and treat the dead of our armed forces.

The work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has maintained a global remembrance landscape that for over a century has helped shape the deeply felt values and culture of commemoration and remembrance we know today.

At its inception, the Commission set out with a clear vision and purpose that “all, whatever their military rank or position in civil life, should have equal treatment in their graves”, but research has brought to light historical failings in our work, with some groups of individuals not receiving the commemoration they richly deserve.

In December 2019, the Commission appointed a Special Committee of independent experts and community representatives to analyse the historical



actions of the Commission within a global context to identify and, wherever possible, correct any gaps in commemoration. Its report made clear that in parts of Africa, the Middle East and India after the First World War, some individuals were not commemorated by name on a memorial or at their grave as we would expect.

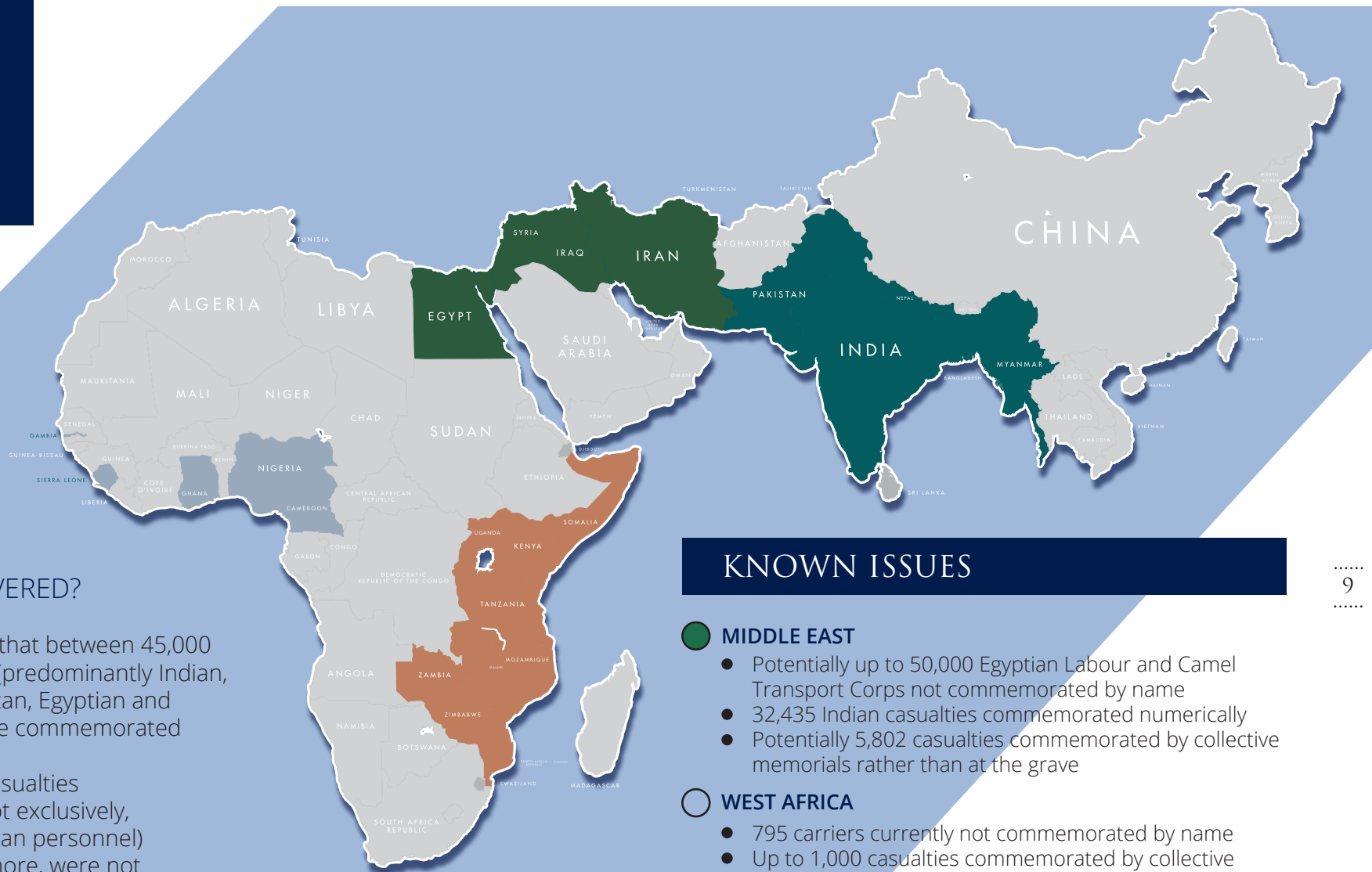
The report of the Special Committee was published in April 2021, with our Chairman and Secretary of State for Defence in the United Kingdom, The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP, making a formal announcement and apology on behalf of the Commission and UK Government, in Parliament.

We welcomed the interest and support of our Chairman and Commissioners, and our newly in post Director General, Claire Horton CBE, lead our apology and response to the significant media and public interest that followed. ■



Although CWGC cemeteries and memorials can be found across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, research has brought to light historical failings in our work in these regions

A HARD LOOK AT HISTORY



WHAT WAS DISCOVERED?

The Committee found that between 45,000 and 54,000 casualties (predominantly Indian, East African, West African, Egyptian and Somali personnel) were commemorated unequally.

A further 116,000 casualties (predominantly, but not exclusively, East African and Egyptian personnel) but potentially many more, were not commemorated by name or possibly not commemorated at all.

The Report identified four regions around the world where these anomalies in commemoration exist.

The report of the Special Committee can be read in full at www.cwgc.org

KNOWN ISSUES

- **MIDDLE EAST**
 - Potentially up to 50,000 Egyptian Labour and Camel Transport Corps not commemorated by name
 - 32,435 Indian casualties commemorated numerically
 - Potentially 5,802 casualties commemorated by collective memorials rather than at the grave
- **WEST AFRICA**
 - 795 carriers currently not commemorated by name
 - Up to 1,000 casualties commemorated by collective memorials rather than at the grave
- **EAST AFRICA**
 - Potentially up to 300,000 African carriers and soldiers not commemorated by name
 - 920 casualties commemorated on collective memorials rather than at the grave
- **PRE-PARTITION INDIA AND MYANMAR**
 - Potentially 4,667 casualties commemorated on collective memorials rather than at the grave



WHY DID THIS HAPPEN?

Conditions and circumstances on the ground in the aftermath of the First World War, including a lack of casualty lists and known places of burial, made our job difficult or even impossible. However, on many occasions differences in commemoration were avoidable.

Ultimately, the Imperial War Graves Commission was responsible for these shortcomings, either because of its own decision making or its complicity in the decision making of others.

In certain circumstances it did not stand by its principles or insist upon them being upheld as happened in Europe.

Administrative errors and prejudiced attitudes also influenced or played a role in bringing about these issues, many of which belonged to departments of the British Imperial government, including the War Office and Colonial Office.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of these findings the Special Committee made ten recommendations for how the Commission should move forward and put right the mistakes of the past.

These recommendations are centred on three key themes:

- Continuing the search for names and acting on what is found
- A renewed commitment to equality of sacrifice through the building of physical or digital commemorative structures.
- The acknowledgement and acceptance of this difficult history and its communication to all the communities of the former British Empire touched by the two World Wars

The recommendations of the Special Committee can be read in full at

www.cwgc.org



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Men and women from around the world and from every background served with distinction in every theatre of the First World War
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**A HARD
 LOOK AT
 HISTORY**

A PROMISE RENEWED

While the findings of this research do not undermine the work of CWGC today, it serves as a reminder that our organisation was not infallible, and the task to preserve the memory of the human cost of the World Wars is far from finished.

We are renewing our commitment to equality in commemoration and over the next five years and beyond, we will right these historic wrongs.

A new project team has been established to oversee the delivery of the Special Committee's recommendations and the ongoing work of the Commission on this topic moving forward. We will continue



the search for names so that we can commemorate as many people as possible, reviewing and amending commemorations policy where needed to allow for the commemoration of individuals known to have served and died but who lack formal documentation.

Where new memorials are required, we will design and build these in conjunction and collaboration with local communities.

Finally, we will use our online presence and wider education activities to reach out to all the communities of the Commonwealth touched by the two World Wars, to make sure their history is better brought to life, recognised, and understood.

The Commission is openly and unreservedly sorry for failing these men and women a hundred years ago. We will not let them down again. ■

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In Kenya we have already begun working to engage with local communities about commemoration and remembrance





OUR GLOBAL OPERATIONS

As the Commission settles into its second century, our devotion to caring for our cemeteries and memorials around the world remains constant. A new century presents new challenges; climate change, an ageing estate, Covid-19 and Brexit. We are committed to sustainably conserving our historic estate and we have the skills, resources, teams and determination to face these challenges. The following section highlights just some of our global operations, showcasing how we are increasing our sustainability, reducing our impact on the environment, conserving our estate, and working with partners around the world to ensure that the fallen are always remembered.



OUR
GLOBAL
OPERATIONS

LOOKING AFTER OUR PLANET IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE OF MODERN TIMES AND WE MUST PLAY OUR PART TOO. WE ARE CONTINUOUSLY LOOKING AT HOW WE CAN REDUCE OUR IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE INCREASING THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR OPERATIONS. IN BELGIUM, WE HAVE TAKEN A NEW SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO KEEPING HEADSTONES CLEAN.



TAKING A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

For decades we have relied on chemical biocides to keep our headstones sparkling white, but while these biocides are an economical and effective tool, they are not environmentally friendly. Equally, those chemicals can over time damage the very stonework we are trying to preserve, while from a purely aesthetic viewpoint, structures should age within their landscape so that they complement and not contrast with their surroundings. The sustainability of our sites is paramount, and as new European Union legislation comes into force banning these products, our team in Belgium have taken a new world-leading approach.

Working with several universities and industry leaders, we have conducted tests over the last four years using enzymes which “eat” the bacteria that discolours the

stone. The results have been extremely positive, and we are very proud of this new approach. We will be expanding the use of enzymes to the UK, the Netherlands and Germany during 2022. We have also begun using them at Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore, where we have seen very heavy biological growth on the headstones following the last monsoon season. We are looking forward to seeing the results in this different climate. ■

Left: Enzyme application at a CWGC cemetery in Belgium
Right: Before and after results of the use of enzymes on a headstone



OUR
GLOBAL
OPERATIONS

EVEN HUMANITY'S
MIGHTIEST OF
STRUCTURES ARE NO
MATCH FOR MOTHER
NATURE. ALL OF OUR
CEMETERIES AND
MEMORIALS ARE AT THE
MERCY OF THE WEATHER,
AND EXTREME CLIMATIC
CONDITIONS CAN CAUSE
MAJOR CHALLENGES.

WHEN LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE

The Singapore Memorial often bears the brunt of monsoon rain and scorching temperatures, but during the winter of 2020, Singapore endured a spike in thunder and lightning storms.

Throughout the period the memorial suffered frequent lightning strikes. Every impact has the potential to cause significant damage, and in places sections of stone were smashed and the memorial scarred black.

We worked to repair the damage to protect the memorial from future storms; a new roof was installed, and repair and other renovation work completed. Most importantly, lightning conductors were fitted to channel the energy safely to the ground, protecting the memorial and visitors for years to come. ■



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Bottom left and right: Stonework at the Singapore Memorial damaged by lightning strikes
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OUR
GLOBAL
OPERATIONS



THIEPVAL: PHASE 2

The restoration of the Thiepval Memorial on the Somme in France is one of the largest and most complex conservation projects we have undertaken in recent years.

Phase 1 of restoring Sir Edwin Lutyens' masterpiece was completed in 2016, and in March 2021, we began Phase 2. This second period of work will upgrade the memorial's internal drainage and waterproofing, restore the vast Portland stone name panels, and repair the detailed artistic paving. Significantly, we are also tackling the challenging problem of the external skin of brick coming away from the internal concrete core of the memorial. Thousands of brick ties are being installed but the only way for us to undertake this work effectively and safely is with scaffolding. This means that until the work is completed in 2022, the memorial is closed to the public.

Throughout this period we are encouraging visitors to continue to visit Thiepval and use a new ground-breaking on-site digital exhibition. The exhibition - In the Shadow of Thiepval - can be explored for free using a mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet, and tells the story of the Battle of the Somme, the memorial's construction, and the men commemorated here. It also provides visitors with updates on the progress of the work. ■

WE ARE ONLY THE CURRENT CUSTODIANS OF OUR CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS. OUR CONSERVATION APPROACH TO MAINTENANCE ENSURES THAT WE RESPECT THE DESIGN DECISIONS OF THE PAST WHILE EFFECTIVELY PRESERVING OUR HISTORIC ESTATE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME. IN FRANCE WE CURRENTLY HAVE TWO MAJOR CONSERVATION PROJECTS UNDERWAY.



Thiepval Memorial under scaffolding for Phase 2 of restoration works

OUR
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LA FERTÉ SOUS JOUARRE RESTORATION

Far from the tourist trails on the Somme and Flanders Fields, the La Ferté Sous Jouarre Memorial is one of the least well-known masterpieces in our care. In April 2021, we began a nine-month project to renovate, restore and repair this memorial.

Located beside a busy road on the banks of the River Marne, the memorial has suffered from pollution and weathering over the decades. We are cleaning and repairing the elegant and impressive Portland stone external features, but the vast majority of the work will take place out of sight. Beneath the memorial is a deep basement and we will be building a new retaining wall, repairing minor damage, and improving the drainage system that draws water away from the foundations.

To raise the memorial's profile, we've worked with a local school in La Ferté to create a new exhibition. Displayed on the temporary fencing erected around the memorial during the works, these young historians have explored the important role of the memorial in preserving local and international history. ■



*Above: La Ferté Sous Jouarre Memorial under scaffolding.
Left: Detailed sculptures on the memorial have been weathered but will now be cleaned and restored
Below: Local school children during the unveiling of their exhibition at La Ferté*



OUR
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OPERATIONS



AT THE HEART OF OUR TASK IS THE COMMEMORATION OF THE FALLEN. EVERY NAME UPON A HEADSTONE OR MEMORIAL IS AN INDIVIDUAL REMEMBERED, A STORY TOLD. WE ARE ALWAYS HARD AT WORK TO ENSURE THAT OUR MEMORIALS ARE UP TO DATE AND OUR HEADSTONES ARE LEGIBLE.



MERCHANT SAILORS REMEMBERED

We receive thousands of submissions to amend or add a name to our roll of honour each year. While our online records can be quickly updated, our teams must carefully plan how each amendment or addition can be made, but some memorials are easier to work on than others.

In March 2021, we added seven new names and amended a further sixteen on the Tower Hill Memorial in central London. Designed by Lutyens, the names of the missing are displayed on bronze panels upon the walls of this Grade I listed masterpiece. Each amendment requires an expert touch; new letters are cast using 3D scans from the memorial to ensure an accurate match, and incorrect letters are then removed by hand using a hammer and chisel. The surface is then cleaned and prepared before a new letter is soldered in place. ■



Bottom left: Amendments to the names on the Tower Hill Naval Memorial in central London

OUR
GLOBAL
OPERATIONS

Right: Stonemason Alastair Goodall places a newly amended grave marker upon a grave at Cliveden, UK



NEW STONE FOR AN ITALIAN-GARDEN-STYLE CEMETERY

Some of our sites are vast and dramatic, others small and intimate. Cliveden War Cemetery falls squarely within the latter category.

This tiny sunken Italian-garden-style cemetery is tucked into a corner of the Cliveden estate. There are just 44 war graves here, each marked by an unusual recumbent stone. In July 2021, we replaced two headstones that were damaged beyond repair with specially sourced Crossland Hill sandstone. Cut to shape and engraved by our team in France, they were then given lead lettering and finishing touches to match the site's characteristics by our stonemasons in England.

A further six headstones were carefully repaired to allow amendments to their inscriptions. Rather than replace historic stonework, our masons carved out the damaged or incorrect sections, adding a new stone insert, and re-engraving the lettering by hand. This approach reduces our use of finite natural resources while keeping the original stone that perhaps loved ones have visited many times over the years. ■





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PRIVATE
J MOROGE
AFRICAN
EDUCATIONAL CORPS
AUGUST 1943



OUR
GLOBAL
OPERATIONS

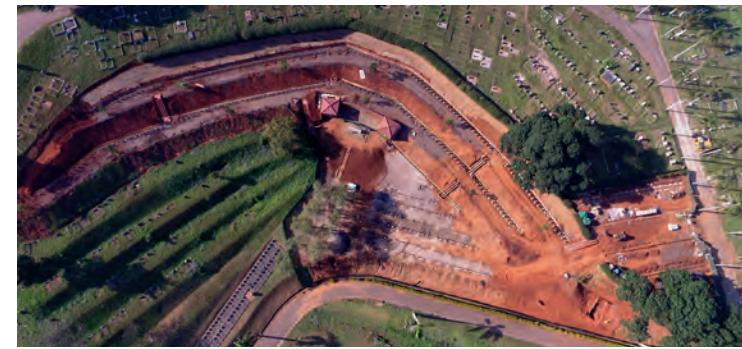
ENGINEERING
A LONG-TERM SOLUTION

Around the world we are working to reduce our water usage. In Durban (Stellawood) Cemetery, in South Africa, limited water supply is a major issue in our day-to-day work. Ironically, in April 2019, it was heavy rainfall that became the issue as water overwhelmed nearby storm drains, causing damage to a significant portion of our plot.

While a team of engineers undertook major engineering work to stabilise the site permanently, we took the opportunity to install an efficient new irrigation system and a borehole to supply water. This will provide the cemetery with a self-sufficient water supply that will reduce the use of local municipality water. Once the work is complete, the entire site will be replanted with drought resistant, indigenous plants.

In Egypt, our cemetery at El Alamein endures scorching hot desert conditions, and maintaining horticulture here is a problem faced by our team.

In autumn 2020, we restored the original cemetery drainage channels and 1950s water pump room. Over the winter months water will be collected in an underground tank and stored for when it is needed during the hot summer months. While this won't provide us with water for the entire dry season, it will reduce our consumption of municipal water by almost a third - a significant amount in a country where water is a precious asset. ■



WATER IS A VITAL NATURAL RESOURCE. OFTEN, OUR CHALLENGE IS TO REDUCE OUR WATER NEEDS AND OUR RELIANCE ON LIMITED LOCAL SOURCES, BUT NOT ALWAYS...

Left: Our team undertake finishing work to the water channels in El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt
Top right: The scale of the effect of the landslide in Durban (Stellawood) Cemetery can be clearly seen here
Right centre & bottom: Work underway to install new water tanks and a borehole at Durban (Stellawood) Cemetery

OUR
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The dramatic effects of heavy monsoon rain at Imphal Indian Army War Cemetery

IT NEVER RAINS, IT POURS!

Sometimes water challenges aren't because of a lack of water. Imphal Indian Army War Cemetery in Manipur State, North-East India, suffers from severe flash flooding during the Monsoon season each year. The flooding often leaves the cemetery under water for extended periods, damaging horticulture and structures, and preventing pilgrims from visiting graves.

In November 2020, we completed a project to build a new flood defence wall and install an underground drainage system. The new defences have proved to be a resounding success, and since their completion the cemetery hasn't flooded once.■

.....
OUR
GLOBAL
OPERATIONS
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A NEW LEGACY IN IRAQ

Over the last few years, we have been making a steady and cautious return to Iraq. We commemorate more than 54,000 personnel at 19 locations across the country, and years of forced absence led to a steady deterioration of these sites. We have a huge task ahead, but with local cooperation and support, and the ongoing generous support of Commonwealth Governments, we will restore them to their former glory.



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Bagdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, Iraq, is one of our largest First World War cemeteries in the world



Our most recent success has come at Bagdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, where we have completed our first extensive survey into the condition of the headstones in decades. Despite many local challenges, including 50-degree heat, Covid-19, and changing security conditions, our local team has done a fantastic job to process huge quantities of coordinates and images. Many headstones have degraded significantly due to the heat and the corrosive saline deposits in the soil, and the next step will be to replace more than 1,500 headstones. ■

GOOD NEWS IS ALWAYS WELCOME, AND THIS YEAR WITH THE HELP OF NUMEROUS INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, ORGANISATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE PROGRESS AT LOCATIONS THAT FOR MANY YEARS HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT OR EVEN IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO WORK AT.

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OUR
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GOOD NEWS FROM IRAN

Tehran War Cemetery isn't on many tourist trails. This cemetery in the heart of Tehran, adjacent to the UK Embassy compound, is perhaps one of the most challenging places for us to work. Due to circumstances beyond our control, it has been difficult for our team to enter the country and to make progress with maintenance.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, however, Samineh Makki, our newly appointed Supervisor, is helping us to start a new chapter. Stonework in the cemetery is being cleaned, a new permanent gardener appointed, and a new operational base site building constructed. Further planned work includes a complete horticultural renovation and the installation of a new irrigation system. We are also looking to replace a number of headstones, and look forward to the day when we might welcome visitors back to this site. ■



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Above and left: Our new Supervisor Samineh Makki, has been working to restore Tehran War Cemetery
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OUR
GLOBAL
OPERATIONS



WE DO NOT WORK IN ISOLATION. WE RELY ON SUPPORT FROM PARTNERS AROUND THE WORLD AND IN TURN OUR VALUED EXPERTISE IS OFTEN SOUGHT AFTER AND WILLINGLY GIVEN.

Left: Agency work being undertaken on military graves in Pembroke Dock Military Cemetery, UK
Right: The recently unveiled British Normandy Memorial, France

OUR AGENCY WORK

Our core work to maintain the graves and memorials of the fallen of the World Wars keeps our teams more than busy. However, the Commission is often approached to provide support and expertise on other projects. This work is coordinated by our Agency Services department and is often varied and challenging.

One of the most high-profile projects we have undertaken this year is the maintenance of the new British Normandy Memorial in Calvados, France. Few events conjure up images of courage and sacrifice like the D-Day landings and the battle to liberate France during the Second World War. In June 2021, the men and women who fought and died in Normandy were honoured with a new memorial

overlooking Gold Beach, where British troops came ashore on 6 June 1944.

Built by the British Normandy Memorial Trust following a successful fundraising campaign, we were appointed to ensure the memorial's upkeep in the coming years. Our gardeners, stonemasons and other specialist staff will ensure the British Normandy Memorial remains a fitting place for families and visitors to pay their respects.

In the UK, the LIBOR grant has seen the Agency team coordinate the renovation of over 6,000 graves in cemeteries across the country on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. Phase one of this project was successfully completed in 2018, and Phase two is now underway at six further locations.

In Green Park, London, maintaining a beautiful water feature in the shadow of Buckingham Palace sounds like a dream job, but Covid-19 and a wet and cold winter presented the team with many challenges as they worked to restore the water system in the Canada Memorial on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada. Working closely with the Royal Parks and with a specialist supplier, the magnificent memorial to Canadian forces is now back in full working order.

These projects maintain and build our partnerships with groups, organisations and governments around the world. We are proud that our expertise is so highly valued and sought after. ■

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EDUCATION AND OUTREACH
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Our core maintenance work ensures our sites of remembrance are there for new generations to discover. But we can't just wait for them to be stumbled across. Education and outreach are vital if we and remembrance are to remain relevant; the digital world allows us to maintain a connection when our audience cannot travel, volunteering creates thousands of ambassadors who truly understand the task at hand, and by engaging the next generation through partnerships, we can ensure the stories of those we commemorate live on. While our work will always be year-round, special occasions help boost our public profile, and the creation of our own War Graves Week offers us a platform to shape the way we want to interact with our public.



.....
EDUCATION
AND
OUTREACH
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“THROUGHOUT 2021, WE HAVE WORKED HARD TO HIGHLIGHT OUR OFTEN-OVERLOOKED WORK IN THE UK.”
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CELEBRATING OUR WORK

We commemorate over 300,000 service personnel across the UK at more than 13,000 locations, from lone graves in local churchyards to vast memorials to the missing. Throughout 2021, we have worked hard to highlight our often-overlooked work in the UK.

In February, we began by launching the Our War Graves, Your History portal on our website. The Portal celebrates our teams across the UK and highlights our 13 fantastic Public Engagement Coordinators. It also showcases in detail the history of 70 of our sites and provides an amazing variety of ways that the public can discover and explore cemeteries near them with self-guided tours and suggested activities. We were delighted to see that during the first few months since its launch,

over 20,000 people viewed the rich and extensive content.

The following month we relaunched our updated and rejuvenated CWGC app, highlighting it through the Portal and with an extensive social media campaign. The app is the perfect tool for finding our sites, particularly in the UK, where many don't realise that there is probably a war grave in their local cemetery or churchyard. To date the app has over 15,000 users.

The groundwork done by the Portal and the app culminated in our first ever War Graves Week. During a busy week, which began on 21 May, we welcomed almost 1,500 people to eight major events at cemeteries and memorials across the UK, with hundreds more joining volunteer led tours at locations across the country.



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We were proud to welcome hundreds of visitors to Brookwood Military Cemetery where our first ever War Graves Week began in May 2021
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While Covid-19 inevitably restricted some of our planned on-the-ground activity, our digital channels and website had amazing engagement throughout the week. A digital highlight was a newly launched postcode search, where the public could search our database and, for the first time, see where the loved ones of our First World War dead lived after the war, being taken to their street via Google Maps. More than 50,000 people logged on and thousands then downloaded a special tribute to show their support.

We're looking forward to next year when we will be taking a bigger, better, and hopefully Covid-19 free War Graves Week global. Watch this space! ■

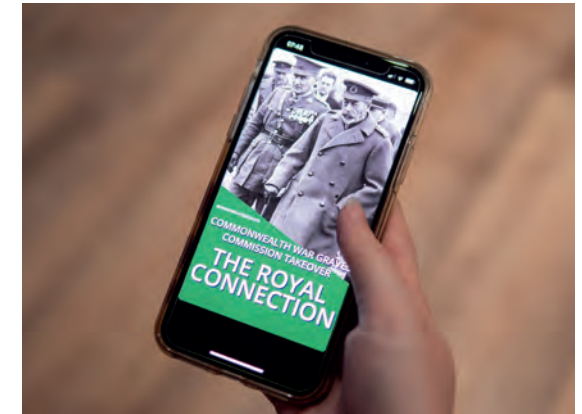


Top right: Students from local schools learned about the work of the CWGC during a visit to the Plymouth Naval Memorial during War Graves Week

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“SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BEEN KING OVER LOCKDOWN, AND WE HAD SOME AMAZING SUCCESS.”
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IT'S AN AWARD-WINNING DIGITAL WORLD

The future is bright, the future is digital, and we have been hard at work creating, updating, and developing our public and internal websites, our app, and have been working on new and exciting digital partnerships.

Social media has been king over lockdown, and we had some amazing success. Just one example was in the period leading up to Armistice Day 2020, when we undertook a takeover of the Royal Family's Instagram account, which has over 8 million followers. Our content was seen by over 1.8 million people, and the takeover led directly to 500 new followers for the Commission own Instagram account.

A digital highlight of the year was a collaboration with the National Museum of the Royal Navy, the National Army Museum and the Royal Air Force Museum which delivered a series of digital events to celebrate VE Day 2020, after Covid-19 ruled out more traditional celebrations. The festival programme featured a Tri-Service Debate with a live Q&A, live swing dancing sessions, stories from the archive, sing-along concerts and live discussions with authors. We were delighted when the project was highly commended in the Partnership of the Year category at this year's Museum and Heritage Awards.

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*Above: Our partnership with the Tri-Service Museums was highly commended at the Museum and Heritage Awards
Right: Our takeover of the Royal Family Instagram led to more than 500 new CWGC Instagram followers*

Following the great success of the VE Day celebrations, we then joined with the Tri-Service Museum partnership to create another selection of curators talks, blogs, archive footage, podcasts and debates, accessible online around the world, to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of VJ Day.

Internally, we have developed a new intranet site, The Hub. Launched at the beginning of 2021, The Hub provides an online social space for our teams around the world to share news and ideas, and to store relevant documents and files for everyone's use. This new tool has been especially timely with teams working from home. ■

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Above: Royal Air Force Air Cadets during a visit to Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery during War Graves Week undertook a special live broadcast to tell the stories of those commemorated
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THE NEXT GENERATION

The torch of remembrance has been taken up by a new generation this year though our partnership with the Royal Air Force Air Cadets.

There are more than 58,000 Royal Air Force personnel buried or commemorated in the UK, and the Air Cadets have been discovering and remembering them.

Over 3,000 cadets from squadrons based across the UK have taken up the task. Each participating squadron has welcomed a Commission volunteer who introduces our work and gives some important hints about researching air force stories local to them.

Thousands of fallen personnel have been researched and written about by the cadets, and as Covid-19 restrictions eased, many made a pilgrimage to a Commission grave to lay a tribute and pay their respects. Each cadet receives an award for taking part and we will be holding an award ceremony to showcase the best research and engagement projects created by these young people.■





A special mention must go to our volunteer tour guides, who have researched, written, and delivered engaging and educational tours of our sites all over the UK. During War Graves Week alone, volunteers delivered over 100 tours at 40 locations across the UK.

In the past our volunteering activity has grown organically, but over the last year we have been focusing on volunteering as a whole, drawing the strands of each activity together so that volunteers feel part of a wider team rather than just a volunteer for a particular project. To create this community feel we now have a volunteering newsletter and regular webinars, where we bring all our volunteers together and update them on what's happening across the Commission. We are also excited to be launching an award programme that will recognise volunteers who have gone above and beyond.

We now have an amazing foundation of committed, knowledgeable and enthusiastic volunteers and we look forward to welcoming many more individuals in the near future. ■

Volunteers at CWGC sites across the UK spread the word about the work of the CWGC



EDUCATION
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SHINE ON

In recognition that 11 November 2020 would be an Armistice Day like no other, we created #ShineOn – an inclusive, accessible, digital Remembrance event completely free and open to all.

Through a virtual experience on the Commission website, making use of our existing extensive records and search facility, the public were encouraged to name stars after one of the over 1.7 million Commonwealth war dead in our care, and then to take a moment at 7pm on 11 November 2020 to step outside their homes, look up to the stars, and remember the fallen. Over 9,000 stars were named, and 52,000 people visited the Shine On section of the website to discover more.

Right: Led by Social Media Manager Scott Smith, a special Facebook Live broadcast showcased CWGC Shine On events across the country on 11 November 2020



In four key locations – the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey, Cardiff (Cathays) Cemetery and Edinburgh (Rosebank) Cemetery – searchlights beamed light into the Armistice night sky in a symbolic gesture that the light of remembrance, even in dark times, will never be extinguished. The public response was overwhelmingly positive and over 400 people watched the live broadcast of the event on the CWGC Facebook page, which has since been viewed more than 21,000 times. ■



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



THE COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES FOUNDATION (CWGF)

Covid-19 has severely affected the entire charitable sector, with events curtailed and significant falls in monetary donations. Our own Foundation was not immune, but we are extremely pleased that membership numbers continued to grow apace, increasing by 48% over the year.

This increase leads directly to the Foundation's ability to grow and support our ongoing projects – the Kantor Speakers program and the Eyes On, Hands On programme, supported by Annington Homes – and to hopefully restart the much-missed CWGF Interns programme.

Our Eyes On, Hands On programme



Above: Eyes On, Hands On volunteers get to work inspecting and cleaning headstone around the UK

now has nearly 2,000 volunteers who keep a watchful eye over war graves local to them, keep them clean, and report any damage to us. The pandemic put an immediate halt to their work, but we are pleased that there was no loss of enthusiasm from volunteers, with many continuing to visit war graves while on their one allotted venture out per day. As restrictions end, we look forward to having them back in the cemeteries.

For the Kantor Speakers programme, lockdown turned out to be a blessing in disguise with groups, schools and clubs all adapting to allow our speakers to give

online lectures. As such, the programme is going from strength to strength, and more than 165 talks have been given by our ever-growing team of volunteers. As restrictions end, we are looking forward to returning to face-to-face meetings.

We are looking forward to jumpstarting our important work over the next year. ■

COMMEMORATIONS

THE HUMAN REMINDER

Despite the growing distance from the wars that began our work, every generation of Commission staff encounters the human reminders of their cost.

More than a century after the end of the First World War, remains continue to be found, graves are identified and cases of non-commemoration are accepted.

We continue to assist our member nations to rebury and rededicate service personnel thought previously lost to the battlefield. The long-term cancellation of events has meant the postponement of the moving ceremonies that would normally take place. But the quiet work that goes on behind the scenes continues apace.

During the year, despite Covid-19 restrictions on activity, 61 casualties were recovered, with the majority located in France. As remains continue to be found in increasing numbers year-on-year, we have recently welcomed two new members of staff who will lead on recovery and identification of remains; Lorelai Margely-Lardeyret, who takes up the role of CWGC anthropologist, and Stephan Naji, as Head of the Recovery Unit in Beaurains.

“MORE THAN A CENTURY AFTER THE END OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR, REMAINS CONTINUE TO BE FOUND, GRAVES ARE IDENTIFIED AND CASES OF NON-COMMEMORATION ARE ACCEPTED.”

All of this is supported by our UK-based Commemorations team who investigate and assess cases. Desk-based research, including our unique archive, supports the adjudication of cases and has contributed to 25 ‘unknown’ graves being successfully identified in the last 12 months.

Alongside the work of recovery and reburial, we continue to investigate cases of casualties who may be eligible for commemoration. In the last year, 498 casualties were accepted and work is ongoing to locate and mark their graves or add their names to the appropriate memorial.

So, despite the challenges, we continue. Headstones are produced and families are supported to make choices for their loved one’s commemoration. Grave locations are found, and burial locations are meticulously selected to reunite those who served and died together, even a century later.

With the hope of slowly easing travel restrictions, it will not be long until we can gather once again, to support our member nations as they pay tribute to one of their own.■



CWGF Interns direct visitors to the names of the missing on the Thiepval Memorial, France

OUR PEOPLE

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE AND COMMITMENT

Our work is only possible because of the dedicated people around the world who make up the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Their expertise and commitment are clear to see at the sites they lovingly care for. It is also seen in our low staff turnover.

For many, this organisation and its purpose becomes a life's calling. We currently employ 1,284 staff around the world, with a total of 17,887 years of experience between them. On average our staff have been with us for just under 14 years.



PERUMAL'S MANAGERS DESCRIBE HIM AS "A QUIET FAMILY MAN, A REAL GENTLEMAN, AND SOMEONE WHO GARNERS GREAT RESPECT ACROSS OUR INDIAN TEAM."

This year alone we awarded 169 one-year, 70 five-year, 50 ten-year, 37 twenty-year, 34 thirty-year and 6 forty-year long service awards to staff in recognition of their dedication and loyalty to the CWGC.

They include Perumal Venkatraman, our Head Gardener in Madras War Cemetery, who was also recently awarded the British Empire Medal by HM The Queen.

For more than 30 years he has tended to this cemetery in the face of regular flood waters and other climatic challenges.

He is just one example of a lifetime dedicated to our cause. ■

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 : Above: Head Gardener Perumal Venkatraman BEM
 : Below left: Public Engagement Coordinator Will Reed presents a story at the Runnymede Air Forces Memorial, UK
 : Below centre: Left to right, Geert De Ruddere, Chris Truant, Jeffrey Ketels, Marco Dehollander, Bedford House Cemetery, Belgium
 : Below right: Irene Wairimu tends to the borders in Nairobi War Cemetery



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IN PERPETUITY
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Our founding fathers faced seemingly insurmountable challenges to establish our remarkable organisation. Today, we are the custodians of that legacy, but the challenges of the past will not be the challenges of the future. We are resolute in our commitment to ensure that the fallen of the World Wars will be remembered.

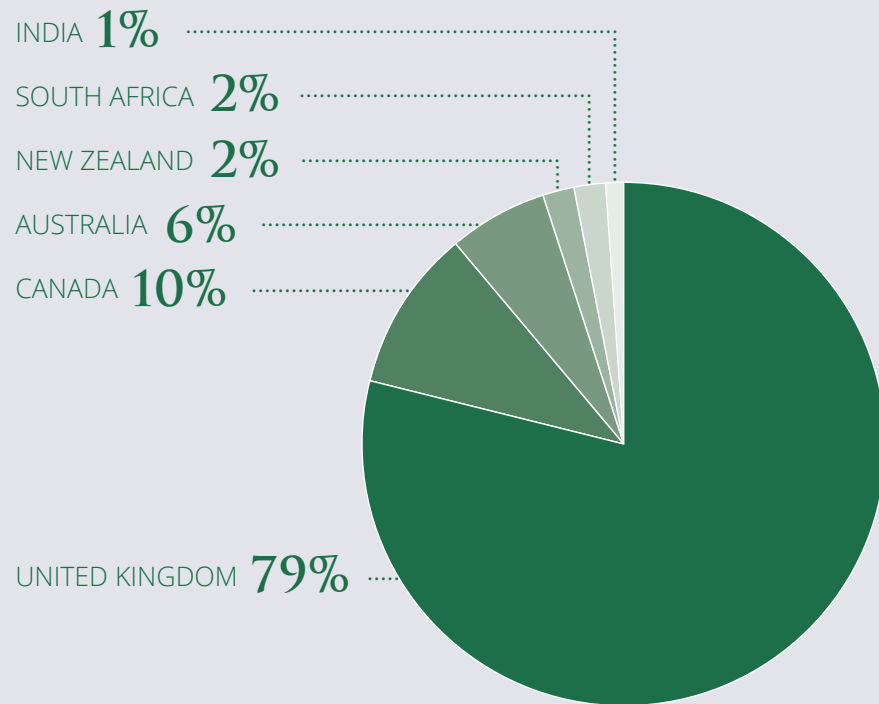
We will continue to grow and adapt, to strive for excellence, and to be and remain world leaders in conservation, sustainability, communication and education.

Our task remains, as it always was, to honour the fallen. We are now renewing our promise to them, their loved ones and our member governments, that, through our work, we will ensure that their name truly does live for evermore.

CWGC FINANCIAL SUMMARY

£74.5M

TOTAL CONSOLIDATED INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 2021



PERCENTAGES OF CONTRIBUTIONS
BEING MADE BY
PARTNER GOVERNMENTS

The Commission was established by Royal Charter in 1917, and some £70 million was spent during the year in ensuring the over 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, the Commission's income for the year ended March 2021 was £74.5 million, which was in line with the reported income for 2020. Member government contributions comprised 89%, £66.1 million, of the year's total income.

The Commission spent less than it had budgeted during the year due to the impact and restrictions arising from Covid-19 on its operations: this resulted in a year-on-year fall of 2.8% in its consolidated expenditures to £70.3 million.

The financial outcome for the year was net income, before pension scheme adjustments and deficit payments, of £4.2 million: this exceeded the budgeted target of £0.7m due to below budget expenditures on items such as travel, structural projects, and recruitment of personnel, which experienced lower levels of activity due to the pandemic.

The Commission's consolidated balance sheet position reports a net deficit position of £11.8m. This deficit is a result of the pension scheme, which has an accounting deficit of £34.2m. A long-term funding plan has been agreed by the Commission with the pension scheme trustees to fund the pension scheme's agreed actuarial deficit.

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	39,118	23,201	28,603	12,093	67,721	35,294	103,015
Canadian	45,603	19,400	37,317	8,072	82,920	27,472	110,392
Indian	8,237	65,691	18,228	68,798	26,465	134,489	160,954
New Zealand	11,772	6,298	9,040	2,886	20,812	9,184	29,996
South African	6,772	4,778	10,030	1,882	16,802	6,660	23,462
United Kingdom	481,333	407,612	245,025	138,869	726,358	546,481	1,272,839
Total	592,835	526,980	348,243	232,600	941,078	759,580	1,700,658 *

* As a result of our investigations into historical cases of non-commemoration, this figure is likely to change

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 civilians 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.

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

This includes:

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

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COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES



FRONT COVER IMAGE:

*Head Gardener Jeffrey Ketels tends to horticulture in
Bedford House Cemetery, Belgium*

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 Covid-19 and therefore do not show the current social distancing advice being followed.

www.cwgc.org

