

**HISTORICAL CASES OF NON-COMMEMORATION  
PROGRESS REPORT**

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The Commonwealth War Graves Commission

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[www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

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## HEADLINES

In this, our second quarterly update since the publication of the Special Committee report into historical cases of non-commemoration, we are pleased to report that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) continues to make progress against the committee's ten recommendations. This quarter's headlines are...

- Polling survey. To better understand engagement and awareness levels among our target audiences, and the channels they mostly engage with, CWGC commissioned YouGov to poll representative groups in the UK, India and Kenya. The results are informative (**ANNEX A**) and will form a base against which CWGC will chart progress over the next five years.
- Two additional staff have been recruited in Kenya as a Field Team Co-ordinator and Field Researcher. They will be key in delivering on our commitment to engage communities, and in searching for sites of potential interest – including third-party memorials or potential individual or mass burial locations.
- Priority has been given to the search for names and work in archives in the UK, Kenya and Tanzania is progressing. The initial euphoria of discovering more than 5,000 names in the Adjutant General papers within the National Archives in the UK, has been tempered by more modest finds in Kenya and elsewhere.
- To date, **6,065 names** of men predominantly from East Africa have been found. More than **2,400 of these have been verified and added to CWGC's records**. The newly revised policy is proving successful for adjudicating these cases.
- CWGC is progressing the necessary steps to discuss collaboration with local stakeholders in relation to third-party memorials in Africa that include names not currently held in our records. We have also progressed partnerships with local communities at memorials sites in Kwale, Kenya.
- Partnerships in Africa, India and the United Kingdom are already delivering on the promise of engaging communities with the culture, heritage, and stories of those not commemorated, as well as the wider contribution of those who served. We have held our first education outreach event at Kariokor in Nairobi with local students in the age range of 10 – 14. The event, and the learning outcomes from it, will be rolled out more widely.

# SPECIFIC PROGRESS AGAINST THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE'S TEN RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. Ongoing commitment to continue the search for the unnamed war dead and those potentially not commemorated:

The search for the names of those not commemorated stands at the core of this project. Until we know how many names we may or may not find, it is difficult to quantify what our physical or digital commemoration programme might look like.

Through detailed research we are achieving a better understanding of the scale of loss and equally important, the historical context around the contribution these individuals made, and the decisions taken that led to their non-commemoration. For example, following research at The National Archives in the UK, we are increasingly confident that the total number of Egyptian Labour Corps and Camel Transport Corps personnel who died during the First World War sits at the lower, but no less significant, end of our original estimate – this means 16,000 individuals rather than 50,000 plus. We also have greater clarity on why the names of these men were not available to the Commission in the post-war period.

**It is, however, important to manage expectations around the probability of recovering all the names we know to be missing from our records.** After an initial large, single discovery of names within the UK National Archives, searches elsewhere have not yet proved so fruitful. **Names are still being found and will likely continue to be found, but they are in smaller numbers.**

- In Kenya, working in partnership with National Museums of Kenya, we recruited a skilled local team to search the Kenya National Archives. This initial search has yielded valuable contextual information and several isolated lists of names, but there has so far been no single large-scale discovery that compares to the material already found in the UK.
- In Tanzania, the British Embassy, British Council and the University of Dar es Salaam, have facilitated access to archives and documents held by the Tanzania National Archives. CWGC has recruited a skilled researcher to explore these records and work is underway.
- As an interim measure, accepted names of newly commemorated war dead will be recorded online and physically in Rolls of Honour to be held at CWGC's Head Office and in the countries to which they relate, pending discussions with local communities as to what form and location physical commemoration might take. **The Iraq Roll of Honour is already online at [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) and work is underway on a similar roll for Sierra Leone.**

## 2. Flexibility in evidence criteria for specific non-commemoration cases:

- The newly created policy and set of guidelines is working well and the evaluation process for newly discovered cases is progressing in a timely and considered fashion.

## 3. Establish an Expert Advisory Panel:

The benefit of external expert voices was proven by the work of the Special Committee.

- Since the publication of the report, CWGC **received more than 150** offers of assistance from individuals, institutions and associations. Each was assessed for their level of interest and potential benefit to the project and many are now actively involved in our work – be it on a research or community engagement level.
- **The structure and terms of reference for the Advisory Panel have been agreed** and an expert, diverse and global list of potential candidates agreed. Invitations to membership will be sent shortly.

## 4. Community engagement and education:

- CWGC, in partnership with several organisations (including Black Poppy Rose, The Royal Air Force, British Army, British Council, University of Dar, and others) **delivered a series of events for Black History Month** in addition to content across all CWGC digital channels.
- Highly successful events were held to mark the contribution of West Indian and Caribbean service personnel at Seaford in Sussex and the Air Forces Memorial, Runnymede.
- An event at Runnymede with Arts Asia explored the remarkable story of Noor Inayat Khan GC and the contribution of South Asian service personnel.
- An event at the Hollybrook Memorial in Southampton highlighted the contribution and sacrifices of South Africans during the First World War with a series of talks and site tours.
- At Kariokor in Nairobi, CWGC held its first education event in Africa. Local students visited the cemetery and took part in activities designed to give them a better understanding of Kenya's role in the world wars and the diversity of those who served. The response from the students and teachers was positive and the intention is to role the activity out more widely to make use of other CWGC sites in Kenya and Tanzania.
- Partnering with the University of Dar, the British Council and British High Commission in Tanzania, CWGC delivered an online seminar about our work on commemoration and to discuss more widely with veterans' groups and others, how we might raise awareness of the contribution of Africans to the world wars.
- A Remembrance assembly presentation with supporting classroom resources, designed specifically to explore themes around inclusive and Commonwealth remembrance was created and mailed to 34,000 educators.

## 5. Community engagement and education:

- CWGC continues to share more details of the work to rectify the issues identified in the Special Committee report. Regular updates on numbers and cases of new commemorations, as well as features on engagement and the search for names, are shared across all CWGC digital channels and stakeholder newsletters. Internal briefings ensure all staff remain informed and engaged.

## 6. Digital rather than physical commemoration:

CWGC is implementing a developmental approach to all work and is committed to co-creating with affected communities, digital and physical commemorative resources, spaces, and structures. The form and scale will be dictated by the search for names, and should large numbers of names prove impossible to find, the broader importance of capturing and telling stories, will increase.

- **Within 12 months**, CWGC will deliver a plan on how the stories of those not commemorated, as well as the wider stories of those who served, might be captured, stored, and promoted across our digital channels.
- **By January 2022** we will have costed and sought funding, through our charitable Foundation, for an oral histories project aimed at capturing the stories of the remaining African world war veterans and the families of those who had relatives that served in those conflicts. It is planned to deliver the project in partnership with several African education and heritage institutions.
- CWGC's **#Remembrancels** campaign was designed around starting a more inclusive discussion about what remembrance means to people around the Commonwealth. With contributions from people all over the world it is our aim to build on this in future years to explore how diverse communities might want evolve remembrance to ensure its future relevance to their young generations.

## 7. Context panels for existing memorials:

- A review of all existing CWGC memorials to the missing is underway. Any that do not meet the stated core principles of the organisation, that cannot be corrected, will have their historical flaws fully and honestly explained on contextual panels. The production of contextual panels will be phased and **completed by the end of 2024**.

## 8. Inscription of recovered names on existing memorials:

- The Iraq Roll of Honour, containing the names of more than 40,000 Commonwealth war dead and currently held in book form at CWGC's Head Office, has **been digitised and made available online** at [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)
- Research into potential additional names for inclusion on existing CWGC memorials is ongoing.

## 9. Adoption of third-party memorials:

- **By Autumn 2022**, CWGC will establish clarity of the ownership of the third-party memorials with the aim of partnering with the relevant local stakeholders and permanently preserving them. Work has already started to ascertain the legal ownership of the Kings African Rifles Memorial at Zomba in Malawi.
- At Mwele Ndogo in Kwale of Kenya, a memorial to **14 members** of the Arab Rifles, previously not commemorated by the CWGC, has been identified and discussions with the local community are advanced. CWGC has engaged with the village elders at this remote location, with a view to securing the long-term future of the memorial and capturing the oral histories of the events which led to its creation.
- The names of the 14 men have been accepted for commemoration and added to CWGC's records.

## 10. New memorials or commemorative structures:

- Where there are new memorials required, the CWGC will design and build these in conjunction and collaboration with local communities.
- The names of **933 individuals** – predominantly Sierra Leone casualties who died while serving with British forces during the First World War – will be added to a ***new memorial in Freetown within the next 24 months***.
- The newly in post Operational Manager has engaged a local heritage expert and they are working to identify and map local stakeholders. **This work will be key in determining both the form and location of the new memorial.**
- **In the interim, the names have been added to a Book of Remembrance** – copies of which will be made available in Sierra Leone and at the CWGC in Maidenhead and online at [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)
- **In South Africa, work has begun on a Public Participation Process for the proposed Cape Town Memorial.** This is a legal requirement of the planning process and is designed to ensure stakeholders nationwide have a voice in the memorial's construction. The Public Participation Process is **on target for completion by end of December.**

DATE OF NEXT REPORT: 1 March 2022

