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COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
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.....
NON-COMMEMORATION PROGRAMME
YEAR TWO ANNUAL REVIEW 2023
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**THE COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION**
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NON-COMMEMORATION PROGRAMME TEAM:

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INTERNAL SPONSOR

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STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Peter Francis

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*Carriers transporting stores across the
Chambeshi River © IWM Q 103654*
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INTRODUCTION

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Our programme to address historical inequalities in commemoration of casualties is the single biggest piece of commemorations work for the Commission since the construction of the Second World War cemeteries. This Review documents our second year of an agreed five-year global programme of intensive work to address these inequalities.

In the past year, the global and multi-faceted projects sitting within the Non-Commemorations Programme, have moved forward well. Our historical research team are finding names and identifying burial locations whilst, at the same time, our operations and in-country

specialists are consulting on participatory memorialisation. We remain in constant – and deeply rewarding – dialogue with locally affected communities, local and national Governments, as well as global heritage, research, and operations experts.

From the Menin Gate in Ypres to India Gate in New Delhi, from tiny cemeteries containing just a handful of graves to those with more than 11,000 burials, the Commission tends to some of the most iconic architectural structures in the world to ensure the memory of those who died in the two World Wars is preserved with respect in perpetuity.



Our iconic memorials around the world were designed by some of the world's most pre-eminent architects of the time; this year, we were honoured to continue our tradition of working with architects of global renown when we welcomed RIBA Gold medal winning architect Sir David Adjaye OBE OM as Creative Advisor to the programme. Sir David's unparalleled expertise in monuments, memorials, and complex places of public memory will enable us to realise our plans to create the next generation of memorials.

Oral histories provide an important dimension. Our teams actively search for, meet and interview veterans and

descendants of both World Wars. It is not unusual to hear stories from former soldiers, but voices like the ones we encounter from communities are heard less often.

We have made important progress and carefully defined new approaches to fieldwork and methodology, memorialisation, and commemorative structures. We will honour our absolute commitment to act now and remember all those who gave their lives and were not commemorated at the time.



Claire Horton CBE,
Director General.



"It's so important that people remember the fallen. We can craft a new generation of memorials and monuments that serve to create a dignified legacy—with equal dignity for all of those who sacrificed their lives."

Sir David Adjaye OBE OM, speaking at CWGC's Cape Town Memorial Architectural Competition



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Top Right: Sir David Adjaye OBE OM
© Chris Schwagga
Bottom left: School visit to Nairobi War Cemetery
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GOVERNANCE
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With such a significant task ahead of us, running an effective and aligned programme is critical to our success.

The Non-Commemoration programme has five workstreams. Each has a specialist leader. They draw upon the best resources and skills to deliver activities, whilst reporting as a team under project management principles. We operate within the frameworks provided by the UN goals for sustainable development in all our projects.

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“Key to our success is being able to align operational resources to help drive activity in regions. We always seek the validation and support of partners - from local government officials to archaeologists, academics, and heritage experts - which allows us to work with communities as we plan together for new commemorative structures and memorials, as well as investigating sites.”

Barry Murphy, Operations Director, and Programme Sponsor
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“A lessons learned workshop allowed us to share ideas to boost the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme. Using these tools, we have understood the value of always using local contacts in country to engage with the right communities. We have also identified finding skilled researchers can be a time-consuming task but is essential to success.”

Vin Pooni, Non-Commemoration Programme Manager
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HERITAGE AND COMMEMORATION

Names we find through our research are carefully and painstakingly verified by our Commemorations team and then included on our database search function. However, it is likely large numbers of names will prove impossible to find, so the programme will consult with communities, governments, and stakeholders to find the best ways to memorialise and represent the sacrifice made. As well as built structures, it is likely co-created digital content and digital heritage visualisation strategies will form a key pillar of our future work.

FOLLOWING THE FIRST WORLD WAR, **350** CEMETERIES WERE RECORDED BY THE ARMY'S GRAVE REGISTRATION UNIT IN EAST AFRICA. THESE WERE SPREAD OVER AN AREA OF SOME **650,000** SQUARE MILES, COVERING UGANDA, KENYA, TANZANIA, ZANZIBAR, MOZAMBIQUE, MALAWI AND ZAMBIA.

Paraphrased quote from the officer commanding the grave registration unit after the First World War



Top left: Barry Murphy handing over of a Book of Remembrance, containing the names of previously uncommemorated Sierra Leonean WW1 dead, at an event at the National Museum in Freetown, Sierra Leone

Right: CWGC Nairobi African Memorial, Kenya



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THE VALUE OF EXTERNAL VOICES

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Our Global Advisory Panel meet three times a year. This forum, formed of world experts in key areas of work pertinent to this programme, have been extremely helpful. The group provide their views and expertise on the different steps, actions, and progress we make and work with us, both in and outside of their formal meetings.

They are critical friends who bring the perspectives of both populations and enablers in East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, the Middle East, India, and the UK.

The panel's diverse perspectives are drawn from long careers in the fields of academia, the arts, heritage, digital, education, and military. Whilst areas and activities are all different, there remain significant parallels in their experience, and we greatly value being able to draw upon this.

Panel members are also in separate engagement with our teams and provide us with new connections and introductions.

Dr Festus Cole of Bowie State University created three podcasts on the origins, recruitment and return from war of the Sierra Leone Carrier Corps.

Strategic advisory panel member and Carrier Corps historical expert, Professor Michèle Barrett and researcher Gilly Furse contributed rich knowledge regarding Carrier Corps hospitals and casualty mapping to our research.

Digital heritage visualisation expert, Chao Tayiana has helped us connect with student animators to co-create an animation to tell the story of the East African Carriers and Porters.



Dr Festus Cole



Professor Michèle Barrett



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Left: Still taken from a new CWGC film which showcases the vital work undertaken by our heritage managers, Patrick Abungu and Jaffer Gullamhussein, in Kenya
Bottom right: East African Askaris sent out by the Civil Administration to collect labourers. Near Ruwu River, April 1917 © IWM Q 15584

RESEARCH
UPDATE



“We have also started to break new ground in projects elsewhere across the globe. The main themes of this research remain unchanged, so the team’s efforts are directed towards gaining a greater understanding of casualty numbers, the whereabouts of missing burials and, of course, the existence of missing names from our sites and records.”

Dr George Hay, Official Historian

Historical research in archives across Africa and Europe continues to make positive progress in revealing the names of those previously un-commemorated, and in mapping potential burial sites. To date, we have found almost 7,000 names. The focus of the research strand remains in the areas known to be worst affected by the issues highlighted in the Commission’s 2021 report.

In Malawi, we have identified extensive collections of service records that have allowed us to submit 1,300 names for formal commemoration, while in Tanzania, the team has been collaborating closely with colleagues at the University of Dar es Salaam to establish research projects in that country.

In the coming year we will also report on Commission commemorative activities post-1945. The team remains dedicated to understanding and reporting this period of history and naming those who have not received the recognition they deserve.



Right: Patrick Abungu in the National Archives, Malawi

FINDING NAMES

We have continued to consider how we accurately quantify the scale of loss amongst men of the Egyptian Labour Corps and Camel Transport Corps. Further research has provided greater insight still, and we now know that more than 327,000 Egyptians served in these corps across the Middle East, Turkey, and Western Europe, and that a little over 16,500 of these men died. Fewer than 400 are currently commemorated by name, and this is something we will be working to rectify over the coming year.

Simultaneously, the team has been working to achieve insights for East Africa, the theatre worst affected by a lack of named commemoration following the First World War and therefore the hardest in which to quantify loss. Although complex due to the nature of service and dispersed recruitment of carriers, we are nearing what we believe to be an accurate figure for the number who died.

The team will consult with historians, and then publish final figures supported by evidence for both cases during the coming year.



*Left: Members of Egyptian Labour Corps at Nalin Sukereir, Palestine, 1918 © BO1415
Right: Dr George Hay undertakes research at the CWGC HO in Maidenhead*



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NAMING
THE DEAD
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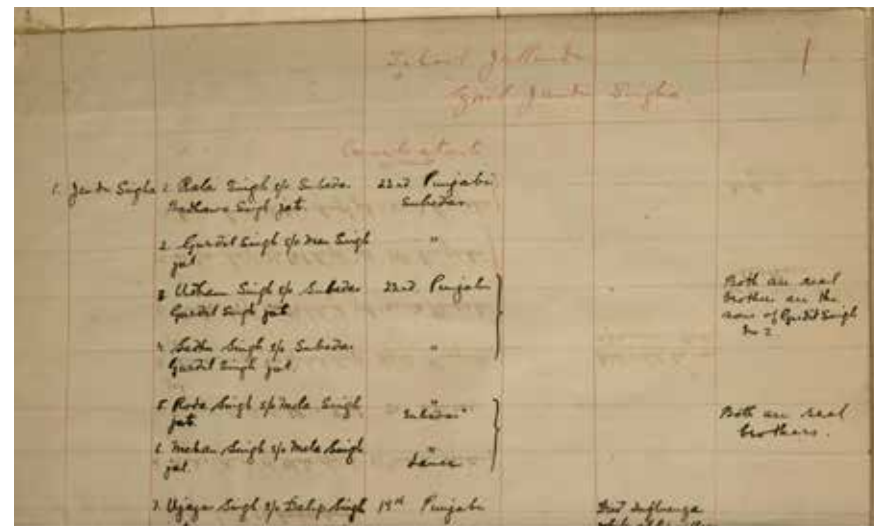


Naming those known to have died but for whom the Commission does not hold information was always going to be our biggest challenge. This has rung true this year, with no major collections uncovered despite detailed and extensive archival work across East Africa and in the UK.

In the case of Kenya, this work has allowed us to conclude that these materials are extremely unlikely to exist in the state archives, however we continue to work closely with the Kenya Defence Force in both our ongoing search for names and preserving records digitally.

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*Dr John Burke in the
Kenyan National Archives, Nairobi*
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**PUNJAB
 PAPERS**



The Commission is sponsoring a PhD student to research a unique set of records that document the First World War service of around 320,000 Punjabis who served in the Indian Army, the majority of whom are already commemorated by the Commission. The student will be under the co-supervision of CWGC's Official Historian, Dr George Hay and the University of Greenwich's Dr Gavin Rand.

We will use the findings of this research and any new casualty names will be considered within the Programme's commemoration plans. It will also open avenues to diaspora communities across the UK and foster new relationships with communities in India and Pakistan.

“As well as helping us understand more about the journey of those who died beyond the battlefields of Europe, the Punjabi records might provide us with more names, possibly up to 10,000 men who were not remembered”

Dr Gavin Rand, Associate Professor, and specialist in the history of the military in colonial South Asia

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FIELDWORK AND METHODOLOGY

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Our approach to combine dispersed archive collections with modern day maps is allowing the programme to get close to the final resting places of first world war african carriers and labourers in british service. The search for lost burials has without doubt, been challenging, largely because of a dearth of relevant maps.

As a result, we have adapted our methodology in searching for missing sites, for which we are now drawing together a variety of sources to build composite maps in Geographic Information System Mapping software.

The most exciting and successful use of this approach was in Mombasa in Kenya, where we have identified two cemeteries – one of which remains extant – that we know to contain the burials of thousands of carriers who died of disease during the First World War

Similar work is ongoing across East Africa and projects are now underway in West Africa, where the names of the dead are largely known but burial locations are not.



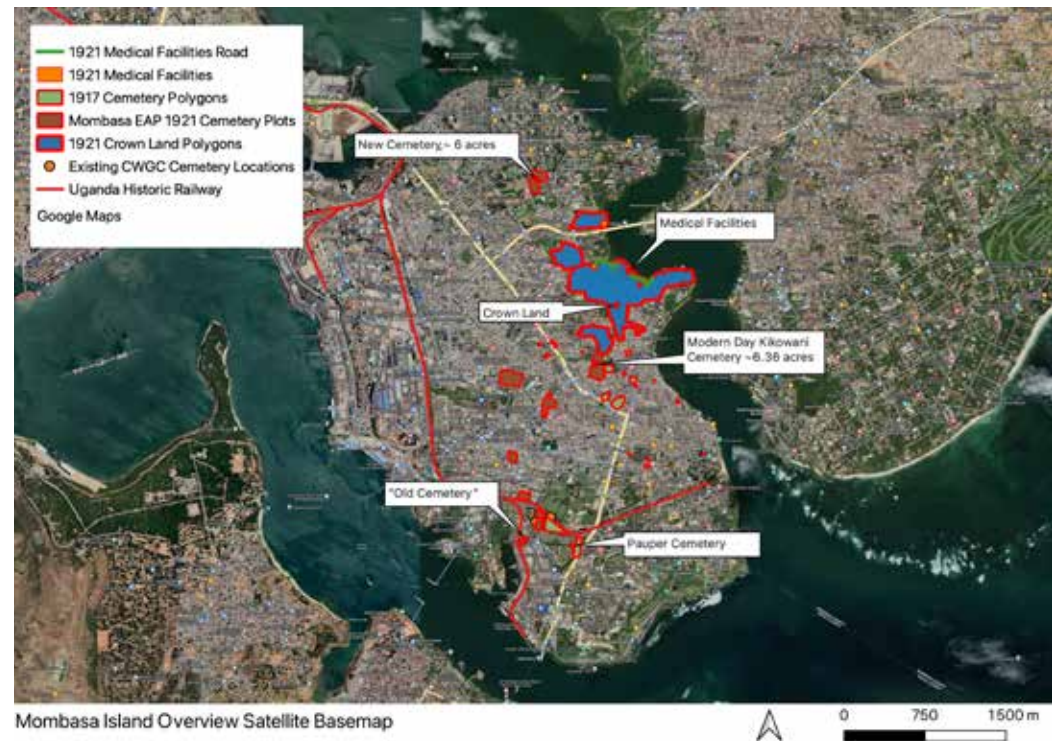
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*Jaffer Gullamhussein with a park ranger
during the search for lost graves and possible
burial sites in Taita Taveta, Kenya*
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MOMBASA CASE STUDY

Mombasa, the seaport where we know most carriers either passed through or returned to, is key to much of our work. Our new research has pinpointed two cemeteries as likely carrier burial sites. We combined on the ground knowledge from our teams with hospital death rates, mapping, and archival research in the form of letters from colonial governors to cemetery officials.

This has led us to two cemeteries where we are certain these men were buried. This discovery provides a powerful starting point for important local consultation into how to suitably memorialise at these sites.

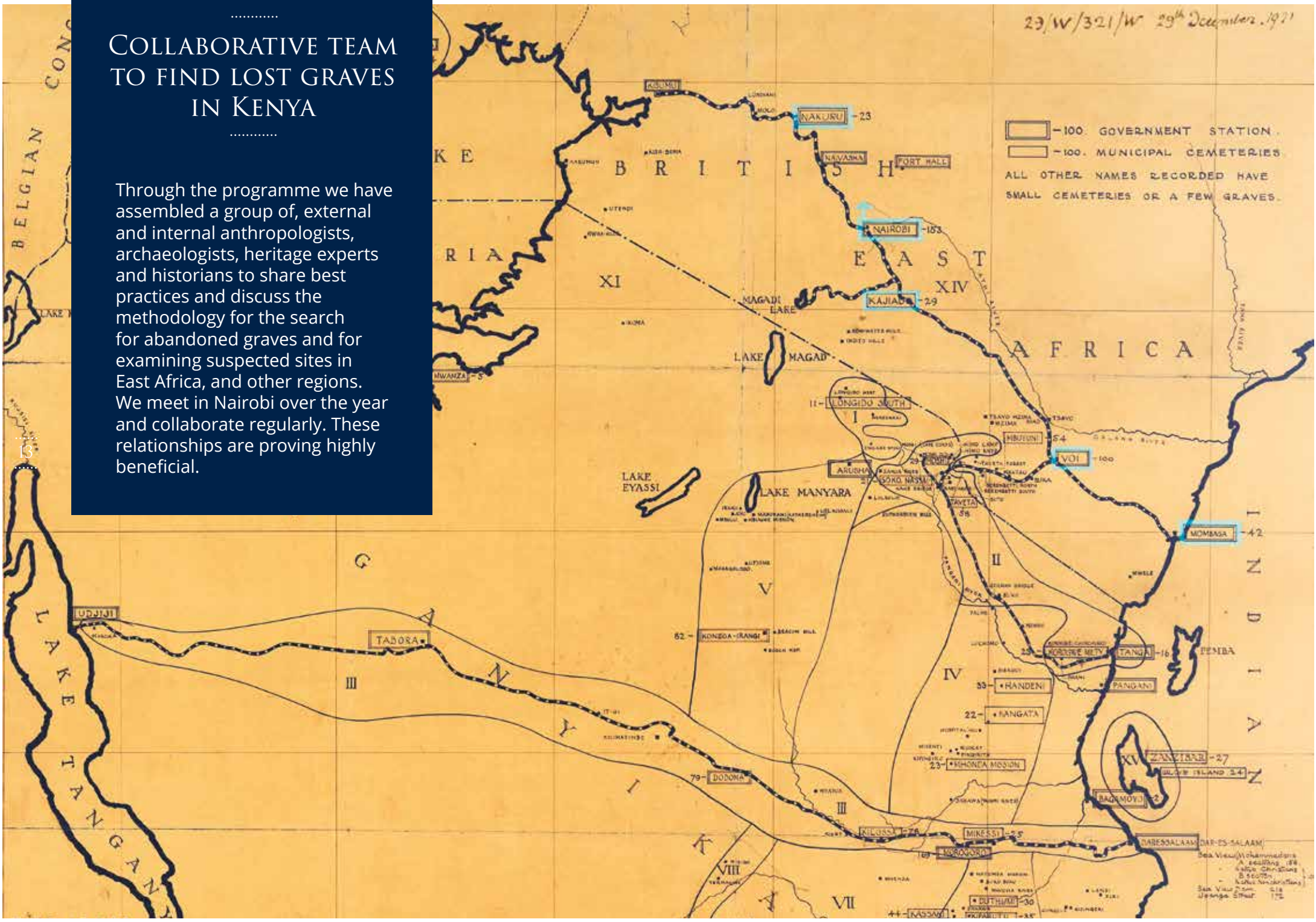
Georeferencing and overlaying this 1921 map on modern satellite imagery of Mombasa allowed our team to accurately locate the position of historic burial locations for Carriers in Mombasa



23/W/321/W 29th December 1971

COLLABORATIVE TEAM TO FIND LOST GRAVES IN KENYA

Through the programme we have assembled a group of, external and internal anthropologists, archaeologists, heritage experts and historians to share best practices and discuss the methodology for the search for abandoned graves and for examining suspected sites in East Africa, and other regions. We meet in Nairobi over the year and collaborate regularly. These relationships are proving highly beneficial.



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INCREASED OPERATIONAL CAPACITY IN EAST AFRICA

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Over the course of the year the appointment of our expert heritage team in Kenya - Patrick Abungu, Jaffer Gulamhussein and Mercy Gakii have significantly increased our operational capacity in East Africa.

At the end of this year, we also welcomed Professor Samuel Nyanchoga to lead research work across the East African region, as well as our relationship with the Kenya Defence Force and support the Field Team's search for abandoned graves.

The team develop the research findings and supplement these with a combination of local knowledge, social anthropology, archaeological techniques, and heritage expertise to help identify suspected abandoned graves across the region. By meeting regularly with governmental organisations, community groups and other interested stakeholders we can collaboratively realise this work.

Geographies covered thus far in Kenya include Taita-Taveta, Kisii and Migori, Kisumu and Turkana Counties.

"With the project now fully established in Kenya the programme aims to begin work on the ground in Cameroon, Malawi and Tanzania during 2023 with initial meetings having already taken place with key stakeholders in-country."

Patrick Abungu, Heritage Manger and Fieldwork Specialist for Non-Commemoration Programme Manager

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Left: This 1920s map of East Africa has been an essential asset for the team as it clearly locates possible burial sites for Carriers that were previously unknown. The map was produced for the IWGC in 1922. © UK National Archives CO 1047/129

Right: Claire Horton with the team in Nairobi War Cemetery

In June we started the Community Engagement element of a project in Sierra Leone to begin the process of commemorating more than 1,000 men of the Sierra Leone Carrier Corps.

An exhibition, with supporting educational materials was installed at the National Museum in Freetown to support the hosting of the new Sierra Leone Book of Remembrance. We received excellent engagement, contributions, and feedback.

Consultation with the Freetown City Council, Government departments, the National Council of Paramount Chiefs and the Sierra Leone Ex-Serviceman's Association has enabled us to commission the next phase of work. Working with West African Heritage specialists we will interview and record the oral histories of descendants of the two World Wars in Sierra Leone. This is due to take place

in March 2023 and takes us one step closer to the realisation of a permanent memorial to these men.

The team are working with Isatu Smith and Professor Paul Basu to visit locations where Carrier recruitment took place to explore what stories may survive of the World Wars in communities.

"We draw upon our experience using ethnographic and oral history research methods as well as managing cultural heritage projects at a national level. In the current phase of the project we are consulting a wide range of stakeholder across Sierra Leone to discuss appropriate forms of memorialisation."

Isatu Smith, West African Heritage expert



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 Right: Foday Kargbo and Isatu Smith at King Tom Cemetery Freetown
 Far right: CWGC Nairobi African Memorial, Kenya



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**ORAL
 HISTORIES**

We are committed to telling the stories of those who sacrificed their lives.

This year we have worked with the British Library and the Oral History Society to train both PhD students and outreach workers in South Africa, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Kenya, and the UK. Our teams are now well versed in the practical techniques and governance required, as well as starting to hone their skills in creating the 'space and air' that allows people to talk.

**Tracing Descendants –
 the Cape Town Memorial**

Over three days in February a team of three – our cinematographer, environmental consultant and isiXhosa speaking oral historian – undertook a project to visit villages and townships in the Eastern Cape. It was a deeply moving exercise that took months of family tree research, planning and trust-building to set up. Their goal was to interview direct descendants of those named on the Cape Town Memorial so we would be able to hear the generational perspective regarding the sacrifice their ancestors made. We will continue working with the families we have met. We will use the stories and memories they have shared with us to inform the visitor and public facing content for the memorial.



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Sonwabile Mfecane prepares to interview descendants in the Eastern Cape

This year we also won Post Office Benevolent funding to build a Commission-wide Voices archive to share and digitise oral histories – we will share these stories alongside the other testimonies from around the world.

Chiwaya Voices

Connections at the University of Malawi have entrusted us with 1950s cassette tape series known historically as Chiwaya Voices. These are interviews done with Malawian First and Second World War Carriers by academic Mel Page. We have placed the tapes with specialist scanners for restoration so they can form part of the digital legacy of our work.

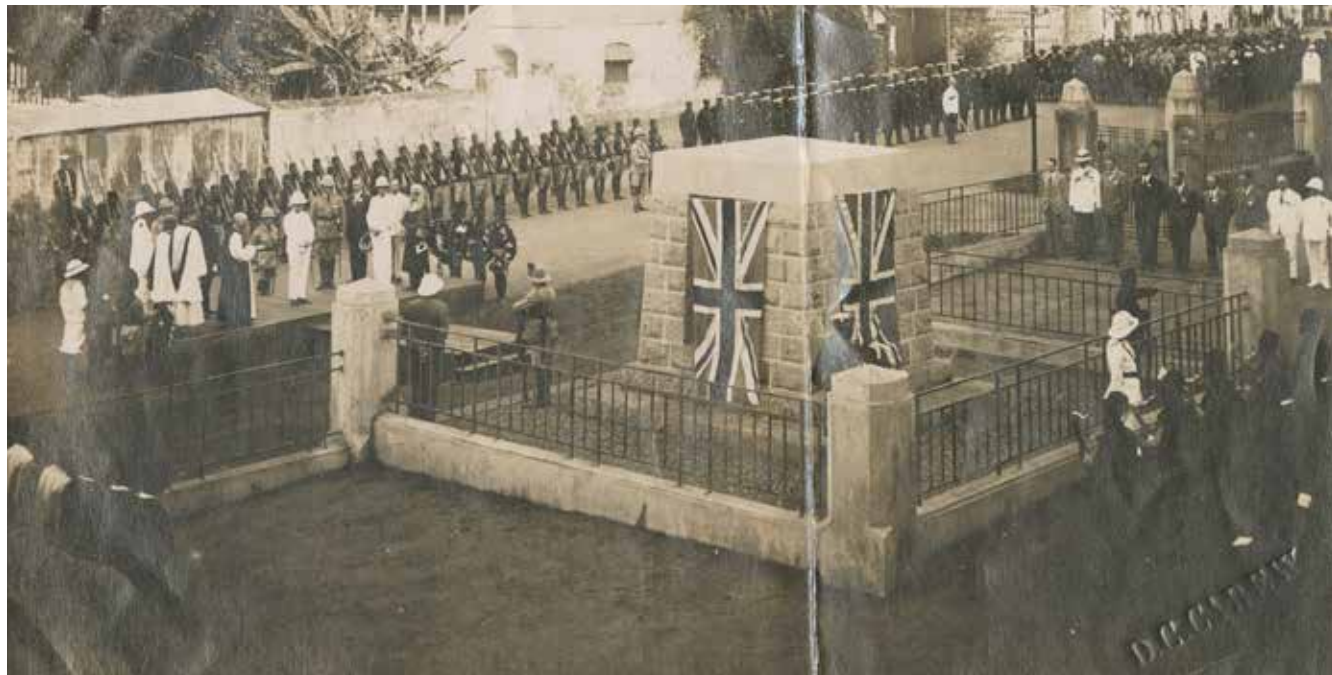


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Left: Interviews with First World War carriers are recorded in this 1950s cassette tape series, Chiwaya Voices
Right: Oral histories engagement project to interview descendants in the Eastern Cape February 2022



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COMING
SOON IN
2023
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In Sierra Leone we have plans to commemorate more than 1,000 men who served in the Sierra Leone Carrier Corps. We are now consulting with the relevant government offices, descendant groups, and heritage experts to agree an appropriate location and form for a new memorial.



Our team in Nairobi have hosted workshops with diverse groups, including youth leaders, educators, elders, business community leaders, local and government officials in Kariokor to collectively outline the best ways to conserve and manage the Kariokor (Carrier Corps) site through the creation of a new community heritage space. We will continue to consult with key stakeholder groups throughout the project to ensure the preservation and ongoing viability of this vitally important heritage site.

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Top: Unveiling of the Freetown Memorial, Sierra Leone 1933
Left: Community elders meeting at the Kariokor War Cemetery
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A NEW
GENERATION OF
MEMORIALS
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“One foot looking to the past in respectful acknowledgement of what has gone before and the other firmly rooted in the present helping us move in a new direction.”

David McDonald, Operations Manager, Non-Commemorations Programme

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As the custodian of thousands of memorial sites and cemeteries across the world, our organisation is very familiar with the challenges of maintaining an historic built estate.

In line with both meeting sustainable objectives and a commitment to work with the material palettes of the countries

where memorials will be based, Sir David Adjaye will work with us to select and mentor architects who can guide us to create a new generation of sustainable memorials. These will be led by the latest thought on the evolving role of commemorative spaces, the use of sustainably sourced materials and the historical context of those who served and lost their lives.

This year we created the Cape Town Memorial Architectural competition. We are now establishing a new memorial in Cape Town’s historic Company’s Gardens. The winning concept design for the new Cape Town Memorial proved to be the successful entry as it considered and responded to the criteria of space, materials, and history effectively.

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Sir David Adjaye talks to members of the South African architectural community at our competition event
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CAPE TOWN
MEMORIAL, SOUTH
AFRICA

THE SHADOWS CAST BY THE
MARKERS AS THE SUN MOVES
THROUGHOUT THE DAY EVOKE
A SENSE OF THE LABOURER'S
PRESENCE AT THE SITE, AS IN REALITY
THESE MEN MOVED ON FOOT –
COVERING UP TO 20 MILES A DAY
– AND FORMING LONG LOGISTICAL
LINES SPREADING MILES ACROSS
CHALLENGING TERRAIN.

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Durban-based Dean Jay Architects' successful design won the CWGC architectural competition for the proposed new Cape Town Memorial located within the historic Company's Gardens.

We were delighted to receive 55 entries for the competition, which was judged by Sir David Adjaye and a panel of South Africa's leading architects, planners, and academics.

This memorial will commemorate over 1,600 South African labourers who died

on the continent of Africa during the First World War whilst serving with labour units.

In the new memorial each casualty will have an individually crafted wooden marker to commemorate their name, which combined which bring a sense of scale to the tremendous losses suffered during this campaign.

The choice of hardwood timber for the memorial posts is an exciting departure, creating a design that feels distinctly African, but also utilises natural materials - sustainably on the African continent that will weather naturally and be easily maintained.

With a final round of public consultation completed and final submissions to local authorities made, memorial plans are taking shape for the construction in late 2023.



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Cape Town Memorial
architectural visualisation
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ORAL HISTORIES



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The teams have spent time in Malawi establishing relationships with local stakeholders and laying the groundwork for a variety of different projects there and in Tanzania. As well as having freer access to the archives in Malawi, George Hay and Patrick Abungu relished the opportunity to meet and interview a 104-year-old veteran of the 2nd King's African Rifles.

While we can tell the story of these campaigns from British official accounts, only Maxmos and his remaining comrades can tell us their story: in his case, the story of a Malawian in British colonial service, transported to another continent to serve in a new terrain and fight an enemy about which he knew little.

"It was a great honour to meet Maxmos. His narrative of service provides a distinct perspective and helps us understand more about the casualties in our care who cannot speak for themselves. As part of the non-commemoration programme, we will be continuing to capture testimony from veterans and their families to broaden this understanding."

Dr George Hay, CWGC Official Historian



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ALIGNMENT WITH HERITAGE

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Working with Heritage Partners

To engage as many people as possible with our sites, cemeteries, and memorials, as part of the wider local landscape, we have started developing a series of heritage trails. A site-specific version in Arabic was created for Alamein War Cemetery in Egypt, as part of the 80th anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein, to encourage local people to visit the site and discover more about those commemorated there. Work is on-going to develop heritage trails in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Cape Town, linking our sites with other heritage sites in those locations.

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Community Collaboration

In Kenya it has become evident that many communities are increasingly seeking to shine a light on the lesser-known history of the First World War in their local area and this is encouraging. Political leaders, academics and local enthusiasts among others are increasingly looking to former battlefield sites in Taita-Taveta county, historical buildings and districts related to the war with a view to establishing tourism infrastructure. Our heritage team work closely with the Governor, Andrew Mwadime, to build deeper links for future collaboration.

Dr Esther Kagure Munyiri, Director of the Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre, Eastern Africa, invited us to join Kenya's leading heritage organisations in a nationwide project to map and promote war heritage experiences across the country.

We have helped Magical Kenya map and interpret the context of existing world war cemeteries in Kenya. This will provide curated information about the two World Wars in the region to a much wider audience.



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*Top: Kehrinter Academy School Sierra Leone
Left: Nairobi War Cemetery, Kenya*

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CLOSING
THOUGHTS –
THE FUTURE
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Whilst we continue to make substantial progress in our research and operational workstreams, it is no surprise that we do not yet have all the answers to the multi-layered and complex questions we face. Our deeply committed team, spanning multiple disciplines and countries, is dedicated to finding the names and graves of the uncommemorated and in doing so delivering the Commission's largest piece of work since the Second World War.

Every name we recover is a person no longer forgotten, every community and stakeholder engaged with goes some way to righting a historic wrong, and combined these developments ensure the sacrifices made across these lesser-known theatres of war remain forever relevant.

Quantifying the scale of loss, finding names and burial sites, whilst telling stories of the many carriers, labourers and soldiers raised to fight in the world wars underpins all our work.

No matter for whom they are intended or what form they take, memorials are complex spaces in which new generations can re-evaluate the legacy of our shared histories. Creating the correct architecture and form is, therefore, at the centre of our programme. To help us achieve this, the Commission is privileged to have the guidance and input of multiple partner associations, from architecture and tourism to heritage and conservation. By taking this deep, collaborative approach, it is hoped the memorial spaces we build will hold a lasting resonance for the communities for which they are built.

Correcting the legacy of unequal commemoration and illuminating the sacrifices made across the lesser-known theatres of the two World Wars drives this our programme forward.



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*Carriers and troops march along a road,
East Africa 1916 -1918 © IWM Q 15418*
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COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
|||||

FRONT COVER IMAGE:

*New Cape Town Memorial
architectural visualisation*

WITH THANKS FOR IMAGES AND ASSISTANCE

We could not deliver this work without our network of architects, archaeologists, academics, communities, interest groups, military networks, historians, heritage leaders, volunteers and governments, as well as veterans, families, and descendants.

We thank them for their invaluable support as we continue in our mission to address unequal commemoration from over one hundred years ago.

www.cwgc.org

