

9A.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
at the 339TH MEETING of the
IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

held at
32, GROSVENOR GARDENS, LONDON, S.W.1.
on THURSDAY, 19TH JULY, 1951.

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Present:

MEMBERS

- Admiral Sir MARTIN DUNBAR-NASMITH, V.C., K.C.B., Vice-Chairman in the Chair.
- J.P. SIGVALDASON, Esq.,
Representing the High Commissioner for Canada.
- Major-General W.G. STEVENS, C.B., C.B.E.,
Representing the High Commissioner for New Zealand.
- H.J. NEETHLING, Esq.,
Representing the High Commissioner for South Africa.
- W.B. ENGLAND, Esq., M.B.E.,
Representing the High Commissioner for India.
- Captain J.T. CHOPPING,
Representing the High Commissioner for Pakistan.
- TRAFFORD SMITH, Esq.,
Representing the Secretary of State for the Colonies.
- General Sir ROBERT GORDON-FINLAYSON, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.
- Air Chief Marshal Sir ARTHUR LONGMORE, G.C.B., D.S.O.

ADVISERS

- Sir WILLIAM HALCROW, M. Inst. C.E. (Consulting Engineer).
- EDWARD MAUFE, Esq., R.A. (Chief Architect and Artistic Adviser).

SECRETARY

F. HIGGINSON, Esq., C.M.G.

There were also present:

- F.C. SILLAR, Esq., C.B.E. (Principal Assistant Secretary)
R.W. BATEMAN, Esq. (Director of Works)
C.R. KIRTON, Esq., M.B.E. (Chief Accountant)
H.P.R. FOSTER, Esq., O.B.E. (Legal Assistant)
O.D. HOLT, Esq. (Principal, Secretarial Branch)

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W.K.K. KINNEAR, Esq., M.B.E. (Chief Administrative Officer,
United Kingdom District).

At the request of the CHAIRMAN, the SECRETARY said that apologies for absence had been received from Mr. Moore, (on behalf of the Ministry of Works), Mr. Bunning, (on behalf of the High Commissioner for Australia), Sir Richard Hopkins, Sir Herbert Ellissen, Sir Patrick Spens, and General Sir John Crocker.

The CHAIRMAN said that before taking the Minutes of the last Meeting he would like to draw members' attention to the revised list of agenda for the present meeting which had been laid on the table. As they would probably have noticed, items 4 and 6 in the list as circulated were transposed.

1. The Minutes of the 338th Meeting of the Commission, held on the 21st June, 1951, were approved and signed. The following points arose out of the Minutes:-

(a) JERUSALEM WAR CEMETERY (page 2).

The CHAIRMAN said that the Foreign Office had written to say that proposals had been received from the Israeli Government which were now being discussed by the British Embassy in Amman with the Jordan Government.

(b) MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION (page 3)

The CHAIRMAN said that after discussing with the Chairmen of the Commission the question of a successor to Mr. Harold Neal, he had informally approached Mr. George O. Sylvester, Member of Parliament for Pontefract, and found that he would be willing to serve. He enquired whether members wished that Mr. Sylvester's name should be put forward for appointment under Royal Warrant in the usual way.

Members signified their agreement.

(c) CONCENTRATIONS IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN (page 4).

At the request of the CHAIRMAN, the SECRETARY read out a letter from Mrs. Shinde, the United Kingdom High Commissioner's local representative for cemeteries in India, to Brigadier Obbard, paying tribute to the way in which the concentration of the 1939-45 graves into the new war cemeteries in India was being carried out.

(d) WAR GRAVES AGREEMENTS (page 8).

The CHAIRMAN said that members would have been glad to see the report in the Press that the British Commonwealth-Netherlands War Graves Agreement had been signed at The Hague on July 10th. This was the first of the new series of war graves agreements dealing with the graves of the 1939-45 War to be signed.

It had always been the practice to have among the honorary members on the international committees set up under war graves Agreements distinguished officers of the Services. For example, Field-Marshal Lord Haig was one of the first two honorary members of the Anglo-French Committee, and Field-Marshal Lord Cavan one of the first two honorary members of the Anglo-Belgian Committee. He had now written on the Commission's behalf

to Lord Montgomery to ask if he would serve on the French Committee; similarly to Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fraser in connection with the Netherlands Committee, and to Lord Tedder for the Belgian Committee.

Mr. SILLAR, in reply to the CHAIRMAN, said that each committee would consist of twenty members, ten Commonwealth and ten foreign members, the ten being divided on each side into four honorary and six official members. The six official members would consist of members of the Commission and their staff, whom the Vice-Chairman would select and approach. Regarding the other honorary members, letters had been written to the participating Governments suggesting that the Ambassadors in the capitals concerned should take it in turns to serve. The proposal was that these three places should be filled by the participating Governments in the order laid down in the Charter - the United Kingdom, Canadian, and Australian Ambassadors being the first appointments - and that when a vacancy occurred the diplomatic representative of the next Commonwealth Government in the country concerned would be appointed. If that Government had no diplomatic representative, the High Commissioner in London would take his place.

Only one or two replies had been received so far and he understood that the Foreign Office had felt it desirable to consult the United Kingdom Ambassadors in the foreign capitals concerned.

In reply to the CHAIRMAN's enquiry, members signified their agreement to this suggested procedure.

(e) GRAVES OF MEMBERS OF COMMONWEALTH FORCES
DYING IN KOREA, AND HEADSTONES FOR SERVICE
GRAVES (pages 9 and 10).

The CHAIRMAN said that members would recall the discussion at the last meeting on the proposal that a uniform marker should be provided for all Service graves. In this connection a discussion had arisen on the policy for the graves of men who died in Korea. The Adjutant-General had undertaken to examine both these matters further and report at this meeting. Unfortunately, General Crocker was unable to be present at the present meeting, but he had sent a report, which he would ask the Secretary to read.

The SECRETARY then read out the following letter:-

"1. You will remember that at our last meeting I undertook to report the position regarding the removal of Commonwealth bodies from Korea to Japan.

As a result of a report by our Graves representative in FARELF, who has visited Korea, I find that no Commonwealth bodies have been removed from Korea to Japan, and instructions have been issued forbidding such movements.

All bodies so far recovered from South Korea, amounting to 317, have been concentrated in TANGGOK U.N. Military Cemetery, Pusan. This figure

includes 212 British and 105 Commonwealth dead. 57 bodies are in cemeteries in North Korea and are still to be recovered. In addition, there are a number of isolated graves to be similarly dealt with. I have decided that a Graves Unit should now be formed, and consequently we should no longer have to rely entirely on American help. This arrangement should prove more satisfactory to all concerned, including the Americans.

I find that the graves marking, carried out by the Americans, is not altogether satisfactory and I have therefore taken steps for 2,000 prefabricated crosses to be sent to Pusan and for the American list of burials in Pusan to be carefully checked against records in our Office.

2. After consideration, I have come to the conclusion that we would not be justified in departing from our well established policy of non-repatriation in the case of Korea at the present time.

3. There is a further matter, quite outside burials in Korea, that I should like to mention, namely our policy as regards headstones on non-war Service Graves. I have examined this question and I find that our proposed arrangements are nothing like so comprehensive as some Members of the Committee thought.

Considered at Sept. meeting

The idea is that those who die at home are alone eligible for the proposed headstone and maintenance always provided the body was buried under military arrangements and in a plot over which the War Department exercised rights. If the body is claimed by the next-of-kin and buried privately no headstone or maintenance at public expense will be provided. This will considerably reduce the difficulty of maintenance, responsibility for which could be delegated to our Army Commands.

I would also like to reassure you that there is no intention of infringing your copyright when designing the headstone which will be distinctively different from that of the Imperial War Graves Commission."

Sir Arthur LONGMORE asked whether the decision not to repatriate meant that there would be no concentrations from Korea to Japan.

The CHAIRMAN replied that no graves would be taken away from Korea, but that they would all be concentrated in a cemetery at Pusan at the tip of the Peninsula.

Sir Arthur LONGMORE asked whether this ruling held good for all three Services.

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON said that he understood that the Army were acting for the other two Services in this matter.

Sir Arthur LONGMORE, referring to the question of a uniform marker for Service graves in this country, enquired whether the Air Ministry had decided to offer a uniform marker for Air Force graves which were not war graves in the Commission's sense of the term. He felt it was important that a decision should be reached, as many burials were taking place in ground adjoining the Services plots, where the Commission had completed their constructional work. It was a matter which the Commission should take up with the Air Ministry.

The SECRETARY, replied that he would ask for further information from the War Office and find out to what extent they had brought the Air Ministry into their consultations.

Mr. SILLAR, in reply to the CHAIRMAN, said that members would note that the ruling in the Adjutant General's letter did not apply to men dying abroad. The Commission had in the past accepted responsibility for maintaining post-war plots adjacent to their cemeteries in Germany and had experienced some difficulty in maintaining the temporary crosses which had been erected. He thought that this matter should be referred to the Adjutant-General.

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR NEW ZEALAND.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Commission would have read that Mr. F.W. Doidge, Minister of External Affairs in the New Zealand Government, had been appointed High Commissioner in London in succession to Mr. W.J. Jordan, who was retiring at the end of August. As High Commissioner, Mr. Jordan had been a member of the Commission for fifteen years, during which period he had taken a close personal interest in the Commission's work. He (the Chairman) knew that members would wish an expression of their grateful appreciation to be conveyed to Mr. Jordan.

Members signified their agreement.

ZEHRENSDORF INDIAN CEMETERY, BERLIN.

The SECRETARY said that he had received a disturbing letter about the condition of this cemetery, which was situated twenty-four miles south of Berlin in the Russian Zone. At the request of the Commission's Area Superintendent, an employee of the Berlin Municipality had visited the cemetery on the 21st May, and he had reported that the cemetery was utterly neglected and the memorials and headstones damaged or displaced. The Chief Administrative Officer had asked the Area Superintendent to find out whether the Municipality could arrange some form of care and maintenance similar to that adopted for the South-Western Cemetery at Stahnsdorf.

ALBUM OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF CEMETERIES IN THE INDIA, PAKISTAN AND SOUTH EAST ASIA DISTRICT.

The SECRETARY said that members would be interested to see an album of recent photographs of cemeteries in this

district. (The Album was passed around).

REPORT OF THE 383RD MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

The CHAIRMAN, referring to item 1, said that members would notice that the sum for the recess authority was considerably larger than in the previous year. This was because it included a sum of £127,000 estimated to be required for a constructional contract for nine cemeteries in Normandy. It was important that this contract should be placed as early as possible so that advantage could be taken of the building months still remaining during the present year.

Mr. BATEMAN, at the CHAIRMAN'S request, gave an account of the visit which he had paid to Paris since the meeting of the Committee in order to interview the lowest tenderer and examine in detail the figures in his estimate. The prices indicated had been so high that it had been doubtful whether the recess authority would provide sufficient cover; owing, however, to a misunderstanding of the English methods of taking out quantities for masonry items, the figures originally quoted had been unnecessarily high. Reductions had been agreed with the Contractor and the recess authority could now be regarded as sufficient.

The CHAIRMAN said that it would not therefore be necessary to call a special meeting of the Finance Committee, but a letter explaining the position would be sent to each member.

Mr. FOSTER, replying to a question from the CHAIRMAN regarding item 2, said that the award made on the 11th June, 1951, in the arbitration proceedings between the Commission and the contractor, G.B. Stellatos, for the construction of Knightsbridge War Cemetery, Acroma, had been disappointing, but he felt satisfied that it was not due to any omission in the preparation of the Commission's case, nor to the way in which the proceedings had been handled. He outlined the arguments which the arbitrator had used in making the award, and concluded by saying that it was difficult to quarrel with it on any legal ground.

The CHAIRMAN referred next to item 4, which dealt with the construction of Bolsena War Cemetery, Italy. Part of the construction was the placing on a single pillar of the same figure of the lion as had already been erected at Minturno. He, personally, did not like its posture and expression and Mr. Maufe, while admiring it as sculpture, had expressed the view that the heraldry on the shield was incorrect. It was important that an immediate decision in this matter should be reached, since it was proposed that the sculpture should be repeated in other cemeteries in Italy, and if it was regarded as unsatisfactory, now was the time to say so and to make any changes which might be desired.

Considerable discussion followed, and reference was made to the lions in front of Buckingham Palace. Members agreed that these were appropriate examples to be followed, - not precisely in the same form, but at least in the spirit and character which those figures expressed.

It was understood to be the wish of the meeting that the lion at Minturno should not be repeated at Bolsena or

elsewhere, and that Mr. Maufe should discuss with the Architect and Sculptor a revision of the design.

Mr. SILLAR said that there were dangers in including a coat of arms at all in view of constitutional developments in the Empire. Members, however, expressed the view that the Royal Arms could be appropriately used because the constitutional changes referred to had not taken place at the time the men had died. The important point was that the heraldry should be correct, and it was agreed that where heraldry was concerned the Commission should consult the College of Arms.

The CHAIRMAN next referred to the appointment of Brigadier J.F.D. Steedman as Principal Deputy Director of Works at Head Office (item 6); and to the appointment of Mr. R.W.W. Green, a New Zealander, as Assistant Secretary, Anzac Agency (item 7).

Item 21 indicated that construction was about to begin at Belgrade War Cemetery, Yugoslavia.

It was proposed by Mr. SIGVALDASON, seconded by Major-General STEVENS, and carried unanimously:

2. That the Report of the 383rd Meeting of the Finance Committee be adopted, subject to reconsideration of the sculpture to be placed on the top of the pillar at Bolsena War Cemetery (item 4 of this report).

STONE OF REMEMBRANCE IN AUSTRALIA.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretary had called attention to the fact that there was no Stone of Remembrance anywhere in Australia, and the proposal to place one on the terrace of the National Memorial at Canberra was put forward in the paper circulated. Sir Arthur LONGMORE said that the proposal seemed to be a most satisfactory arrangement.

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON thought it would be a mistake to let the bronze plate, indicating that the Stone had been provided by the Commission, into the paving as it would wear out quickly.

The SECRETARY said that it was very much a question of how big the plate would be. He had in mind something several feet in width, which people would regard as part of the feature and would not walk upon.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that this was a point the Anzac Agency might be asked to settle. The resolution asked only for the Commission's approval in principle of the proposal.

Major-General STEVENS enquired whether a Stone of Remembrance had ever been placed outside a cemetery before.

The SECRETARY said this had been done and quoted several instances.

It was proposed by General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON, seconded by Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur LONGMORE, and carried unanimously:

3. The Commission, having considered a paper No. CM/27/1 dated 11th July,

RESOLVE:

That the proposal that the Commission should offer to erect a Stone of Remembrance at the Australian National War Memorial at Canberra, in honour of the war dead buried in Australia, be approved in principle.

EXAMINATION OF SKETCH DESIGN FOR CEMETERY CONSTRUCTION: INDIA, PAKISTAN, AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA DISTRICT. KANCHANABURI WAR CEMETERY, THAILAND.

The CHAIRMAN referred to the small drawing which had been laid on the table and asked for the large drawings to be produced.

Apart from a small modification, suggested by Mr. Maufe, of the hedges forming the central feature around the Cross, and the addition of two seats, the design was approved.

It was proposed by Mr. Trafford SMITH, seconded by Captain CHOPPING, and carried unanimously:

4. The Commission having considered a Paper No. A/97/166 dated 11th July 1951,

RESOLVE:

That the Commission having taken note of the Sketch Design for Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, Thailand, (Mr. C. St. C. Oakes, F.R.I.B.A.), resolve that the Finance Committee be and hereby is authorised to consider and accept tenders for the construction of the said Cemetery without further reference to the Commission.

SAIWAN BAY WAR CEMETERY, HONG KONG.

It was proposed by Mr. ENGLAND, seconded by Mr. NEETHLING, and carried unanimously:

5. The Commission having considered a Statement No. RA/42269 dated 6th July 1951,

RESOLVE:

That authority be and hereby is given for the Commission's Seal to be affixed to and the Proper Officer to sign the Deed of Appropriation between His Excellency the Governor of Hong Kong and the Commission appropriating exclusively and in perpetuity in the name and under the control of the Commission the land required for the Saiwan Bay War Cemetery, Hong Kong.

EXAMINATION OF SKETCH DESIGN FOR CEMETERY CONSTRUCTION: INDIA, PAKISTAN, AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA DISTRICT. SAIWAN BAY WAR CEMETERY, HONG KONG.

The CHAIRMAN said that the entrance feature would consist of a memorial to about 2,000 men who had no known grave.

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON said that he thought it would be a mistake to plant wistaria at the foot of the retaining wall and allow it to climb over it; this plant grew profusely in the tropics and he thought that eventually, unless great care were taken, it would pull the wall down.

The CHAIRMAN said the Commission's local representatives would be warned to keep constantly on the watch for this danger.

Mr. BATEMAN, in reply to a question to the CHAIRMAN, said that there would be seats inside the Memorial, and that four others would be placed elsewhere in the Cemetery as, and where, required.

Members criticised the somewhat bare appearance of the entrance building but accepted Mr. Maufe's advice that it was satisfactory.

The Chairman questioned the desirability of including the four flagpoles suggested by the Architect. Considerable discussion ensued and it was eventually decided that only one flagstaff should be permitted, this to be erected clear of the building and mounted for use only on ceremonial occasions.

It was proposed by Mr. NEETHLING, seconded by Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur LONGMORE, and carried unanimously:

6. That the Commission having considered a Paper No. A/97/168 dated 11th July 1951,

RESOLVE:

That the Commission having taken note of the Sketch Design for Saiwan Bay War Cemetery, Hong Kong, (Mr. C. St. C. Oakes, F.R.I.B.A.) resolve that subject to the omission of the flagstaffs the Finance Committee be and hereby is authorised to consider and accept tenders for the construction of the said Cemetery without further reference to the Commission.

LEASES OR OTHER ASSURANCES OF CEMETERY SITES:
INDIA, PAKISTAN AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA DISTRICT.

It was proposed by Mr. SIGVALDASON, seconded by General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON, and carried unanimously:

7. The Commission having considered a Statement No. A/39/18 dated 6th July 1951 and Resolution No. 7 of the 308th Meeting of the Commission,

RESOLVE:

(i) That authority be and hereby is given to the Chief Administrative Officer of their India, Pakistan and South-East Asia District, to sign on the Commission's behalf or in their name leases or other assurances of sites of Commonwealth War Cemeteries situated in any part of the said District:

(ii) that the foregoing authority is additional and complementary to the authority given by Resolution No. 7 of the 308th Meeting and amplified by Resolution No. 6 of the 327th Meeting of the Commission in respect of the signing of leases of sites of Commonwealth War Cemeteries in India and Pakistan:

(iii) that the foregoing authority includes the doing of all such other things and the signing of all such other documents as it may be necessary to do or sign on the Commission's behalf or in their name in

in order to bring the said leases or assurances into full effect:

- (iv) that the foregoing authority may be exercised by the official acting for the Chief Administrative Officer of the said District during the temporary absence of the latter from duty at any time:
- (v) that the Secretary of the Commission be and hereby is authorised as evidence of the foregoing authority to certify copies of this Resolution and to affix the Seal of the Commission to any such copy if required.

MAINTENANCE OF WAR GRAVES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM:
THIRTY-FIFTH QUARTERLY REPORT (TO THE 30TH JUNE 1951).

Mr. KINNEAR, in reply to the CHAIRMAN, said that since the Paper had been circulated two other Crosses of Sacrifice had been unveiled, one at Sutton Bridge, and one at Cleethorpes. Both ceremonies had been well attended by relatives and visitors.

AIR FORCES MEMORIAL, COOPER'S HILL: AUTHORITY
TO AFFIX SEAL TO CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT.

It was proposed by Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur LONGMORE, seconded by Mr. Trafford SMITH, and carried unanimously:

8. The Commission, having considered a Statement reference A/52/1/1 dated 11th July 1951,

RESOLVE:

That the Seal of the Commission be affixed to and the Proper Officer sign Articles of Agreement with Messrs. Holloway Brothers (London) Limited for the construction of the Air Forces Memorial, Cooper's Hill.

GENERAL NOTES

The CHAIRMAN referred to the dedication of the Cross of Sacrifice at Harrogate (Wetherby Road) Cemetery.

Sir Arthur LONGMORE said that the ceremony had been a most successful one. The High Commissioner for Canada had unveiled the Cross and large numbers of relatives had attended. A most appropriate address had been given by the Acting Mayor in the absence of the Mayor, who was unfortunately ill and unable to be present.

The SECRETARY, in reply to a question from Sir Arthur LONGMORE, said that he did not think the R.A.F. Shelter building ought to remain in the cemetery. The Register would be kept in the Shelter building which was now in course of construction.

SICKNESS BENEFITS FOR STAFF OVERSEAS.

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON said that he would like the Commission to take note of this question, as the present position was causing considerable dissatisfaction among the staff overseas. At present, if they went into the general ward of a hospital their expenses were paid, but if they went into a private room in a nursing home they had to bear the entire cost. No doubt the same thing would happen in this country, but the standard of treatment in the general ward of a French hospital was very much lower than in an English one. What he would like to suggest was that if the staff chose to go into a private nursing home they should at least receive the same benefits as they would be granted if they went into the general ward of a hospital.

The CHAIRMAN said that this whole matter was being very carefully examined.

PRIORITY OF CONSTRUCTION FOR CERTAIN CEMETERIES.

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON said that another point which he wished to raise was that of giving priority to the construction of certain cemeteries which were much visited: Arnhem, Bayeux, Heliopolis, for example. He thought it was important that a special effort should be made to get these completed.

Mr. BATEMAN said that the construction programmes had been carefully worked out and it was difficult to vary them once they had been fixed; but he was ready, if required, to discuss variations with Chief Administrative Officers.

Mr. SILLAR said that the programmes in the various districts were closely integrated with the delivery of headstones in this country, which had to fit in with the output from the factory.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The CHAIRMAN said that there would be no meeting in August. The next meeting would be held on Thursday, the 20th September, 1951, at 11 a.m.

There being no other business the Meeting concluded at 12. 25 p.m.