

6A.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
at the 345TH MEETING of the  
IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

held at

32, GROSVENOR GARDENS, LONDON, S.W.1.

on THURSDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY 1952.

Present:

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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.

W.H. BUNNING, Esq.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for Australia.

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 K. A. RASHID,  
Representing the High Commissioner for Pakistan.

Air Chief Marshal Sir ARTHUR LONGMORE, G.C.B., D.S.O.

Colonel The Rt. Hon. The Lord WIGRAM, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., C.S.I.

GEORGE SYLVESTER, Esq., M.P.

ADVISER

EDWARD MAUFE, Esq., R.A., F.R.I.B.A. (Chief Architect and Artistic  
Adviser).

SECRETARY

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

There were also present:

F.C. SILLAR, Esq., C.B.E. (Principal Assistant Secretary).

W.J. CHALMERS, Esq. (Assistant Secretary).

Major-General J.F.D. STEEDMAN, C.B.E., M.C. (Director of Works).

H.L. SIMMONS, Esq. (Legal Adviser).

O.D. HOLT, Esq. (Principal, Secretarial Branch).

A.S. LAING, Esq. (Private Secretary to the Secretary).

At the request of the CHAIRMAN, the SECRETARY read the apologies for absence.

The CHAIRMAN said that the minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and, if they were approved, he would sign them.

1. The minutes of the 344th Meeting were approved and signed.

#### DEATH OF HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI.

The CHAIRMAN said that their first duty was to place on record their deep sorrow in the loss which the Commission, in common with the whole of the Commonwealth and Empire, had suffered by the death of their beloved and revered Sovereign, King George VI.

Copies of the messages of condolence which had been sent on the Commission's behalf to Their Majesties The Queen, Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, and Queen Mary, had been circulated, and the paper which had been placed first on the Agenda for the present meeting contained a resolution that these messages be entered on the minutes. Before he put that resolution to the meeting, however, he would like to recall one or two events in His Majesty's close association with the Commission.

His Majesty's first direct link with the Commission's work was in October 1924, when, as Duke of York, he unveiled the Naval Memorial at Portsmouth.

In 1936 he was appointed President and held that office until his accession. During his Presidency he took the Chair at the 194th Meeting of the Commission in May 1936, and in the following June he and the Duchess of York received the members of the Anglo-German-French Committee at 145 Piccadilly.

After succeeding to the Throne The King continued to follow the Commission's progress with close interest and attention, and messages sent in reply to the copies of the Commission's Annual Reports which were submitted regularly, always afforded great encouragement. In 1937, and again in 1939, His Majesty received members of the Anglo-Italian Committee at Buckingham Palace on the occasion of their meetings in London.

In 1938 The King, accompanied by The Queen, unveiled the Australian National Memorial at Villers Bretonneux in the presence of the President of the French Republic; and on the 14th July 1946 The King, accompanied again by The Queen and by the two Princesses, unveiled the Cross of Sacrifice at Great Bircham Churchyard, Norfolk.

Members stood during the reading of the following resolution which was proposed by the CHAIRMAN, seconded

by Mr. SIGVALDASON and carried unanimously:

2. That the Commission having considered a paper No. CM/41 dated 13th February 1952,

RESOLVE:

That the resolution of condolence submitted by the Commission, on the occasion of the death of His Majesty King George VI, to Their Majesties The Queen, Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother and Queen Mary, and the letter of condolence addressed to His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, President of the Commission, be entered on the minutes.

The letters of condolence were as follows:-

To Her Majesty The Queen:

Mr. Antony Head with his humble duty to Your Majesty has the honour to submit the following resolution:

The members of the Imperial War Graves Commission desire to offer the assurance of their profound sympathy in the death of His Majesty King George VI. They recall with deep gratitude your gracious father's abiding interest in their work and they remember with pride and affection his term of office as their President when Duke of York. They trust that their thoughts and prayers, with those of all Your Majesty's loyal subjects, may help to comfort Your Majesty at this time.

To Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother:

Mr. Antony Head has the honour respectfully to submit to Your Majesty the following resolution:

The members of the Imperial War Graves Commission desire to offer the assurance of their deep sympathy in the death of His Majesty King George VI. They recall Your Majesties' constant interest in their work and in particular Your Majesties' gracious expressions of sympathy with the bereaved at the dedication of the Cross of Sacrifice in Great Birchem Churchyard. They pray that the recollection of the solace brought then, and at many other times, to the relatives of the Dead may be a source of comfort to Your Majesty at this time.

To Her Majesty Queen Mary:

Mr. Antony Head has the honour respectfully to submit to Your Majesty the following resolution:

The members of the Imperial War Graves Commission desire to offer the assurance of their profound sympathy in the death of His

Majesty King George VI. They recall His Majesty's deep and abiding interest in their work and they can never forget that in this he followed the example of his gracious father and of Your Majesty. They pray that Your Majesty may be helped and sustained by the recollection of the comfort which Your Majesty's sympathy has brought to so many families.

To His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester,  
President of the Commission:

Your Royal Highness,

The members of the Imperial War Graves Commission desire to submit to Your Royal Highness this assurance of their profound sympathy in the death of your beloved and revered brother, His Majesty King George VI.

They recall with pride and affection that period when His Majesty, then Duke of York, preceded Your Royal Highness as President of the Commission, and they remember in particular his deep and abiding interest in their work.

They pray that the recollection of the words of sympathy so frequently spoken by His Majesty to the bereaved may help to comfort Your Royal Highness at this time.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your Royal Highness's

obedient Servant.

(Sgd.) ANTONY HEAD.

#### THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR PAKISTAN

The CHAIRMAN said that members would have been interested to see that His Excellency Mr. Habib Ibrahim Rehimtoola who, as High Commissioner for Pakistan, had been a member of the Commission since 1947, had been appointed Pakistan Ambassador to France. He was succeeded as High Commissioner, and as a member of the Commission, by His Excellency Mr. M.A.H. Ispahani.

#### FILM LECTURES IN SCOTLAND AND AT AMBLESIDE.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Principal Assistant Secretary had given film lectures in Edinburgh and St. Andrew's, and at Ambleside, the previous month, and he would ask Mr. Sillar to tell members about them.

Mr. SILLAR said that the lectures were received extremely well. The first lecture in Edinburgh was arranged for the Saturday night but it was so crowded, and so many people had to be turned away, that a second showing of the film had to be arranged for the following Wednesday. The enthusiasm and interest shown were remarkable.

Mr. SYLVESTER enquired whether the attendance at Ambleside had been as great.

Mr. SILLAR replied that there was not so large an attendance there but it was a much smaller place and it was a bitterly cold night. It was understandable that audiences would not be so large at the smaller places.

Mr. SYLVESTER said that the reason for his question was that he had found that in Yorkshire at any rate, the work of the Commission seemed to be so little known among the ordinary people. He had received numerous enquiries from people who had lost sons in both wars and they did not seem to know where they could get answers.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that it might be a good plan for Mr. Sillar to give a lecture in Yorkshire, and Mr. SYLVESTER agreed.

Mr. SILLAR said that he had discussed the question of giving lectures in the north of England with Lord Lawson who had said that it was very difficult to collect large enough audiences there and the matter had therefore been dropped; but if Mr. Sylvester would care to talk to his constituents and let him know whether a lecture would be appreciated he would be happy to give one.

Mr. SYLVESTER replied that he would certainly make enquiries.

Mr. BUNNING said that the High Commissioner for Australia issued a small book to Australian visitors to this country, which contained references to war cemeteries and graves and information about them.

#### MERCHANT NAVY MEMORIAL BILL.

The SECRETARY said that the Merchant Navy Memorial Bill had passed its second reading in the House of Commons without opposition. It had now been referred for study to the Committee for Unopposed Bills.

#### REPORT OF THE 389TH MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

The CHAIRMAN, referring to Item 1 of the Report, said that in the course of Brigadier Obbard's recent visit the Director of Works had been able to revise the schedule of permissible construction costs in the India, Pakistan and South East Asia District.

Members would see from Item 3 that the sculpture of the bronze eagle for the Air Forces Memorial in Malta had been entrusted to Mr. Charles Wheeler, R.A.

Item 4 summarized adjustments in the staff of the Works Department so that they could more readily undertake the great amount of work which lay immediately ahead.

Item 5 indicated that the additions to rates of pay which had just been brought into operation in the Civil Service were being applied to the Commission's staff in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Item 17 referred to the construction of Gauhati War Cemetery in India. Members would recall that Brigadier Obbard had said that the two cemeteries at Imphal were already under construction and were making good progress.

Item 19 showed that the contract for the bronze name panels for the Naval Memorial at Portsmouth had now been let.

Members would see from Item 23 that major maintenance work at 31 out of 49 cemeteries and memorials of the 1914/18 War in the French District had been completed at a total cost within the amount authorised.

It was satisfactory to note in relation to Item 26 that for the year ended 31st December 1951 the staff canteen at Woburn had made a profit.

It was proposed by Mr. SYLVESTER, seconded by Lord WIGRAM and carried unanimously:

3. That the report of the 389th Meeting of the Finance Committee be adopted.

#### THIRTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSION.

The CHAIRMAN said that proofs of the thirty-second Annual Report had been circulated and several helpful replies from Commissioners had been received. Before examining them in detail, however, he would be grateful if members would consider the form of reference which they would doubtless feel should be made in the Report to the death of His Majesty King George VI; a draft had been prepared, of which copies were on the table. He would propose that, when approved, this should be printed on a separate page at the front of the Report and enclosed in a black border.

The members then considered the draft submitted, and after some discussion it was agreed with certain amendments.

The members then proceeded to consider certain small amendments and additions to the draft of the report

as circulated. Proof copies of the colour frontispiece and of the twenty-four reproductions in half-tone of photographs of cemeteries and memorials were also approved.

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

The Commission having considered a Paper No. CM/11/1, dated 13th February, 1952:

RESOLVE:

That the draft Report and Statement of Accounts of the Commission for the year ended 31st March, 1951, be and hereby is adopted.

MEMORIAL TO THOSE WHO HAVE NO KNOWN GRAVE:  
MERCHANT NAVY - 1939/45 WAR.

The SECRETARY pointed out a small error in the paper which had been circulated: in the second line of the penultimate paragraph the word "submitted" should read "substituted". He said that no resolution was required, the object of the paper being merely to amend the paper that was submitted to the 342nd Meeting of the Commission held on the 15th November 1951.

EXAMINATION OF SKETCH DESIGN FOR CEMETERY  
CONSTRUCTION, SOUTHERN EUROPEAN DISTRICT:  
SANGRO RIVER WAR CEMETERY.

Major-General STEEDMAN, at the CHAIRMAN'S request, explained the main features of the Principal Architect's design.

The CHAIRMAN questioned the desirability of the extensive paving used in the paths round the circumference of the cemetery. He thought that they would be more satisfactory if they were grassed.

Mr. MAUFE, replying to the CHAIRMAN'S question, said that it was difficult for him to express an opinion on this point without a knowledge of the locality. In cemeteries in Belgium, for example, he would deprecate much paving; but there might be some local reason at Sangro River Cemetery why it was necessary. He considered that the Principal Architect should be asked to reduce the paving to a minimum.

The CHAIRMAN enquired whether members would agree to Mr. Maufe settling the point with the Principal Architect. The estimated cost was within the figure permissible for this cemetery.

Members signified their agreement.

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

5. The Commission having considered a paper No. A/97/113, dated 13th February 1952:

RESOLVE:

That the Commission having taken note of the Sketch Design for Sangro River War Cemetery, Italy, 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.

PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE QUARTER ENDED  
31ST DECEMBER 1951.

The Commission took note of the report submitted.

The SECRETARY said that since the end of the period covered by the report the 1400 names for the first Cemetery Register part had been sent to the printers.

WEST ROAD CEMETERY, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

It was proposed by Captain RASHID, seconded by Mr. SYLVESTER, and carried unanimously:

6. The Commission, having considered a paper No. A/19330, dated 24th January 1952:

RESOLVE:

That the Seal of the Commission be affixed to and the Proper Officer sign the Deeds of Grant in duplicate vesting in the Commission the exclusive burial rights in the graves of members of the Forces of ex-enemy nations in the West Road Cemetery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

ROYAL NAVAL PATROL SERVICE MEMORIAL,  
LOWESTOFT.

It was proposed by Lord WIGRAM, seconded by Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur LONGMORE, and carried unanimously:

7. The Commission, having considered a paper No. A/52/2/6, dated the 8th February 1952:

RESOLVE:

That the Seal of the Commission be affixed to and the Proper Officer sign the Duplicate Deed of Grant from the Corporation of Lowestoft to the Commission of the right to erect and for ever maintain



a Memorial to the dead of the Royal Naval Patrol Service who have no known grave on a site in Belle Vue Park, Lowestoft.

GENERAL NOTES.

The Commission took note of the paper submitted.

Major-General STEVENS, referring to the paragraphs relating to the graves in Norway, enquired whether maintenance was carried out by local authorities and not by the Commission.

The SECRETARY replied that the Commission made the necessary arrangements for maintenance through Her Majesty's Consuls, but there were certain generous local authorities who, at their own request, carried on the work on the Commission's behalf without payment.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

The CHAIRMAN said that the next meeting would be held at eleven o'clock on Thursday, the 20th March.

There being no other business the meeting concluded at twelve noon.

HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI

His late Majesty, before his accession, was for a time President of the Imperial War Graves Commission. The Commission are proud to acknowledge his constant interest in their work both then and after his accession, when he appointed his brother, The Duke of Gloucester, to succeed him as their President.

Royal remembrance of those who fell in the service of the King has been an inspiration to the Commission from the time when they were established by Royal Charter in 1917 under the Presidency of the Prince of Wales. They recall, in particular, [King George V's pilgrimage to the war cemeteries in France and Belgium in 1922 and his deeply moving words on that occasion; the dedication of the Somme Memorial in 1932 and the tribute then paid by the Prince of Wales to the 73,000 men whose names are engraved there;] the solemn ceremonial in 1938 when King George VI, accompanied by the Queen, unveiled the Australian National Memorial at Villers Bretonneux; the simple homeliness of the service in the village churchyard at Great Bircham, close to Sandringham, where in 1946 the King, accompanied by the Queen and the Princesses, unveiled the first Cross of Sacrifice erected in England to the memory of those who fell in the 1939/45 War.

In April 1951, Her Majesty the Queen, as Princess Elizabeth, paid a visit to the war cemeteries at Anzio. In this recent act of homage may be found renewed the [assurance of an] enduring tradition of royal remembrance.

Message of Condolence to Her Majesty The Queen  
sent by the Chairman of the Commission on the occasion of the  
death of His late Majesty King George VI.

Mr. Antony Head with his humble duty to  
Your Majesty has the honour to submit the following  
resolution:

The members of the Imperial War Graves  
Commission desire to offer the assurance of their  
profound sympathy in the death of His Majesty King  
George VI. They recall with deep gratitude your  
gracious father's abiding interest in their work and  
they remember with pride and affection his term of  
office as their President when Duke of York.  
They trust that their thoughts and prayers, with  
those of all Your Majesty's loyal subjects, may  
help to comfort Your Majesty at this time.

7th February 1952