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MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

at the 558th MEETING of the

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

held at

2 MARLOW ROAD, MAIDENHEAD

on

THURSDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 1984

Present

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR JOHN BARRACLOUGH KCB CBE DFC AFC FRSA  
(Vice-Chairman of the Commission)  
in the Chair

SIR EWEN BROADBENT KCB CMG  
Representing the Secretary of State for Defence

MR R A GOMME  
Representing the Minister for Housing and Construction

MR A N LEVER  
Representing the High Commissioner for Canada

MR R H ROBERTSON  
Representing the High Commissioner for the Commonwealth of Australia

HIS EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE WILLIAM L YOUNG  
High Commissioner for New Zealand

MR J DAVIES  
Representing the Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa

BRIGADIER S NAMBIAR Vr C  
Representing the High Commissioner for the Republic of India

THE LORD WALLACE OF COSLANY

SIR EDWARD GOSCHEN Bt DSO

GENERAL SIR ROBERT FORD GCB CBE

SIR DAVID MUIRHEAD KCMG CVO

SIR DONALD MAITLAND GCMG OBE

PROFESSOR THE BARONESS MCFARLANE OF LLANDAFF

2.

ADVISERS

MR PETER SCOTT BSc FICE, Honorary Consultant Engineer

PROFESSOR E A BELL PhD FLS CChem FRSC, Honorary Botanical Adviser

SECRETARY

SIR ARTHUR HOCKADAY KCB CMG, Director-General

Also in attendance:

MR P R MATTHEW, Assistant Secretary, Deputy Director-General

MR J SAYNOR JP, Assistant Secretary, Assistant Director-General  
(Administration)

MR W J SYMONS OBE, Assistant Secretary, Assistant Director-General  
(Operations)

MR H WESTLAND MIPM, Establishment Officer

MR P H M SWAN, Director of External Relations

MR J B PATON NDH, Director of Horticulture

MR N B OSBORN ARICS, Director of Works

MR G C REDDIE, Legal Adviser and Solicitor

MR S G CAMPBELL MC, Director of Information and Secretariat

MR M S JOHNSON ACMA, Chief Finance Officer

MR S A WALKER )  
MR B P MCGEE ) Secretariat

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were reported from Sir Edward Gardner, Admiral Sir David Williams and Professor Sir Peter Shephard.

SOUTH AFRICAN REPRESENTATIVE

The CHAIRMAN welcomed Mr Davies who was representing the South African Ambassador at a Commission meeting for the first time.

SECRETARIAT

The CHAIRMAN also welcomed Mr McGee as successor to Mr Walker in the Secretariat.



## APPOINTMENTS

The CHAIRMAN reported the following appointments:

a. South African Ambassador

Dr Denis Worrall as Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa in London and as a member of the Commission; he was expected to visit Head Office on 2 October.

b. Indian High Commissioner

Shri Prakash Mehrotra as High Commissioner in London for the Republic of India and as a member of the Commission; it was hoped that he too would visit Head Office shortly.

c. Canadian Agent

The Honourable George Hees PC MP as Canadian Minister of Veterans Affairs with effect from 18 September 1984 and therefore the Commission's Agent in Canada.

d. Chairman, South African Agency

Mr C W van Niekerk as Deputy Director-General of the Department of Public Works and Land Affairs and therefore as Chairman of the South African Agency.

## HONOURS AND AWARDS

The CHAIRMAN congratulated Sir Ewen Broadbent upon his appointment in the Birthday Honours List as a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath; he also reported that Mr Ronald Clothier, Administrative Officer, France Area, had been appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire and that Mr Hassan Mouallem, who looked after Damascus War Cemetery, had been awarded the British Empire Medal.

## COMMISSARIATO GENERALE ONORANZE CADUTI IN GUERRA

Generale di Corpo d'Armata Pietro Tolomeo, Commissioner General of the Commissariato, had retired in June. He had been thanked for his co-operation with the Commission over the years and presented with the Commission's gold medal by the Director-General. He had been succeeded by Generale di Corpo d'Armata Ferruccio Brandi.

## 558.1 MINUTES OF THE 557TH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

## 558.2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 557TH MEETING

558.2.1 Remuneration for service overseas (557.3b)

No further problems had arisen since the last meeting. Only ten members of staff overseas, six of whom were over the age of 60, had



opted to retain the old system of remuneration. The new system would probably cover everyone within about two years as the older staff retired and the younger ones moved.

558.2.2 Use of computer systems (557.3c)

- a. Implementation was proceeding ahead of schedule. It was expected that the system would go 'live' for pensions in October and for pay in February.
- b. It was also planned to pay locally engaged staff in France Area through a computer system and a French bureau, CCMC, had been engaged to provide this service. It was expected to go 'live' early in 1985, and savings of some £7,000 per annum were expected.

558.2.3 Reburial in Israel of Jewish Brigade war dead (557.4)

Commissioners were thanked for their comments which had been incorporated in the draft passed to the Ministry of Defence. Lord Trefgarne had used the draft to reply to Mr Janner who had now accepted the Commission's decision; while not concealing his disappointment he had expressed his gratitude for the consideration the Commission had given to the subject.

558.2.4 Threat to Rangoon War Cemetery, Burma (557.12)

An aide-memoire in the terms proposed at the last meeting had been cleared with the representatives of all member governments and had been sent to the British Embassy in Rangoon. The British Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Mr Richard Luce, was about to visit Burma and the aide-memoire would be delivered to the Burmese Government after that visit.

558.3 ANNUAL REPORT 1983/84 AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS OF THE COMMISSION

558.3.1 The Annual Report had been circulated in draft to all Commissioners; they were thanked for their helpful comments which had been taken into account. The report would be published, as usual, at Remembrancetide.

558.3.2 The Accounts for the year ended 31 March 1984, which had already been scrutinised by the Finance Committee, were presented in a vertical format with supporting notes which it was hoped would make for greater clarity.

558.3.3 The balance carried forward had fallen from £1,768,810 at 31 March 1983 to £1,042,535 at 31 March 1984. It was expected that this figure would fall further to the accepted target of £500,000 as the working balance at 31 March 1985.



558.3.4 Expenditure for 1984/85 had been 9.8% higher than in the previous year, reflecting inflation - particularly overseas - and some planned additional commitments in both horticultural and structural maintenance. The property account had been closed and a sum of £126,464 transferred to general purposes.

558.3.5 In reply to Mr ROBERTSON it was confirmed that:

- a. the headstones intended for the Lebanon were currently held in store and had been paid for;
- b. overall savings had been achieved through the re-organisation of the Commission's Eastern Mediterranean Area and the establishment of mobile horticultural groups in France and North West Europe Areas. A report giving full details would be presented in September 1985.

558.3.6 On a proposal by Mr YOUNG, seconded by Sir Robert FORD, *the Commission approved the Report and Statement of Accounts of the Commission for the year ended 31 March 1984.*

#### 558.4 REPORT OF THE 598TH MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

##### 558.4.1 The Thiepval Memorial, France

The Thiepval Memorial had been undergoing major rehabilitation work since 1974. The final phase would commence in the spring of 1985 and would involve repaving the terraces, using Accrington Nori paving bricks, at a cost of £38,000. The work would be completed by August 1985.

##### 558.4.2 Report of Appointments to Senior Grades

Ten senior appointments to be made over the next twelve months, resulting in part from the planned retirement of five senior members of staff, were reported.

558.4.3 On a proposal by Mr ROBERTSON, seconded by Sir David MUIRHEAD, *the Commission adopted the report of the 598th meeting of the Finance Committee and approved its recommendations.*

#### 558.5 GRAVES NOT WITHIN THE COMMISSION'S CONTROL

558.5.1 In introducing the paper the Secretary reminded the Commission that it had taken an important decision in principle a year ago that the classification of a family grave containing a war burial and marked only by a private memorial as "not within the Commission's control" did not absolve the Commission of its responsibilities, under the terms of its Charter, to ensure commemoration in perpetuity.



558.5.2 Inevitably, some of the private memorials on war graves in the United Kingdom for which relatives had originally taken responsibility were now neglected and did not provide adequate commemoration. The further surveys now reported in the paper before the meeting had suggested that there would probably be a maximum of 1,500 requiring immediate alternative commemoration; this number could be expected to increase slowly as private memorials continued to deteriorate.

558.5.3 The Director of the Office of Australian War Graves had suggested that a Garden of Remembrance on the Australian model could provide a more suitable means of alternative commemoration than the present practice of local alternative commemoration close to the place of burial. The only sites available for development in this way were Brookwood Military Cemetery and Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery. If the Garden of Remembrance model were to be adopted it would be used not only for graves classified "not within the Commission's control" but also for the alternative commemoration of other graves that might be declared unmaintainable. The costings in the paper had been made on the basis of an initial provision of 3,000 plaques, with room for a further 3,000. Photographs of Australian Gardens of Remembrance and a design for a Garden of Remembrance at Brookwood were on display to give Commissioners a clearer idea of what the proposal involved.

558.5.4 The General Secretaries of the three service associations had been asked for their views on the subject. The Royal British Legion in particular had emphasised the importance it attached to local commemoration and its objections to any change in the Commission's policy.

558.5.5 Commissioners in general endorsed this sentiment. It was felt that the way in which nearly every village in the country had its own remembrance service in November indicated the strength of local interest in commemoration of the war dead, and that any action which might undermine that interest should be resisted. Lady McFARLANE pointed out that by definition the graves that were being discussed had ceased to be a focus of local interest, although local memorials might become such a focus. Mr ROBERTSON supported this point but accepted that the heavy capital cost inherent in the Garden of Remembrance proposal militated against it and that the views of the ex-service associations were of fundamental importance. He also agreed that, in the context of the United Kingdom with its traditional parish structure, the Australian practice of centralised commemoration based on each State was less appropriate. Mr YOUNG also favoured local commemoration and Sir Ewen BROADBENT wondered how a change in the present policy, if it came about, would be presented to the public.



558.5.6 The CHAIRMAN concluded that there was a clear consensus of opinion among members in favour of continuing the present practice of local commemoration and that this should extend where appropriate to the commemoration of war burials in graves which had been declared "not within the Commission's control". The SECRETARY confirmed that detailed proposals for individual cases requiring alternative commemoration would now be prepared for consideration by the Commission on this basis.

#### 558.6 BURIALS AND COMMEMORATIONS

558.6.1 On a resolution by Mr DAVIES, seconded by LORD WALLACE, the Commission approved the proposal to provide alternative commemoration for 25 Commonwealth war dead of the 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 Wars (as listed in the Appendix to the Commission paper) by the erection of commemorative headstones in the war graves plot in Port Elizabeth (North End) Cemetery, Cape Province, South Africa.

558.6.2 On a resolution by Sir Ewen BROADBENT, seconded by Mr LEVER, the Commission approved the proposal to exhume the 48 Commonwealth war burials of the 1939-1945 War from Tamale African and Tamale European Cemeteries and to re-inter the remains in Christiansborg War Cemetery, Accra, Ghana.

558.6.3 On a resolution by Sir Edward GOSCHEN, seconded by Mr GOMME, the Commission approved the proposal to exhume the two Commonwealth war burials of the 1914-1918 War from Sekondi (Shama Road) European Cemetery and to re-inter the remains in Takoradi European Public Cemetery, Ghana.

#### 558.7 MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN AGENCY

558.7.1 It was explained that although three members of the Agency were *ex officio* appointments, the fourth member had to be appointed by the Commission on the recommendation of the South African Government.

558.7.2 On a resolution by Mr DAVIES, seconded by Sir Donald MAITLAND, the Commission approved the appointment of Mr J L Viljoen as a member of the South African Agency in succession to Mr J R Mostert.

#### 558.8 COMMONWEALTH-FOREIGN JOINT COMMITTEES - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

558.8.1 On a resolution by Brigadier NAMBIAR, seconded by General Sir Robert FORD, the following were appointed to be members of Commonwealth-Foreign Joint Committees:

##### COMMONWEALTH-JAPANESE JOINT COMMITTEE

Japanese Member

Mr Itaru Umezu

(Director, Second West-Europe Division,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs)



Japanese Member  
Mr Atsuo Yamaguchi  
(Director, National Property Inspection Division,  
Ministry of Finance)

COMMONWEALTH-NETHERLANDS JOINT COMMITTEE

Netherlands Official Member  
Mr M de Bruijne  
(Queen's Commissioner in the Province of Gelderland)

558.8.2 The SECRETARY announced that Commissioners would shortly be sent detailed proposals designed to eliminate anomalies that had arisen in the composition of the Commonwealth side of some Commonwealth-Foreign Joint Committees. They would be asked for their comments in order that a paper might be prepared for the next Commission meeting.

558.9 SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS EXECUTED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE  
COMMISSION BETWEEN 22 MAY AND 31 AUGUST 1984

558.9.1 On a resolution by Lady McFARLANE, seconded by Mr LEVER, *the Commission confirmed the action taken for the execution on its behalf of the documents, serial numbers 590-593 and 231-232, referred to in the Schedule laid before the meeting and signed for identification by the Commission's Legal Adviser and Solicitor.*

558.10 TOURS BY COMMISSIONERS AND HEAD OFFICE OFFICIALS

558.10.1 Both Sir Donald MAITLAND and Lady McFARLANE had toured in France and Belgium during the summer. Sir Donald MAITLAND had been impressed by the high calibre of new members of staff and Lady McFARLANE had been interested to find out about the impact of health and safety legislation. They both thought that the new mobile groups seemed to be working well.

558.10.2 Professor BELL, General Sir Robert FORD, Sir Edward GOSCHEN Sir Donald MAITLAND and Mr YOUNG had all managed to visit memorials and cemeteries abroad, whilst on other business, in Australia, Denmark, Italy, Japan and Crete respectively. All the sites visited had been found to be maintained to a high standard.

558.10.3 The SECRETARY reported on his visit to Austria and Italy where he had seen a number of cemeteries between Klagenfurt and Rome and had also established personal links with senior officials of the Commissariato Generale Onoranze Caduti in Guerra and diplomatic representatives in Rome.

558.11 DIARY

*The Commission took note of the report of various ceremonies connected with the 40th anniversaries of the liberation of various parts of Europe and the Director-General's presence at a ceremony attended by veterans of the Battle of the Somme at Thiépval.*



## 558.12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

558.12.1 Gardener's Quarters - Beersheba War Cemetery

At the 553rd meeting of the Commission it had been reported that legal proceedings concerning the unauthorised occupation of the gardener's quarters at Beersheba War Cemetery were under way. The Commission had now obtained judgement and recovered possession of the quarters.

558.12.2 Commemoration of servicemen judicially executed

Following a letter to the Prime Minister and various newspaper and magazine articles the Commission had been consulted about the commemoration on the Brookwood Memorial of men who had been executed under judicial procedure whilst still in the Forces. The Ministry of Defence had been advised that the Commission's policy from the 1914-1918 War had been to commemorate regardless of the cause of death (which was not always reported to the Commission) and that it would be difficult to overturn decisions made forty or seventy years ago to commemorate these men in this way.

558.12.3 Possible purchase of property in Ieper

It was reported that an opportunity had just arisen to buy a property at the rear of the present office premises in Ieper. This property, when converted, could be used as a base for four mobile groups and would also provide the necessary workshop space for the painter and blacksmith. It was due to be inspected the following week and the Commission would be advised of the outcome and progress in due course. It was agreed that the Director-General could proceed with the purchase if he considered the property suitable.

558.12.4 Sir Ewen Broadbent

The CHAIRMAN thanked Sir Ewen BROADBENT, who was attending his last Commission meeting before retirement, for the interest that he had shown in the Commission's work and for his work on its behalf as the Defence Secretary's representative on the Commission since 1982. On behalf of the Commission he wished Sir Ewen and his wife every happiness in their retirement.

558.12.5 Mr Robert Robertson

Mr Robertson was also attending his last Commission meeting, before being posted to Geneva. He had taken an active interest in the Commission's work since 1978, first as Australian Ambassador in Rome and then as Deputy High Commissioner in London; he had been a regular attender at Commission meetings and his lively contributions would be missed. The Director of the Office of Australian War Graves had specifically asked to be associated with the thanks and best wishes which the Chairman extended to Mr Robertson on the Commission's behalf.