

BRITISH MONUMENTS ON THE SCENES OF THE GREAT WAR

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THE problem of commemorating victory itself was one of the minor preoccupations of the Allied Governments in the months that followed the Armistice with Germany. The consequences of victory were to be settled at Versailles; the price of victory, in lives and wounds and pensions, national debts and personal bereavement, was to be liquidated in every belligerent country. But the fact of victory remained, and the popular instinct was to put it on record. The British peoples were conscious that in every continent their Armies had triumphed, their Navy had cleared every sea, their air squadrons were ready to consummate success, and that these facts should be permanently commemorated in stone.

The British victories were due mainly, as was generally admitted, to the unimpassioned steadiness with which the ordinary man came forward to be trained, went out to fight, and if necessary stayed to lose his life; and there were many who felt that the due commemoration of the individual dead was the fitting permanent record of the Empire's military effort. This was not, it seemed, the correct reading of the national demands. The Dominions, as well as the principal Allied countries, had already chosen some of the sites to which their pilgrims now resort. Many units of the British Armies had erected temporary memorials on the scenes of important achievements, and were fully determined to replace these temporary structures by permanent monuments. To meet this general desire, and at the same time to regulate it, was one of the earliest post-War problems.

Private funds, and local or Divisional pride, had forced on the attention of the British Government the most urgent aspect of this problem. The French and Belgian Governments were embarrassed by numerous applications, direct or indirect, for permission to buy land and erect permanent memorials on the scenes where British or Dominion formations had gained important successes or sustained serious loss. Through the mediation of the Imperial War Graves Commission, the French Government obtained the appointment by the Army Council of the "Battle Exploit Memorials Committee" in November 1918; and this Committee, on which the Dominions are represented, was instructed to receive

such applications from units, to refer them to the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and to forward such as were approved to the Allied Government concerned. To the French and Belgian Governments it appeared simplest to assimilate these applications to the requests for War cemetery sites with which they were already familiar, and provision was made accordingly. By the Anglo-Belgian Agreement of June, 1919, and in France by the joint effect of the Anglo-French Agreement of November, 1918, and the Presidential Decree of November, 1922, all applications for leave to erect "a monument commemorative of a feat of arms of the British Army or of one of its units" were canalised through the Imperial War Graves Commission.

Battle Exploit Memorials recall the achievements or sufferings of a unit; they are mainly Divisional. They are erected from private funds, and maintained by endowment. Their erection is neither encouraged by the Governments concerned nor deprecated, if they pass the tests of historical justice and aesthetic suitability. They are dependent on private generosity, which many famous units cannot command, and even collectively they do not represent the Imperial effort to which so many countries and races contributed. The question of public commemoration on a greater scale remained. For twelve months it was considered, and the foundations of the present scheme laid, by the Battle Exploit Memorials Committee.

The greater monuments may be called, by way of distinction, "Battlefield Memorials". They are erected and maintained out of public funds. They recall a national effort in an area not less than that of a battle, and frequently co-extensive with a campaign. They were considered at first in terms of Expeditionary Forces: France and Belgium, Salonika, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia and East Africa. From the first, Ypres was taken to represent Belgium, La Ferté-sous-Jouarre (where the Retreat from Mons may be said to have ended) and some other "central site" the complex history of the British line in France. The detailed analysis of campaigns had not yet been made from the Despatches.

The Battle Exploit Memorials Committee first met in February, 1919 (calling itself, on that occasion, the Battlefield Memorials Committee). By the following December it had held six meetings, completed and published a list of claims by units for Battle Exploit Memorials, and worked out a scheme of Battlefield Memorials which Mr. Winston Churchill (then Secretary of State for War) circulated to the Cabinet on the 14th November. The chosen battlefields were Ypres, Mons, the Somme, Arras, the

Hindenburg Line, Gallipoli and Palestine. To Ypres, where they had obtained a design for rebuilding the Menin Gate, they allotted £300,000 out of a proposed expenditure of £500,000. It was understood that the forces in Mesopotamia and at Salonika would erect their own memorials, and that the Dominions and India would act for themselves (the latter taking East Africa as one of her battlefields).

The Cabinet memorandum of November 1919 was followed by a Conference of Ministers held in December, in the result of which this question was referred to a new authority, and the Battle Exploit Memorials Committee thereafter dealt only with unit memorials. The National Battlefield Memorials Committee was set up "to consider and report on the forms of national war memorials and the sites on which they should be erected, together with estimates of cost." It reported to the Cabinet in July, 1920, and again on February, 1921. It recommended the rebuilding of the Menin Gate of Ypres at a maximum cost of £150,000, to which the Dominions and India should be invited to contribute; the building of memorials at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, for the earliest days of the War, and Amiens, for the British Western Front generally; the erection of tablets in some of the Cathedrals in the former British area; and the execution of these undertakings by, or for, the Office of Works. Naval memorials were to be left to the Admiralty; the question of Gallipoli should await the result of the visit then being made by Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston; and Palestine and Salonika should be left to the troops.

By June, 1921, after further communications between the Committee and the Cabinet, the scheme in being was (a) for the Army, the rebuilding of the Menin Gate (at a cost of £100,000) and the erection (at a total cost of £60,000) of a cenotaph in Paris, a memorial at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and a joint memorial at Cape Helles with Australia and New Zealand; (b) the offer of £40,000 to the Admiralty. In April the British Ambassador in Brussels had formerly notified the Belgian Government that the British Government wished to rebuild the Menin Gate. At this stage, as the result of an accident, the whole problem of Battlefield Memorials was reconsidered from a new point of view.

The Imperial War Graves Commission was empowered and instructed by its original Charter (May, 1917) not only to mark War Graves and build War Cemeteries, but also to commemorate those officers and men whose graves are not known. The War deaths of the British Empire, including all the fighting forces and "followers" and the Merchant Navy, numbered 1,104,890; and of

these 517,771 are represented by unidentified graves (which number 180,861) or are not represented by any known grave.

The planning and erection of these memorials involved the separation of 517,771 names from the other 587,119; the placing of the unit concerned at the date of death in every case; the selection and acquisition of appropriate sites; and the designing and erection of appropriate memorials to take a number of names varying from two or three to many thousand. The first of these tasks could not be undertaken until the regimental lists of dead were completed by the War Office, late in 1921. The second depended on a lengthy examination of War Diaries, for which facilities were given from the outset by the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence. The third and fourth depended very largely on the results of the first and second; and all four were necessarily postponed, even if they could have been begun earlier, to more urgent duties. The Commission, created eighteen months before the Armistice with Germany, and seeing its earliest plans dislocated by the events of 1918 on the Western Front, could do little constructional work until November, 1918. It had gradually to build up its organization, to establish its position in the British Government service and its relations with the other contributing Governments of the Empire and with the Allied Governments, to co-ordinate its action with that of the Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries at the War Office and in the theatres of War, and—above all—to plan the acquisition and permanent construction of the cemeteries. The general policy was announced to the public in November, 1918. It was already mature as regards cemetery construction, but for over two years it remained fluid as regards memorials to those officers and men who (to use an ambiguous but almost necessary term) remained "missing".

In the early months of 1921 the scheme of memorials to the "missing" was worked out, and the selection of sites and the preparation of lists begun. From 1918, the intention had been to link these "missing" names as closely as possible with the War Cemeteries. They were now grouped by the areas in which death occurred, in some cases by battles or campaigns within those areas, and in some instances by the nationality (within the Empire) or the Service to which the combatants in question belonged. Inevitably, they began to form a historical record in outline.

By April, 1921, there existed, therefore, two schemes for Memorials on an Imperial scale, those of the National Battlefield Memorials Committee and the Imperial War Graves Com-

mission. The War Office, the Office of Works, the Royal Academy and the Dominions were in touch with both bodies. The Committee had seen the scale of its plans more than once cut down. Both schemes followed the movements of the Armies or perpetuated the sites of their trenches, and either overlapping or convergence was inevitable. The decision for convergence was due directly to the notification at Brussels, in April, 1921, that the British Government wished to rebuild the Menin Gate.

It was represented by the Imperial War Graves Commission that under the Anglo-Belgian Agreement of June, 1919, this notice should have been given by the Commission, and the Foreign Office agreed. The resulting discussions revealed the extent to which the two schemes coincided and the urgent necessity of co-ordination. On the 7th June the Committee formally requested the Commission to confer with it. On the 8th July the Secretary of State for War, as Chairman of the Commission, circulated a memorandum to the Cabinet suggesting a fusion of the schemes, and the execution of the work by the Commission. The decisive conference, attended by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, took place at the Treasury on the 22nd June. On the 5th August the Cabinet agreed to abandon all general memorials other than the Commission's; to regard the National Battlefield Memorials Committee as having "completed its functions"; and to appoint a new committee to advise the Commission as to sites and designs for "general memorials". In seven meetings, from the 3rd November, 1921, to the 4th May, 1928, the Advisory Committee was kept in touch with the whole of the Commission's work in this matter, and in every instance it approved the site and the design. On every battlefield of the Old and New Armies, from Ypres to Baghdad and Dar es Salaam, "*duplices signat titulos commune tropæum*".

Thus, by general consent, a new and independent duty was laid on the Commission. The interest of the British Government as a whole, not less than that of the Treasury, was to avoid the creation of duplicate chains of British War Memorials from Nieuport to La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. The machinery of the Commission's Works Department was available in London and in France, and has proved equal to the duty; the funds available for commemorating the "missing" seemed sufficient to commemorate the feats of the British Armies on the same monuments, as in fact they have sufficed without any supplementary grants. But the British Government was moved also by the sense of fitness. The memorials of the Armies were properly linked with those of the officers and men who, to gain the victory, lost not only life but

even known burial. The collective commemoration was emphasized by association with the columns of individual names in which every "missing" soldier, Brigadier-General or Private, had no more and no less than one carved line to recall him.

The Battle Exploit Memorials Committee, the National Battlefield Memorials Committee and the Cabinet itself had left the question of Naval memorials to the Admiralty; and here also the course of events led to a similar result. In September, 1920, the Admiralty, on the invitation of the Commission, appointed a Committee to advise "how the duty laid upon the Commission of commemorating all those who fell during the War can most properly be carried out in the case of men lost or buried at sea". Two months later the Committee reported, and the Admiralty accepted its report. The places of commemoration should be the three Manning Ports, Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth, where the greatest number of seamen and Marines and their kin might see the monuments. The monuments should occupy "a largely frequented position on public ground", and should be associated with "some practical Naval purpose", for choice "a sea-mark or leading-mark near the foreshore". Since the actual battlefields of the Navy cannot sustain memorials, these conclusions were accepted as convincing. And, although the Admiralty and their committee were careful to distinguish these monuments "from National Memorials to commemorate the work of the Navy in the War", they remain and are now accepted as fittingly carrying out that purpose also.

The Royal Air Force and the Merchant Navy in their turn adopted, as will be seen later, the principle of the Cabinet's decision of August, 1921.

The Dominions and India were not bound by the Cabinet's decision. Their separate proposals had bulked large in the arguments of the Army Council and the Cabinet for the early schemes of national memorials. Their tendency, developed during the War and at Versailles, was to co-operate, not to merge, with the United Kingdom. But they were represented on the Imperial War Graves Commission; their representatives played a great part in shaping and executing its policy; and their outlook is visible in every aspect of the Commission's work.

The Western Front, Gallipoli, Palestine and Iraq, where the armed forces of the Overseas Dominions were more particularly engaged, display the results of the full acceptance of the right of each Dominion to accept or modify the decision for itself of the United Kingdom. The Canadian, Australian and Indian "mis-

sing" in Belgium are named with those of the United Kingdom on the Menin Gate at Ypres, but in France on separate national memorials at Vimy, Villers-Bretonneux and Neuve-Chapelle respectively. Australia has her Gallipoli Battlefield Memorial, bearing the names of "missing", at Lone Pine. The Indian Memorial at Port Tewfik serves the double purpose for Egypt and Palestine; at Basra, India joins with the United Kingdom for both purposes. New Zealand has her separate Battlefield Memorials and her separate memorials to the "missing" both on the Western Front and on Gallipoli, though at Tyne Cot (Passchendaele) and at Lone Pine her memorials to the "missing" coincide with others. South Africa has her separate Battlefield Memorial for the Western Front at Delville Wood, but her "missing" everywhere are named on the same memorials as those of the United Kingdom. The main Newfoundland Memorial, for all Services, areas and purposes, is at Beaumont-Hamel, but the caribou stands on other French and Belgian battlefields.

It may be noted that the erection of the Delville Wood Memorial was carried out by the Imperial War Graves Commission for the South African Government, and that in other instances the Commission's staff has assisted in the erection, or carries out the maintenance, of Dominion Battlefield Memorials.

Thus the British Government entrusted the work of erecting its Battlefield Memorials to the Commission, and at the same time contributed the indispensable co-operation of its Departments, the foundations laid by the National Battlefield Memorials Committee, and the valuable counsel of the Advisory Committee. The Overseas Dominions here joined in the scheme, and there supplemented it. The Governments to whom the sites belonged facilitated, in a spirit of friendship and sympathy all the more useful because it was not uncritical, the acquisition of land and the work of construction; and certain of the Memorials in France are dedicated "to the French and British Armies".

In October, 1921, a list of twelve sites in France and Belgium, and twelve in other areas, was drawn up by the Imperial War Graves Commission. Continually increased in number as the cemeteries in new areas were completed, it grew to a list of 99 memorials to the "missing", of which all but four are now erected. They vary, from a stone recording one or two names to a monument bearing more than 73,000 names. All but seventeen were, or will be, built at the sole cost of the Commission, and to five of the seventeen the Commission contributed, or will contribute, the cost of commemorating the "missing".

The following paragraph contains a table of some of the more important of those memorials erected by the Commission, or adopted by them as suitable, which are at once memorials to the "missing" and battlefield memorials. It does not include all the former class, or all the latter; the total of the dead commemorated by these selected monuments is less than that of the "missing" dead, and the achievements of the Empire, as well as its sacrifices, are even greater than the list would indicate. But, as it stands, it suggests the world-wide effort and the triumph, slowly and hardly won, of 1914-1918. The selection has been made of those with special Dominion interest.

(Memorials built in, or adjoining, cemeteries are so described under "Position"; and all memorials not stated to have been built by other authorities were built by the Commission).

MEMORIAL	POSITION	EVENTS COMMEMOR- ATED	"MISSING" DEAD COMMEMOR- ATED
BELGIUM Nieupoort	North side of town.	Defence of Antwerp, 1914; operations on the Belgian coast, 1918.	566
Menin Gate	Ypres.	Fighting in the Ypres Salient, 1914 to August, 1917 (for the United Kingdom), 1914-18 (for Canada, Australia, South Africa, India and the West Indies).	54,375
Tyne Cot.	Tyne Cot Cemetery, Passchendaele.	Fighting in the Ypres Salient, August, 1917 to 1918 (for the United Kingdom), at Passchendaele, 1917 (for New Zealand).	34,883
FRANCE. Arras.	Faubourg-d' Amiens Cemetery, Arras.	Fighting in the area Loos (exclusive) to Berles -au- Bois, 1916 (when taken over from French) to July, 1918 (United Kingdom and South Africa); also Air Services of United Kingdom and Overseas Dominions, Western Front, 1914-18.	35,942

MEMORIAL	POSITION	EVENTS COMMEMOR- ATED	"MISSING" DEAD COMMEMOR- ATED
Thiepval.	On the ridge above the Ancre.	Fighting on the Somme and the Ancre from 1915 to July, 1918 (United Kingdom and South Africa).	73,357
Pozières.	Pozières British Cemetery.	The Retreat of the Fifth Army (United Kingdom and South Africa).	14,690
Neuve-Chapelle.	Cross-roads on the Estaires-La Bassée road.	The Indian Corps, Indian Cavalry Corps and Indian Labour Corps in France, 1914-18.	4,847
Vimy (built by Canadian Government; Commission paid for "missing" commemoration).	On Vimy Ridge.	Operations of the Canadian troops in France, 1914-18.	11,285
Villers-Bretonneux (Australian Government is to build, Commission to pay for "missing" commemoration).	Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery.	Operations of the Australian troops in France, 1915-18.	10,982
Beaumont-Hamel.	Newfoundland Park.	Services of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve and the Newfoundland Merchant Navy, 1914-18.	820
MACEDONIA. Doiran (the British Salonika Army contributed part of the cost).	Colonial Hill.	Salonika campaign, 1915-18 (United Kingdom).	2,161
EGYPT. Port Tewfik.	Near Suez.	Campaigns in Egypt and Palestine, 1914-18 (Indian Army).	3,904
PALESTINE. Jerusalem (the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and the New Zealand Government contributed part of the cost).	Jerusalem War Cemetery.	Campaigns in Egypt and Palestine, 1914-18 (United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and West Indies).	3,38

BRITISH MONUMENTS OF THE GREAT WAR 453

MEMORIAL	POSITION	EVENTS COMMEMOR- ATED	"MISSING" DEAD COMMEMOR- ATED
GALLIPOLI. Helles.	Cape Helles.	Fighting on Gallipoli (United Kingdom and India).	20,752
Lone Pine.	Anzac.	Fighting on Gallipoli (Australia and New Zealand).	4,939
CANADA. Halifax (N. S.).	Point Pleasant Park.	Loss or burial at sea of Royal Naval Can- adian Volunteer Re- serve.	415
Victoria (B. C.).	Ross Bay Cemetery.	Canadian soldiers and nurses, and Canadian Merchant Navy.	41

NOTE

The following National Battlefield Memorials of the Dominions do not fall within the definition at the end of paragraph 11:

CANADA: St. Julien, Hill 62 (Zillebeke), Courcellette, Passchendaele, Le Quesnel, Dury, Bourlon Wood, Mons.

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND: Port Said.

NEW ZEALAND: Chunuk Bair, Longueval, Messines, Gravenstafel, Le Quesnoy.

SOUTH AFRICA: Delville Wood.

NEWFOUNDLAND: Gueudecourt, Monchy-le-Preux, Harlebeke.