

**Fall in Line: Canada's Role in the Imperial War Graves
Commission after the First World War**

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Abstract

The Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission (IWGC), founded during the 1917 Imperial War Conference, was the institution responsible for the British Empire's war dead from the First World War. This thesis reveals Canada's limited influence in establishing the IWGC and also during its early deliberations. This is in sharp contrast to standard historical views of Canada's apparent national affirmation at home and abroad during the war.

This thesis argues that despite Canada's initiatives for increased autonomy over military and political matters during the First World War, this desire for independence of action was absent when exploring the case study of the IWGC. Each Dominion had a delegate in the IWGC's governing body and the cost of the care and maintenance of the Empire's war graves was shared between Britain and the Dominions, proportionally to their number of war dead. Canada's share was the largest amongst the Dominions. However, the innovative imperial structure reflected in the IWGC's organization did not translate into any equality in decision-making regarding IWGC policies. British representatives preferred a unified imperial approach, suppressing Dominion voices, and Canada's representative rarely objected. Given the importance of the subject of military burials for bereaved families, the Canadian government's general lack of advocacy on their behalf demonstrates Canada's imperial mindset, which in this case overshadowed burgeoning national assertion.

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Acronyms

BNAA – British North America Act

CEF – Canadian Expeditionary Force

CSAMA – Canadian South African Memorial Association

CWGC – Commonwealth War Graves Commission

CWGS – Canadian War Graves Section

DGRE – Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries

GLWSA – Guild of Loyal Women South Africa

IODE – Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire

IWGC – Imperial War Graves Commission

LAC – Library and Archives Canada

OMFC – Overseas Military Forces of Canada

PPCLI – Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry

Introduction

Fighting as Canadians, Buried as Britons

The First World War was an important step for Canada achieving greater status and recognition on the world stage, but most importantly within the constitutionally evolving British Empire. Despite accomplishments on the battlefields and a growing national identity and confidence, Canada did not adopt a distinct stance on all imperial matters. This study will demonstrate that notwithstanding Canada's apparent national coming of age during and immediately after the First World War, Britain maintained control and dictated the tenor of events regarding the Empire's war dead. And Canada did not much object. Due to an entrenched tradition of deferring to Britain in imperial matters and the nomination of a docile Canadian representative in negotiations concerning a common imperial war burial policy, this thesis argues that Canada did not demonstrate its 'birth of nationhood', acclaimed in other areas of the war and often assumed in the historical literature. Rather, despite the deeply emotive subject of marking the final resting places of Canada's fallen, Canada meekly allowed burial practices for its war dead to follow a British lead. As the war progressed, Canadian troops increasingly fought and died as Canadians but were buried as Britons.

When Britain declared war against Germany on 4 August 1914, Canada, as a colony of Britain, was automatically also at war; still, Canada could decide what role it would play in the war.¹ Early enthusiasm for war, though varying in degree and certainly not unanimous, was strong throughout the country, with French-speaking Canadians, Canadians of German and Austro-Hungarian ancestry, and rural Canadians expressing the least evident support. But voices raised in outright opposition were few. By 8 September, 32,665 Canadians had enrolled

¹ Jonathan F. Vance, *Maple Leaf Empire: Canada, Britain, and Two World Wars* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2012), 39; Charles P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, Volume 1: 1867-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 174.

voluntarily and descended upon Valcartier, the designated mobilization assembly area just outside of Quebec City. By the end of the war, more than 619,636 Canadian men and women had served in the army.²

The cost of the war was high for Canada: with a population of barely eight million, 60,661 soldiers would never return.³ Of these fatalities, approximately 20,000 were considered ‘missing’. Though more than 13,000 of those soldiers’ bodies simply were never found, this number also included 6,846 unknown soldiers whose bodies were recovered but whose identities could not be confirmed.⁴ For Britain and the Dominions during and after the First World War, deciding the manner of burying the bodies of the Empire’s more than one million fallen soldiers became a necessary and particularly poignant duty. Proper burials were not often possible in the heat of battle: the initial burial of bodies was generally done haphazardly, under fire, or during brief respites in the action. Shallow graves were dug, bodies were retrieved from no-man’s-land when possible, and wooden crosses were planted to identify the remains. The scale of the First World War’s dead was unprecedented and the logistics of burial an immense burden for all nations involved.

Initially, the Mobile Unit of the British Red Cross took care of primary burials, recording the location and identity (when possible) of remains. As the number of fatal casualties escalated, in 1915 this unit evolved into the Graves Registration Commission and eventually became an integral part of the British Army. In 1916, the organization grew further to become the Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries, which was tasked with responding to letters

² Colonel G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919: Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1962), 20 and 535.

³Ibid., 535.

⁴ “Remembrance: The Unknown Soldier,” *Canadian War Museum*, accessed 22 March 2017, <http://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/history/after-the-war/remembrance/the-unknown-soldier/>; “The Tomb: Questions and Answers,” *Veterans Affairs Canada*, accessed 22 March 2017, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canada/tomb-unknown-soldier/thetomb/tombqanda>

from families, seeking information on the final resting places of their loved ones. These organizations were primarily responsible for the burial of remains and the recording of grave locations. In September 1915, in parallel with this evolving structure, the National Committee for the Care of Soldiers' Graves was created for the long-term care of graves after the war. An article published in Toronto's *The Globe* in March 1916⁵ announced to Canadians the creation of the National Committee, while an October 1916 article outlined in more detail the developments of the care of graves, after the War Office issued an explanatory memorandum to the Canadian government. The article stated that "as so many Canadians are deeply concerned in this information it is desirable that it should be given the widest publicity."⁶ Already thousands of Canadians had died, but Canada seemed content to follow the British lead.

In an effort to centralize authority over burial practices for all of the Empire's dead, it was agreed by Britain and the Dominions at the 1917 Imperial War Conference to grant a Royal Charter for the establishment of the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC).⁷ This new body would assume responsibility for proper record keeping and the care of graves in perpetuity wherever the Empire's dead could be found.⁸ The IWGC established comprehensive and collective policies and practices regarding the burial of the Empire's dead. Fatalities were to be buried as close as possible to where they fell; their tombstones would be uniform (regardless of service, race, or rank); and a regimental badge would identify the unit in which the soldier had served. In the cases of the Dominions, however, a national symbol would replace this badge. The maple leaf, already broadly recognized internationally as a Canadian representation, was carved on each Canadian headstone.

⁵ "Permanent Provision for Soldiers' Graves," *The Globe* (Toronto), 30 March 1916.

⁶ "Soldiers' Graves to Be Well Cared For: Their Registration and Maintenance Are Planned," *The Globe* (Toronto), 28 October 1916.

⁷ In 1960 the Imperial War Graves Commission became the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

⁸ Edwin Gibson and G. Kingsley Ward, *Courage Remembered* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989), 44-47.

From its formation, the IWGC was designed as an imperial structure. The cost of the IWGC's work was shared by the Dominions, proportionally to their number of war dead. The IWGC's governing council included, in addition to the Secretaries of State for the Colonies and for India, representatives for Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Newfoundland. The Canadian delegate, Sir George Perley, then acting High Commissioner for Canada in London, was tasked with advocating for the Dominion's interests during the deliberations of the IWGC's council meetings. Yet, as the only Canadian representative amongst the commissioners, his influence was limited, even were he inclined to seek to wield such influence.

This thesis explores Canada's influence on the IWGC's policies during and after the First World War and examines the degree to which Canada even *sought* such influence. It will become evident through this study that the Dominions had limited decision-making power regarding IWGC policies, as the British representatives preferred a unified imperial approach, rather than allowing the Dominions to proceed along a distinctly 'national' path. Canada did succeed in initiating some small changes to IWGC policies, but on more significant issues, such as the IWGC's refusal to repatriate the war dead to their countries of origin, Canada failed to exert any influence. Given Canada's simultaneous attempts to achieve greater independence on other wartime imperial matters, such as greater national authority over its troops in the field and some involvement in negotiating peace terms, this lack of insistence on policies that reflected the views of many bereaved Canadians allows insight into Canada's imperial mindset to the exclusion of 'national' priorities.

The main periodization of this work will be from 1914, with the establishment of the Mobile Unit of the British Red Cross Society, the first group responsible for the Empire's war dead, to 1921, the year that three IWGC experimental cemeteries were completed, which

established the design of all subsequent ‘imperial’ cemeteries. Some exploration of the years preceding 1914 will be necessary to demonstrate the evolution of Canada’s development as an increasingly strident national entity from the turn of the century to the years following the First World War. Further, as Canadians who fought in the South African War are also buried overseas, analyzing the work of Canadian organizations which undertook the responsibility for these burials will provide some useful prewar context on the matter of any existing “Canadian” military burial policies or precedents.

To clarify the subject at hand, I wish to define the scope of the term “war dead.” It is used throughout to indicate all who died while on active service. For the First World War, the dates that delineated the conflict were extended well beyond the signing of the Armistice on 11 November 1918. The official dates of the war as established by the Termination of the Present War (Definition) Act 1918, were 4 August 1914 to 31 August 1921.⁹ The official end date of the war reflects the day of the signing of Britain’s last peace treaty, with Hungary. Therefore, the First World War ‘war dead’ includes anyone on active military service killed or died while on duty or who died from wounds within these dates.

The historiography of the IWGC is sparse and almost exclusively British-centric and British-written. It has mainly focused on the IWGC as an innovative, collaborative imperial body, due to its financial structure being based on the proportional number of war dead per nation and perhaps also due to the strong contemporary sense that the Empire’s war dead had all fallen in a common cause. Most of the studies relating to the IWGC have focussed on the Commission’s work since the end of the First World War, yielding only the briefest mentions of its founding and first few years of operations.

⁹ “Minutes of the Forty Second Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” 21 February 1922, File W-18-26 (25), Vol. 329, RG 25 (Department of External Affairs), Library and Archives Canada (LAC).

The Commission's founder, Sir Fabian Ware, wrote the earliest work about the IWGC in 1937.¹⁰ Ware, largely responsible for the organizations charged with the early care of war burials prior to the IWGC's establishment, drafted the Commission's charter, which was granted during the 1917 Imperial War Conference. Ware recounts his experiences in overtly 'imperial' terms not fully acknowledging the concerns of the Dominions, which were sometimes opposed to certain IWGC policies. Although it is frequently self-serving, Ware's account offers insight and details concerning the founding of the organization not otherwise available in reading the IWGC's meeting minutes or annual reports.

In 1967, the IWGC commissioned a history of its organization, which was written by historian Philip Longworth.¹¹ *The Unending Vigil* is a complete overview of the organization's establishment, with a relevant focus on policy-setting, based on the IWGC's own archives. Evidently, as a commissioned work, it represents a mainly one-sided narrative of the IWGC's history, much like Ware's account. Longworth, too, ignored the Dominion perspective, making very few remarks about Canadian or other Dominions' opinions or dissensions. Longworth even refers to the IWGC as "the only permanent institutional reflection of a common spirit in the Empire, of an equal partnership of nations."¹² This study will demonstrate that during the First World War, the IWGC represented far from an equal partnership between the Dominions and Britain.

A Canadian War Museum and Department of Veterans Affairs joint publication, *Silent Witnesses*, appearing in 1974, offers a broad narrative of Canada's experience in the IWGC, including an historical overview of the battles and corresponding cemeteries from both world

¹⁰ Fabian Ware, *The Immortal Heritage* (London: Cambridge at the University Press, 1937).

¹¹ Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil: The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (Southampton: The Camelot Press Ltd., 1986).

¹² *Ibid.*, 28.

wars.¹³ It is not an academic account and offers no critical re-appraisal, but it serves as a well-researched guidebook for visitors to the battlefields, memorials, and cemeteries. This is one of the only publications on the IWGC that focuses on the Canadian perspective. This thesis will offer a more critical review of Canada's involvement in the early years of the IWGC by placing it within the contemporary trends of Canadian national affirmation in political and military spheres.

In *Courage Remembered*, published simultaneously in Canada and the United Kingdom in 1989, historians Edwin Gibson and G. Kingsley Ward recounted the history of the British Commonwealth military cemeteries and memorials during the two world wars, including their planning and design, the setting of formal policies, and their construction.¹⁴ The book also includes a large collection of reference information and serves as a guide to visiting the sites. Their research touched on the early years of the IWGC and included the Dominions' roles and perspectives, rendering it very useful to this study.

In 2007, historian Julie Summers wrote a short history of the IWGC through an illustrated book.¹⁵ The book includes a combination of modern and historical photographs, with many images of cemeteries during the war juxtaposed with their present appearance. The book includes a short history of the IWGC, which focused mainly on Ware's role but also acknowledges the public debate, which existed in Britain during the First World War about the IWGC's work. But Summers does not include the Dominions' perspectives.

¹³ Herbert Fairlie Wood and John Swettenham, *Silent Witnesses* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974).

¹⁴ Gibson and Ward, *Courage Remembered*.

¹⁵ Julie Summers, *Remembered* (London: Merrell Publishers Limited, 2007).

Historian David Crane published the most recent study of the IWGC's work in 2013.¹⁶ Crane's work focused mainly on Ware's role as the founder of the IWGC and his work with the Mobile Unit of the Red Cross and the Graves Registration Commission. However, Crane unduly credits Ware with single-handedly establishing the IWGC and authoring its policies, which he claims democratized the war dead in a class-divided Britain. Crane makes few references to the Dominions' involvement in the IWGC and echoes Longworth's view of an "equal partnership" between nations, characterizing it as "Ware's triumph."¹⁷

These books allow for an in-depth understanding of the IWGC's founding and policy-setting. However, there is very little mention of the Dominions' involvement and influence within the Commission or the Empire, something that this thesis seeks to address from a Canadian perspective.

Recent studies have undertaken more narrow analyses of the IWGC's work. A 2007 article by Michèle Barrett considers the politics involved in the naming of IWGC cemeteries and memorials, and the discrepancy in the treatment of colonial troops as compared to 'white graves,' despite the IWGC's claim of equality of treatment.¹⁸ Andrew Prescott Keating's 2011 doctoral thesis explores the British government's increasing role in the traditionally private act of mourning and grief through the IWGC as well as Britain's use of war cemeteries to reinforce its reputation as an imperial power.¹⁹ Keating's study is centered on tensions between the British government and families and includes little on the Dominions' perspective. In 2015 William M. Taylor explored the morals and aesthetics of the IWGC memorials and the collection of war

¹⁶ David Crane, *Empires of the Dead: How One Man's Vision Led to the Creation of WWI's War Graves* (London: William Collins, 2013).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁸ Michèle Barrett, "Sublaterns at War: First World War Colonial Forces and the Politics of the Imperial War Graves Commission," *Interventions* 9, no. 3 (2007): 451-474, accessed 19 May 2018, DOI: 10.1080/13698010701618703

¹⁹ Andrew Prescott Keating, "The Empire of the Dead: British Burial Abroad and the Formation of National Identity," (Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2011).

trophies after the First World War.²⁰ His study, focused on the Australian perspective, argues that the uniform layout of IWGC cemeteries conceals the opposition to many of the Commission's policies. This thesis will also explore these policy disagreements at the outset of the IWGC, but focusing on the Canadian position. As no biography of Sir George Perley exists, the analysis of his role is largely dependent on his recorded interjections at IWGC meetings and his related correspondence with Canadian Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden or Ware.

In terms of other Dominions' experience within the IWGC, in 2007 historian Bart Ziino published a thorough analysis of Australia's experience in the IWGC during the First World War.²¹ This book allows for interesting comparison between Canadian and Australian political and public opinion regarding IWGC policies, which particularly differed in regards to the matter of repatriation. Ziino's chapter, co-authored with historian John Lack, in Andrew Tait Jarboe and Richard S. Forgarty's collection, published in 2014, also offered useful insight into the IWGC and Fabian Ware, arguing that the IWGC's main goal was to symbolize an enduring imperial relationship and help demonstrate a united Empire as an element of Britain's world power.²² This thesis similarly argues that Ware achieved this goal, as the IWGC was a symbol of imperial unity and solidarity, with the Dominions falling into line, notwithstanding the desires of their people. Imelda Bargas and Tim Shoebridge address the New Zealand experience in one chapter of their 2015 work. The authors are unusually critical of the IWGC and of its own representative on the

²⁰ William M. Taylor, "War remains: contributions of the Imperial War Graves Commission and the Australian War Records Section to material and national cultures of conflict and commemoration," *National Identities* 17, no. 2 (2015): 217-240, accessed 19 May 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2015.1019210>

²¹ Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2007).

²² John Lack and Bart Ziino, "Requiem for Empire: Fabian Ware & the Imperial War Graves Commission," in *Empires in World War I: Shifting Frontiers and Imperial Dynamics in a Global Conflict*, eds. Andrew Tait Jarboe and Richard S. Fogarty (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2014).

Committee, Sir James Allen, High Commissioner in London.²³ Though Bargas and Shoebridge's criticisms of Allen differ from this thesis's own criticism of Canada's IWGC representative, Sir George Perley, the fact that both Dominions' populations felt their interests inadequately represented by their IWGC delegates implies that there was hardly unanimity concerning the founding principles and practices of the IWGC and that a less-than-perfect imperial solidarity was overshadowed by Britain's own objectives.

On the broader subject of death and bereavement, Thomas Laqueur's 2015 study allows for useful context regarding the evolution in the treatment of bodies and changing culture of memory and burials, focused mainly on Britain.²⁴ Laqueur's chapters on the location of graves and the increasing importance of naming the dead are particularly pertinent to this study.

The United States, unlike the British Empire, offered dual options to its citizens, whereby families could choose whether or not they wished to have the remains of their war dead returned to the United States at government expense. Given similar geographical gulfs between the war zones and home, the American experience offers useful comparisons with Canada. In 2005, journalist Michael Sledge published *Soldier Dead* which studies the American experience with burial policy and repatriation from the American Civil War to the war in Iraq. Sledge focuses the social importance placed on the war dead in the United States and explores the vexing question of to whom, exactly, the dead belong: the government, the nation, or the families?²⁵ In 2010, historian Lisa Budreau published *Bodies of War* that criticized the politicization of memory in the United States after the First World War. She denounced the government's imposition on

²³ Imelda Bargas and Tim Shoebridge, *New Zealand's First World War Heritage* (Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 2015).

²⁴ Thomas W. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015).

²⁵ Michael Sledge, *Soldier Dead: How We Recover, Identify, Bury, and Honor Our Military Fallen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

grieving families to decide the fate of loved one's remains, a decision-making opportunity which was generally looked upon with envy by Canadians. Budreau's work serves to contrast the Canadian policies with those of the Americans.²⁶

For Canada's military role in the First World War, this thesis relied mainly on Colonel Gerald W. L. Nicholson's *Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War*, first published in 1962.²⁷ For the political implications of the First World War, historians C.P. Stacey's *Canada and the Age of Conflict* and Desmond Morton's *A Military History of Canada* were indispensable.²⁸ Desmond Morton's 1982 *A Peculiar Kind of Politics* expertly describes the Ministry of Overseas Military Forces of Canada.²⁹ For Canada's position in the Empire outside the IWGC, historian Philip G. Wigley's 1977 work analyses the changing Anglo-Canadian relationship from 1900 to 1926, focusing mainly on foreign and imperial policies.³⁰ Historian Robert Craig Brown's biography of Sir Robert Borden, published in 1975 was useful in advancing the notion that the Canadian government sought an altered relationship with Britain during and after the war.³¹ Similarly, Borden's own memoirs make this point and demonstrate that Canada's wartime military achievements and political advancement would mean something in terms of postwar "national" affirmation, notwithstanding the fact of Canada's lack of influence on the IWGC council.³²

²⁶ Lisa M. Budreau, *Bodies of War: World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919-1933* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2010).

²⁷ Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1918*.

²⁸ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies*; Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Limited, 1999).

²⁹ Desmond Morton, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics: Canada's Overseas Ministry in the First World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

³⁰ Philip G. Wigley, *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth: British-Canadian Relations 1917-1926* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

³¹ Robert Craig Brown, *Sir Robert Borden: A Biography* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975).

³² Robert Laird Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs Volume II, 1916-1920*, eds. Henry Borden and Heath Macquarrie (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1969).

Canada's role in a changing Empire underpins the present research and this thesis approaches this subject with a narrow lens in an attempt to show that Canada's often-cited increased recognition and status as a result of its First World War experiences was not apparent in the imperial structure of the IWGC. Historian Jonathan F. Vance claims that by 1918:

Canada's status as the senior dominion was also assured, for the Borden government had used the power of the Canadian Corps to leverage greater influence in the running of the war. This (...) had a strong nationalist dimension. It emerged from the assumption that Canada's new nationalism could be expressed most effectively through the British Empire, not independently, and so it was through imperial institutions that Canada should seek influence.³³

If, as Vance argues, Canada did not wish to be entirely independent, this offers a possible motive for Canada's lukewarm stance on the IWGC. However, this thesis will show that Canada did not succeed in influencing policies or direction, and the Canadian representative, Perley, made only half-hearted attempts at doing so. The result was that Canada's war graves were treated first and foremost as those of British dead.

The primary sources for this thesis are mainly drawn from the Library and Archives Canada collection in Ottawa, the Commission's archives in Maidenhead, England, and the Commission's Canadian Agency's archives in Ottawa.³⁴ The second and third chapters are largely based on correspondence and records from the IWGC's archives in Maidenhead.³⁵ The IWGC's meeting minutes between 1917 and 1922 are valuable to evaluate Canada's participation in the decision-making process relative to the burial or the commemorating of the Empire's war dead, including more than 60,000 Canadians. Along with correspondence between Sir George Perley – Canada's High Commissioner in London and Canada's delegate to the

³³ Vance, *Maple Leaf Empire*, 109.

³⁴ The Canadian Agency is responsible for the care of the Commonwealth's war graves from the First and Second World Wars located in the Americas. It will be discussed in further detail in chapter 2.

³⁵ It is worth noting that until recent months, the Commission's Maidenhead archives were only accessible in person, which limited their usage. They are now being digitized and are increasingly becoming available for consultation online.

IWGC – and his colleagues at home, this will allow understanding into the government's attempts at identifying and promoting Canadian national interests within the overarching context of an imperial relationship with Britain and the other Dominions in the Commission.

Furthermore, newspaper articles from the period were used to assess Canadians' opinions towards IWGC policies. Some families used the public platform of the media to protest the IWGC's far-off handling of such a sacred task as burying the nation's fallen, and to voice their preference for certain policies, namely the repatriation of the remains of their loved ones. At the same time, newspaper articles also show that some families supported the policies of the IWGC.

The first chapter explores the broader context of the Anglo-Canadian relationship, tracing its evolution from the South African War to the First World War. Though the relationship between Canada and the Mother Country did not substantially change in this inter-war period, the nationalism that was prevalent amongst Canadian troops during the South African War only increased during the First World War. This nationalism was felt at home as well and within the Canadian Government. The latter's increased feelings of confidence and independence from British authority is clear from the 1916 establishment of a ministry in London, the Ministry of Overseas Military Forces of Canada, to better manage and support Canadians troops. Understanding the dynamic between Canada and Britain, particularly the keenness with which Canada wished to be consulted within the counsels of Empire in political and military matters, is key to recognizing the inconsistency of Canada's voice and role in the early years of the IWGC.

The second chapter focuses on the organizations that were responsible for the care of the war graves in the South African War, as well as in the first few years of the First World War, until the IWGC was established. This background is significant as some of the IWGC's policies were established by these early organizations, which did not have Dominion representation. The

lack of consultation was corrected with the founding of the IWGC, which included members from each of the Empire's Dominions. However, the power imbalance created by the financial structure of the IWGC perpetuated the inequality of voices and limited Canada's ability to sway decisions to favour the wishes of Canadians.

The third chapter describes the IWGC's policy setting and outlines Canada's limited role in this process. The chapter will highlight some of Canada's successful initiatives, such as the policy of epitaphs; its partial achievements, such as the representation of a national symbol on Dominion headstones, where the resulting policy was not the desired outcome; and the policies where Canadian opinion was disregarded in favour of a united imperial approach, which was the case of the non-repatriation policy. Canada achieved some successes within the IWGC's new and challenging imperial structure. However, when compared to the advancements on the political and military fronts, the lack of interest in the care of war graves is shocking and inconsistent with a nation's coming of age.

Though the immediate topic is of a military nature, this research also radiates into the realms of cultural, political, and social history. It also represents a contribution to the institutional history of the Imperial War Graves Commission. As a case study of the IWGC, this thesis will chip away at the colony-to-nation paradigm³⁶ by showing that Canada continued to be dominated by Britain in the care and design of war graves and that independence of action was not so easily attained in this matter. This thesis will be an addition to the history of Canada's role in the First World War, particularly in the context of commemoration and remembrance. It is particularly relevant to research this subject at this time, as the centennial of the First World War,

³⁶ For an explanation of this debate see Yarema Gregory Kelebay, "The New Paradigm in Canadian History: Restoring reason in writing and teaching," *McGill Journal of Education* 19, no. 3 (1984): 273-283; Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing since 1900*, second edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 259-320.

which generated much national interest in remembrance and in research regarding the memory of the First World War, comes to a close. As grave markers, along with other physical memorials, are some of the primary methods of remembering those who fought and fell during the First World War, further investigating the rationale behind their creation is especially pertinent.

Chapter 1

“A share in our councils as well as in our burdens”³⁷:

Evolution of the Anglo-Canadian Relationship from 1899 to 1918

The period 1899 to 1918 saw important changes in the Anglo-Canadian relationship, as Canada first sought a greater voice within the Empire and, later, more independent decision-making power. The South African War (1899-1902) spurred a growing sense of Canadian nationalism and military self-confidence that left many Canadians desirous for increased autonomy in military and foreign relations.³⁸ In the interwar period of 1902 to 1914, Canada took steps to improve its militia, while debating the implications of Imperial defence and the need for a naval force. The First World War brought on important discussions relating to Canada's status within the Empire, and though there was no change to Canada's constitutional status, the cause of growing Canadian independence of action on the world stage was advanced during the 1917-18 Imperial War Conferences and Cabinets.³⁹ Yet, despite the First World War's importance in Canada's transition from colony to nation, and notwithstanding the example of the South African War, Canada seemingly placed little importance on the care of the graves of thousands of fallen Canadians soldiers. This broad exploration of the Anglo-Canadian relationship will provide necessary context for the narrower study of the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC) in the next chapters. The study of the Anglo-Canadian relationship will begin with the outbreak of the South African War, at which time powerful imperial sentiments led to Canadian participation, setting the most important precedent for Canada's eventual response to the First World War.

³⁷ David Lloyd George quoted in Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1974), 282.

³⁸ Carman Miller, *Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 478; Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 117-119.

³⁹ Wigley, *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth*, 28, 29, 42; Stacey, 213, 227.

Canada's status as a First World War combatant and its evolving ties with Britain will then be evaluated.

The British North America Act (BNAA) of 1867 united three provinces, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Canada (Upper and Lower), into a self-governing colony, a Dominion within the British Empire. In 1871, Canada's population was 3,485,761 people, of whom 2,110,592 originated from the British Isles and 1,082,940 were of French origin. The BNAA did not define Canada's new status nor did it outline how its foreign relations should be managed. This latter omission was due to the view, shared by Canada and Britain, that foreign relations remained the responsibility of the British government.⁴⁰ Despite Canada's willing deferral of foreign affairs to Britain at Confederation, as of 1869, the Canadian government named an informal representative in London. When Canada suggested making the appointment more formal, some British ministers felt that this proposal threatened the unity of the Empire. It was only in 1880 that Sir Alexander Galt eventually received the title of "High Commissioner for Canada in London."⁴¹ This rapid transition from apparent disinterest in foreign affairs at Confederation to aspirations of diplomatic representation in London, or at least for a greater voice within the Empire, demonstrates the growing wish for greater autonomy in external affairs that stemmed from Canada's established self-government in internal affairs.

On the military front, Canada relied on Britain for protection from attacks. At the time of Confederation, there were more than 15,000 British troops stationed in Canada. However, in 1870, in an effort to reduce expenses, Britain announced, against Canada's wishes, that it would maintain only one garrison in Canada, the Imperial fortress in Halifax. All other troops were

⁴⁰ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 3-5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

evacuated the following year. Nevertheless, it was understood that, should Canada be threatened, Britain remained obligated to defend it, as it would with any of its overseas colonies and territories.⁴² During this period of reduction in the British garrison, Canada was under threat from the Fenians, a group of Irish-Americans, who attempted to invade Canada in order to use it as a bargaining chip against England to obtain Irish independence. Though they were unsuccessful, they did conduct attacks on the Canadian-American border until 1871. In May 1870, the Canadian cabinet expressed “the deep sense entertained by the people of the Dominion of all shades of party, that they have not received from Her Majesty’s Government that support and protection which, as loyal subjects of Her Majesty, they have a right to claim.”⁴³ How far could Canada rely on Britain?

Canada took steps to improve its tiny permanent force and its citizen-soldier part-time militia although these remained weak and under-equipped and without benefit of important auxiliary services, such as medical, supply, or transport. Canada’s militia was still intended to serve as a supplementary force to the British army and the new Dominion continued to depend on Britain for protection.⁴⁴

In 1884, Britain organized a relief expedition to rescue British General Charles Gordon, who had been surrounded in Khartoum by the forces of the Mahdi. After consultation with Sir John A. Macdonald, Prime Minister of Canada, the Governor General, Lord Lansdowne raised a contingent of 386 Canadian civilian boatmen, the voyageurs, whose skills would be useful in shipping supplies down the Nile. These men represented Canada’s first overseas contribution to a British war. The Canadian government, despite receiving a number of offers of service, did not offer Britain an official Canadian contingent. Though Macdonald had no issue with the British

⁴² Ibid., 9 and 10

⁴³ Ibid., 10 and 11.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 11; Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 90 and 94.

raising a force in Canada at its own expense, the conflict in the Sudan did not threaten Canada's national interest.⁴⁵ Besides, Macdonald was worried about unrest in Canada's Northwest that would occupy the bulk of the Canadian Militia. At this early stage, Canada was beginning to identify its own military needs and policies.

The period between the Nile Expedition and Canada's next overseas engagement, the South African War, saw little change in the relationship between Canada and Britain. In 1887, the British government invited the colonies to the first Colonial Conference, later Imperial Conference, in London, to discuss imperial defence. But already Canada had begun to define its own national interests and, while remaining broadly supportive of Empire, would participate in its defence only insofar as this was vitally important and did not jeopardize Canada's domestic harmony. Moreover, increasing Canadian national affirmation confirmed that any participation in imperial defence had to be identifiably *Canadian*.

In 1896, Wilfrid Laurier became Prime Minister of Canada. Laurier was in a challenging position, having to navigate regional and linguistic divides, as well as the different forms of nationalism existing in Canada. Imperial sentiment was strong in (mainly English) Canada in this period, as some Canadians feared annexation to the United States. English Canada traditionally demonstrated sympathy towards British aims and policy. Immigration from the British Isles continued to be strong, which served to maintain imperial support.⁴⁶ Further, English Canadians saw participation in the Empire as advancing Canadian security and economic interests. As historian Carl Berger concludes, "Imperialism was one form of Canadian nationalism."⁴⁷

Imperialists in Canada at this time believed that, in Berger's words, "the imperial system was the

⁴⁵ Stacey, 41-44.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁷ Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 259.

vehicle through which she would achieve nationhood.”⁴⁸ On the other hand French Canadians felt no historic or emotional attachment to Britain, nor did most feel much attachment to France. French Canadians felt loyalty only for Canada. Accordingly, French Canada viewed potentially costly military contributions to the Empire as retrograde and not advancing Canada’s national aspirations.

In 1899 war broke out in South Africa between Britain and two independent republics, the Orange Free State and Transvaal, which were inhabited by descendants of the region’s Dutch settlers. Britain claimed to be defending the rights of British settlers, but the conflict was really about Britain’s territorial and economical ambitions, as the area was rich in gold and diamonds. Laurier appreciated the potential divisiveness of the South African War amongst Canadians, with much of English Canada being in favour of participation alongside Britain whereas French Canada was generally opposed. Laurier felt that, as Canada’s national interests weren’t directly in jeopardy, Canada had no business participating. Still, he attempted a compromise: the Canadian government would provide equipment and transportation for 1000 volunteers to serve alongside Britain. Once they arrived in South Africa, the British Government would be financially responsible for them.⁴⁹ Notwithstanding the seeming abdication of sovereign control over its military forces under this arrangement, the Canadian volunteers, under the command of a Canadian, remained concentrated in a nationally identifiable contingent. The men represented the emerging Dominion, but remained under British operational control.

The South African War was Canada’s first official overseas conflict. It represented an unprecedented response, in size and nature, by Canada to Britain’s call for assistance. Laurier assured Canadians that his agreement to participate would not guarantee Canadian involvement

⁴⁸ Ibid., 259.

⁴⁹ Brown and Cook, *Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed*, 40.

in future British conflicts. Though most English Canadians appeared pleased with this arrangement, the enthusiasm was not unanimous. Some farmers, and Canadians of Irish or German descent were opposed to Canada's response. There were English-Canadian nationalists who believed that Canada should assert its nationhood and equality of status in the war by assuming full financial responsibility for the Canadian force in South Africa, deeming Laurier's half-hearted response humiliating. On the other hand, some French Canadians, including the vocal politician Henri Bourassa, felt that national assertiveness should be demonstrated by refusing to participate in a conflict that had no direct impact on Canada.⁵⁰ In March 1900, Bourassa argued in the House of Commons that Parliament should have been consulted prior to Laurier's commitment of troops.⁵¹ War had the potential to divide the country but it also brought forward debate on Canada's role in the Empire and its colonial status.

Between 1899 and 1902, more than 7,000 Canadian volunteers participated in the war in South Africa, either through the dispatch of official Canadian contingents or by recruitment into British units. Lieutenant-Colonel William Otter, a Canadian, commanded the first contingent. The men of the first contingent were identifiable by their badge, which depicted an imperial crown with the word 'Canada' on a maple leaf.⁵² A week after they sailed to South Africa, a second contingent was offered and accepted by the British. In addition to these official contingents, some Canadians joined the British forces and individuals raised other Canadian units that were attached to British forces.⁵³ Upon the announcement in 1899 of Canada's decision to offer the first contingent of 1000 men, Governor General Lord Minto wrote to Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to express that "My Ministers hope that

⁵⁰ Ibid., 40, 41, and 162.

⁵¹ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates of the House of Commons*, 8th Parliament, 5th session, 13 March 1900, 1795-1796.

⁵² See Appendix 1.

⁵³ Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, 71; Brown and Cook, 41; Stacey, 70.

Canadian contingent will be kept together as much as possible but realize that this must be left to discretion of War Office and Commander in Chief.”⁵⁴ Though the men of the first contingent would not be dispersed into British units (despite British hopes), no attempt was made during the South African War to unite all of the Canadians into one unified force, especially since they were enlisted at different times and under different terms.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the plea to keep Canadians together foreshadowed the policy adopted for the Canadian Corps during the First World War and demonstrates a growing sense of Canadian autonomy.

By the end of the South African War, when the early jingoism had faded, many Canadians began to recognize a need for change in the relationship with Britain. The war had given Canada a sense of confidence through its successes on the battlefield, which translated into an increased desire for autonomy in military and foreign relations. Further, some Canadians blamed British command for the slow progress of the war in South Africa, and according to historian Carman Miller, attributed these problems to the “army's rigid adherence to form, custom, red tape, and ‘five o'clock tea principles,’ as well as a class system that stifled initiative, encouraged dependence, and rewarded compliance.”⁵⁶ However, despite this feeling of differentiation from British command practices and tradition, no fundamental change took place in the military or political relationship with the Mother Country; it would take another war and tens of thousands of dead before this occurred.

In the period between the South African War and the outbreak of the First World War, Canada's main external preoccupations rested in negotiations with the United States on a number of matters including the Alaska Boundary Dispute, fisheries, seal hunting, and the establishment of an International Joint Commission in 1909, charged with negotiating policy in relation to

⁵⁴ Lord Minto quoted in Stacey, 67.

⁵⁵ Stacey, 69.

⁵⁶ Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, 478.

boundary waters. In order to keep the Prime Minister apprised of the situation with the United States, Canada insisted, despite the Colonial Office's reluctance, on establishing a Department of External Affairs in 1909.⁵⁷

During this period, Canada became even more tied to Britain through Imperial Defence arrangements and prepared to assist the mother country in an overseas war involving a major power; Germany was increasingly viewed as the most likely adversary. In this period, Canada's own military structure was improved. In 1904, a new Militia Act established that Canadian officers were now eligible for command of the militia. The previous system had seen a British-appointed general in command of Canadian forces in Canada. Still, Canadians didn't occupy senior military positions until the First World War. The Canadian government also purchased new arms and equipment, and created medical, transport, supply, engineering, and intelligence organizations.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Canadians took over the fortresses at Halifax and Esquimalt, which the British vacated. In 1907, the Dominions attended an Imperial Conference, where it was agreed to create an Imperial General Staff, with members of the Empire's various forces, which would share defence plans and offer training guidance, without interfering with command.⁵⁹ This would facilitate affordable integration and interoperability with the British forces in times of need. This is telling as it runs counter to the apparent Canadian keenness to secure greater autonomy of action. Tightening imperial defence arrangements in an increasingly dangerous world left little room for Canadian sovereignty projects.

In 1909, after the Royal Navy developed a new powerful battleship, the *Dreadnought*, which made all other battleships obsolete, a naval race ensued between Britain and Germany.

⁵⁷ Stacey, 90, 106, and 108. For a more complete account of Britain's role in the negotiations between Canada and the United States in this period, see Stacey, 85-122.

⁵⁸ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 119-121.

⁵⁹ Nicholson, 9.

This rising tension caused Canada to re-evaluate its naval defence, which was essentially non-existent at this time. In the summer of 1909, the British Colonial Secretary, Lord Crewe, called a special Imperial Conference on the subject of naval and military defence of the Empire. The conference's main result was that (and building on the result of the 1907 conference) the Empire's armies would be standard in organization, training, and equipment. During these meetings, Canada's Minister of Militia, Sir Frederick Borden, confirmed that the decision to participate in a war rested with Canada's Parliament: "Under the militia law of Canada the Governor-General in Council has power to mobilise the whole of our forces, and if a war is imminent and Parliament is not in session, Parliament can be called within 15 days, and Parliament will then decide, and Parliament can alone decide whether we will take any part in that war, whatever it may be."⁶⁰ This confirmed Canada's freedom of action, despite the army's new structure, which would allow it to seamlessly integrate an Imperial field force.⁶¹

As a result of the conference's decisions, in 1910, the Canadian government introduced and passed the Naval Service Bill, which authorized the creation of the Department of the Naval Service in Canada, and allowed for Parliament to approve for the service to be at the disposal of the Royal Navy during emergencies. That Canada chose to create its own naval fleet, rather than contribute to the Royal Navy, is an important demonstration of Canada's nationalism and growing desire for independence in foreign affairs. Nevertheless, the issue was divisive amongst Canadians, with many French Canadians against Canada contributing to naval defence, which they saw as largely imperial in motive. Henri Bourassa argued that the creation of the Canadian navy obliged the country to participate in any imperial war, since it would under command of the British Admiralty in the event of such a war. On the other hand, some English Canadians

⁶⁰ Sir Frederick Borden quoted in Stacey, 133.

⁶¹ Stacey, 132-134.

doubted Canada's ability to build a navy and favoured a contribution to the Royal Navy, rather than the creation of Canada's own.⁶² As it turned out, the Royal Navy had transferred but two aging cruisers to the fledgling Royal Canadian Navy before war broke out in 1914.

In 1911, another Imperial Conference occurred in London. However, the deliberations relating to defence took place in the more exclusive meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Laurier, as Canada's Prime Minister, was invited to three of these meetings. During the second, the British presented a definition of the relationship between the Canadian and Royal navies, which was entirely opposite to the new Canadian Naval Service Act. Laurier stressed the importance of maintaining control over the fleet in times of peace and only relinquishing it to British service during emergencies. Britain reluctantly accepted Canada's position.⁶³ But even this arrangement demonstrated Canada's subservient status since controlling a navy in wartime is what really mattered. A pattern of almost slavishly following British military practice had been established. As will be shown, this would extend to the practice of military burials as well.

Despite this agreement with Britain, in Canada the matter came to a head during the 1911 election. Sir Robert Borden, Leader of the Opposition, campaigned against Laurier's naval plan as not doing enough to help the Empire while Bourassa warned families that their sons would be conscripted by the imperial fleet if the Liberals maintained power. In English-Canada, the main electoral issue was reciprocity with the United States; many English-Canadians worried that reciprocity would lead to annexation by the United States.⁶⁴ These anti-American feelings in English Canada and French Canada's refusal of Laurier's naval plan would both contribute the Liberals' demise; the Conservatives won a majority of the seats and Borden became Prime Minister. Borden proceeded to re-evaluate Canada's naval policy and consult with the British

⁶² Ibid., 126-136; Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 125 and 126.

⁶³ Stacey, 139-141.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 146-149.

Admiralty. Much to Bourassa's displeasure, Borden, after hearing of the Britain's immediate need for assistance, introduced a "Naval Aid Bill", which suggested contributing \$35 million to Britain's dreadnought battleship construction efforts. Borden claimed "that the great dominions, sharing in the defence of the Empire upon the high seas must necessarily be entitled to share also in the responsibility for and in the control of foreign policy."⁶⁵ With this promise, Borden appealed to imperialists in committing to contribute to imperial defence, whilst appeasing those in favour of a more autonomous Canada, who longed for control over foreign policy. Though the bill passed in the House Commons, the Liberals adamantly opposed it. The Senate, where a Liberal majority remained, essentially defeated the bill. Accordingly, neither Laurier's nor Borden's naval policies succeeded.⁶⁶ These political rifts reflect the divisiveness of imperial defence and naval policy for Canadians and echo the disunity between imperial nationalists and nationalists of a more independent nature.

On 28 June 1914, following a build-up of European tensions and political alliances, a Serbian terrorist assassinated the Austro-Hungarian Archduke, Franz Ferdinand. One month later Austria-Hungary and Serbia were at war, with each player's allies joining the conflict. On 4 August 1914, after the expiration of its ultimatum to Germany to withdraw from neutral Belgium, Britain declared war, committing its whole Empire to the struggle. When the Canadian Cabinet met on 1 August 1914, Parliament was not in session, nor was it reconvened to debate this international crisis. Legally, Canada was automatically at war along with Britain; still, Canada had to decide what role it would play in the war.⁶⁷ A special Parliamentary session was called from 18 to 22 August 1914, to confirm what the Cabinet had already decided and all parties offered their support. It was during this special session that Laurier, as Leader of the

⁶⁵ Sir Robert Borden quoted in Stacey, 159.

⁶⁶ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 125-126; Stacey, 157-161.

⁶⁷ Stacey, 174.

Opposition, in a speech in the House of Commons approving the government's response, famously proclaimed that "When the call comes our answer goes at once, and it goes in the classical language of the British answer to the call to duty: 'Ready, aye, ready.'"⁶⁸ Canada agreed to send 25,000 troops although the arrangement differed from the South African War in that the Canadian government would be responsible for the men's expenses, with the troops remaining nevertheless firmly under British command and discipline. Nevertheless, the Canadian government hoped that exercising more responsibility over the organization and administration of its forces might lead to increased leverage in their eventual command and disposition.⁶⁹ By 8 September 1914, a total of 32,665 volunteers had converged at Valcartier, the designated mobilization site just northwest of Quebec City.⁷⁰ Of the men in the first contingent, approximately 65 per cent were originally from the British Isles or other parts of the Empire.⁷¹

The first Canadian contingent, under the command of British Lieutenant-General Edwin Alfred Hervey Alderson, who had commanded some Canadians in South Africa, sailed for England in October. In September 1915, the 2nd Canadian Division went to France to join the 1st Division and form the Canadian Corps, with Alderson as its commander. The 3rd Canadian Division was formed by the end of the year and the 4th Division arrived in France by August 1916.⁷² Canadian soldiers were organized into numbered battalions, 12 to a division, and although there was some variation in design, each soldier wore a badge that depicted a maple leaf, the imperial crown, the battalion's number, and in some cases the word 'Canada,' in a design similar to the South African War badge. The men might have been at Britain's disposal, but the divisions of the Canadian Corps would stay together throughout the war and eventually

⁶⁸ Sir Wilfrid Laurier quoted in Stacey, 176.

⁶⁹ Morton, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics*, 25.

⁷⁰ Nicholson, 16-20.

⁷¹ Ibid., 213.

⁷² Stacey, 179.

take on the characteristics of a 'national' army. Historian Desmond Morton states that "by the summer of 1918 the Canadian Corps had become, in many respects, an allied army, fully responsive to the administrative and political authority of its own government."⁷³ United in an Imperial cause, the men would fight, as Canadians, in a manner more firmly 'national' than had been the case in South Africa.

In April 1915, the 1st Canadian Division experienced its baptism of fire at Ypres, during the Germans' first use of a chlorine gas attack. This unexpected use of chemical warfare led to chaos and the Canadians' famous role in successfully holding off the German attack cost a shocking number of casualties. By the time the 1st Canadian Division was relieved on 3 May 1915, it had suffered casualties amounting to 208 officers and 5,828 other ranks. In addition, one battalion, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) remained in the line until 10 May 1915 and endured 678 casualties.⁷⁴ This number of killed and wounded was unprecedented in Canadian military history. The task of locating and identifying remains and burying hundreds of Canadian troops was a British responsibility. But effective and uniform policies on how to deal with such a volume of fatalities were lacking.

While Canadian troops were gaining confidence on the battlefield, on the home front, the government sought to strengthen Canada's authority over the Canadian Expeditionary Force. In 1916, Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden created a new ministry, the Overseas Military Forces of Canada (OMFC), to solve the organizational and communication problems between Canada and its overseas military administration.⁷⁵ As summarized in the 1918 OMFC Report:

⁷³ Desmond Morton, "Exerting Control: The Development of Canadian Authority over the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919" in *Men at War: Politics, Technology and Innovation in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Timothy Travers and Christon Archer (Chicago: Precedent, 1982), 16.

⁷⁴ Nicholson, 92.

⁷⁵ Morton, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics*, 85.

The methods of communication between the Ministry in England, the Canadian Corps, General Headquarters of the British Armies in France, and troops on the Lines of Communication, had been cumbersome and unsatisfactory. Purely Canadian matters were sometimes dealt with by those not intimately interested therein, and it was felt that in matters affecting the organisation and administration of the Canadian Forces, Canadians should manage their own affairs.⁷⁶

The minister responsible for the OMFC would be posted in London and would negotiate directly with the British government for all matters relating to Canada's overseas military.⁷⁷ It was a major leap forward in redefining the Anglo-Canadian wartime relationship.

By war's end, the OMFC's responsibilities included overseeing Canadian troops on the Western Front, in other fighting areas, the administrative staff in Britain, as well as military hospitals and supporting groups such as the Red Cross, the YMCA, and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire.⁷⁸ The 1918 Report outlined that the OMFC:

practically constitutes an Overseas Canadian War Office; for it should be borne in mind that with the exception of active operations in the Field, which of necessity, come under the direction of British General Headquarters, Canada's Forces are an entirely autonomous body, all questions affecting their administration, organisation, promotions, pay, etc., having to receive the sanction of the Minister before any action can be taken.⁷⁹

However, even with this new organization in place to ensure that Canadians could deal with matters of great import themselves, this was not extended to the Canada's dead, burial arrangements for whom remained under the care of an imperial organization, the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC), founded in May 1917. This is especially curious given Canadians' prompt and independent action in caring for the graves of the fallen in South Africa and Canada's insistence on administering all other aspects of its overseas forces. The government

⁷⁶ Canada, Ministry, Overseas Military Forces. *Report of the Ministry: Overseas Military Force of Canada, 1918* (London: Overseas Military Forces of Canada, 1919), 1.

⁷⁷ Morton, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics*, 85.

⁷⁸ Vance, 94.

⁷⁹ Canada, *Report of the Ministry, 1918*, xi.

had seen the will of the people in caring for the South African burials and yet, it did not follow the practice during the First World War.

On 28 October 1916, Borden appointed Sir George Perley as minister for this new portfolio.⁸⁰ Perley, an American originally from New Hampshire, was a logging businessman and philanthropist turned politician. He was already at this time the acting Canadian High Commissioner to London, a position he accepted temporarily following the death of the previous High Commissioner, Lord Strathcona, in January 1914. According to an article in the *Daily Mail Over-seas Edition*:

Shortly before the war broke out he came to London for a short visit on behalf of the Canadian Premier, to attend to some of the work of the vacant office of High Commissioner. No man had succeeded to this office since Lord Strathcona died, and there was a feeling that it would be hard to follow in the steps [of] that great veteran. The war broke out, and Sir George Perley was forced to keep on. He was only acting High Commissioner and refused any other title.⁸¹

Not long after his additional appointment as minister of the OMFC, Borden wrote to Perley: “I realise fully the magnitude and importance of the duties which I asked you to undertake and I know that you will bring them the earnestness of purpose which characterizes the performance of all your official duties.”⁸²

This appointment was not without controversy. Perley was without military experience and Borden choosing him as the minister for the OMFC, over the meddlesome Minister of Militia and Defence, Sir Sam Hughes, was deliberate. Perley was a long-time enemy of Hughes and, according to Borden’s diaries, was outspoken about Hughes’s many mistakes in administering his department. Borden wrote in September 1916, shortly before Perley’s

⁸⁰ Assistant Clerk of the Privy Council, “Certified Copy of a Report of the Committee of the Privy Council,” 31 October 1916, File 4, Vol. 14, R3895-7-6-E (George Halsey Perley fonds), LAC.

⁸¹ “An Ambassador of Empire,” *Daily Mail Over-Seas Edition*, 17 November 1917, No. 678, XIII edition, File 1, Vol. 13, R3895-5-2-E, LAC.

⁸² Sir Robert Borden to Sir George Perley, 6 November 1916, Vol. 7, R3895-3-9-E, LAC.

appointment as minister: “Long discussion with Perley as to whole situation in G.B. He thinks only salvation is to take it completely out of Hughes [*sic*] hand.”⁸³ Hughes met with Borden before the announcement of the ministerial appointment to express his objections and “argued against it saying that there would be nothing left for him, that he would be humiliated and that he would have to leave the Government. He gave a tirade against Perley and decried his ability. Said that everything he had done himself was perfect etc.”⁸⁴ These appeals did not sway Borden, nor did the further attempts Hughes made to convince Borden of his merit. An article in *The Globe* from 3 November 1916 strongly alluded to Perley being a more favourable choice than Hughes for the role: “Sir George Perley’s experience (...) will be valuable in maintaining the necessary understanding and communication between the Canadian and British military authorities. This will end the lamentable waste that has occurred in the past through the impulsive purchase of unsuitable supplies and other failures of co-operation.”⁸⁵ In fact, in November 1916, Borden demanded Hughes’s resignation. Sir Edward Kemp was named the new Minister of Militia and Defence.⁸⁶

With Perley’s new appointment as minister of the OMFC, in addition to his role of High Commissioner, Borden felt compelled to instruct him as to which role should take priority:

In my judgement your status as Minister of Overseas Forces altogether outclasses the position of High Commissioner, and the duties which you have assumed are infinitely more important than those which devolved upon you as High Commissioner. This is perfectly apparent to me whether the situation is regarded from the standpoint of service to the Empire and the Dominion, or from the lower but important standpoint of our party’s welfare.⁸⁷

⁸³ Sir Robert Laird Borden, *The Diaries of Sir Robert Borden, 1912-1918*, 6 September 1916, LAC; Tim Cook, *Warlords: Borden, Mackenzie King, and Canada’s World Wars* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2013), 84.

⁸⁴ Borden, *The Diaries of Sir Robert Borden, 1912-1918*, 19 October 1916, LAC.

⁸⁵ “Overseas Minister of Militia,” *The Globe* (Toronto), 3 November 1916, 4.

⁸⁶ Borden, *The Diaries of Sir Robert Borden, 1912-1918*, 5 November 1916, LAC; Stacey, 198.

⁸⁷ Sir Robert Borden to Sir George Perley, 6 November 1916, Vol. 7, R3895-3-9-E, LAC.

In fact, though at first reluctant to accept the official title, Perley preferred to be confirmed as the High Commissioner, rather than to keep the title of Minister of the OMFC. Perley felt that the role of High Commissioner implied higher status than that of a Dominion minister.⁸⁸ By 1917, he urged Borden to confirm him in the role and remove the word ‘acting’ from his title, which he felt was misunderstood.⁸⁹ Despite Borden’s insistence that the position of Minister was preferable to the role of High Commissioner, Perley did not relent and Borden agreed to remove him as Minister of the OMFC. On 12 October 1917, Sir Edward Kemp took over the ministry and Perley concentrated on his role as High Commissioner, in which he was confirmed on the same date.⁹⁰ During his term as High Commissioner, Perley represented Canada in London on a variety of matters, including burial policy as Canada’s representative on the Imperial War Graves Commission. Perhaps Perley’s preference to represent Canada as High Commissioner, rather than to remain minister of the OMFC, foreshadowed his role as a passive British imperial agent in the IWGC. Chapter 3 will demonstrate Perley’s ineffectiveness in pursuing a Canadian agenda with the IWGC.

As the need for a Canadian ministry in London reveals, in the first few years of the war, Borden was left out of the war planning, finding out through newspaper articles about important decisions, including some which dealt with Canadian troops.⁹¹ His discontent with the lack of Dominion consultation, even with each sacrificing so many men on the battlefield, led to Borden’s oft quoted letter to Perley on 4 January 1916: “It can hardly be expected that we shall put 400,000 or 500,000 men in the field and willingly accept the position of having no more voice and receiving no more consideration than if we were toy automata. Any person cherishing

⁸⁸ Morton, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics*, 92 and 93.

⁸⁹ Nicholson, 354.

⁹⁰ “The Overseas Ministry,” *Canadian War Museum*, accessed 20 October 2017, <http://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/history/life-at-the-front/military-structure/>.

⁹¹ Cook, *Warlords*, 65.

such an expectation harbours an unfortunate and even dangerous delusion. Is this war being waged by the United Kingdom alone, or is it a war waged by the whole Empire?"⁹² The British government in the first few years of the war was not sympathetic to Canada's demand for consultation. Similar demands were also being made from other Dominions, such as Australia. In a 1915 memorandum, Robert Henry Muirhead Collins, the Secretary of the Office of the High Commissioner for Australia, wrote:

The circumstances of this war in which we are now so deeply engaged and to which the Dominions are sacrificing so much blood and treasure, serve to make the conviction stronger that we are on the eve of great changes in the relationship of the Mother Country to the Dominions, and that some measures must follow bringing the Dominions into more direct relationship to the grave affairs of Foreign Policy and Defense, as well as other matters that are of mutual or common interest. (...) The urgent want of more cohesion is the want of continuous and effective consultation. Periodic conferences do not give this. Representation by High Commissioners cannot give this.⁹³

This insistence on consultation in exchange for the losses on the battlefield echoed throughout the Empire.

In December 1916, a change in British prime ministers, from Herbert Asquith to David Lloyd George, led to more Dominion involvement, with the latter stating to his colonial secretary, Walter Long, "the more I think about it, the more I am convinced that we should take the Dominions into our counsel in a much larger measure than we have hitherto done in our prosecution of the War."⁹⁴ Though the Empire had been gathering regularly since 1887, the 1915 Imperial conference was postponed due to the war. By 1917, with the Dominions demanding increased communication and consultation in exchange for their enormous sacrifices and, more

⁹² Sir Robert Borden quoted in Robert Craig Brown, "Sir Robert Borden, the Great War, and Anglo-Canadian Relations," in *Towards a New World Readings in the History of Canadian Foreign Policy*, ed. J.L. Granatstein (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1992), 35.

⁹³ Robert Henry Muirhead Collins, "Memorandum from Mr. Collins of Australian Office," 2 September 1915, File P-4-47, Vol. 263, RG 25, LAC.

⁹⁴ David Lloyd George quoted in Morton, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics*, 109 and 110.

importantly, with Britain needing even more Dominion involvement, Lloyd George called a meeting of the Imperial War Conference. Moreover, Lloyd George created the Imperial War Cabinet (to meet on alternate days from the Conference), which comprised the five-man British War Cabinet and Dominion Prime Ministers. Canada was allowed two members and Borden and Perley attended the meetings.⁹⁵ Though Britain still retained all real decision-making power over the Empire's war effort, the conference and cabinet represented unprecedented Dominion input. As Borden wrote in his memoirs: "For the first time the mother country and the Dominions met in the great inquest of the Commonwealth which, for convenience, was designated as a Cabinet."⁹⁶

The 1917 Imperial War Cabinet's most important outcome for the Dominions was the adoption of Resolution IX on 16 April 1917, which stated:

Any [constitutional] readjustment, while thoroughly preserving all existing powers of self-government and complete control of domestic affairs, should be based upon a full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth, and of India as an important part of the same, should recognize the right of the Dominions and India to an adequate voice in foreign policy and foreign relations, and should provide effective arrangements for continuous consultations in all important matters of common Imperial concern.⁹⁷

Borden drafted this resolution primarily in cooperation with Prime Minister Jan Smuts of South Africa and the Canadian Prime Minister believed that the Dominions had earned decision-making power on the world stage. The use of the phrase 'autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth' demonstrated the Dominions' willingness to remain linked to Britain through their historical and constitutional imperial ties, but to be recognized internationally as nations with interests to defend. On 18 May 1917, Borden announced in the House of Commons that "it is not proposed that the Government of the United Kingdom shall, in foreign affairs, act first and

⁹⁵ Brown and Cook, 282; Vance, 109; Stacey, 206 and 207. See Appendix 2.

⁹⁶ Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs, Volume II, 1916-1920*, eds. Borden and Macquarrie, 63.

⁹⁷ Wigley, *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth*, 42; Stacey, 213.

consult us afterwards. The principle has been definitely and finally laid down that in these matters the Dominions shall be consulted before the Empire is committed to any policy which might involve the issues of peace and war.”⁹⁸ Though it would be almost another decade before Canada obtained de facto control over its external affairs, Resolution IX’s demand for the Dominions to have “adequate voice in foreign policy and foreign relations,” a passage insisted on by Borden, set the stage for those later discussions, and demonstrates Canada’s leading role in this matter.⁹⁹ When contrasted to the matter of the care of the graves, however, it raises yet more questions. While Canada so adamantly demanded control over its military forces with the establishment of the OMFC and attempted to secure control over its foreign affairs, it is astonishing that no such importance was placed on such an emotional matter as the final resting place of Canada’s fallen. Here, Canada blithely followed a British lead.

Desmond Morton argues that the Imperial War Cabinet and Imperial War Conference did little to influence the direction of the war, apart from the adoption of Resolution IX. The Dominion leaders, namely Borden, feared a loss of independence in the name of a common cause and direction.¹⁰⁰ Borden, in a London address to the Empire Parliamentary Association in April 1917, said “Each nation has its voice upon questions of common concern and highest importance as the deliberations proceed; each preserves unimpaired its perfect autonomy, its self-government, and the responsibility of its Ministers to their own electorate.”¹⁰¹ According to Philip Wigley, the Imperial War Cabinet did succeed in giving the Dominion members a forum from which to advocate for their own country’s interests.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates of the House of Commons*, 12th Parliament, 7th session, 18 May 1917, 1528.

⁹⁹ Cook, *Warlords*, 92; Brown and Cook, 283; Stacey, 216.

¹⁰⁰ Morton, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics*, 110 and 111.

¹⁰¹ Sir Robert Borden quoted in Morton, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics*, 111.

¹⁰² Wigley, 28.

During the 1917 Imperial War Conference, Borden moved a resolution for the creation of the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC). Borden's diary from 13 April 1917 notes that the process preceding the adoption of the IWGC's charter was an arduous one. He wrote: "Attended conference (...) and wasted much time (Massey [Prime Minister of New Zealand] responsible) in discussing charter of proposed Graves Commission."¹⁰³ This diary entry confirms how little importance Borden awarded the war graves. Any length of time spent on this issue should not have amounted to a waste of time, given its importance to bereaved Canadians. The subject of the care of war graves elicited interest from the press, with *The Globe* reporting, as part of a summary of the Conference's discussions, that "a joint British and overseas Dominions Commissions would undertake the task [of the care of soldiers' graves]."¹⁰⁴ Despite lengthy discussions, the Conference approved the IWGC's constitution, which led to the granting of the IWGC's Royal Charter on 21 May 1917.

The IWGC was the first example of the joint responsibility of the new arrangement between Britain and its Dominions. Though as historian Jonathan Vance notes, while Canadians appeared keen to obtain influence in foreign and military policy arising from discussions at the Imperial War Conference and Cabinet, "few Canadians questioned the Empire as the best forum through which Canada should fulfill its nationalism. And so Canada took a leading role in new imperial organizations, such as the Imperial Munitions Board and the Imperial War Graves Commission."¹⁰⁵ This assertion appears to run counter to the Canadian government's apparent willingness to relinquish the care of Canada's dead to British-dominated organization.

¹⁰³ Borden, *The Diaries of Sir Robert Borden, 1912-1918*, 13 April 1917, LAC.

¹⁰⁴ "Keep Autonomy of Dominions: Premier Borden Tells of the Imperial Conference," *The Globe* (Toronto), 19 May 1917.

¹⁰⁵ Vance, 109.

Though the 1917 Imperial War Cabinet and Conference were not effectively influential towards the direction of the war, since the smaller British War Cabinet in fact continued to make most of the decisions relating to the fighting, the Dominion representatives did gain a much-needed and overdue briefing on the current status of the war effort from the Imperial War Cabinet.¹⁰⁶ But in the year following this meeting, the British ministers returned to their regular communication channels, excluding the Dominion members from policy-making.¹⁰⁷

Back on the Western Front, the casualty list continued to grow, with especially heavy losses on the Somme in the summer and fall of 1916; the Canadians were not immune, suffering 24,000 casualties there. In April 1917, as part of the larger Arras offensive, the Canadians Corps, made up of four divisions, launched its attack on Vimy Ridge. By the end of the battle, the Canadians had suffered more than 10,000 casualties, amongst them 3,598 killed.¹⁰⁸ Though the capture of Vimy Ridge did not have any significant strategic impact on the war, it did represent the first clear-cut British offensive victory until that point and indisputably strengthened Canada's reputation and standing on the Allied side. The battle also was a catalyst in Canada's obtaining authority over its own troops in the war effort. After the victory at Vimy Ridge, the Corps Commander, Sir Julian Byng, was promoted to the command of the Third Army. Lieutenant-General Arthur Currie, who previously had commanded the 1st Canadian Division, became the first Canadian commander of the Corps.¹⁰⁹ When *The Globe* reported on the appointment, it noted the soldiers' opinion of Currie as their new leader: "Fortunately, also, the Canadian soldiers, who are most intimate with him, have faith in his capacity, admiration for his achievements and confidence in his judgement. His appointment is quite in keeping with their

¹⁰⁶ Cook, *Warlords*, 88; Wigley, 34.

¹⁰⁷ Wigley, 29.

¹⁰⁸ Nicholson, 265

¹⁰⁹ Brown and Cook, 218.

desires.”¹¹⁰ After Vimy, Canadians soldiers’ confidence increased and the victory there cemented their reputation as shock troops.¹¹¹

In the spring of 1917, Borden, feeling pressure from Britain at the Imperial War Conference and Cabinet to supply more men and having suffered heavy losses in 1917, announced that Canada would have to bring in conscription to support the demands of the war effort. Upon this announcement, Canada’s persistent linguistic tensions worsened as French speakers in Quebec in particular were blamed for low recruitment numbers.¹¹² Fearing an election defeat, Borden attempted to form a coalition with Laurier, who refused, certain that the Liberals would remain by his side. However, Borden swayed many English-speaking Liberals who abandoned Laurier in favour of Borden’s conscriptionist stance.

With the help of some dubious pieces of legislation, such as the Military Voters’ Act, which extended the franchise to men and women serving in the Canadian Expeditionary Force whose votes could be added to constituencies determined by the governing Conservatives, and the Wartime Elections Act, which allowed mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters of soldiers to vote, but disenfranchised ‘enemy aliens’ who had been naturalized after 1902 and who were more likely to vote Liberal, Borden, won the December 1917 election with 153 seats to the Liberals’ 82. However, Canadians expressed their displeasure with conscription: a large majority of those called up for service applied for exemptions. Some potential recruits fled, while others rioted.¹¹³ Ultimately, of the 125,000 conscripts joining the CEF, fewer than 25,000 would be taken on strength by units in France, but they would indeed be crucial to the success of the final

¹¹⁰ “General Sir Arthur Currie,” *The Globe* (Toronto), 21 June 1917, 4.

¹¹¹ Tim Cook, *Vimy: The Battle and the Legend* (Toronto: Allen Lane, 2017), 148 and 149.

¹¹² Brown and Cook, 262-267; Stacey, 235 and 236; Morton *A Military History of Canada*, 152 and 153; Cook, *Vimy*, 151-162.

¹¹³ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 153-156; Cook, *Vimy*, 155 and 156.

campaigns.¹¹⁴ This persistent need for more recruits for the war effort was due to constantly increasing casualties, and with them, burials, on the battlefield. The war dead had become a political tool, which Borden leveraged to secure votes.

Returning to events on the fighting front, in the months following the Battle of Vimy Ridge, the Canadian Corps would experience the horrors of the Ypres Salient once more, from October to November 1917, at Passchendaele. Though the Corps did eventually succeed in taking Passchendaele, the cost, at almost 16,000 Canadian casualties, was high.¹¹⁵

Reconvened in London, the 1918 sessions of the Imperial War Conference focused mainly on war strategy. The Dominions were no longer willing to be excluded from that planning which had such a devastating impact on the troops and insisted that Lloyd George give them some input over British strategic direction.¹¹⁶ This frank discussion included an analysis of the long-term approach of the war effort, as well as an evaluation of the day-to-day operations. Furthermore, the 1918 Imperial War Cabinet reopened discussions relating to imperial constitutional change, which had essentially ceased since the 1917 sessions. Borden wrote to Lloyd George in June 1918 to inform him that the Colonial Office's control over British and Dominion governments' means of communication with London (via governors general and the Colonial Office) was out-dated and not reflective of the growing ideas of nationhood in Canada and in the other Dominions.¹¹⁷ He demanded a change to allow more autonomy to the Dominions. On 30 July, the Imperial War Cabinet agreed to a number of changes in the communication structure between Britain and the Dominions. These changes included the statement that "The Prime Ministers of the Dominions, as members of the Imperial War Cabinet,

¹¹⁴ Nicholson, 353.

¹¹⁵ Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 149 and 150.

¹¹⁶ Wigley, 29; Stacey, 213.

¹¹⁷ Wigley, 62 and 63.

have the right of direct communication with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and *vice versa*.”¹¹⁸ Though there was still much work to do, the Imperial War Cabinet did initiate key debates on the Empire’s political structure. However, without any change to Canada’s constitutional status in practice, the Dominions were rarely treated as equal partners during the war or in the years that followed. This was also true of Canada’s role in the IWGC, where it was not treated as an equal partner.

In 1918, Canada’s main offensive was the Hundred Days campaign, which lasted from early August until the end of the war in November. During this time the Canadians, in parallel with British, French, and American attacks, often spearheaded offensives and helped defeat the German Army.¹¹⁹ But the cost was enormous: 45,000 casualties in these three months alone. By the end of the war, 619,636 Canadians had served, of which 60,661 were killed in action, died of wounds, illness, or accidents. In the four years of the war, Canadians had developed a greater sense of national destiny, which increased with each battlefield accomplishment. The troops’ patriotism reduced regional differences within the Corps and surpassed regimental pride.¹²⁰ It is, therefore, even more surprising that this feeling of nationhood was not reflected in the care of the war graves, as Canadian soldiers were more or less buried as Britons, following British policy, with the only distinguishable feature the maple leaf engraved on their headstones.

Following the armistice on 11 November 1918, the Dominions expected to be invited to participate in the peace conferences. During the 31 December 1918 meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet, after the British suggested that only one of the five British delegates to the peace conferences represent the Dominions, Borden made an impassioned speech in which he stated, according to the minutes: “There was no question on which the people of Canada were more

¹¹⁸ Minutes, 28th meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet, 30 July 1918, quoted in Stacey, 227.

¹¹⁹ Cook, *Vimy*, 163.

¹²⁰ Nicholson, 535.

insistent than their claim to representation at the Peace Conference which would settle the issues of a war in which they had taken so notable a part. He hoped that the Cabinet would appreciate, although it was almost impossible for them fully to appreciate, the strong feeling in Canada on this subject.”¹²¹ Accordingly, the Dominions obtained representation as separate powers on an equal footing as smaller Allied nations and as part of the British Empire Delegation, which the *Canadian Gazette* reported was marking “another stage in the admission of Canada and the other Dominions into the fellowship of the nations of the world. It illustrates once more the ease with which the British Constitution adapts itself to new and ever-changing conditions, preserving the vitality of union within the Empire without losing the status and dignity belonging to each of the young nations included in that Empire.”¹²² On 28 June 1919, Britain signed the Treaty of Versailles with Germany and, under an indentation below this signature, so did the Dominions.¹²³

Canada’s authority over its military increased significantly from the South African War until and throughout the First World War, with the appointment of a Canadian Corps Commander in 1917 and with the creation of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada. Borden’s participation in the Imperial War Cabinet and Conference, spearheading initiatives that further secured the Dominions’ autonomy within the Empire, was innovative and reflected Canada’s growing national identity. However, Canada’s eagerness for control over its military did not appear to extend to fallen soldiers and its newfound sense of autonomy did not transfer to the care of graves, which remained under the authority of an imperial organization. The Canadian government appeared to have been too preoccupied with gaining authority over the troops

¹²¹ Minutes, 48th meeting of Imperial War Cabinet, 31 December 1918, quoted in Stacey, 244.

¹²² No title, *Canadian Gazette*, 11 July 1918, Vol. E-2562, RG 25, LAC.

¹²³ Stacey, 245, 254, and 255.

fighting on the battlefield to ensure that those who had already given their lives, be buried in a manner befitting a self-governing nation. The next chapters will explore the establishment of the IWGC and its policy-setting, with particular emphasis on Canada's role in this imperial organization, in order to demonstrate how little influence it had, despite the troops' battlefield accomplishments.

Chapter 2

“To promote a feeling of common citizenship and of loyalty and devotion:”¹²⁴

The History and Founding of the Imperial War Graves Commission

This chapter will provide the context relating to the founding of the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC), exploring the way in which soldiers’ burials were conducted in the decades leading up to the First World War. It will further examine those organizations that preceded the IWGC, including those responsible for the identification and care of Canadian and British war graves during the South African War and in the early years of the First World War until the creation of the IWGC in May 1917. These organizations contributed to the establishment of the IWGC as the eventual authority in the field. These earlier organizations debated many policies relating to the burial of the Empire’s dead, such as the acquisition of land for the burials, which had to be negotiated with the French authorities. The present chapter will expand upon the IWGC’s creation, membership, and the cost distribution among member nations, with a particular focus on Canada. It will demonstrate that though the Dominions’ representation on the Commission was a positive step towards consultation and collaboration on imperial matters, and notwithstanding their massive sacrifices, the Dominions did not receive an equal voice to that of Britain. The Dominions’ small financial contribution, based on a relatively small number of war dead when compared to Britain’s massive losses, limited them to the status of junior partners in the decision-making process.

A large part of the motivation for the creation of an organization dedicated to the recording and upkeep of graves during the First World War stemmed from lessons learned in

¹²⁴ “Charter of Incorporation dated 21st May 1917 and Supplemental Charter dated 8th June 1964,” *The Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 10 July 2017, http://media.cwgc.org/media/394524/royal_charter_of_incorporation.pdf.

past conflicts. Historically, only British officers were given individual burials, while all other ranks were buried in common graves. These soldiers were often buried rapidly, in rudimentary pits or makeshift graves, due to fears related to the spread of diseases. Soldiers were rarely commemorated by name, until the First World War.¹²⁵ Further, British soldiers were never repatriated to their home country.

During the Crimean War (1853-1856¹²⁶), British casualties amounted to 2,755 killed in action and 2,019 died of wounds, as well as 16,323 died of disease.¹²⁷ Many of those who died from disease were buried near the hospital barrack. The Crimean War marked the first time that British soldiers were given individual burials, which one scholar argues was due to the practice of Evangelical Christianity among soldiers.¹²⁸

Conversely, American burial policy in the 19th century was more individualized. During the American Civil War, a section of the battlefield was allocated to burials, with names and military serial numbers of the dead listed on headboards.¹²⁹ The Americans also established a tradition of returning bodies to the United States. Most notably, the United States had repatriated 1,880 bodies after the Spanish-American War (1898).¹³⁰ This precedent greatly influenced the United States' policy regarding its own First World War dead.

For Canada, the issue of dealing with overseas war dead had first presented itself on a small scale during the South African War, Canada's first military expedition overseas. Between 1899 and 1902, 7,368 Canadians volunteers served in Canadian units under British command or

¹²⁵ Crane, *Empires of the Dead*, 3; Ziino, *A Distant Grief*, 3.

¹²⁶ Britain only entered the war in 1854, though it began in 1853.

¹²⁷ Andrew D. Lambert, *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy Against Russia, 1853-56* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 15.

¹²⁸ Prescott Keating, "The Empire of the Dead: British Burial Abroad and the Formation of National Identity," 6.

¹²⁹ Wood and Swettenham, *Silent Witnesses*, 5.

¹³⁰ Budreau, *Bodies of War*, 25 and 26; Sledge, *Soldier Dead*, 143.

with the British forces.¹³¹ Financial responsibility for the troops ended for the Canadian government once the trained and equipped volunteers arrived in South Africa; from there, the British took over financing.¹³² During this three-year conflict, approximately 22,000 imperial troops died in South Africa with disease being the leading cause of death: 135 Canadians died of disease, while the remaining 89 deceased were killed in action.¹³³ Though little information is available detailing Canadian burials during the South African War, following the Battle of Paardeberg on 18 February 1900, during which 18 Canadians were killed a burial party placed the dead in a common trench, overseen by a chaplain who performed a service for both Catholic and Protestant soldiers.¹³⁴

Canadians soldiers in South Africa became aware of the social and cultural differences between Britons and themselves or, as historian Cameron Pulsifer put it, “Canadians developed a profound sense of distinctiveness from their imperial counterparts that nourished feelings of national pride and a sense of independent military identity.”¹³⁵ Perhaps this influenced Canadian organizations to commemorate its fallen in a manner distinct from Britain. With this feeling of Canadian identity after the South African War, it is surprising that Canada, in 1917, chose to allow an imperial organization to care for its First World War burials.

The care of war graves and the construction of the monuments that would commemorate these soldiers’ sacrifice initiated some conflict between two competing Canadian organizations. The first of these organizations was the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE),

¹³¹ Miller, *Canada’s Little War*, 5 and 6.

¹³² Cameron Pulsifer, *Dispatches*, “For Queen and Country: Canadians and the South African War, 1899-1902,” no page numbers, accessed 20 October 2017, <http://www.warmuseum.ca/learn/dispatches/for-queen-and-country-canadians-and-the-south-african-war-1899-1902/#tabs>.

¹³³ Miller, *Canada’s Little War*, 85; Pulsifer, “For Queen and Country.”

¹³⁴ Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, 98; “Canada & The South African War, 1899-1902,” *Canadian War Museum*, accessed 21 May 2018, https://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/boer/battlepaardeberg_e.shtml

¹³⁵ Pulsifer, “For Queen and Country.”

founded in Montreal in 1900 by Margaret Clark Murray. Clark Murray sensed a growing patriotic fervour in Canada, amplified by the South African War. Hoping to reinforce Canadian nationalism while maintaining a strong imperial relationship, Clark Murray established the IODE to support Canadians participating in the South African War. The IODE was formed by elite, English-speaking, Protestant women. It was the largest women's patriotic organization in Canada and referred to itself as the Empire's "premier" of such groups. Colonial nationalism and imperialism were not opposing concepts for the IODE. Rather, as historian Katie Pickles notes, "colonial nationalism was premised on Canada proving itself within an imperial context."¹³⁶ Indeed, Clark Murray had plans to create a Federation of Daughters and Children of the Empire, with groups all across the Empire, beginning with Canada. This ambition was never fulfilled; in 1901, a group of British women founded the Victoria League and objected to the IODE establishing a London chapter. Conflict and rivalry would prove to be a pattern for the IODE.

Nevertheless, the IODE continued its work, albeit on a smaller scale than Clark Murray had envisioned. The IODE's activities consisted of promoting patriotic feeling, supporting the dependants of military personnel, preserving the memory of historic acts and securing unity of the Empire. This included providing clothing to men serving in the South African War and fundraising through lectures, plays, and pageants.¹³⁷ At the end of the war, the IODE established the South Africa Graves Committee, to begin identifying the graves of all the Canadian fallen.¹³⁸ In this, the IODE worked with the Guild of Loyal Women South Africa (GLWSA), a group of

¹³⁶ Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 2 and 5.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 19; "IODE in Ontario," *Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire*, accessed 12 November 2017, <http://www.iode.ca/iode-in-ontario.html>

¹³⁸ Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, 15, 17, and 109.

women based in South Africa whose purpose was the care and maintenance of graves. Local branches had been instituted in each town and district where soldiers were buried.¹³⁹

Almost simultaneously, and further demonstrating the nationalist-imperial fervour triggered by the Dominion's successes in South Africa, in 1902, another group was founded: the Canadian South African Memorial Association (CSAMA). This group involved many influential public figures in Canada such as the Governor General of Canada, Lord Minto, who was the Patron, while Lady Minto was the President.¹⁴⁰ Lady Minto was aware of the work of the IODE upon the founding of the CSAMA, but as the IODE had mostly become active in Ontario, though founded in Montreal, Lady Minto felt that it "only represented a very small proportion of the population of Canada."¹⁴¹ She believed that the matter of commemorating the fallen "affected the whole Dominion and must be a National Movement."¹⁴² In an effort to centralize efforts and funding for the memorials in South Africa, the CSAMA wrote to both the IODE and the GLWSA stating that the CSAMA was "working with the full approval of the Canadian Government and the Canadian Military Authorities."¹⁴³ The CSAMA planned to erect grave markers "indicative of Canadian nationality over the graves of all Canadians who have died in the South African War," as its secretary, Major Maude, wrote to the GLWSA.¹⁴⁴ The GLWSA, which had already been collaborating with other groups such as the Victoria League, agreed to collaborate with the CSAMA and combine its fundraising, but the IODE would not be convinced.

¹³⁹ Mary Currey, Acting President of the Guild of Loyal Women, to Major Maude, secretary, CSAMA," 26 August 1902, File 2, Vol. 1, MG 28 I8 (Canadian South Africa Memorial Association fonds), LAC.

¹⁴⁰ Major Maude, to the President of the Guild of Loyal Women South Africa, 18 April 1902, File 2, Vol. 1, MG 28-I8, LAC.

¹⁴¹ Lady Mary Minto to Mrs Nordheimer, President of the IODE, 2 January 1902, File 3, Vol. 1, MG 28-I8, LAC; Pickles, 26.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Major Maude to the President of the Guild of Loyal Women South Africa, LAC.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Lady Minto, according to a letter from the secretary of the CSAMA to the IODE, hoped that:

the Daughters of the Empire will not only continue their present work of collecting funds, thus furthering the success of the scheme by using their influence throughout Canada, but that they may agree to be represented (...) on the Central Committee of the Canadian South Africa Memorial Association, so that they may be intimately connected with every detail of this national and patriotic movement and may in this way take an active part in the further work which is now being commenced of locating the graves and of erecting the Memorials in South Africa.¹⁴⁵

The IODE, unmoved by this proposal, refused the offer to join forces with the CSAMA and continued to work independently. Pickles argues that the imperial hierarchy existing at the time meant that the IODE would, by tradition, differ, in reverence to British-based organizations' demands.¹⁴⁶ As such, though Clark Murray had been willing to bend to the British Victoria League's request that she not establish an IODE chapter in London, she was less lenient towards other Canadian organizations' wishes, which she saw as competition. As such, the IODE and the CSAMA fundraised simultaneously but separately towards the same cause.

Nevertheless, with its government endorsement, the CSAMA maintained control of the war graves and arranged for headstones for the fallen soldiers to be installed over the graves in South Africa. By 1909, more than \$14,000 had been raised for the construction of Canadian headstones. Today, a large granite stone inscribed with the word 'Canada' and a maple leaf marks each fallen soldier's grave.¹⁴⁷ The IODE raised funds to erect a memorial at Bloemfontein in South Africa. Both the CSAMA and the IODE contributed funds to the GLWSA for the maintenance and care of soldiers' graves after the war.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Major Maude to Mrs Nordheimer, 22 February 1902, File 3, Vol. 1, MG 28-I8, LAC.

¹⁴⁶ Pickles, 17 and 18.

¹⁴⁷ Miller, 85 and 435. See Appendix 3.

¹⁴⁸ Rawbone, Hon. Federal Graves Secretary, Guild Loyal Women of South Africa, to Colonel D.T. Iwrin, CSAMA, 29 March 1911, File 3, Vol. 1. MG 28 I8, LAC; "Bloemfontein Canadian Memorial," *Veterans Affairs Canada*,

For British graves, the Victoria League similarly collaborated with the GLWSA, providing it with instructions and funds to complete the work.¹⁴⁹ According to Lieutenant-General Sir Nevil Macready, the Adjutant-General of the British Expeditionary Force during the First World War and the Chief Staff Officer at Cape Colony after the South African War, the “Guild [GLWSA] started this work admirably but it was an unsatisfactory arrangement,” as no structure had been in place for burials during the campaign and beginning the work afterwards was challenging. In particular, the GLWSA had to conduct extensive research, which could have been avoided had an organization been responsible since the outbreak of the conflict for recording the graves.¹⁵⁰ British graves were marked with steel crosses unless families had installed a private headstone.¹⁵¹

After both the Crimean and South African Wars, Britain had neglected to care for and maintain the graves of its fallen men. Part of the neglect arose from the men lying in faraway graves, but there was also vandalism in the countries where these Britons were buried.¹⁵² This experience of distant graves being destroyed or subsequently forgotten would colour the Empire’s perception of the ability of the IWGC to adequately care for the graves of the First World War fallen. The opposing voices to the IWGC’s work will be discussed later.

Thus, Canadian war dead in South Africa are distinctively marked from the other British soldiers, achieving the shared intent of both competing organizations and ensuring recognition for Canadians who served during the South African War. There was no coordinated effort between the Canadian and British governments to standardize headstones or memorials, as there

accessed 14 November 2017, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/overseas/south-african-war/bloemfontein>; “Our History,” IODE, accessed 12 November 2017, <http://www.iode.ca/our-history.html>.

¹⁴⁹ Pickles, 109.

¹⁵⁰ “Minutes of a Meeting Held in the War Office,” 25 September 1916, Vol. 2044, SDC 22, Commonwealth War Graves Commission Archives, Maidenhead, England (CWGC Maidenhead); Crane, 49.

¹⁵¹ Wood and Swettenham, 5.

¹⁵² Crane, 16 and 97.

would be in the First World War. It is interesting that, though Canadian participation was relatively small in the war and that the soldiers were serving alongside the British forces, both of these organizations were formed in Canada by women eager to strengthen the growing notion of Canadian nationalism within an overarching imperial framework.

From the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, the Joint War Committee, made up of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John of Jerusalem, was responsible for the collection of wounded men of the British Army. This inevitably led to this group completing some burials when the wounded succumbed to their injuries.¹⁵³ With the 1st Canadian Division arriving in France in March 1915, there were not yet many Canadian casualties. However, the British losses were rising rapidly with approximately 16,200 officers and men killed by the end of 1914.¹⁵⁴

At this time, Fabian Ware, 45, formerly editor of *The Morning Post* and once a senior educational administrator in South Africa, and a strong believer in Empire, sought to fulfill a role in the war effort in 1914, Ware became the commander of the Mobile Unit of the British Red Cross Society.¹⁵⁵ Macready recruited Ware to organize the members of the Red Cross Society who “at the time were in a spasmodic way interesting themselves in the matter [of graves] and expending their energy in different directions. But there was no control.”¹⁵⁶ Lack and Ziino paint Ware as an imperial patriot who saw political significance in the suitable treatment of the fallen. They claim that “the war seemed to confirm his beliefs about the development of the British Empire as an association of peoples across the globe. In the British and Dominion armies at the front, Ware saw the unity between men of different classes and branches of ‘the British race’ that

¹⁵³ Ware, *The Immortal Heritage*, 24.

¹⁵⁴ Crane, 39.

¹⁵⁵ Gibson and Ward, 43 and 44.

¹⁵⁶ “Minutes of a Meeting Held in the War Office,” 25 September 1916, CWGC Maidenhead.

he had advocated before the war, and in their dead its most powerful expression.”¹⁵⁷ Ware was instrumental in establishing a standard imperial burial policy that would define the physical commemoration of the First World War for the Empire.¹⁵⁸ With this mentality, it is evident that Ware would have opposed any Dominion interested in establishing its own grave system, as the Canadians had previously done in South Africa.

Ware’s unit, made up of a mobile light hospital, ambulances, and some medical staff, began to take note of the British war dead’s identities on the Western Front following the retreat from Mons in August 1914. The wounded were driven to Ypres, where some succumbed. Even in the first few months of the war, it was evident that not all soldiers would be found or even identified if the remains were recovered. In October 1914, following the visit of a Red Cross advisor to the battlefield, the responsibilities of the Mobile Unit of the British Red Cross Society were officially extended past the burials of wounded men, to include the recording of temporary graves in an effort to find the missing soldiers at a later date once conditions allowed.¹⁵⁹

By the spring of 1915, the work had overwhelmed the small Mobile Unit. By this point, Canadians were fighting at Ypres, the Australians, French, and British had landed at Gallipoli, and the number of casualties was rising to unprecedented numbers. Of concern here, the Canadians’ baptism of fire at Ypres had caused more than 2,000 fatalities. The responsibility for burials was transferred to the newly named ‘Graves Registration Commission.’ This Commission was funded in part by the British Army, which took on the costs of the temporary wooden crosses, rations, and fuel, and by the British Red Cross, which supplied the Commission with

¹⁵⁷ Lack and Ziino, “Requiem for Empire,” eds. Jarboe and Fogarty, 357.

¹⁵⁸ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 22 and 23.

¹⁵⁹ “Minutes of a Meeting Held in the War Office,” 25 September 1916, CWGC Maidenhead; Crane, 4, 33, and 44; Pat Jalland, *Death in War and Peace: Loss and Grief in England, 1914-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 62; Ziino, *A Distant Grief*, 31.

vehicles and staff. Ware was given a local rank of major and the Commission became the sole organization responsible for the care of imperial graves, which allowed for a centralization of efforts.¹⁶⁰ On 6 September 1915, following Macready's recommendation to the War Office, the Graves Registration Commission was removed from the purview of the British Red Cross and became an integral part of the British Army in the field. In the year 1915 alone, the Commission recorded approximately 27,000 graves.¹⁶¹

Despite the creation of these organizations for the identification and care of soldiers' graves, the soldiers on the battlefields, more often than not, conducted the actual burial of fallen soldiers. The instructions were issued to them in the General Routine Orders, which encouraged soldiers to assist the Graves Registration Commission's work after burials. The *Instructions Relating to the Burials of British Soldiers* issued on 1 December 1915 stated that:

by the definite selection of proper burial grounds it will be possible to avoid in any but exceptional cases the creation of small isolated burying grounds of which, unfortunately, over 250 exist on the present front, not including single isolated graves. Thus the identification and proper marking of graves, on which the Graves Registration Commission has been engaged, will be much facilitated and the relatives of those who have fallen will have the assurance that the graves, in all but the exceptional cases referred to, will be easily found after the war, and the necessity for the removal of bodies after the war will also be avoided.¹⁶²

Temporary wooden crosses identified graves with their named marked on "little metal tablets at any reasonable place."¹⁶³ The standards by which the IWGC would be guided had thus been established relatively early in the war. It would remain for the Dominions to decide their degree of adherence to this structure.

¹⁶⁰ Crane, 52.

¹⁶¹ Gibson and Ward, 44 and 45.

¹⁶² Sir Nevil Macready, "Instructions Relating to the Burial of British Soldiers," 1 December 1915, Vol. 2028, GRC 7, CWGC Maidenhead.

¹⁶³ "Minutes of a Meeting Held in the War Office," 25 September 1916, CWGC Maidenhead. See Appendix 4.

Nonetheless, the identification of bodies proved to be difficult.¹⁶⁴ During the Battle of the Somme in July 1916, Ware initiated the use of a double identity disk, made of compressed fibre, to replace the previous single disk often made of thin aluminum.¹⁶⁵ Even with this new measure in place, the identity disks were not always used appropriately. Protocol was to leave one disk on the body and remove the other as proof of identity and as a record during burials. These new instructions were often disregarded or proved too confusing for soldiers completing the burials, leaving the body with no identification or no tag collected for the record of burial.

Furthermore, as a result of shelling and inclement weather, graves were often destroyed or lost. Major Reverend Barton, a Senior Chaplain, reported about unidentified and lost graves to the Director of Chaplain Services for Canada in November 1919. Barton wrote: “We visited spot approx. to ‘Valley Cottages,’ but I was without my map and hence unable to positively identify where I buried 34 men in May, June, and July, ‘16. Some damaged crosses were seen but no names on them.”¹⁶⁶ About another location, he reported on potentially moved or lost graves: “In June ‘16 I buried men in 3 trenches, approx. 100 ft. in length. The bodies were laid touching one another. Crosses erected are not in positions as reported by me.”¹⁶⁷ And finally, in the Ypres Salient, he wrote: “I can state positively that graves of men I buried and reported officially are not at present marked in this cemetery Ypres Reservoir Cemetery (Prison).”¹⁶⁸ These reports demonstrated the challenges in finding burial sites after the war ended, even when those involved in the burials themselves returned to the designated site.

¹⁶⁴ Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead*, 460-467, 473-477.

¹⁶⁵ Crane, 92.

¹⁶⁶ Major Reverend Wm. Barton, Senior Chaplain, “Report on Soldiers’ Graves, Belgium,” 4 November 1919, File W-18-26, Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

The decision to transfer the Graves Registration Commission to the responsibility of the British Army was not taken lightly, especially since, as Macready had pointed out, although the Army was willing to take on work that was undoubtedly important on an emotional level, the burial of soldiers and design of cemeteries did not directly advance the war effort. Nonetheless, he recognized that the care of the graves would become a focus for the public after the war.¹⁶⁹

Later in 1916, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig made similar comments, stating:

It is fully recognised that the work of this organisation is of purely sentimental value, and that it does not directly contribute to the successful termination of the war. It has, however, an extraordinary moral value to the Troops in the Field as well as to the relatives and friends of the dead, at home. The mere fact that these Officers visit day after day, the cemeteries close behind the trenches, fully exposed to shell and rifle fire, accurately to record not only the names of the dead but also the exact place of burial, has a symbolical value to the men that it would be difficult to exaggerate.¹⁷⁰

The Graves Registration Commission further evolved by February 1916, when Ware was appointed Director-General of the new Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries, (DGRE) which would comprise a staff of 700 and a number of Graves Registration Units.¹⁷¹ The DGRE had to respond to an increasing number of letters from relatives wondering what was being done to care for the graves of the fallen. According to Ware, the pressure from families for appropriate care of the graves grew “more insistent as the numbers of non-professional soldiers forming the New Armies increased.”¹⁷²

With the number of fatalities, and consequently burials, increasing faster than in any previous conflict, new policies and international laws were required to manage the burials on foreign soil. On 29 December 1915, a French law was passed that ensured a perpetual resting

¹⁶⁹ “Minutes of a Meeting Held in the War Office,” 25 September 1916, CWGC Maidenhead

¹⁷⁰ Extract from letter from Sir Douglas Haig to the Secretary, War Office, 15 March 1916, Vol. 2044, SDC 22, CWGC Maidenhead.

¹⁷¹ Gibson and Ward, 46.

¹⁷² Ware, 25.

place to any soldier who was designated as “*Mort pour la France*,” a term that, following a 2 July 1915 French law, was used to describe any military personnel or civilians killed as a result of war.¹⁷³ Further, this law confirmed that the French Government would only conduct dealings with a single authority of a given Allied country regarding the allocation of land for cemeteries. This was so that the French Government could avoid having to negotiate with different associations from each country.¹⁷⁴ The authority for all British (including Canadian) graves was the DGRE.

While the DGRE was mainly responsible for the recording of grave locations, the long-term care of graves was not envisioned to be its responsibility. Rather, a different organization would be tasked with this solemn work. In September 1915, Ware formed the Prince of Wales’s National Committee for the Care of Soldiers’ Graves. The original plan, according to Macready, would have allowed for the Committee to be “practically dormant during the war” and “after the war the work of the Directorate [would] be taken over by the National Committee.”¹⁷⁵ In September 1916, Macready also acknowledged that there was Dominion interest in the care of war graves abroad. Indeed, he had invited Dominion representatives to a meeting at the War Office to share with them the work being conducted by the Grave Registration Units. He stated that “the Army in the Field is now an Imperial Army and it is only right that the Dominions will desire to be represented.”¹⁷⁶ In an attempt to centralize authority, he continued: “It must be remembered that they were dealing with a big subject and one in which many interests, both British and of our allies, are concerned. To prevent friction it would be advisable that everything

¹⁷³ “Pendant la 1^{ère} guerre mondiale,” *Réseau Canopé*, accessed 10 November 2017, http://www.cndp.fr/crdp-reims/memoire/lieux/sepultures/03_1gm.htm; “Le 2 juillet 1915: ‘Mort pour la France,’” *Les Archives du Pas-de-Calais*, accessed 10 November 2017, <http://www.archivespasdecalais.fr/Activites-culturelles/Chroniques-de-la-Grande-Guerre/A-l-ecoute-des-temoins/19152/Le-2-juillet-1915-Mort-pour-la-France>.

¹⁷⁴ “Minutes of a Meeting Held in the War Office,” 25 September 1916, CWGC Maidenhead

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

should come to the central body who [*sic*] would have to consider the representations put forward.”¹⁷⁷ At the meeting, Sir Thomas Mackenzie, the High Commissioner for New Zealand, suggested that the High Commissioners should be appointed as the permanent Dominion representatives on the Prince of Wales’s National Committee for the Care of Soldiers’ Graves. This recommendation was later approved and Macready announced the appointment of Dominion representatives at a January 1917 meeting.¹⁷⁸ Sir George Perley, High Commissioner for Canada, became the Canadian representative on the National Committee.

In the spring of 1917, with the challenges posed by mass casualties only increasing, the authority over British and Dominion graves changed again. Ware sent a memorandum to the Prince of Wales, outlining his vision for “an Imperial organization to care for and maintain in perpetuity the graves of those who have fallen in the War, to acquire land for the purpose of cemeteries and to erect permanent memorials in the cemeteries and elsewhere. At the Imperial War Conference, Ware’s memorandum, endorsed by the Prince of Wales, and his draft charter were reviewed and after a few amendments, approved. On 13 April 1917, Sir Robert Borden moved a resolution, which led to a Royal Charter being granted on 21 May 1917, creating the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC), with the Prince of Wales as its president, and Brigadier-General Fabian Ware as its vice-chairman. Fabian Ware would serve as the Commission’s vice-chairman until 1948, a year before his death.¹⁷⁹ With the creation of the IWGC, the Prince of Wales’s National Committee for the Care of Soldiers’ Graves ceased to exist, and its responsibilities were transferred to the IWGC.¹⁸⁰ In accordance with the 29 December 1915 French Law, the IWGC further became the “sole British authority charged with

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Prince of Wales Commission for the Care of Soldiers Graves Held at the War Office,” 14 January 1917, CWGC Maidenhead.

¹⁷⁹ Gibson and Ward, 47 and 48.

¹⁸⁰ Lord Derby to Sir George Perley, 3 November 1917, Vol. 1085, WG 1298, CWGC Maidenhead.

the care of British military graves in France.”¹⁸¹ In October 1917, a Royal Warrant appointed ex-officio and non-official members to the Commission. Following in the footsteps of the Prince of Wales’s National Committee, the newly created IWGC consisted of members representing all of the Empire’s Dominions. In addition to the Secretaries of State for the Colonies and for India, the Commission included the High Commissioners for Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa as well as a representative for Newfoundland.¹⁸² On 16 June 1917, Canada nominated Sir George Perley to represent Canada on the IWGC.¹⁸³

In caring for the Empire’s war dead, the IWGC was designed, according to the Royal Charter, “to keep alive the ideals for the maintenance and defence of which [the dead] have laid down their lives, to strengthen the bonds of union between all classes and races in Our Dominions, and to promote a feeling of common citizenship and of loyalty and devotion to Us and to the Empire of which they are subjects.”¹⁸⁴ It was a very ‘imperial’ document, one leaving little opportunity for the expression of individual Dominions’ wishes. According to Lack and Ziino, Ware saw the IWGC as the “very machinery by which closer imperial ties might be managed into the future.”¹⁸⁵ Again, as with Borden’s 1917 election scheme, the dead became a political tool. William M. Taylor claims that the IWGC was “responsible for adding further injury – and no small dose of nationalism – to widespread feelings of grief following the First World War by promoting the former monuments as means for promoting supposedly universal and democratic values and for heralding an era of lasting peace.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ “Agreement between the United Kingdom and France Respecting British War Graves in France,” 26 November 1918, File W-18-26 (5), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC; Crane, 100.

¹⁸² Crane, 99.

¹⁸³ Nicholson, 210; Letter to Colonel Harrington, 11 February 1919, File W-18-26 (6), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC.

¹⁸⁴ “Charter of Incorporation dated 21st May 1917 and Supplemental Charter dated 8th June 1964,” *The Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 10 July 2017, http://media.cwgc.org/media/394524/royal_charter_of_incorporation.pdf.

¹⁸⁵ Lack and Ziino, 364.

¹⁸⁶ Taylor, “War remains,” 235.

The IWGC was, according to an interview between members of the Commission and Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer in June 1919, "an Imperial body responsible to all the Governments of the Empire but not under the control of any one of them."¹⁸⁷ This was to be exemplified by the financial structure of the Commission. As Perley stated at the time of the IWGC's creation, "the Dominions would wish to pay their share and at the same time want an organization on which they could have a voice."¹⁸⁸ Perley's mention of Canada's wish to take financial responsibility for its war dead hints at a feeling of national ownership over the fallen. It was resolved at an Imperial War Conference meeting on 17 June 1918 that "the cost of carrying out the decisions of the Imperial War Graves Commission should be borne by the respective Governments of the Empire, in proportion to the numbers of the graves of their dead."¹⁸⁹ Accordingly, Canada's share in 1919 was 7.86% of the total cost of the IWGC, placing it second only to Britain's portion of 81.52%.¹⁹⁰ This raises the question as to whether or not a larger share of the financial responsibility represented more decision-making authority. In other words, was the number of dead being leveraged in order to gain more influence on the Commission? Undoubtedly, this was an innovative structure within the British Empire and demonstrated an important step towards increased independence of voice and practice for the Dominions. But with such a small share for each Dominion compared to the Mother Country's colossal stake, how could the Dominions not feel that the Commission was under the power of one Government? This would have been Ware's approving view.

¹⁸⁷ "Memorandum of an Interview with the Chancellor of the Exchequer Held at Treasury Chambers," 20 June 1919, File W-18-26 (7), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC.

¹⁸⁸ "Minutes of a Meeting of the Prince of Wales Commission for the Care of Soldiers Graves Held at the War Office," CWGC Archives Maidenhead.

¹⁸⁹ Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs Volume II, 1916-1920*, ed. Borden and Macquarrie, 144.

¹⁹⁰ Fabian Ware to Sir George Perley, 19 February 1919, File W-18-25 (5), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC. See Appendix 5. Today, Canada's share is approximately 10%, as it absorbed Newfoundland's portion after 1949, and as Canada's fatalities of the Second World War exceeded in proportion those of the other Dominions.

"How we are Funded," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 7 November 2017, <https://www.cwgc.org/about-us/how-we-are-funded>

Notwithstanding the creation of the IWGC, the Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries continued to operate. In fact, according to Ware, the IWGC, would not “begin to function until it has received from this Directorate certified records and surveys of the cemeteries as before then it is impossible for the work of construction and permanent marking to be put in hand.”¹⁹¹ The Ministry of Overseas Military Forces of Canada’s (OMFC) 1918 Report outlined the procedure to be followed for burials, stating:

The responsibility for the selection of sites for burial ground or British soldiers, and for the control and supervision of cemeteries, rests on the Director of Graves Registration and Enquiries (...). A Burial Officer is appointed for Corps Headquarters and one for each Division, whose duties comprise the general supervision of burials and cemeteries in their respective areas. Whenever an interment is made the Chaplain who conducts the ceremony must ensure:

(a) That the report on the prescribed form is completed (...). The report referred to contains full particulars of the deceased, *i.e.*, name, initials, regimental number, unit, date of death (wherever possible), and the map location of the grave.

(b) That the grave is suitably marked in such a way as to ensure identification. For this purpose pegs are kept by a soldier in charge of all authorised cemeteries. Full particulars of the deceased as mentioned in (a) are entered on the labels attached to the peg. At the earliest opportunity a wooden cross bearing the same particulars is erected. In cases where the erection of crosses is difficult, or has to be delayed, a record written with hard black pencil is in addition to be placed in a bottle which is half buried (neck downward) at the foot of the grave.¹⁹²

The report makes no mention of the IWGC’s role, despite its creation one year before. This is likely due to the IWGC’s anticipated role in the permanent marking and maintenance of graves after the war, rather than during the war. Though the OMFC report mentions “British soldiers” rather than Canadians, the burial instructions interestingly are followed by “Plans are in preparation for the erection of a specially designed headstone over the grave of each Canadian soldier.”¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Fabian Ware to the Chief of General Staff, OMFC, 24 February 1920, File 10-2-18 (2), Vol. 61, RG 9 III A-1 (Department of Militia and Defence), LAC.

¹⁹² Canada, *Report of the Ministry: Overseas Military Force of Canada, 1918*, 304.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

A small organization, the Canadian War Graves Section (CWGS), reporting to the Ministry of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada (OMFC), was responsible for liaison between the DGRE and the IWGC as well as assisting families who wished to visit the burial sites. In practice, the role of this organization was to: “Verify particulars on ‘known’ Canadian graves; Identify Canadian Graves at present marked ‘Unknown’; Locate isolated graves and have same concentrated into recognised cemeteries.”¹⁹⁴ Further, the Canadian Government wished for the CWGS to be responsible for all matters relating to Canadian graves. At an IWGC meeting in December 1920, William Lenny Griffith, Secretary to the Office of the Canadian High Commissioner in London, representing Canada in Perley’s absence, explained that:

There is very keen interest in Canada, an exceedingly keen interest, in regard to the work of this Commission and in regard to the graves. I will not say it is keener than anywhere else but it is very keen indeed. There was a question at one time whether the Canadian Government would not have to take separate action in order to voice the public feeling, it was so strong, on that question.¹⁹⁵

After Griffith statement, Ware expressed his disagreement with the suggestion for “separate action” by Canada, as “any isolated action of that kind on the part of Canada would have been impracticable, most embarrassing, and would have upset what Sir George Perley cares so much about – the Imperial principle underlying this.”¹⁹⁶ In March 1921, Ware wrote a letter to the DGRE to express his opinion that the CWGS should be disbanded and its work taken on by the IWGC, as was the case with the other Dominions. His meagre offer of compromise was that a Canadian clerk could remain in London to oversee the work of verifying Canadian records.¹⁹⁷ Though Canada was cowed by British pressures and the CWGS’s responsibility was eventually

¹⁹⁴ Staff Captain, War Graves Section, Overseas Detachment, “Memo for High Commissioner,” 18 December 1920, File W-18-26 (18), Vol. 327, RG 25, LAC.

¹⁹⁵ “Draft Minutes of the Twenty Seventh Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” 13 October 1920, WG 1306, CWGC Maidenhead.

¹⁹⁶ “Draft Minutes of the Twenty Seventh Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” CWGC Maidenhead.

¹⁹⁷ “Memorandum Regarding General Ware’s Letter on Graves Registration & Enquiries Work,” 10 March 1921, File W-18-26 (17), Vol. 327, RG 25, LAC.

transferred to the IWGC, it is of important to note that Canada appears to have been the only Dominion that wished to maintain control of its records and to keep a physical presence in London.

Partially as an alternative to this proposal for separate action when it came to Canadian graves abroad, the IWGC created the Canadian Agency. A Canadian Order in Council from 2 September 1920, appointed the Canadian minister of militia and defence as the IWGC's representative in Canada, which was later extended to include the United States and Siberia.¹⁹⁸ In September 1920, there were approximately 6,000 graves in Canada that fell under the definition of war dead and therefore, under the responsibility of the IWGC.¹⁹⁹ The purpose of this agency was "to acquire land to be held by the Commission for the purpose of cemeteries in any territory in which any officers or men of His Majesty's Naval, Military or Air Forces raised in any part of the British Empire who shall have died from wounds inflicted, accident occurring or disease contracted while on active service whether on sea or land during the late war may be buried."²⁰⁰ The Canadian Agency received funds from the IWGC to complete its work. The Canadian Agency was another example of Canada's interest in the matter of the care of the graves and its willingness to retain control over the work, though it had to concede the care of fallen Canadians overseas to the larger imperial body.

In 1921, an article appeared in *La Presse*, indicating that the Canadian Prime Minister, Arthur Meighen,

¹⁹⁸The agency still operates today and is now responsible for all graves in the Americas, which account for 20,370 war dead. *IWGC Annual Report for 1920-1921*, File W-18-26 (26), Vol. 330, RG 25, LAC; "History," *Canadian Agency, Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 7 November 2017, <http://www.cwgc-canadianagency.ca/s5/history-eng.php>; "Our Mission," *Canadian Agency, Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 7 November 2017, <http://www.cwgc-canadianagency.ca/s4/mission-eng.php>

¹⁹⁹"Minutes of the Twenty Sixth Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission," 21 September 1920, File W-18-26 (15), Vol. 326, RG 25, LAC.

²⁰⁰"Draft Powers of IWGC Agencies," n.d., File W-18-26 (13), Vol 325, RG 25, LAC.

a déclaré qu'il était prêt à recevoir une délégation chargée de lui demander que le gouvernement canadien continue à s'occuper de l'entretien des soldats canadiens en France. (...) le principal argument en faveur de [la] requête [de la délégation] sera que la commission impériale des tombes de guerre n'étant pas familière avec les différents régiments canadiens, prendra moins d'intérêt à l'entretien des tombes des soldats canadiens que ne le ferait une commission nommée directement par le gouvernement du Canada et composée de canadiens. D'un autre côté, il paraît que sir George Perley est d'opinion que la commission impériale est non seulement en position d'entretenir convenablement les tombes des soldats canadiens, mais aussi de la faire à un coût bien moindre que si ce soin était confié à une commission canadienne.²⁰¹

This article indicates that cost may have been the main motivation for the Canadian government delegating the care of Canadian war dead to the IWGC. Why this delegation's offer should come so late, after the war, once all policy decisions governing the appearance and design of war graves had been made, remains unclear. But that the offer was made at all is still significant. It demonstrates an apparent willingness by Canadians, if not Perley or the government, to take control of the care of war graves.

Canada was not the only Dominion interested in the care of war graves in its own country. In fact, at the IWGC's meeting in September 1920, New Zealand's desire to be responsible for the graves on its own soil was the subject of significant debate. The New Zealand representative, Sir James Allen, wishing to replicate the Canadian arrangement as closely as possible, proposed for his government to be responsible, both financially and in questions of policy, for the graves in New Zealand. After an initial resolution was moved that the "New Zealand Government be invited to assist the Commission in carrying out the general purposes of the Commission in New Zealand,"²⁰² Sir James Allen, unsatisfied by its wording, clarified that "the issue was whether the Commission was to control the New Zealand Graves or whether the New Zealand Government was to control them. In New Zealand they thought it their

²⁰¹ "Les tombes de nos soldats en France," *La Presse* (Montréal), 28 juin 1921.

²⁰² "Minutes of the Twenty Sixth Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission," LAC.

responsibility to look after their own graves.”²⁰³ Canada’s initiative in this matter had inspired other Dominions to push back against Ware’s united imperial plan.

This focus on control and duty of care appears to be similar to Canada’s effort to maintain involvement in the Commission’s work, both abroad and at home. But Sir James Allen went further than the Canadian proposal and insisted that, in the words of the minutes of the meeting, “the New Zealand Government wished to be entirely responsible for their own dead in their own country according to their own ideas. They were endeavouring to follow the policy of the Commission as nearly as possible, but if they disagreed they would follow their own ideas and not those of the Commission. It was possible there might be a case where they could not follow the policy of the Commission.”²⁰⁴ As they still intended to represent the Commission’s general scheme as closely as possible, the proposal was approved and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force War Graves Committee was eventually appointed.²⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the New Zealand Government’s insistence on a caveat for flexibility towards IWGC policies in its own country demonstrates that Dominions could, in not insignificant ways, influence the Commission. Perhaps it was simply a matter of energetic personalities and as David Crane suggests, Sir James Allen “could never be bullied into anything.”²⁰⁶ Alternatively, it is also possible that this victory for New Zealand was facilitated by it suggesting financial responsibility for independent action. Though it is difficult to ascertain, it is important to consider the implications. Was Canada more bound to respecting IWGC policy than New Zealand because it was not willing to cover the expenses of graves on its own soil?

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ *IWGC Annual Report for 1920-1921*, LAC.

²⁰⁶ Crane, 100.

From a small, ad hoc British Red Cross unit, the ballooning need to care for war graves from the First World War led to the formation of a vast, uniform imperial organization.²⁰⁷ Canada's decision to forge its own way respecting burials resulting from the South African War would not (could not) be repeated. The efforts of groups such as the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and the Canadian South African Memorial Association ensured that Canadians maintained control over the care of graves and the memorialization of the fallen of that earlier conflict. Though after the First World War Canada succeeded in creating a Canadian Agency for those graves on its own soil, it did not secure control of Canadian graves overseas. With an imperial body designing the graves and cemeteries, the Dominions had to resort to identifying their dead by a national symbol on otherwise identical headstones. The next chapter will outline Canada's role in the policy decisions regarding national emblems and family-requested inscriptions, the only differentiated elements on the Empire's headstones.

²⁰⁷ Laqueur, 461-464.

Chapter 3

“The most beautiful and moving places in which men ever collected their dead:”²⁰⁸

Canadian Influence on the Imperial War Graves Commission

Following the Imperial War Graves Commission’s creation and once its membership had been determined, the Commission had to establish policies in order to cease the unstructured chaos underway with the burial of the Empire’s fallen. With its innovative structure of Dominion representation, opinions amongst members often differed. Each Dominion fought for its own nation’s voice to be heard within the imperial arrangement. Often, the Dominion members supported each other’s initiatives, opposing the British representatives and finding commonality in their national opinions on grief and sacrifice, such as was the case with Dominion national representation on headstones. However, in other instances such as the policy on epitaphs, though both Canada and New Zealand faced a mutual problem in the expression of their grief – distance – each Dominion’s approach to lessen the gap differed considerably. This chapter will focus on the IWGC’s policy setting during the war and in the immediate post-war period, including the choice to commemorate soldiers individually, the design of the overseas cemeteries, headstone design, and more controversial decisions such as equality of treatment and non-repatriation of remains. There will be special focus on policies in which Canadian initiative directly had an impact on the appearance of graves, such as the inscription of epitaphs and the design of a badge. It will be argued that through these foundational discussions, Canada’s opinion was often misunderstood, its voice unheard, or Canadians’ wishes ignored, in favour of imperial unity.

From its founding, the IWGC had to determine how it would go about fulfilling its colossal mandate of caring for the graves of the Empire’s dead. With more than a million British

²⁰⁸“Editorial,” *Manchester Guardian*, 18 December 1919.

Empire dead, the work of locating, identifying (when possible), and recording graves was a tremendous undertaking. By 1920, the IWGC would be responsible for almost 600,000 graves across the world. With no precedent for such a large-scale logistical challenge, the IWGC had the difficult task of making decisions that would determine how soldiers would be remembered for decades to come. The Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries (DGRE) was responsible for initial steps such as registering graves prior to the IWGC's long-term care and cemetery design. The DGRE's work progressed very slowly after the end of hostilities due to demobilisation interfering with personnel levels. During IWGC meetings, the frustrated Dominion delegates often reiterated this issue.²⁰⁹ At an IWGC meeting in February 1919, the idea of hiring French labour to carry out the work was briefly considered, as it would have been less expensive. Ware was "however sure that there would be a great outcry (...) if British labour were not used for putting the cemeteries in order."²¹⁰ As such, it was resolved that British labour should be used for the construction of cemeteries in France and Belgium.

One of the IWGC's first policy challenges was determining which fallen soldiers would be entitled to an individual headstone. Clearly, soldiers whose remains had been located and could be identified with certainty would be assigned a headstone and plot of land. However, it wasn't as clear for those whose remains had once been buried but whose markers had subsequently been lost. The IWGC opted to mark these with a headstone inscribed with as much information as could be collected. As such, some soldiers' stones read "Buried Elsewhere in this Cemetery"; "Believed to be Buried in this Cemetery"; or "Known to be Buried in this

²⁰⁹ *IWGC Annual Report for 1919-1920*, File W-18-26 (15), Vol. 326, RG 25, LAC; "Minutes of the Eighth Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission," 21 January 1919, File W-18-26 (6), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC.

²¹⁰ "Minutes of the Ninth Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission," 18 February 1919, File W-18-26 (5), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC.

Cemetery”.²¹¹ A similarly fitting inscription had to be selected for the inscription on the headstones of soldiers whose remains had been recovered but whose identity had been lost due to any number of reasons such as shelling or misuse of the identity tags. Rudyard Kipling, the Commission’s literary advisor, who had himself lost a son in the war whose remains were not found, selected the passage “Known Unto God,” after his earlier suggestions of “Whose righteousness hath not been forgotten” and “the Lord knoweth them that are His” were the source of objections by various religious groups. He felt that this new excerpt from the Book of Ecclesiasticus, Acts 15:18, would be appropriate “since the passage in which they occur is one dealing with the universality of God’s care for man.”²¹² Approximately 180,000 of the IWGC’s total burials numbering near 600,000 bear the inscription ‘Known Unto God.’²¹³ As for the thousands of soldiers whose remains were never found – more than 6,000 of them Canadians – yet another predicament presented itself.²¹⁴ Were their families not entitled to a distinct place for the individual commemoration of these soldiers’ sacrifice?

At an April 1919 IWGC meeting, the representative for Australia introduced a proposal. He suggested that “every man, whether his body was found or not, should be entitled to his six feet by two of ground in the cemetery and to his cross.”²¹⁵ The Australian Government had asked their representative “to propose that in the nearest cemetery to the spot where he was known to have been killed each missing man should have a cross on which there should be simply the record that he was killed in action on such a date without any mention of the fact that his body

²¹¹ “Frequently Asked Questions About Our Documents,” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 12 November 2017, <https://www.cwgc.org/find/find-war-dead-and-cemeteries/documents-faqs>.

²¹² Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, “Headstones of Unidentified Soldiers,” 10 September 1919, File W-18-26 (10), Vol. 324, RG 25, LAC.

²¹³ Crane, 175.

²¹⁴ “The Remembrance: The Unknown Soldier,” *Canadian War Museum*.

²¹⁵ “Minutes of the Tenth Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” 15 April 1919, File W-18-26 (5), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC.

was never found.”²¹⁶ Most of the other Commission members did not share this opinion. In particular, Kipling expressed his distaste at empty graves. Further, Sir Nevil Macready, the Adjutant-General of the British Expeditionary Force during the First World War, reminded the IWGC that the land on which cemeteries were being built was a gift by host countries involved and to use even more land for empty graves would not be well received.²¹⁷ By this time, the IWGC acted as the sole British authority for dealings with the French Government relating to land awarded for burials, as per the 29 December 1915 Law.²¹⁸ A similar agreement had been concluded with Belgium (August 1917), Italy (June 1918), Greece (November 1918), and Egypt (November 1918).²¹⁹ Consequently, the proposal was not carried and a solution was still needed for appropriate commemoration for these missing soldiers.

At the next IWGC meeting, it was agreed that temporary crosses could be placed for those “men whose place of burial has not been identified. The crosses will be placed, so far as practicable, in the cemetery nearest to the place where they lost their lives.”²²⁰ Ultimately, following suggestions by both Macready and Sir Frederick Kenyon, Director of the British Museum and enlisted by Ware to evaluate possible cemetery designs, the names of the missing were inscribed on nearby memorials rather than on headstones.²²¹ In this way, they could still be remembered by name, without the use of additional land. It is this type of memorial to the missing which prompted Field Marshal Lord Plumer on 24 July 1927, during the unveiling of one of the four memorials of this type in Belgium, the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, to exclaim

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ “Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” 18 February 1918, File W-18-26 (42), Vol. 335, RG 25, LAC.

²¹⁹ *IWGC Annual Report for 1919-1920*, LAC.

²²⁰ “Minutes of the Eleventh Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” 1 May 1919, File W-18-26 (8), Vol. 324, RG 25, LAC.

²²¹ “Minutes of the Seventh Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” 17 December 1918, File W-18-26 (24), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC; “Minutes of the Tenth Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” LAC.

“He is not missing: he is here!”²²² With this decision, families whose loved ones had been lost in the war still had a physical space by which to remember them. This emphasis on naming each soldier and ensuring that each family had a physical embodiment (whether memorial or headstone) through which to commemorate the fallen was unprecedented on this scale. The importance of naming the dead was a relatively new concept. As historian Thomas Laqueur states, bringing the names of the dead into public settings was in fact becoming a “moral imperative” and the standard set during the First World War drove this idea further forward.²²³

In addition to determining who would conduct the labour and which soldiers would receive a headstone, the IWGC had the complex and solemn task of designing and constructing cemeteries. On 20 November 1917, Kenyon was appointed as an adviser to the IWGC. In 1918 he suggested two types of cemeteries. The first involved a design where the individual graves would be “undistinguished (except perhaps by an inconspicuous number), and the names of the dead will be commemorated on a single inscription, placed in some convenient position in the cemetery.”²²⁴ Kenyon, favoured his second option, in which each grave was marked by its “own headstone, of uniform dimensions, on which the name of the dead will be carved, with his rank, regiment and date of death.”²²⁵ He worried that people would mistake the first option of cemetery for a garden. Further, he believed that “the rows of headstones in their ordered ranks carry on the military idea, giving the appearance as of a battalion on parade, suggesting the spirit of discipline and order which is the soul of an army.”²²⁶ This second option, eventually chosen

²²² “He is not Missing: He is Here!” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 12 November 2017, <https://www.cwgc.org/learn/news-and-events/news/2017/08/08/13/24/he-is-not-missing-he-is-here>; “Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial,” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 12 November 2017, <https://www.cwgc.org/find/find-cemeteries-and-memorials/91800/ypres-memorial>.

²²³ Laqueur, 414, 417, 447-488.

²²⁴ Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, *War Graves: How the Cemeteries Abroad Will Be Designed*, 24 January 1918, File W-18-16 (6), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC, 7.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

by the IWGC, also allowed for individual headstones for each fallen soldier. Kenyon felt sure that this would meet the wishes of relatives, as the individual markers would “serve as centre and focus of the emotions of the relatives who visit.”²²⁷ However, it appears that Canada’s representative, Sir George Perley, did not fully agree with this design. In January 1918, he wrote to Sir Arthur Currie, the commander of the Canadian Corps:

All the other Commissioners, including the representatives of the other Dominions, having agreed to these individual headstones, there is nothing for us to do but to fall in line, as the Canadian Government joined in the formation of the Imperial War Graves Commission which is charged with the care of these graves. I feel, however, strongly, that is it most desirable that we should do so with the willing consent of yourself and the officers and men under your command whose favourable opinion we should like to carry with us in these questions.²²⁸

Perley’s reference to feeling that Canada was obligated to “fall in line” allows insight into the inner workings of the IWGC, where a united public front often proved to be more important than individual Dominions’ wishes. As Taylor argues, the cemeteries’ regular and standardized appearance “belies an uneven history of commemoration, concealing evidence of considerable disagreement over IWGC policies and dissent.”²²⁹

In December 1919, the *Manchester Guardian* reported that the cemeteries built by that date were “the most beautiful and moving places in which men ever collected their dead” due to their “nobly expressive simplicity.”²³⁰ According to Ziino, who wrote of Australia’s experience with the IWGC, the Commission’s aim with the design of war graves was to create a lasting monument to the Empire, which would commemorate how the Dominions and imperial colonies had come to fight alongside Britain. The cemeteries were meant to be a “model of what Imperial

²²⁷ Ibid., 8.

²²⁸ Sir George Perley to General Currie, 28 January 1918, File 10-2-18 (1), RG 9 III A-1, LAC.

²²⁹ Taylor, 226.

²³⁰ “Editorial,” *Manchester Guardian*, 18 December 1919.

co-operation might be.”²³¹ Following a recommendation by Perley, junior architects from the Dominions were given the opportunity to work alongside the principal architects in the design of the first few cemeteries, which would serve as models and determine the best practices for the remainder of the cemeteries.²³² The consensus amongst members was that one of these junior architects should be from Canada and have served with the Canadian Forces during the war. Accordingly, the IWGC appointed Lieutenant Frank Higginson, who had served as a temporary captain with the 14th Canadian Infantry Battalion, to the position and sent him to France.²³³ This suggestion of Dominion involvement in the cemeteries’ design and construction shows a rare desire by Canada’s representative for influence on the appearance of these sacred grounds, as well as control over future plans for the treatment of the dead.

Also involved in the cemeteries’ construction was the concentration of graves into larger cemeteries for ease of access for relatives and to facilitate long-term maintenance work. As reported in November 1918 in the *Aberdeen Journal*, there were already 150,000 known isolated graves in France and Belgium alone.²³⁴ As much as possible, bodies already interred would not be disturbed and the IWGC decided that: “where there was a group of ten graves, these should not be moved, but should form the nucleus of a big Cemetery.”²³⁵ Yet, when it was unavoidable, isolated graves were consolidated to existing larger cemeteries or moved to terrain better suited for preservation and accessibility. Some families were outraged to hear that the bodies were being disinterred, but Henry Cook, a British father, wrote to the IWGC to express his support for the policy of concentrating graves. He wrote to thank the Commission as “a Father of five dear

²³¹ Fabian Ware quoted in Lack and Ziino, 354.

²³² “Draft Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” 18 February 1918, WG 61, CWGC Maidenhead.

²³³ Unknown to Deputy Minister of Department of Militia and Defence, 3 June 1919, File W-18-26 (8), Vol. 324, RG 25, LAC.

²³⁴ “Care of War Graves,” *Aberdeen Journal* (Aberdeen, Scotland), 29 November 1918, 2.

²³⁵ “Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” 19 November 1918, File W-18-26 (6), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC.

boys buried in isolated graves. (...) Where the brave lads who fought and fell together is a very fitting place for them to rest in peace.”²³⁶ By 1921, the IWGC had moved 242,650 bodies from their original burial locations, in its effort to concentrate cemeteries.²³⁷

The IWGC decided to add standard monuments to each cemetery. Kenyon was instrumental in this policy setting, feeling strongly that the Cross of Sacrifice, designed by Principal Architect Sir Reginald Blomfield, should appear in all cemeteries. Though this ultimately did not transpire, the Cross of Sacrifice, with its embedded inverted crusader sword, is featured in all IWGC cemeteries that contain more than 40 graves, representing the faith of the majority of soldiers in the Empire at the time.²³⁸ Another monument was chosen to be common to all large cemeteries: the war stone, or as it was later referred to, the Stone of Remembrance. This stone, introduced by architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, was deemed too costly to be installed in all IWGC cemeteries. Instead, it was added to all cemeteries that contained more than 1,000 graves and, with its alter-like rectangular shape, serves to acknowledge soldiers of all faiths or none.²³⁹ The inscription on the stone reads “Their name liveth for evermore,” a passage proposed by Kipling who had consulted the Bible, as he believed it was “the one Book which was beyond criticism.”²⁴⁰ These monuments along with the rows of uniform headstones made the cemeteries,

²³⁶ Henry Cook to the Imperial War Graves Commission, 4 December 1918, Vol. 1082, WG 1294/3 Pt. 1, CWGC Maidenhead.

²³⁷ Crane, 141.

²³⁸ Blomfield also designed the aforementioned Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, in Belgium. See Appendix 6. “Minutes from the Fourteenth Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” 22 July 1919, File W-18-26 (7), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC; “Sir Reginald Blomfield,” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 10 November 2017, <https://www.cwgc.org/learn/horticulture-and-works/our-architects/sir-reginald-blomfield>; “Architecture,” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 8 November 2017, <https://www.cwgc.org/learn/horticulture-and-works/architecture>.

²³⁹ “Minutes from the Fourteenth Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” LAC; “Architecture,” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 8 November 2017, <https://www.cwgc.org/learn/horticulture-and-works/architecture>; See Appendix 7.

²⁴⁰ “Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” LAC.

as envisioned by Kenyon, resemble an imperial army standing at attention in the fields of honour.

Another important element of the cemetery design was the principle of equality of treatment, which the IWGC established after the 21 May 1917 Royal Charter.²⁴¹ This directive affected the type of burial each soldier received, the headstones' uniform design, and the universal application of policies to all family requests, regardless of financial or political influence. In light of this, an officer could be buried alongside his men, without any more distinction than his rank carved into his identical headstone. Kenyon worried that without equality of treatment:

the monuments of the more well-to-do would overshadow those of their poorer comrades; the whole sense of comradeship and of common service would be lost. The Commission, on the other hand, felt that where the sacrifice had been common, the memorial should be common also; and they desired that the cemeteries should be the symbol of a great Army and a united Empire.²⁴²

For some families, this decision allowed their fallen loved ones a more dignified burial and headstone than they could have otherwise afforded. The poor were often buried without an individual plot and without their name on a stone. At home, the type of burial depended on social class; at war, all were treated as equal individuals.²⁴³

One of the initial manifestations of the policy was the interdiction of personalized memorials to mark soldiers' graves. As such, the Commission reserved the right:

To permit or prohibit the erection by any person other than the Commission of permanent memorials in any such cemetery, or in any part of such cemetery, and, where such memorials are permitted, to receive and deal with applications by any persons to erect any such memorial, and to reject any application if the

²⁴¹ Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 255.

²⁴² Kenyon, *War Graves: How the Cemeteries Abroad Will Be Designed*, LAC, 6.

²⁴³ Laqueur, 311-312, 452, 463-470.

proposed memorial appears to the Commission (whose decision shall be final) to be unsuitable.²⁴⁴

Kenyon was also in support of this policy, as he wrote in July 1919:

the commemoration of a common sacrifice in comradeship for a common cause, is greater than the commemoration of individual loss, and it is also more suitable in a foreign country where these cemeteries will be the monuments of this country's service to a great cause.²⁴⁵

He further believed that "it is probably more in accordance with the wishes of the men whom we are honouring. I never met a soldier who wished to be separated from his comrades or distinguished from them."²⁴⁶

Though there were many cries in opposition to this ruling, families from all corners of the Empire supported the standardized stones. The Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, which represented approximately four and a half million working people in Britain, wrote a letter to the Prince of Wales, stating that they wished to "appeal to those whose means enable them to bear the cost of private monuments to set aside their individual preferences so as not to mar the completeness of the scheme of national commemoration."²⁴⁷ In the press, appeals in favour of the policy were also made, such as one from an ex-staff officer who wrote in *The Scotsman*: "Within the great national war cemeteries let the nation's respectful homage to the nation's dead be paid to all in the same form, so that the lonely man who gave his life for a community which had given him little may at last be on an equality with his fellow to whom life has given all that is involved in friendship and family affection."²⁴⁸ With equality of treatment in commemoration, there would also be unity and comradeship in perpetuity for all fallen soldiers.

²⁴⁴ "Letters Patent," 10 May 1917, File W-18-26 (9), Vol. 324, RG 25, LAC.

²⁴⁵ Sir Frederic Kenyon, "Memorandum on the Principles of the Commission's Scheme," 5 July 1919, File W-18-26 (7), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC.

²⁴⁶ Kenyon, "Memorandum on the Principles of the Commission's Scheme," LAC.

²⁴⁷ Stuart G.H. Bunning and C.W. Bowerman from the Trades Union Congress Parliamentary Committee to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, 28 May 1919, File W-18-26 (8), Vol. 321, RG 25, LAC.

²⁴⁸ "War Graves in France and Flanders," *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh, Scotland), 29 December 1919.

According to David Crane, the policy of equality of treatment digressed to a judgement of quality, taste and artistic judgement, rather than simply of matter of wanting a standardized and fair commemoration for all fallen soldiers.²⁴⁹ On the discordance towards the policy, Crane quotes Kenyon: “it is necessary to face the fact that this decision has given pain in some quarters.”²⁵⁰ Kenyon continued that he hoped that relatives wishing to install their own memorials would:

realize that they are asked to join in an action of even higher significance. The sacrifice of the individual is a great idea and worthy of commemoration; but the community of sacrifice, the service of a common cause, the comradeship of arms which has brought together men of all ranks and grades – these are greater ideas, which should be commemorated in those cemeteries where they lie together, the representatives of their country in the lands in which they served. The place for the individual memorial is at home.²⁵¹

Kenyon’s last sentence is of particular interest, as the policy of equality of treatment shaped another IWGC guiding principle, that of non-repatriation, which prevented the bodies, if not a form of memorial, from indeed being at home.

The IWGC was subject to a French order from April 1915, which prohibited disinterring bodies from the battlefields in France due to concerns related primarily to sanitation and transportation but also equality of treatment. The French authorities did not want to allow any ambivalence in this ruling, in an attempt to dissuade more influential individuals from applying pressure on their acquaintances for the permission to exhume a body.²⁵² Orders were issued to the Armies in the field that “Field-Marshal Commanding-in Chief has decided that no disinterments will be permitted in the area occupied by the British Army in the Field except for purely sanitary reasons, e.g. the proximity of wells, springs of water or houses, and then only

²⁴⁹ Crane, 124.

²⁵⁰ Sir Frederic Kenyon quoted in Crane, 124.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ware, 45.

with special permission from General Headquarters”²⁵³ citing issues of hygiene and equality of treatment. By 1918, the policy had been officialised in an IWGC’s report:

The Commission felt that a higher ideal than that of private burial at home is embodied in these war cemeteries in foreign lands, where those who fought and fell together, officers and men, lie together in their last resting place, facing the line they gave their lives to maintain. They felt sure (and the evidence available to them confirmed the feeling) that the dead themselves, in whom the sense of comradeship was so strong, would have preferred to lie with their comrades (...) This view has already been expressed in some of the Overseas Dominions, and the Commission were strongly of opinion that it would commend itself to the large majority of the British people, as the higher and nobler course.²⁵⁴

Though there was no precedent for contradicting this policy, in the case of the First World War dead, it would be perhaps the IWGC’s most contentious policy in Canada. Moreover, there existed rather thin evidence for the view that there was Dominion concurrence for the policy of non-repatriation and what evidence did exist originated mainly from Australia. In the same IWGC report, the dichotomy of opinions is evident, as it is also stated “with regard to the removal of bodies to their native countries, the Commission were aware of a strong desire in a small number of cases that such exhumation should be permitted.”²⁵⁵

The members of the Commission made statements in the press to convince the Empire’s population that the decision against repatriation was the most sustainable, in terms of equality of treatment and logistics: “In view of the enormous number (over half a million) of our dead in France alone, the removal of bodies to England would be impossible, even were there a general desire for it. But the overwhelming majority of relatives are content that their kin should lie – officers and men together – in the countries that they have redeemed.”²⁵⁶ Whether or not the

²⁵³ Sir Nevil Macready to the 1st and 2nd Armies, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, Indian Cavalry, Indian Cavalry Corps, IGC, 28 April 1915, DGRE 12, SDC 4, CWGC Maidenhead.

²⁵⁴ Imperial War Graves Commission, “Report,” December 1918, File W-18-26 (8), Vol. 324, RG 25, LAC.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Rudyard Kipling, *The Graves of the Fallen*, n.d., File W-18-26 (8), Vol. 324, RG 25, LAC, 15.

overwhelming majority” was in agreement with the policy cannot be verified, but certainly many letters were written against it. Indeed, the IWGC received as many as ninety letters per week from families seeking repatriation of their loved ones’ bodies.²⁵⁷

In one of these letters, a Mrs. Smith of Leeds appealed to the Prince of Wales to change the non-repatriation policy. Mrs. Smith wrote:

It has always been the view of every English family that their beloved dead belonged to them alone; yet we are not permitted to have the remains brought over, nor even to erect a cross or other emblem over their graves. Where possible, and where the relatives desire it, is it too much to ask that the bodies may be brought across, at our own expense, if necessary? We pray Your Royal Highness will grant that the right which has been the privilege of the bereaved may not be denied us.²⁵⁸

The IWGC decided that Mrs. Smith should be informed that due to the French law prohibiting exhumations “nothing could be done.”²⁵⁹ It is apparent that the Commission did not share Mrs. Smith’s view of the individual’s ownership over the dead or one’s right to private burial. Rather, the dead belonged to the Empire, as evidenced by the frequent use of the term ‘common’ by both Kenyon in references to the policy of equality of treatment and by King George V in a speech in 1922: “the existence of these visible memorials will, eventually, serve to draw all peoples together in sanity and self-control, even as it has already set the relations between our Empire and our allies on the deep-rooted bases of a *common* heroism and a *common* agony [emphasis added].”²⁶⁰ However, it became increasingly clear that the Dominions did not entirely share this view of imperial ownership over the dead or the commonality of the Empire’s grief.

²⁵⁷ Gregory, *The Last Great War*, 255; Laqueur, 470.

²⁵⁸ “Minutes from the Fourteenth Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” LAC.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ King George V quoted in Ware, 38.

Canadians also wrote letters, both in favour and against the non-repatriation policy. A letter written by an anonymous Canadian mother, published in *The Globe* on 17 June 1920, appears to support the claim of Dominion agreement with the non-repatriation policy. She wrote:

Having two sons numbered among the glorious dead over there and no desire to remove their bodies from the soil where they in such a noble company laid down their lives for a righteous cause, I can think of nothing more painful than the thought that this movement might be permitted to go on, and those who were so near each other, who lived together as we who live in civilian life cannot understand nor attain to, in unselfish comradeship and loyalty to each other – that the bodies of these should be exhumed and brought over the ocean again to be lain in family plots all over Canada, surely we will never witness this being done. The place where they have been lain is sacred ground. We have the promise that the cemeteries will be lovingly carried for, the stones which mark their resting place uniform, all of equal rank in death, a wonderful silent army “until the day dawn.” Can we think those we gave would wish it different? I cannot but believe they would wish to remain upon the field of honor.²⁶¹

On the other hand, there is much evidence in opposition to this policy. Thomas Preston, a Member of provincial Parliament and journalist in Ontario, wrote one such letter to his federal Member of Parliament, John Harold. Preston wrote: “Those Canadians who, like myself, have given their sons for Country’s sake ought not to be asked to make the additional sacrifice of having the remains of their loved ones left on foreign soil.”²⁶² Pilgrimages to cemeteries on these ‘foreign lands’ would be a more challenging undertaking – both in distance and cost – for families in the Dominions compared to those in Britain who could visit the graves in France with much more relative ease.

In March 1919, in a speech to the Canadian House of Commons, Sir Sam Hughes, previously the minister of militia and defence, asked Major-General S.C. Mewburn, the minister of militia and defence at the time, to consider the American policy towards repatriation. In 1919, American Secretary of War Newton D. Baker had announced that “no body will remain abroad

²⁶¹ “The Graves of Canadian Soldiers: A Mother,” *The Globe* (Toronto), 17 June 1920.

²⁶² T.H. Preston to John Harold, MP, 29 April 1919, File W-18-26 (8), Vol. 324, RG 25, LAC.

which is desired in this country and that no effort will be spared to accord fitting and tender care to those which, by request of the families concerned, will remain overseas.”²⁶³ The decision for repatriation or overseas burials rested with the families and their wishes would be respected. The next of kin of all identified soldiers, was contacted by the War Department who sent out thousands of cards to families after the war, where they could mark their preference.²⁶⁴ Of the 74,770 cards sent to families, approximately 69% of those who responded chose the repatriation option.²⁶⁵ Repatriation of American soldiers was completed at government expense. However, as the remaining 31% of Americans not repatriated, after the consolidation of graves, a total of eight cemeteries were established in Western Europe for American soldiers’ burials, numbering 30,973 gravesites.²⁶⁶ This led to many families wishing to visit the overseas graves. The movement in both directions – with thousands of bodies being returned to the United States, and thousands of families traveling to Europe to visit gravesites – caused strains on already devastated countries, such as France and Belgium, until the mid-1920s.²⁶⁷

In the House of Commons, Hughes asked Mewburn “to give the matter consideration in regard to the bodies of Canadians who fell. I know that it would be a heavy job, but the United States authorities are said to be doing it and a great many Canadians are urging that it be done here.”²⁶⁸ Hughes’s query went unanswered. Perhaps due to the relatively low number of American bodies (approximately 116,000 American fatalities²⁶⁹ compared to the British Empire’s more than one million), the option offered to Americans was never given to Canadian

²⁶³ Sledge, 136.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 141.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 150.

²⁶⁶ “History,” *American Battle Monuments Commission*, accessed 29 May 2018, <https://www.abmc.gov/about-us/history>

²⁶⁷ Budreau, 172.

²⁶⁸ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates of the House of Commons*, 13th Parliament, 2nd session, 10 March 1919, 332.

²⁶⁹ Budreau, 248.

families who had to resign themselves to pilgrimages in order to see the headstones of their war dead overseas.

Ware was so confident in the IWGC's decision against repatriation that in July 1920, he wrote to Perley: "Personally, I am convinced that if such demands are resisted for, say, another two years, the public will be so satisfied with the cemeteries that have by that time been constructed abroad that even those who at present wish to bring their dead home will realise that the better thing is for them to remain in the cemeteries abroad, side by side with their comrades."²⁷⁰ There is significant evidence that shows Ware's outlook on the subject was very naïve; Canadians continued for the next decade to try to circumvent this prohibition on the repatriation of those they saw as 'their' dead, not necessarily the Empire's.

With the demand for repatriation still strong, the illicit smuggling of bodies became a lucrative business. On 20 January 1920, an advertisement appeared in *The Globe* by Monsieur E. Teyseyre, Undertaker, Paris, France, that announced that he "will accept commissions from relatives who so desire, to exhume, prepare and transport to Canada, the Sacred Remains of their soldier dead, now in France and Flanders."²⁷¹ This advertisement led to much confusion and controversy, as families believed that they could finally bring home the remains of their loved ones, though the IWGC policy had not changed. In response to the advertisement, the Department of Militia and Defence issued a statement, which was reported on 26 May 1920 in *The Globe*:

emphasizing the reasons why it would be practically impossible to exhume the bodies of Canadian soldiers who are buried in France in order that they might be brought to Canada for burial. The statement says that an advertisement recently appearing in Toronto newspapers gives the impression that it is possible to exhume bodies in France and Belgium and return them to Canada for reburial. 'The advertisement in question is very misleading,' the statement adds, as the

²⁷⁰ Fabian Ware to Sir George Perley, 1 July 1920, Vol. 327, File W-18-26 (17), RG 25, LAC.

²⁷¹ No title, *The Globe* (Toronto), 20 January 1920.

Governments of France and Belgium have, by special decrees, forbidden the removal of bodies from these countries. The opinion is that these restrictions should not be removed.²⁷²

The IWGC did not change its stance even after the French lifted the ban on the disinterring of bodies. According to historian Jay Winter, the French felt that there was little use in maintaining the law as many wealthier families were still illegally exhuming bodies. On 28 September 1920, the French government issued a decree giving the right to French families to claim the bodies and repatriate them at the state's cost.²⁷³ It was also after this decree that the United States began the process of repatriating bodies from France. This would have no impact on the bodies of Canadian fallen soldiers, which the IWGC still prohibited removing to Canada.

Ordinary Canadians, along with others from the Empire, demonstrated their disagreement with this policy through letters to the newspapers and to government officials, as they felt it deprived them of their ability to properly grieve. There are some reported cases of successful illegal repatriations, and a few notable examples are worth exploring. In one instance, a family from Saskatchewan chose to take matters into its own hands when it was denied permission to repatriate the remains of a loved one who had fallen at Passchendaele in November 1917. On the night of 17 to 18 May 1921, the body of Private Grenville Carson Hopkins of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry was disinterred from Tyne Cot Cemetery.²⁷⁴ From the report issued to the IWGC on 4 July 1921, it is clear that Belgian authorities believed that responsibility for this exhumation fell to Private Hopkins's parents, to whom the IWGC had denied permission to repatriate their son's remains.²⁷⁵ The Commission's non-repatriation policy had prevented

²⁷² "Removal of Soldiers' Bodies is Forbidden," *The Globe* (Toronto), 26 May 1920.

²⁷³ Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 26.

²⁷⁴ Private Secretary of the Ministry of OMFC to GOC Canadian Section: 'Mr. William Hopkins, Saskatoon, Visit to France,' 6 January 1919, File III-A-2 (61), Vol. 353, RG 9, LAC.

²⁷⁵ Major A. L. Ingpen, "Report to the Vice-Chairman of the IWGC," 4 July 1921, File W-18-26 (21), Vol. 328, RG 25, LAC.

them from doing so using legal channels, so the Hopkins family then allegedly hired a demobilized British officer in Belgium, Colonel Caustin, to carry out the exhumation and shipping of the remains.²⁷⁶ Authorities discovered the remains of Private Hopkins before they could be repatriated. According to a report to the Vice-Chairman of the IWGC by Major Arthur Ingpen, the Commission's Land and Legal Adviser in France and Belgium, it was suspected that Private Hopkins's "body was removed from Tyne Cot to Anvers in a valise or some similar receptacle and that when the persons removing it found they could not dispose of the body they had it put in a coffin and placed in the Depot Mortuaire."²⁷⁷ He was reburied at Schoonselhof Cemetery in Anvers (Antwerp), Belgium.²⁷⁸

Another notable case is Captain William Arthur Peel Durie of the 58th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, who was killed in action on 29 December 1917. Originally buried at Corkscrew British Cemetery, Liévin, he was moved to Loos British Cemetery by the IWGC.²⁷⁹ In 1925, his mother Anna and sister Helen illegally repatriated his remains to Canada. Anna was inspired by the successful illegal repatriation, earlier in 1925, of Major Charles Elliott Sutcliffe of the Royal Flying Corps, who was smuggled by his father from a cemetery in Cambrai, France to a family vault in Lindsay, Ontario, by claiming that he was repatriating an American soldier to New York.²⁸⁰ After one failed attempt at repatriation, Captain Durie's

²⁷⁶ Colonel Osborne, "Memorandum for the Honourable Minister," 9 June 1924, REC 9, CWGC Canadian Agency, Ottawa (CWGC Ottawa).

²⁷⁷ Major A. L. Ingpen, "Report to the Vice-Chairman of the IWGC," LAC.

²⁷⁸ "Private Hopkins, G C," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 9 December 2017, <https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2959546/hopkins,-/>. See Appendix 8.

²⁷⁹ See Appendix 9.

²⁸⁰ Major C.E. Sutcliffe is buried in Lindsay Riverside Cemetery.

"Major Sutcliffe, Charles Elliott," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 9 December 2017, <https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2756965/sutcliffe,-charles-elliott/>. "Charles Elliott Sutcliffe," *Veterans Affairs Canada*, accessed 9 December 2017, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2756965?Charles%20Elliott%20Sutcliffe>.

family was successful in bringing his remains back to be buried in Toronto.²⁸¹ The return of Captain Durie's remains was reported in *The Globe*, though not as an illegal activity. The article stated: "as the notes of the Last Post sounded, the remains of this gallant Canadian soldier were at last laid at rest in his native land."²⁸² Author Veronica Cusack alleges that although the French government wished to prosecute the Durie family for the illegal repatriation, the IWGC preferred to hide the crime and erected a headstone over the empty grave.²⁸³ However, this claim seems to be disproven by cemetery records. A Graves Registration Report Form, reports Captain Durie's body as 'removed' from the Loos British Cemetery.²⁸⁴

This illegal practice of smuggling bodies seemingly continued well into the inter-war period. An article published on 3 May 1931 in the *London Express* uncovered a Belgian man's illicit activities:

The remains of scores of British soldiers, secretly exhumed from the war cemeteries of France and Flanders, have been brought across the Channel, smuggled into this country and handed over to relatives. This astounding traffic in Britain's war dead is controlled by a Belgian with headquarters in Antwerp, and already a group of smugglers of whom he is the head have been paid a sum of money running into five figures. Well-to-do mothers and widows in this country have been carefully selected by this man. They have paid prices ranging from £250 to £500 for remains, brought over during the night (...) The secret has been so closely guarded that the smuggling has been going on for ten years without a word of it having reached the authorities (...) It is a simple matter for him to encourage what is the dearest wish of every father or mother – to have their son's remains interred at home. It is a great temptation to the relatives to fall in with the idea. He sympathises with them on the fact that while the parents of American, French, and Belgian soldiers are allowed to move their sons, the Imperial War Graves Commission denies a similar privilege to Britons.²⁸⁵

²⁸¹ Captain W. A. P. Durie is buried in Toronto (St James's) Cemetery. See Appendix 10. "William Arthur Peel Durie," *Veterans Affairs Canada*, accessed 10 December 2017, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/426331?William%20Arthur%20Peel%20Durie>.

²⁸² "Brought to Canada for Final Funeral," *The Globe* (Toronto), 24 August 1925. See Appendix 11.

²⁸³ Veronica Cusack, *The Invisible Soldier: Captain W.A.P. Durie, His Life and Afterlife* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 2004), 193 and 194.

²⁸⁴ See Appendix 12.

²⁸⁵ "British War Dead: Bodies Exhumed from Graves in Flanders," *London Express* (London, UK), 3 May 1931.

These allegations led to an inquiry by the Belgian Ministry of Justice, which, according to Thomas Shaw, the British Secretary of State for War, showed “no support” for the allegations.²⁸⁶ Further, Shaw stated that “the investigation shows that it is almost inconceivable that the alleged proceedings could escape notice at any stage. I think it safe to say that the story may be dismissed and its publication is all the more discreditable in view of the pain that it could not fail to revive in so many thousands of cases.”²⁸⁷ However, with the examples of Private Hopkins, Captain Durie, and Major Sutcliffe alone, it is possible to imagine additional families having succeeding in repatriating remains. Further, if Cusack’s interpretation of the Duries’ experience is correct, the IWGC may have hidden from public knowledge other repatriations across the Empire. As is evidenced by these three extreme cases and to the many others who chose to appeal to the IWGC by writing letters, it appears to have been hard for Canadians to accept these British-inspired and -imposed policies governing this sacred issue. Would the Canadian bereaved have no input or influence into the deliberations concerning the dispositions of their loved ones’ bodies?

Despite this focus on equality, and consequently standardization, the IWGC decided it would allow one item on the headstones to be personalized by families. Relatives could pay for an epitaph of their choice (under the condition of Commission approval and within the permitted character length) to be added at the bottom of the stone. Of the Final Verification Forms returned by the next-of-kin to the IWGC by 18 June 1920, 73% of Canadians requested personal inscriptions, while 1% indicated an inability to pay for an inscription. The British statistics were similar, with 72% of returned forms requesting an inscription, but of those who requested no

²⁸⁶ Great Britain, House of Commons, *Debates of the House of Commons*, 35th Parliament, 23 June 1931, Vol. 254, 212 and 213.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

personal inscription, 4.5% indicated an inability to pay.²⁸⁸ The Canadian Government, upon hearing of this policy, decided that it would pay for any Canadian family making a request for an inscription to be added to a headstone. As the Deputy Minister of the Department of Militia and Defence Eugène Fiset wrote to Perley, the IWGC “by requesting the next of kin to pay for inscriptions, is creating an inequality of treatment, which may be made the object of considerable criticism throughout Canada.”²⁸⁹ It is curious that the IWGC had not considered the risk of perceptions of unfair advantages being afforded to wealthier families, given the importance they appeared to place on the principle of equality of treatment in regards to other policies.

After hearing of many families from elsewhere in the Empire unable to afford the cost of the inscription, the IWGC opted to make the payment voluntary.²⁹⁰ A few members of the IWGC felt that publicly stating their intent to cover the cost of inscriptions would be too confusing to those who had already paid and who might request a refund. As such, the policy change was not publicly announced, but rather privately observed; as such, no family was denied an inscription due to lack of funds.²⁹¹ Interestingly, the New Zealand Government, represented on the IWGC by the High Commissioner, Sir James Allen, opted against offering an epitaph to its grieving families. Sir James Allen felt that it would break with the spirit of uniformity of the graves.²⁹² It is curious that with such strict policies as non-repatriation and equality of treatment already reducing the freedom of families to privately grieve, the New Zealand Government chose to limit its people even further with this interdiction. But this was a rare instance of the Canadian government having a demonstrable impact on an IWGC policy, though the significance is somewhat reduced since the intended goal of having the IWGC cover the cost of inscriptions was

²⁸⁸ “Report on Payment for Personal Inscription,” n.d., File W-18-26 (13), Vol. 325, RG 25, LAC.

²⁸⁹ Fiset to Perley, 7 July 1920, File W-18-26 (13), Vol. 325, RG 25, LAC.

²⁹⁰ Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, 44.

²⁹¹ Unknown to General Fiset, 21 July 1920, File W-18-26 (13), Vol. 325, RG 25, LAC.

²⁹² Ward and Gibson, 67; Bargas and Shoebridge, *New Zealand's First World War Heritage*, 221 and 222.

not achieved. Moreover, this initiative gives insight into the importance that the Canadian government placed on the care of graves and the principal that Canadian families saddened and perhaps impoverished had given enough; they need not pay for the privilege of a final dignified good-bye etched in stone. This issue also showed an apparent willingness by the Canadians to influence the IWGC policies to the limit of their power.

There is one more occurrence of the Dominions influencing IWGC policies. In the spirit of equality of treatment, headstones were designed to be standard in shape and size. Headstones were 2 feet 8 inches high, 1 foot 3 inches wide and 3 inches thick, with a rounded top. They were (mostly²⁹³) made of Portland stone, native to Britain, inexpensive and easy to carve.²⁹⁴ Apart from the personalized epitaph, the only variant was the design of the badge carved on the face of the headstone near the top. In an IWGC report published in January 1918, it was noted that, “some form of national device should appear on each headstone.”²⁹⁵ The use of the term ‘national device’ appears to run counter to the idea that cemeteries should be symbols of a ‘united Empire’. Nevertheless, the report stated that some members of the Commission felt that it would emphasize that the British Army “was gathered from all quarters of the earth.”²⁹⁶ As such, the word ‘Canada’ would receive, “the greater prominence in any design adopted, so as to instantly catch the eye,” wrote the Deputy Minister of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada, Colonel Walter Gow.²⁹⁷

The idea was to engrave a regimental badge or emblem at the top but for the most part the Dominions employed numbered battalions not always based on an existing regiment.

²⁹³ Today, IWGC headstones in cemeteries around the world are made from more than 25 different types of stones, due to climate or ease of access of materials. “Conservation Management,” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 18 May 2018, <https://www.cwgc.org/learn/horticulture-and-works/conservation-management>

²⁹⁴ Summers, *Remembered*, 26, 27, and 46.

²⁹⁵ Kenyon, *War Graves: How the Cemeteries Abroad Will Be Designed*, LAC, 9.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ Walter Gow to Sir George Perley, 12 March 1918, File W-18-26 (3), Vol. 322, RG 25, LAC.

Accordingly, unlike the case for the British war dead, most of the Dominions' fallen would not have had distinctive regimental badges or insignia suitable for placing on a headstone. At the February 1918 IWGC meeting, the Canadian and Australian delegates offered a suggestion to solve this issue. The minutes read: "Sir George Perley and Mr. Andrew Fisher said that they thought it would probably be better that there should be one pattern of headstone for Canadian and one for Australian graves, rather than a different design for each regiment for the Canadian and Australian Forces."²⁹⁸ In April 1918, *The Globe* reported the final decision to Canadians, quoting a cable from Perley to Mewburn that though "English regiments may decide to have a distinctive pattern for each regiment, (...) after full consultation with Canadian Corps and the military authorities here, Sir Edward Kemp and I found the general consensus of opinion that we should have a uniform headstone and inscription for all Canadians."²⁹⁹ For Canada, the clear choice for a national pattern was the maple leaf.

Similarly, in a draft memo intended for release to the Canadian Press in December 1918, Ware announced that:

In the case of Canada and the other Overseas Dominions, however, the regimental badge will not be used. Careful inquiry among representatives of the Dominion Forces at home and abroad showed that there was a strong desire that the national emblem should be inscribed on the headstone instead of the regimental badge. It was decided accordingly that the headstone of each officer and man of the Dominion Forces should bear the badge not of the regiment but of the Dominion to which he belonged.³⁰⁰

Yet, this memorandum was never published or distributed due to the ensuing confusion about the policy when Perley reviewed this draft. Though this decision appears to be in unison with the policy announced in *The Globe* in April 1918, Perley did not agree with the implications of

²⁹⁸ "Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission," LAC.

²⁹⁹ "One Pattern Headstone for Canadians' Graves," *The Globe* (Toronto), 5 April 1918.

³⁰⁰ Fabian Ware, "Memorandum to Canadian Press about Canadian Badge on Headstones," 14 December 1918, File W-18-26 (1), Vol. 321, RG 25, LAC.

Ware's statement. In response to the above draft memorandum, Perley wrote to Ware: "I fear there is some misunderstanding on the subject. When we discussed this matter I was under the impression that the headstone only was referred to, in regard to which we are agreed that there should be a uniform pattern. I did not gather that there was any suggestion that Canadian Regiments should not have the right reserved to have a motto or crest placed on the headstone."³⁰¹ It is therefore evident that though Perley wished for an easily identifiable Canadian symbol on all of the headstones, he did not intend for it to *replace* a regimental badge, but rather for both representations to be possible. Though this occurrence could be seen as a successful Dominion-led initiative to achieve national representation for war graves, Perley's comment makes it clear that the outcome, once again, was not the intended aim. Whereas the policy on epitaphs led to a positive distinction for Canadian families who chose to avail themselves of it, this impact on headstone design led to Canadians distinguishing themselves as a nation while losing privileges accorded to British war dead for regimental recognition.

In 1919, perhaps to avoid similar misunderstandings, Ware wrote to Perley to "ask you whether the Units of the Canadian Force desire to avail themselves of the option to have separate badges on headstones, or whether they would be content with the National Badge for headstones of the whole Force."³⁰² Perley appears to have acquiesced to the idea of a national symbol, rather than a regimental or battalion emblem, perhaps due to the difficulty in representing Canada's numbered battalions, though some symbols had been developed during the war. In February 1918, in order to select this national badge, the IWGC opted to consult directly with serving officers and men. Ware also suggested that Kenyon consult the Dominions directly as to the

³⁰¹ George Perley to Fabian Ware, 19 December 1918, File W-18-26 (1), Vol. 321, RG 25, LAC.

³⁰² Fabian Ware to Sir George Perley, 19 February 1919, File W-18-26 (5), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC.

selection of the design.³⁰³ One year later, the IWGC was still awaiting an official response from Canada, likely due to the Canadian Corps having been dispersed after the war.³⁰⁴

The Canadian authorities in England had themselves submitted a national design to the Canadian Corps in France for its approval. However, as Major Sherwood, Secretary of the Overseas Military Council, wrote to Perley, the Corps felt that this suggestion:

was rather too ornate and the [maple] leaf too conventional. They were then asked to submit some design which they considered appropriate and have now furnished the sketch which is attached hereto. In writing regarding this sketch they stated that the design should in their opinion, resemble as much as possible, the natural leaf and that the leaf should be placed on the headstone so as to look as natural as possible, that the leaf in a slanting position would probably look more natural than an upright one, but the most suitable position would have to be determined having regard to the headstone. This design was considered by the Overseas Military Council of Canada, which accepted the view expressed by the Canadian Corps and approved the design submitted by them.³⁰⁵

Accordingly, the design was sent to the IWGC and each Canadian headstone was eventually engraved with this stylized maple leaf designed by soldiers, not artists or bureaucrats.³⁰⁶

With the combined Dominions' share amounting to less than 20% of the total financial contributions to the IWGC's work, they did, in rare cases, succeed in expressing their views and at times, influencing policies. The Canadian Government's insistence at covering the cost of family-chosen epitaphs on the headstone, leading to a change in the IWGC's policy, is one example of the impact that individualized action could cause. Another instance, the representation of a national emblem for Dominion graves, may not have received an entirely positive response, yet still demonstrates a willingness by the Dominion troops, governments, and

³⁰³ "Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission," LAC.

³⁰⁴ Unknown to the Secretary, Imperial War Graves Commission, 6 February 1919, File W-18-26 (6), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC.

³⁰⁵ L. P. Sherwood to the Secretary, High Commissioner for Canada, 17 March 1919, File W-18-26 (5), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC.

³⁰⁶ See Appendix 13 and 14.

Commission representatives to identify themselves, not as Britons, but as Canadians, Australians or New Zealanders. Still, the IWGC's British representatives' significant influence and weight can be plainly understood when looking at the debate surrounding non-repatriation. Canadian public opinion may have been steadfastly against this policy, which it was felt unjustly robbed families of physical and individual memorials at home, but the British members were not moved. Ware, especially, was confident that his vision would be commended once the public saw the outcome of the cemeteries. But with a representative such as Perley, willing to "fall in line" with the Commission's decisions, was Canadian opinion being fairly embodied in policy? Nevertheless, Canada did achieve some small victories within a new and challenging imperial structure.

Conclusion

Canada and the Imperial War Graves Commission

During the First World War, Canada achieved many important steps towards its eventual independence from Britain and attained greater authority over foreign relations. On New Year's Day 1916, Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minister of Canada, pledged 500,000 men to the war effort, and he firmly expected that this astounding contribution to Britain's cause would pave the way for greater Canadian autonomy within the structure of the Empire and, later, internationally. Later that year Ottawa created the Ministry of Overseas Military Forces of Canada and demonstrated the Canadian government's desire to exercise national authority over the Canadian Expeditionary Force. By 1917, for the first time, a Canadian, Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie, commanded the Canadian Corps. Further, Borden's participation in the Imperial War Cabinet and Conference meetings in 1917 and 1918, demonstrated Canada's ambition to secure control over its external affairs, while maintaining historical ties with Britain.

The Dominions' inclusion in, first, the Prince of Wales's National Committee for the Care of Soldiers' Graves in January 1917 and then the Imperial War Graves Commission in May 1917, appeared, on the surface, to be a step towards imperial collaboration and inclusivity. However, as meetings progressed and the Commission set important policies regarding the Empire's war dead, it became clear that the Dominions' involvement in the IWGC would be minimal and that Britain was anxious to maintain control over the Empire in a time of increasing national affirmation on the part of the Dominions. As with the Imperial War Cabinet and Conference meetings, the Dominions' presence at the IWGC table did not signify real change in the structure of the Empire or in consultation on important issues; decision-making power remained in British hands. The Empire had been united and uniform during the war and so it

would be following the end of hostilities. The minor policy changes engendered by Canada or other Dominions were reflective of the Dominions' stabs at independence of action but, with a combined contribution of less than 20% of the IWGC's budget, due to a relatively smaller number of graves, it was obvious who was in charge; the IWGC would be an example of ongoing imperial centralization, not devolution.

Despite this period traditionally being represented as Canada's coming of age, in its role in the Imperial War Graves Commission, Canada retained the position of a docile Dominion rather than forcefully voicing Canadian opinion or representing the wishes of many of its citizens. If Canada gained any power during the First World War, it was not consistently applied in negotiations during the IWGC's meetings. By favouring imperial unity of action, Perley ignored the wishes of Canada's bereaved families, who were obliged to rely on his advocacy on the commission. By 1918, approximately 587,000 of the Empire's graves had been identified and an additional 559,000 casualties had no known grave.³⁰⁷ No bodies were (legally) returned to Canada.

Meanwhile, the American policy allowed for bodies to cross the Atlantic to be interred at home, much to the envy of Canadians. As the American repatriation option caused such logistical difficulties, perhaps it was for the best that Canada's war dead were not returned. Nonetheless, Canada's meek acquiescence of Britain's policies when it came to such an important decisions as the final resting place of the nation's fallen is alarming, especially when compared to Canadian organizations' independent action for the commemoration of South African War burials.

³⁰⁷ "History of the CWGC," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 5 May 2018, <https://www.cwgc.org/about-us/history-of-the-cwgc>.

By March 1920, the IWGC's first three cemeteries had been completed: Le Tréport, Forceville, and Louvencourt. These served as experimental cemeteries, on which the rest would be based. The main architect was Sir Reginald Blomfield, with Canadian Lieutenant Frank Higginson assisting with the first two cemeteries, and Briton Charles Holden assisting with the third. Following the completion of the three cemeteries, the IWGC determined that the design at Forceville was the preferred option and future cemeteries used this site as an example.³⁰⁸

At home, Canadian communities funded local memorials, in churches, schools, and other public places. Historian Jay Winter suggests that local memorials sought to better express the sadness and bereavement felt by those in the community, rather than the grander ideas of patriotism that overseas or national memorials offered. These memorials allowed for a place of focused grief and public mourning; commemorative ceremonies would be centered on these memorials for decades to come. The importance of naming the dead, seen with the memorials to the missing and with individual headstones, is also evident in these local memorials.³⁰⁹

During the Second World War, the IWGC was once again the authority responsible for the care of soldiers' graves. Having just completed the First World War cemeteries and memorials, an additional 581,000 servicemen and women from the Empire came under the Commission's care.³¹⁰ The IWGC carried out more extensive concentration of graves after this war and Canadian war dead were often grouped within cemeteries, reflecting an increased national autonomy and identity.³¹¹ The IWGC was not responsible for the graves of the war dead

³⁰⁸ Summers, 20; Ward and Gibson, 54 and 55.

³⁰⁹ Winter, 85; Laqueur, 447-488.

³¹⁰ "Second World War," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 29 May 2018, <https://www.cwgc.org/history-and-archives/second-world-war>

³¹¹ Gibson and Ward, 58.

from the Korean War, as it was a United Nations mission. Most of the Empire's dead (including 376 of the 516 Canadian fatalities) are buried in a military cemetery in Pusan, Korea.³¹²

Canada lifted its policy of non-repatriation for war dead of the Afghanistan mission (2001-2014), during which 158 Canadian Armed Forces members died.³¹³ By this time, Canada had achieved complete control over its external affairs and was no longer bound to respect imperial policies, such as those imposed by the IWGC. These fallen Canadians were first flown to Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Ontario for a ceremony and then driven to Toronto along the "Highway of Heroes"³¹⁴ for an autopsy, before being buried in their hometowns.³¹⁵

In May 2000, Canada completed the only official repatriation of a First World War soldier. Until this time, the Unknown Soldier, buried in 1920 in Westminster Abbey, London, represented all of the Empire's unknown soldiers. Australia was the first Commonwealth country to repatriate a soldier of the First World War, in 1993, as a commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the end of the war. Following in Australia's footsteps, Canada repatriated a soldier from Cabaret Rouge Cemetery in Souchez, near Vimy Ridge, as a millennial project. He was laid to rest at the base of the National War Memorial, in Ottawa.³¹⁶

That Canada did not push during the First World War to ensure that its war dead were buried according to the wishes of many bereaved Canadians – at home, in private plots or under personal memorials – and why it didn't appear to place much importance on a matter so significant as this basic physical representation of memory, grief, and sacrifice, is difficult to

³¹² "United Nations Memorial Cemetery," *Veterans Affairs Canada*, accessed 29 May 2018, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/overseas/korean-war/unmem>

³¹³ "The Canadian Armed Forces in Afghanistan," *Veterans Affairs Canada*, accessed 29 May 2018, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/canadian-armed-forces/afghanistan>

³¹⁴ Since 2007, a 170 km stretch of Highway 401 between Canadian Forces Base Trenton and Toronto is referred to as the "Highway of Heroes."

³¹⁵ "His Work Begins When a Canadian Soldier's Life Ends," *Globe and Mail*, 7 November 2009.

³¹⁶ "Remembrance: The Unknown Soldier," *Canadian War Museum*; "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier," *Veterans Affairs Canada*, accessed 29 May 2018, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/national-inventory-canadian-memorials/details/9367>.

grasp, especially as our modern understanding of memory and war was shaped by the representations of the dead during the First World War.³¹⁷ The legacy of this failure to act on a matter of great national significance is still visible today in the IWGC cemeteries, where Canadian graves are marked alongside the Empire's dead, imitating an imperial army of stone.

³¹⁷ Laqueur, 449-452.

Appendix 1



“Canadian Badge modelled on that of the Queen’s Own Regiment”

Barbara Wilson Collection NA PA 181425

Carman Miller, *Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War 1899-1902*, 84

Appendix 2



Imperial War Cabinet – 1 May 1917

“Group photograph of the IWC members taken in the garden of No. 10 Downing Street. Front row (left to right); ?---erson (Minister without portfolio), Lord Milner (Minister without portfolio), Lord Curzon (Lord President of the Council), A Bonar Law (Chancellor of the Exchequer), David Lloyd George (Prime Minister of the United Kingdom), **Sir Robert Borden (Prime Minister of Canada)**, W F Massey (Prime Minister of New Zealand), Lt. Gen. J C Smuts (Prime Minister of South Africa): middle row (left to right; Sir S P Sinha (Member Designate of the Executive Council of the Government of Bengal), Col. the Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh Bahadur (Maharaja of Bikaner - representing the Royal Princes of India), Sir J S Meston (Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces, India), Austen Chamberlain (Secretary of State for India), Lord Robert Cecil (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), Walter Long (Secretary of State for the Colonies), Sir Joseph Ward (Finance Minister of New Zealand), **G H Perley (Minister of the Overseas Forces of Canada)**, **R Rodgers (Minister of Public Works, Canada)**, **J D Hazen (Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and of the Naval Service, Canada)**: back row (left to right); Captain L S Amery (Assistant Secretary, IWC), Admiral Sir John Jellicoe (First Sea Lord), Sir Edward Carson (First Lord of the Admiralty), Lord Derby (Secretary of State for War), Maj. Gen. F B Maurice (Director of Military Operations, War

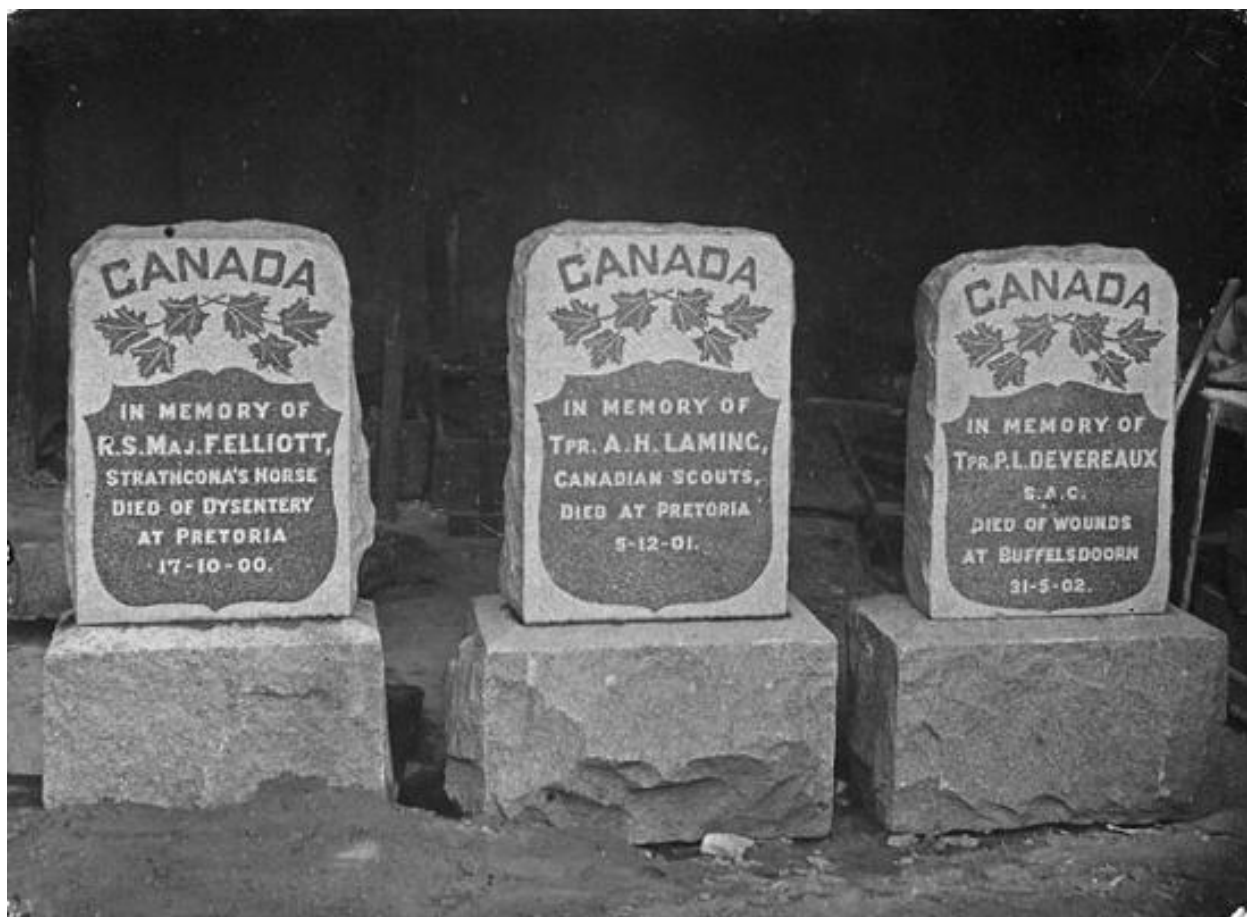
Office), Lt. Col. Sir Maurice Hankey (Secretary to the IWC), H C M Lambert (Secretary to the Imperial War Conference), Major L Storr (Assistant Secretary, IWC)."

Catalogue number: HU 81394

Imperial War Museum Photograph Archive Collection

"The Imperial War Cabinet," *Imperial War Museum*, accessed on 10 January 2018,
<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205124978>

Appendix 3



Canadian war graves in South Africa

“South African War,” Canadian South Africa Memorial Association, *Library and Archives Canada*, accessed on 8 November 2017,
<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/south-african-war/photo-gallery>.

Appendix 4



Temporary Wooden Cross, First World War

"Canadian Virtual War Memorial," *Veterans Affairs Canada*, accessed 8 November 2017, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2943645>

Appendix 5

COPY.

£1,403,222

Government	Graves	Percentage of total	Proportion of cost £1,403,222
			£.
United Kingdom	452,730	81.52	1,143,911
Canada	43,631	7.86	110,293
Australia	35,131	6.33	88,823
New Zealand	11,393	2.05	28,766
South Africa	4,450	.80	11,225
do			
Native Labour Corps	525	.09	1,262
Newfoundland	888	.16	2,245
India (Natives)	5,665	1.02	14,312
British West Indies	956	.17	2,385
Totals	555,379	100.00	£1,403,222

Note Figures of graves up to 16.1.19.

Distribution of graves and percentage of total funding by Government

Fabian Ware to Sir George Perley, 19 February 1919, File W-18-26 (5), Vol. 323, RG 25, LAC.

Appendix 6



Cross of Sacrifice

(Personal photograph)

Appendix 7



Stone of Remembrance - Thiepval Memorial

(Personal photograph)

Appendix 8

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT.

Army Form W. 3372.

GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.

D.A.D.G.R. & E., No. 5 District.

Commune : **ASSCHENDAELE** REPORT No. 51

XY 2629
SCHEDULE 624/C.

PLACE OF BURIAL **TYNE COT BRITISH CEMETERY**

Documents Certified Correct & Complete.

Ann. Burials in this Plot are Concentrations

Map Reference Sheet **28.N.E., D.17.a.00.25.**

21 SEP 1928
IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION
Lt. Spence
Registration Officer
3.5.22

Major,
D.A.D.G.R. & E., No. 5 District.

The following are buried here:—

Regiment	No.	Name	Rank and Initials	Date of Death	Cross Erected or G. R. U'd.	Plot, Row and Grave
		Plot 56.	Row "A".			Row "A"
		VACANT 92	Grave			1
P.P.C.L.I. *	2193335	HOPKINS	Pte.	15.11.17	All	1
		Granville C.				
P.P.C.L.I.	2193334	McKEOWN	Pte. L.	15.11.17	3/21938	2
N.Z.R.	-	UNKN. NEW ZEA. SOLDIER				3
13th. D.L.I.	19060	NOLAN	Sgt. Pte. F.	20.9.17	YP/452/12542 EF/x/862	4
N.Z.R.	-	UNKN. NEW ZEA. SOLDIER			Crosses	5
Border Regt.	241654	UNKN. BRITISH SOLDIER			EF/x/8663	6
		" "	"			7
Grenadier Guards		" "	"		Erected	8
Yorks & Lincs.		" "	"			9
2/K.O.S.B.	28769	STEWART	PTE. J	4-10-17	EF/x/10893	10
Hants.		UNKN. BRITISH SOLDIER				11
N.Z.R.		" NEW ZEA. SOLDIER				12
Manchesters		" BRITISH SOLDIER				13
Suffolks		" "	"			14
		" "	"			15

* Removed to SCHWENSEL Hof CEM "A" NEW P
CCM/32/16470

ENTERED
06/10/22

(5 31 5) W3160—P2723 100,000 9/19 HWV(P1024) Forms W3372/3

Graves Registration Report Form for Tyne Cot Cemetery showing Private Hopkins's vacant grave.

"Private Hopkins, G C," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, accessed 9 December 2017, <https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2959546/hopkins,-/>

Appendix 9

CROSS ERECTED AND CHECKED.
 LOOS-EN-BOHELLE 103-236E
 CONCENTRATION OF GRAVES (Exhumation and Reburials).
BURIAL RETURN.

Name of Cemetery of Reburial LOOS BRITISH CEMETERY. Sheet. 44a.M.6.a.7.3.

Plot	Row	Grave	Map Reference where body found	Was cross on grave?	Regimental particulars	Means of Identification	Were any effects forwarded to Base?
20	G	19.	CORKSCREW B.C.LIEVIN. 44a.M.11.a.3.3. ✓ Row "E". Grave 21.	Yes. Regimental & Standard.	Capt. W.A.P. DURIE. 58/Bn. Canadians. 29-12-17. ✓	Certified Report & Cross. (Body enclosed in zinc lined coffin.)	No.
			Authority W.G.R.I. No. 1111, dated 18-12-24.				
			IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION. No. 2 AREA				
			No. <u>B.R.1/1106/E.</u> Date <u>20-2-25.</u>				

This form to be made out in triplicate, two copies being handed to the D.A.D. (C. of G.) and the other retained by the Burial Officer.

2154 W.W.H.M.P. 6488. 250,00000. 9/19. S.O.F.B.E.

CANCELLED BY
CERTIFIED REPORT
ENTERED 18/3/25
CLIPS CHECKED 21-19-3-25
J.P.R. Man
Registration Officer,
for Area Superintendent,
No. 2 Area. I.W.G.C.
Armentieres.

Concentration of Graves form, showing Captain Durie's reburial in Loos Cemetery from Corkscrew British Cemetery, Lieven

"William Arthur Peel Durie," *Veterans Affairs Canada*, accessed 10 December 2017, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/426331?William%20Arthur%20Peel%20Durie>

Appendix 10



Captain Durie's gravesite in Toronto (St James's) Cemetery.

"William Arthur Peel Durie," *Veterans Affairs Canada*, accessed 10 December 2017, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/426331?William%20Arthur%20Peel%20Durie>

Appendix 11

BROUGHT TO CANADA FOR FINAL FUNERAL: REMAINS OF CAPT. W. A. P. <SPAN ...
The Globe (1844-1936); Aug 24, 1925; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail
 pg. 10

BROUGHT TO CANADA FOR FINAL FUNERAL

Remains of Capt. W. A. P.
Durie Conveyed From War
Zone Cemetery

WAS KILLED NEAR LENS

On Saturday afternoon the funeral took place of the late Captain W. A. P. Durie, who fell in the Great War in December, 1917, and whose remains were recently brought to Canada.

At 2.15 o'clock a private service took place at his late residence, 306 St. George Street, conducted by the Rev. C. Templeton, and attended by relatives and immediate friends of the family.

The pallbearers were officers of the 58th Battalion, who served in France with the late Captain Durie: Major W. I. Cusler, M.C., Lieut.-Col. Dunham, Capt. A. S. Brown, Col. the Honorable Dugal Carmichael, D.S.O., Lieut.-Col. G. R. Geary, Croix de Guerre, M.C., and Mervyn Pentecost.

A public service at St. Thomas's Church, Huron Street, followed, when the church was crowded to capacity with men of the 58th Battalion, and friends of the deceased. Rev. C. Enser Sharp officiated, the service being fully choral. Clergy and choir met the funeral cortege at the entrance to the church, the first hymn being "For All the Saints Who From Their Labors Rest." At the conclusion, "Abide With Me" was sung, followed by the Dead March in Saul.

Rev. C. Templeton officiated at the service of reinterment in St. James's Cemetery. As the notes of the Last Post sounded, the remains of this gallant Canadian soldier were at last laid at rest in his native land.

Relatives present were: Mrs. Durie, mother of Captain Durie; Miss Helen Durie, his sister; W. D. Gwynne and Mrs. Gwynne. Others who attended were: Major F. H. Adam, Major A. D. Armour, T. L. Church, M.P., Capt. Frank Vipond, Capt. B. Miller, James W. Somers, W. A. Littlejohn, Dr. Herbert Burgess, R. J. Clarke, W. R. Flett, George Shields, and Harry Bray. G.W.V.A.; Lieut. Charles Johnson, Sergt. G. W. Bloomfield (Brantford), Rev. R. J. and Mrs. Campbell, A. D. Robertson (Royal Bank), John Ahearn, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. C. Cameron, Mrs. George Nesbitt, George Lyons, and many others, including officers of Q.O.R. and 36th Peel Regiment.

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Article about the burial of Captain Durie in Toronto, which states "as the notes of the Last Post sounded, the remains of this gallant Canadian soldier were at last laid at rest in his native land."

"Brought to Canada for Final Funeral," *The Globe* (Toronto), 24 August 1925.

Appendix 12

NO. 2 Area,
I.W.G.C. COMPREHENSIVE REPORT. Army Form W. 3372.

GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.

REPORT No. 103 SCHEDULE No. 998. 2018
1980.

COMMUNE : -LOOS EN GOHELLE.
PLACE OF BURIAL LOOS BRITISH CEMETERY.

Map Reference 44a.M.6.a.7.3.

The following are buried here:—

Regiment	No.	Name	Rank and Initials	Date of Death	Cross Erected or G. R. U'd.	Plot, Row and Grave
		<u>PLOT 20 "G" Contd.</u>				
24/Div.M.G.Bn.	28574	WOOD	Sgt. J.M.	18.5.18.	E.	17. ✓
9/E. Surrey Regt.	28944	MELIA	Pte. M.	7.5.18.	<u>11.8/12/19.24</u> E.	18. ✓
56/Bn. Cans.		DURIE	Capt. W.A.P.	29.12.17.	E. <u>REMOVED (27/2645)</u>	19. ✓

ENTERED 4/9/25
SLIP CHECKED 5/14/19/25

(6 31 5) W3100—P2723 100,000 9/19 HWV.P1024 Forms/W3372/3

Graves Registration Report Form showing Captain Durie's body as "removed" from Loos British Cemetery.

"William Arthur Peel Durie," *Veterans Affairs Canada*, accessed 10 December 2017, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/426331?William%20Arthur%20Peel%20Durie>

Appendix 13

Canadian maple leaf emblem

(Personal photograph)

Appendix 14

A stonemason engraving a headstone destined for the grave of a Canadian casualty of the First World War. From the information on the bottom of the headstone P3 RA C20 DOULCCE the casualty who received this headstone has been identified as Private John Christopher Weatherhead, Canadian Army Medical Corps Plot III Row A Column 20 in Doullens Communal Cemetery Extension No.1.

Catalogue number: Q 100870

Bawtree Ivan L. Collection

“Engraving Headstones for Casualties of the First World War,” *Imperial War Museum*, accessed on 30 May 2018,

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205087100>

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MG 28-18, Canadian South Africa Memorial Association fonds

RG 9, Department of Militia and Defence

RG 25, Department of External Affairs

CWGC Maidenhead:

DGRE 12, SDC 4

GRG 7

SDC 22

WG 61

WG 1294/3

WG 1298

WG 1306

CWGC Ottawa:

REC 9

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“Keep Autonomy of Dominions: Premier Borden Tells of the Imperial Conference.” 19 May 1917.

“One Pattern Headstone for Canadians’ Graves.” 5 April 1918.

“Overseas Minister of Militia.” 3 November 1916.

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“Removal of Soldiers’ Bodies is Forbidden.” 26 May 1920.

“Soldiers’ Graves to Be Well Care For: Their Registration and Maintenance Are Planned.” 28 October 1916.

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