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## The Imperial War Graves Commission, the war dead and the burial of a royal body, 1914–32

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### Abstract

The mass deaths of British and imperial soldiers during the Great War created a crisis of commemoration. How could the bereaved come to terms with the losses when their deceased loved ones were buried so far from home, or had disappeared completely? This article aims to redress an imbalance in the current historiography on war and memory: despite a plethora of studies of war memorials as substitute graves at home, we lack a deeper understanding of the treatment of real bodies and war graves abroad. The Imperial War Graves Commission was established in 1917 to devise and enact a scheme for commemorating the dead in a fitting and permanent manner. A key principle for the treatment of bodies, known and unknown, was the decision to commemorate at the original place of burial where possible, or very nearby if exhumation was necessary. In doing so, the IWGC effectively made bodies the possession of the British Empire and took agency away from the bereaved entirely. This article explores how the grave of Prince Maurice of Battenberg became a test case of the Commission's powers and influence, as it sought to establish the legitimacy and aptness of its approach against the opposition of Maurice's mother, Princess Beatrice, daughter of Queen Victoria. It reveals the IWGC's desire to avoid public controversy while sticking to its guiding principles, and its belief that far from being exempt from those principles through her royal status, Princess Beatrice had a moral obligation to accept and embrace them.

The Great War forced the British government, its departments of state and agencies, and the British people to confront both the full implications of, and a crisis in, modernity and the modern world. The massive scale of the war, with its seemingly existential implications, demanded the full resources of the state and a vast expansion of its powers and reach, breaking down long-held political and cultural concepts and norms. Much of the historiography has concentrated on how these affected living bodies, most significantly in terms of individual rights through the introduction of conscription which turned men into direct servants of the state.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps somewhat ironically this increase in state power over individuals occurred *after* it had exerted its powers of control over a seemingly useless asset – the dead bodies of soldiers. Within the historiography of the commemoration of those dead soldiers, much emphasis has been placed on attempts to interpret the absent body for grieving families and communities through memorial schemes.<sup>2</sup> After the Great War memorials were erected throughout Britain, designed to trigger memory in the absence of bodies. While these substitute graves *at home* have been studied in some depth, the

scholarship that addresses the construction of war cemeteries abroad is extremely thin. This is partly due to the working practices of the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC), but also partly a reflection of historians' methodological choices and training. A civilian, inter-governmental organization, the Commission followed British civil service practices, accomplishing its massive task efficiently and quietly. Unlike the civil service, the Commission was (and still is) not obliged to hand over its files to the Public Record Office/The National Archives. The Commission's official history published in 1967 (revised in 1985) on the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment, provides a useful account of the evolution of the institution, but significantly does not include a single reference to archival sources.<sup>3</sup> It was not until 1997 that a first professional, yet incomplete, archive catalogue was compiled by a hired researcher.<sup>4</sup> However, it took well over another decade for the Commission to employ a full-time archivist and build a reading room for visiting researchers.

With the Commission's copious archive effectively closed, British historians during the 1990s began to study war memorials erected in the British homeland.<sup>5</sup> Although influenced by the 'cultural turn', this body of work was in many ways an extension of earlier research into the social history of the *home* front.<sup>6</sup> Despite the influential work of Antoine Prost (on Verdun) and George L. Mosse (on German war cemeteries), British historians continued to make a wide berth around the real war graves abroad, focusing on local case studies of war memorials and commemorative rituals instead.<sup>7</sup> Contrary to the suggestion that the post-Cold War 'memory boom' in historical studies took off in unison with popular culture, British people participated in a site-specific memory boom in the immediate aftermath of the conflict by visiting the war cemeteries and battlefields making them sites of emotional attachment, investigation and reflection long before the historical profession came across them as a subject.<sup>8</sup> Inexplicably, even the subsequent 'body turn' – with its focus on the representation of corporeal fragmentation in the poetic and medical discourses – largely bypassed the war graves issue.<sup>9</sup> Some important studies of mass death in war provided valuable insights into the work of the IWGC, but much of this focused on the need to name the dead and thus concentrated on memorials to the missing rather than the treatment of the bodies themselves.<sup>10</sup> To be sure, in recent years, scholars, especially from Australia, have laid the groundwork for the study of (Australian) war graves, but the full history of the work undertaken by the IWGC is still very much in its infancy.<sup>11</sup>

Through a micro-study of Prince Maurice of Battenberg's grave the critical debates about commemoration of the war dead in Britain and the Empire can be explored, and in particular the controversial issue of non-repatriation of bodies. Although he was a junior officer, Maurice was the highest ranking member of British society to be killed in the war. His mother was Princess Beatrice, youngest daughter of Queen Victoria, and widow of Prince Henry of Battenberg, who had died from fever whilst returning from military service in the Ashanti in 1896. As such the decisions over the treatment of his grave form the perfect illustration of what Reinhart Koselleck has called the 'democratization of death' in the modern age in his seminal work, 'Kriegerdenkmale als Identitätsstiftungen der Überlebenden'.<sup>12</sup> For the huge

numbers of grieving relatives, the process of coming to terms with the loss and their grief started with control over the body, its interment in the soil of their choice and permanent form of commemoration – and yet the overwhelming majority were to be denied this power. With the armed forces taking control of the dead, whether they still existed in body form or not, the British imperial state made an astonishing move which created a commemorative legacy few could envisage at the time. This article will explore the ways in which Princess Beatrice sought to exert control over her son's grave and how this brought her into conflict with the infant IWGC. Further, it will show how Sir Fabian Ware, the IWGC's vice-chairman and presiding spirit, came to view Prince Maurice's grave as a test case for the authority of the Commission and its principal tenets.

Despite preparations for a conflict of intensive action, the scale of the casualties still shocked the British Army, and threw up the issue of accounting for masses of dead, dealing with their bodies and informing the bereaved. In some ways, the question was a purely administrative one. Efficient management of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) demanded that the Army had a grip on its casualty statistics and the fate of its missing. Although such tasks came under the authority of the Adjutant-General, the small-scale BEF found its administrative structures under great pressure and it could not adequately cope with the demands of accurate grave registration to assist in its statistical calculations. Into this gap stepped Fabian Ware, an Edwardian polymath – journalist, colonial administrator and educational reformer. Aged forty-five at the outbreak of war, Ware volunteered for the Red Cross and led a mobile unit. During this initial period of service he rapidly began to realize the problem of grave marking and recording, and his role gradually shifted towards this task. Its primacy became apparent when he instigated a special unit, the Graves Registration Commission, to oversee the work. As its workload swelled in 1915, the Army recognized the wisdom of integrating this role into its own structures and in February 1916 the Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries (DGRE) was formed with Ware given the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.<sup>13</sup>

Among the many issues Ware was trying to deal with was that of repatriation. It did not take him long to make up his mind, and he became an almost instant convert to the idea of non-repatriation. His stance on the issue hardened in the spring of 1915 after Lieutenant W.G.C. Gladstone, grandson of the former prime minister W.E. Gladstone, was disinterred and repatriated. For Ware, a Plymouth Brethren by birth, the issue threw up fundamental moral issues regarding equality of treatment. Fully aware that only the rich were likely to have the influence and resources to engineer such a time-consuming and potentially dangerous venture, he was determined to stamp out the practice.<sup>14</sup> This conclusion reveals something of Ware's acute sensitivity to the wider public attitude and was a statement about equality long before the sacrifices of the great citizen army on the Somme in 1916. As Thomas W. Laqueur has noted, the principle of equality of treatment was 'in stark opposition to the *aristocratic* [our emphasis] principle that had dominated remembrance of the dead of war since Agincourt and that was being eroded in the late nineteenth century'.<sup>15</sup> The Great War then made this emerging concept a moral and political necessity. To achieve equality and

harmony between the classes of Britain and the Empire, the only solution was state power over the most intimate of objects, the dead bodies of men.<sup>16</sup> Although driven by his high-minded idealism, the flip side for the Army was the strictly utilitarian one of smooth management of the war, for the bureaucratic beast that it was, did not need the distraction of trying to assist grieving relatives disinter, prepare and despatch home the bodies of dead soldiers.

Working with great determination, Ware secured an agreement with the French for the perpetual concession of land for British military cemeteries and graves in December 1915. An important component of this desire to achieve control was not just to ensure equality between the treatment of bodies, but equality of treatment of the dead *per se*. With so many bodies missing entirely, not a fragment remaining, a dilemma in commemoration had been created: how was a man who now existed in name only to be remembered? At the same time, there were lots of bodies whose identity was unsure, leaving the question of who would be responsible for their commemoration and what form it should take. For Ware, the discrepancy between the known dead body, unknown body and the missing would be accentuated if individuals were allowed either to take possession of known bodies or to erect memorials over their burial spaces. Reacting to this problem, in May 1916 he achieved a ban on the erection of permanent private memorials on graves.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the intensity of this activity, the British were still some way behind the Germans who commenced the creation of at least semi-permanent, extensive and elaborate war cemeteries on the Western Front from 1915, and it was not until the winter of 1916–17 that the issue of post-war permanent commemoration of the war dead began to emerge.<sup>18</sup> Nineteen-seventeen then became a crucial year in terms of shaping the Britannic world's formal remembrance and commemoration of the conflict in the establishment of the National (quickly renamed Imperial) War Museum, and after a round of discussions, and some disputes, the decision to create a unique pan-imperial institution for the permanent care of the war dead.<sup>19</sup> The Imperial War Graves Commission came into existence on 20 May 1917 under its permanent vice-chairman, Ware, who now had to balance his work and time between the on-going need for marking graves and the search for permanent solutions to the commemoration of the British Empire's war dead. Deeply committed to the idea of the imperial family, Ware ensured that the entire Empire was represented on the body, but all of the representatives were white men, occasionally diversified by the voice of an Indian. Such a composition meant that the commitment to equality of treatment could be reinterpreted according to particular circumstances, as has emerged in recent studies.<sup>20</sup> However, as the case of Prince Maurice shows, this commitment was by no means an empty one.

Prince Maurice of Battenberg died of wounds sustained during the First Battle of Ypres on 27 October 1914, and was then buried in Ypres town cemetery.<sup>21</sup> His status made him newsworthy and his death and burial service was covered extensively in the British press, as well as making headlines in the USA.<sup>22</sup> His death was also an important symbol of the Anglo-

German Battenberg family's loyalty to Britain, which had been questioned, forcing Prince Louis (Maurice's cousin) to resign from the Admiralty in October 1914.<sup>23</sup> For Princess Beatrice, like thousands of other mothers, the circumstances in which her son died denied her the ability to intervene in choice of ground, memorial or funerary service. This was in stark contrast to the extreme pomp and ceremonial with which her husband, Duke Henry, had been buried in 1896. His body had been brought home, ceremonially transferred to the family chapel, and there had followed a lavish funeral in which Princess Beatrice participated fully as impresario and mourner. As John Woolfe has noted, prior to the Great War 'great deaths' were often represented in a highly emotive and controlled manner which created a powerful 'paradox of immediacy and remoteness'.<sup>24</sup> When it came to the burial of her son, a series of decisions and actions usually reserved for the most intimate of relatives were carried out by others.<sup>25</sup>

In late November 1914 the first photographs of the grave were published showing its simple wooden cross covered in wreaths. The *Daily Mirror* reproduced a view of the grave on its front page alongside a portrait photograph of the Prince inset into the image. The caption stated: 'Where Prince Maurice of Battenberg lies buried. On the cross are inscribed the words "Mort au champ d'honneur" (died on the field of honour). The portrait is of the hero Prince, who was a lieutenant in the King's Royal Rifles'.<sup>26</sup> During the course of the conflict, Beatrice's elder sister, Helena (Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein), enquired after the state of the grave, and was reassured by the DGRE that it was in good order. Such requests were a routine part of the DGRE's operations, but in this instance Ware himself provided a personal reply. With his acute sense of maintaining public confidence in the work of his unit, Ware was probably keen to ensure that no one should doubt the dedication of his staff and their determination to mark the dead accurately and respectfully.<sup>27</sup> For Princess Beatrice, as with so many of the bereaved, the wooden cross was regarded as a temporary marker, and she commissioned her own memorial in the form of a stone cross and slab complete with inscriptions and the crest of his regiment. The inclusion of the regimental badge reveals something about the Princess's understanding of her son's identity: she clearly perceived him to be a soldier and his military home and family were granted a particular status in her response to a grave marker for his body's burial place. The problem for the Princess, and for many others, was that Ware and the two organizations over which he presided, the DGRE and the IWGC, represented a completely different way of thinking about the war graves.

Almost as soon as the Armistice came into effect Princess Beatrice began to make plans for the erection of her own memorial.<sup>28</sup> Ware's response was clear. From the moment the Princess began her enquiries, Ware expected her to drop any private plans and set an example by publicly accepting, and endorsing, the recommendations of the Commission. It is possible that Ware was also aware that Lord Kitchener was alleged to have offered the Princess the opportunity of having her son's body repatriated soon after his death, but she had declined the offer.<sup>29</sup> In particular, he wanted a statement about the proposed use of headstones rather than crosses, which many thought a betrayal of Christian principles and deprived them of the

solace inherent in the meaning of the cross. Writing to the Commission's chairman, Winston Churchill, his ex-officio post as the Secretary of State for War, Ware stated: 'I had hoped that Princess Beatrice would have been ready to give a lead in this question of equality of treatment'.<sup>30</sup> For Ware, here was an ideal opportunity to display before the public the sketch plans, and maybe even a full-scale mock-up, of the Prince's headstone design supported by a statement from the Princess. He told Churchill 'she might be asked to allow an announcement to be made that this headstone was being erected over the grave (as over all Officers graves and men of the regiment whatever their rank)'.<sup>31</sup> For Ware and the Commission getting such a prestigious endorsement was a way of clearing up the many misconceptions about the role and authority of the organization that were apparent in the year or so immediately following the end of the war. Although the Commission had been formed in 1917 and had set to work immediately, much of its early activity was of an exploratory nature as the question of permanent commemoration was discussed and solutions offered. A crucial moment came in January 1918 when Sir Frederic Kenyon delivered his report, *War Graves: How the Cemeteries Abroad will be Designed*. However, at first this was for internal circulation and debate only, and was not made public until three days after the Armistice.<sup>32</sup>

Nonetheless, the public discourse, and the Commission's reaction to it, reflected the fact that the position on permanent commemoration was by no means entirely solid nor completely understood. Such misunderstandings even appear to have affected Commission staff. Ware sent Lord Stopford, a Commission official, to see the Princess in the hope of persuading her to drop any private initiatives over her son's grave. In choosing Stopford, Ware had selected a long-standing and intimate collaborator from the DGRE, who had just become Assistant Secretary to the Commission, and was thus trusted with this very delicate task. Ware may also have been sensitive to the aristocratic rank of Stopford, which he might have thought valuable in dealing with the Princess. In the event, Stopford inadvertently complicated matters. Perhaps believing that a princess might be exempted from the standard regulations, during the meeting he told her that 'in all probability she could put up the stone she has had made, but it was hoped that she as member of the Royal Family would lead the way and set a splendid example'.<sup>33</sup> However, she remained unmoved by this argument, retorting that 'almost directly her son was killed she set to work to have the stone made before there was any idea of any Commission, and it was at the suggestion of the Prince of Wales, later, that she postponed doing anything, as he said he hoped it would be alright later'.<sup>34</sup>

A number of points came together in the Princess's retort. First, it exposed the grey area as to the position of permanent memorials erected or commissioned before the formulation of DGRE and IWGC policy was defined and made binding. A small number – estimated to be no more than 100 – permanent funerary monuments had been erected in France and Belgium, and a good deal more in Egypt under the encouragement of the British Red Cross (BRC), by grieving families during the course of the war.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, there were also some lavish monuments of a quasi-permanent nature put up by soldiers themselves to their comrades.<sup>36</sup> Given the Commission's desire to be seen as the friend of the soldier, these memorials, too,

had the potential to cause embarrassment and confusion. Expediency and diplomacy here became the watchwords, with the IWGC politely enquiring of relatives whether they wished their original memorials to be replaced and quietly leaving in situ those who declined the offer of the official grave marker.<sup>37</sup> In this particular case, the Princess had not actually had her permanent memorial placed on the grave, but it had been completed according to her design and she claimed her right to have it installed on the fact that her decisions had been made and executed long before the Commission was instigated. Trying to find a way around this tricky situation, and revealing the Commission's desire to be as flexible as possible, Stopford suggested that the memorial slab could be 'erected in a prominent position for all who pass in and out of the town to see' on the Ypres ramparts near the Menin Gate. At this point, the British government was working up its plans for a major memorial on this site, and so the suggested location was made in the knowledge that it would become a place of extreme importance and thus make a significant statement to future visitors.<sup>38</sup> Stopford was very kindly thanked for this offer, but it was just as firmly rejected: the precise spot, the precise soil in which her son lay was the crucial thing for the Princess.<sup>39</sup>

The symbolic value of soil, long recognized in European culture, was emphasized throughout the conflict with its gender element becoming even more pronounced. If the plough and seed could be seen as the male reproductive elements penetrating and mingling with the female womb of the soil, then during the war, soil was raped by the brutal invasions of the enemy's booted impress and despoiling artillery ordnance. The Flemish writer Léon Huygens summed up these common feelings in his 1916 essay, 'The Inviolable Yser', in which he referred to the sacred soil of Flanders being polluted by the German presence.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, soil could be sanctified and redeemed through sanguinary sacrifice. Sue Malvern interprets Paul Nash's painting, 'We Are Making a New World' (1917–18) in this manner, thus underlining its original propaganda message, rather than the symbol of protest against meaningless and futile destruction.<sup>41</sup> Further, the flow of blood could transubstantiate soil into a sacred possession. In British imperial culture this was expressed most strongly by Rupert Brooke in his 1914 sonnet, 'The Soldier', declaring that his death and the mingling of his body with foreign soil would make 'a corner of a foreign field forever England'.

A second important point was revealed in Stopford's interview with the Princess in the form of the Prince of Wales's unfortunate tendency to confuse matters by making off-the-cuff comments, which was particularly problematic given his status as IWGC President. For Ware it was vital that the highest families in the land revealed sympathy and unity with the lowest, and this was undermined by the Prince seeming to suggest that a different rule could be applied to his relative. From the start, Princess Beatrice claimed that the Prince of Wales had assured her that her own desires would be respected, and that Kenyon's report 'was made to discourage the erection of personal monuments rather than to prohibit this particular one – and from this the Princess still hopes that later on when peace time conditions are resumed that the permission may be granted.'<sup>42</sup>



It was in these hints of royal exceptionalism that Ware was most exercised and had to tread most carefully. A firm believer in imperial unity through a paternalist, reforming and improving Conservatism, Ware was extremely concerned to show class solidarity through the actions of the Commission. He told Churchill that:

the right solution, the only one which will not create extremely bad feeling among the working classes and many others who are in favour of equality of treatment is that Princess Beatrice should take the lead by announcing that the ordinary regimental headstone will be erected over Prince Maurice's grave and that the headstone which she has already had made is being erected among the family memorials in this country, say at Froggnal.<sup>43</sup>

He made a similar point in a letter to Colonel Colbourne, a representative of the Princess, stating:

that the erection of the private headstone will be most severely criticised and, as you know, this criticism will not only come from 'Labour' (and, of course, the danger of their making political capital out of such a situation cannot be ignored) but also from the relatives of many Regular officers and others of good social position who do find real consolation in the thought of equality of treatment and corporate memorials.<sup>44</sup>

In the wake of the Bolshevik revolution, the fear that the British Labour party might be either the cover organization of Communists, or an unwitting dupe of such radicals, was held by many and can be detected in Ware's statement.<sup>45</sup> At the same time, he revealed both his confidence that many in the higher classes supported the IWGC's policy and were very willing to set a public example. A further fascinating insight into Ware's mentality can be seen in his perception that by very definition Regular Army officers (i.e. professional soldiers) were of the patrician class.

In these assumptions, Ware rather deliberately overstepped the mark, for much of the fiercest opposition to the IWGC came from the higher ranks of the British establishment. The Cecil family proved particularly troublesome. Ware's former collaborator in the BRC, Lord Robert Cecil, Lord Hugh Cecil, Lady Florence Cecil, widow of Sir Edward Cecil and by 1919 wife of the Bishop of Exeter, and former Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour (his mother was a Cecil), were joined by Viscount Wolmer in fierce resistance to the Commission.<sup>46</sup> The arguments against the Commission settled on three main points: the use of a headstone rather than a cross; the principle of uniformity of treatment; and the continuing ban on exhumation and repatriation. Realising that it would seem extremely uncharitable to the poor to state that the IWGC's entire plan should be scrapped, they conceded that the government should help only those who could not afford their own solution.<sup>47</sup> However, the seeming consideration behind this point completely ignored the working class fear of a pauper funeral, which had sparked the great interest in funeral insurance schemes.<sup>48</sup> And, somewhat ironically given Ware's

fears, the Countess Selborne (sister-in-law of Lady Florence Cecil) accused the Commission itself of being a bastion of Bolshevism, writing in a letter to the *National Review* that 'this conscription of bodies is worthy of Lenin'.<sup>49</sup>

The Princess appears to have seen her own position as one in which she had the right to choose through her status and wealth, while believing the IWGC plan would be the safety-net for those unable to adopt an alternative course. Stopford noted that she 'evidently feels very strongly indeed about it and says it is very hard that because she is a member of the Royal Family she should be made to suffer in this way.'<sup>50</sup> Such sentiments reveal that the Princess seemed to feel that she was going to be part of an elite minority made to comply with a regulation dreamt up by the IWGC that no others would follow. The fear of setting a meaningless example appears to have permeated her understanding of the situation. And this was the difficulty for Ware and the Commission at this point; it had carried out a lot of preparatory work, it had the governments of the Empire, and many people in the Empire, in agreement, but it had not yet been given a full mandate from the UK parliament and people who were to provide the bulk of the funding for its operations. The time had come for a public statement to clear away confusion.

On the three main accusations put against the IWGC, it remained firm, starting with repatriation. One IWGC official stated: 'One could never explain to a person why Lord or Lady this was able to have a body [brought] home while plain Mrs Smith, a labourer's wife or widow could not, though anyone aware of the conditions would know quite well.'<sup>51</sup> Arguing that repatriation would drive a wedge between the nobility and the rich and those of humbler means if the state refused to pay for it, was not good enough for many; neither was the argument that by being buried abroad, the dead had in effect made the soil British. Although this symbolism may have been accepted, for many bereaved the battlefields would never be a suitable final resting place for their loved ones, and repatriation remained a vital issue for some. Such sentiments fuelled a modern resurrectionist business on the battlefields of the former Western Front. Illegal exhumations were attempted in the 1920s, but the evidence suggests that very few, if any, were successful.<sup>52</sup> Imperial bonds could then put a particular variant on the repatriation issue, and it was the pan-imperial aspect that very much concerned Ware. As Bart Ziino has shown, although Australians felt extremely remote from the battlefields, they were also aware that repatriation on a large scale was impractical and unlikely given the distances and environmental conditions, compounded by the difficulties of ensuring access to the Gallipoli peninsula in the face of the extreme instability of the region, and thus found the proposals of the IWGC reassuring and fitting.<sup>53</sup> Convinced of the value and sanctity of the imperial family, Ware insisted from the formation of the Commission that there would be no unravelling of the ban on repatriation and that imperial cities of the dead would rise, and in many instances dominate, foreign landscapes. In complete contrast, France, the spiritual homeland of *égalité*, saw a near state of chaos over its own war dead. The French government expressed the desire to maintain wartime camaraderie through uniform war cemeteries, but then found it difficult to enact an agreed plan in timely fashion. Forced to

accept the principle of repatriation in July 1920, many families reclaimed their lost loved one, which at least stopped the practice of clandestine exhumation and retrieval of bodies. The huge ossuaries marking the French battlefields were then erected not by the state, but by private initiative frustrated at the lack of co-ordinated activity.<sup>54</sup>

Ware revealed his determination to uphold the Commission's principles even as Parliamentary opposition appeared to harden in 1919, led by Balfour and Lansdowne in the Lords, and Sir Edward Carson and Hugh and Robert Cecil in the Commons. Lady Florence Cecil, who had lost three sons in the war, appealed to the Prince of Wales 'in the names of thousands of heartbroken parents, wives, brothers and sisters' to allow the cross, stressing the Christian consolatory message it had for the bereaved.<sup>55</sup> She presented a petition with more than 8,000 signatures. In a war fought against Prussian autocracy, and in a world in which state power had made ever more intrusions into people's lives, the Commission could easily be accused of being dictatorial and therefore, by implication, thoroughly unBritish. It was a point taken up by a private organization which called itself the British War Graves Association, established and led by Mrs S.A. Smith of Leeds, who began a campaign against the headstone and the ban on repatriation that lingered on until her death in 1936.<sup>56</sup>

Having played a part in creating a public debate, and after much discussion in the press and behind the scenes, Balfour and Lady Cecil said they would withdraw opposition to other aspects of the Commission's plans if a cross was allowed, and Balfour was invited to submit a design. Universally condemned for its poor aesthetics by the Commission's architects, Balfour was allowed to produce another design, which fared no better. The entire issue was then debated in the Commons on 4 May 1920, but amid distinct signs that sentiment was swinging behind the Commission. Ware was beginning to win his propaganda battle through the degree of imperial consent, partly engineered by shrewd public relations such as the beautifully illustrated pamphlet, *The Graves of the Fallen*, with text by Kipling, and by the solid support of the British trade unions delivered by Harry Gosling, Labour MP and member of the IWGC's governing executive.<sup>57</sup> The issue of equality was moving from wartime rhetoric to solid expression when it came to the issue of the dead.

In the Commons, the IWGC position was put most eloquently by the normally taciturn William Burdett Coutts (uncle of Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett of Gallipoli reportage fame) who quoted from a letter by Rudyard Kipling, which poignantly put the case for those who had no known grave to visit, implying that those who did have this favour from the fortunes of war should not be making such a fuss. Moving on, he spoke of 'the genius of this war' that 'fused and welded into one, without distinction of race, colour or creed' the manhood of the Empire in a common cause.<sup>58</sup> He said the poor would, no doubt, accept without complaint the ability of their richer fellow citizens to erect memorials sympathising as they would in their common grief, but for him the nobility was in the equality and glorious comradeship shown by the men of the forces which they should now emulate. Asking them to imagine the differing effect on the emotions and senses of different types of cemetery, he drew two images: one a mixture of standard

and individual grave markers, the other entirely uniform commemorating 'great and lowly, peer and peasant, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, raised to one supreme level in death by common sacrifice for a common cause.'<sup>59</sup>

In response, Viscount Wolmer put the alternative case saying it was wrong to confuse equality with uniformity and asked whether aesthetics would be allowed to trump individual emotions. He quoted letters from bereaved parents very much disturbed by 'the idea that the tombstones should resemble so many milestones'.<sup>60</sup> Churchill then entered the debate. With an eye very firmly on the bigger picture, the war dead were to be appropriated into the grander narrative of British imperial history. He closed the debate by moving the rhetoric firmly back into the truly monumental mode capturing the imagination of the Commons with his ethereal visions, making the dead symbols of the nation and Empire rather than the much-loved members of individual families:

The cemeteries ... will be entirely different from the ordinary cemeteries which mark the resting place of those who pass out in the common flow of human fate from year to year. They will be supported and sustained by the wealth of this great nation and Empire, as long as we remain a great nation and Empire, and there is no reason at all, why, in periods as remote from our own as we ourselves are from the Tudors, the graveyards in France of this Great War shall not remain an abiding and supreme memorial to the efforts and the glory of the British Army, and the sacrifices made in the great cause. [He said the power of Lutyens's Stones of Remembrance would endure for 2,000 years and would] preserve the memory of a common purpose pursued by a great nation in the remote past and will undoubtedly excite the wonder and the reverence of future generations.<sup>61</sup>

Concluding his sweeping and majestic speech, he appealed to the House to decide the issue without dividing, which it duly did, but with the caveat that the campaign would continue outside the Commons. Although the protests continued, the Commission had been given its mandate.

Of particular importance in winning over the remaining doubters was the completion of three experimental cemeteries, which could then be used as examples to set before the public. The cemeteries at Le Tréport, Forceville and Louvencourt were completed in the spring of 1920, and in September *The Times* carried a highly favourable article written by the poet and co-founder of the remembrance movement, the Ypres League, Beatrix Brice. According to Brice, the cemeteries were 'filled with an atmosphere that leaves you very humble, that gives you wonderful thoughts' where 'chivalry, knighthood, heroism and self-sacrifice... are knit-together'.<sup>62</sup> Brice had called upon chivalric imagery, so ubiquitous in wartime and post-war commemorative discourse. In so doing, the dead were symbolically drawn into the warfare of a previous age; they were feudalized at exactly the same time as their democratic equality was emphasized through the cemeteries. She then brought together Churchill's lofty rhetoric

with a gender-based viewpoint from the position of the bereaved: 'Your own man has a wonderful grave, the nation has a wonderful monument', adding that the names inscribed on the headstones were the 'flower of the manhood of our race' forever resting in soil won by 'the valour of her [Britain's] sons'.<sup>63</sup> Ware hoped to use the combined architectural and horticultural effect of the cemeteries to win the Princess over. One month after Brice's piece appeared, he sent some photographs of the cemeteries and an appeal to the Princess via Viscount Corkran, one of her gentlemen-in-waiting: 'I do wish Her Royal Highness could have seen one of the completed cemeteries, it would immediately dispel all this cruel nonsense that has been talked about "dogs' headstones" which has caused pain to so many.'<sup>64</sup> Here Ware was referring to a term used by Mrs M. Carpenter in an impassioned letter to the Commission, lambasting its decision to erect uniform headstones. She condemned the design as something 'we would put over a favourite dog's grave'.<sup>65</sup> It is unclear whether Viscount Wolmer had had any kind of contact with Mrs Carpenter, but he referred to a soldier who told his mother 'that he would "hate to be buried like a dog"' in the crucial Commons debate over the IWGC's core principles.<sup>66</sup> Clearly, Ware was hypersensitive to this accusation and wanted to see it dispelled: a resounding testimonial from the Princess would have been hugely helpful in such circumstances.

Gaining little response from the Princess, Ware was faced with the problem that she might become what he called 'a sort of rallying centre' for those who remained opposed to the Commission.<sup>67</sup> Matters became even more fraught when it became known that the Princess was negotiating to buy the plot of land in Ypres town cemetery in which her son's grave lay. During the conflict, British soldiers had been buried in many Belgian and French civic cemeteries and churchyards through sheer practicality. Some were buried in concentrated plots, while others were randomly scattered. In such cemeteries the IWGC was then left with the task of making small enclaves, referencing its overarching architectural features and principles, or simply replacing the crosses with permanent headstones depending on the precise condition. Prince Maurice's grave fell into the latter category of being a scattered grave within a civic cemetery. Buried away from other British soldiers, Princess Beatrice clearly believed this technicality exempted her from the rules on military cemeteries formally agreed by Britain with France and Belgium during the conflict, and gave her room to negotiate her own preferred grave monument. However, this was a misunderstanding of the position, as the Anglo-French and Belgian agreements were quite clear that first the Army, and then any British state-approved successor body, had authority over military graves no matter where they were.<sup>68</sup>

In trying to contain the Princess, Ware had to consider his tactics carefully. His sense of loyalty to the monarchy precluded any attempt at making the issue public and somehow shaming the Princess into acquiescence; at the same time, he must also have been fearful of the opposite effect of making her appear a martyr to IWGC intransigence. Notwithstanding his sensitivity, he does seem to have been prepared to use public exposure as a gentle threat. Stopford in his interview had pointed out that the Commission could not remain silent if she

executed her plan to erect her own grave marker. Such action might result in 'a very unpleasant discussion ... in which she would be the centre and bringing in all the Royal Family', Stopford warned.<sup>69</sup> Ware then told Churchill that if the Princess pressed ahead, he would have to report it to the full Commission council, meaning it would come 'under the direct notice of the Labour representatives and undoubtedly a full statement would be required by them from me as to what means I had taken to prevent it.'<sup>70</sup> For Ware, establishing the sole authority of the Commission over the issue of commemorating the war dead was absolutely crucial, and the continued manoeuvrings of the Princess invited other players to stake a claim by supporting her. In July 1920 he rather forcibly referred the matter to Churchill, telling Edward Marsh, his secretary, that 'I think the time has come when Mr Churchill should be asked to take any action he can with regard to the erection of a headstone on the grave of Prince Maurice of Battenberg at Ypres.'<sup>71</sup>

A particular problem came in the figure of Henry Beckles Willson, a Canadian writer and journalist who had served on the Canadian staff as a propagandist during the war, became a collector of artefacts for the nascent Imperial War Museum, and in 1919 was town major of Ypres. Establishing exactly how he came by that role is a little difficult, as Beckles Willson was clearly a forceful character who did not mind playing fast and loose with regulations. Obsessed with the symbolism of Ypres, and driven as he was by a burning desire to see respectful commemoration of the dead, he wrote a very early guidebook to the salient with the potent title, *Ypres: Holy Ground of British Arms* (1920), and helped establish the Ypres League with Beatrix Brice. By that point, Beckles Willson had had a bungalow erected on the ramparts and had unilaterally claimed a large portion near the Menin Gate as reserved for Canada. At the same time, he engaged in direct correspondence with the Belgian government attempting to gain its agreement to maintaining the ruins of the city as a memorial.<sup>72</sup>

Absolutely convinced of the rectitude of his own visions and seemingly oblivious to other agencies, he met the Princess when she visited her son's grave in July 1919. He noted in his diary: 'She is anxious that Prince Maurice's grave shall not be disturbed; but the Graves Registration people are insisting that the body must be exhumed and transferred to the British cemetery, and that, in any case, no monument or special tombstone must be erected to differentiate it from the others.'<sup>73</sup> His comments imply a distaste for the methods and regulations of the Graves Registration units who were completing their tasks as a preliminary to the Commission commencing work on the permanent commemoration. Fortunately, the high-handed attitude of Beckles Willson meant that he did not win over many influential people, and he caused much embarrassment for the Commission and the British government through his private initiatives and enterprises.<sup>74</sup>

Confident in his views, sympathetic to the Princess (he persuaded her to become a patron of the Ypres League), and as someone deeply connected to the world of journalism, Beckles Willson may well have been one of those responsible for the story of the Prince's grave coming before the public. Kept carefully under wraps for many years, the issue finally came

into the open in July 1925 when the *News of the World* published an article on the grave under the headline, 'All Treated Alike/ Grave of King's Cousin at Ypres/ Princess Beatrice and a Bereaved Father', complete with a photograph of the Prince's sister (Queen Victoria Eugénie of Spain) placing a wreath on the grave still marked by its original wooden cross. The story recounted that Princess Beatrice visited her son's grave recently and had noticed an old man doing likewise. One of the gardeners told the Princess this fact and 'she immediately went over and spoke to him'.<sup>75</sup> It transpired that he had sailed from New Zealand with his wife to see their only son's grave, who had died at much the same time as the Prince, and that his wife had died en route. The Princess remarked that both of them had lost a child in their country's service and both a spouse at sea. By shaping the story in this way, the Princess became a parent, and more specifically a mother, like any other visiting her son's grave in loving memory and respect at his achievements.<sup>76</sup>

The article then went on to state:

Her Majesty has been desirous of erecting a special memorial over his last resting place. She approached the Prince of Wales, in his capacity as President of the Imperial War Graves Commission, and he laid the matter before the King. His Majesty, however, refused the sanction, pointing out that it had been decided that the graves of both General and Private of the British Army who fell in the Great War, equal in honour for duty well and nobly done, should be marked by the same simple headstones, and that he wished no exception to be made in the case of a member of his own family. Our photograph shows the Queen of Spain kneeling at the graveside. The smaller wooden cross in the rear is the original one set up when the Prince fell in 1914. Both crosses will shortly be removed and replaced by a uniform dwarf Portland headstone of a similar design to those in the two rows which appear in the photograph.<sup>77</sup>

The King was, therefore, represented as entirely above reproach in his perfect observation of the procedures and practices of the IWGC, with the Prince of Wales acting as a kind of intercessor creating a very interesting religious allusion. This story was then reproduced verbatim in the *Ypres Times*, journal of the Ypres League.<sup>78</sup>

The King's relationship with his relative's grave had been revealed prior to this in high profile coverage of his tours of the Western Front. In December 1918, and just after much of the press had commented on Kenyon's report on war graves, the King made his first post-war visit. Much emphasis was given to the King's low-key approach, and it was noticeable that the press reports made no particular comment on his cousin's grave.<sup>79</sup> A similar spirit infused the coverage of the far more extensive tour made in 1922: the *Illustrated London News* exemplified the approach, publishing a photograph of the monarch standing at Maurice's grave, but accompanied by no overt statement about its meaning.<sup>80</sup> Such sentiments can also be detected in the official record of the tour, *The King's Pilgrimage*, published in 1922. Sales

profits from the book were then donated to charities specialising in supporting war graves visits for the poor. The author, Frank Fox, recounted the King's visit to the Prince's grave, but in studiously low-key terms:

On his way to the Menin Gate of Ypres city, the King directed the cars to turn aside to the Town Cemetery, that he might stand silent for a few moments by the graves of Prince Maurice of Battenberg, Lord Charles Mercer-Nairne, Major the Hon. W. Cadogan, and other officers, some of those of his own personal friends whom the war claimed, and whose graves lie among those of their men, marked by the same simple memorials.<sup>81</sup>

In emphasising the graves 'among those of their men', Fox picked up on the desire of soldiers to be buried together and remain as comrades in perpetuity.<sup>82</sup> This interpretation also downplayed Maurice's familial status, and instead transformed him into a member of the royal-military circle of acquaintances, with the implication that the King paid no more particular attention to his grave than to others. It also made the equality of commemoration obvious, and by passing no other comment implied that the King was in perfect sympathy with this approach to grave markers. Indeed, the coverage may have been no more than an account of the King's actual attitude; his diary record of the visit gives very little away: 'The cemeteries are very well arranged and looked after by ex-service men under the Commission. Very interesting passing through the battle area, nearly all the houses have been rebuilt. But I think they have quite spoiled Ypres which was nothing but ruins and now they are rebuilding it again. I visited Maurice's grave at Ypres.'<sup>83</sup>

What the 1925 *News of the World* story finally made explicit was the King's personal stance on the grave, and it was everything Ware wished: judicious, utterly impartial in his interpretation of regulations, and convinced of the righteousness of equality of treatment for the war dead. The royal officer body was the same as the body of the private soldier of humble background. However, others did perceive the specialness of the Prince's grave and expressed it publicly. The *Ypres Times* carried a report on the 1921 observations of All Saint's Day in Ypres. It was stated that crowds visited the cemeteries to lay wreaths on soldier's graves. But, significantly, 'There was nowhere the Belgian authorities could lay their wreath but on the grave of Prince Maurice of Battenberg.'<sup>84</sup> Such an action is interesting for revealing the traditional sense of respect and worth invested in a royal figure. At the same time, Maurice almost became the corollary of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. In perfect, mutually supporting, tension Maurice was the prince commemorated like every other soldier, whilst the Unknown Warrior was everyman treated as a prince.

The fact that the new grave marker had not been erected by 1925 is difficult to interpret conclusively. It is highly possible that the Commission was deliberately dragging its heels, knowing that any sudden move to finalize the situation could escalate matters into a full-blown nasty dispute with the Princess; equally, completion and erection of headstones was a



staccato business with cemeteries often in a state of transition for a considerable period.<sup>85</sup> The disadvantage of not finalising the condition of the Prince's grave became apparent in 1932 when Charles Graves's reflective travelogue, *Gone Abroad*, was published. In the section on Ypres, he wrote: 'We are now passing the grave of Prince Maurice of Battenberg. He was killed on October 24, 1914. He was in the King's Royal Rifles, but because he was not an English subject he only has a wooden cross instead of a stone one.'<sup>86</sup> This implied some sort of prejudicial action by the IWGC based on Maurice's nationality. The incongruity of the wooden cross among the ever-increasing number of permanent headstones was also noted by a German veteran. Writing to the Commission in December 1931, he asked why 'of all the thousands of British graves I saw, only the grave of the Prince Maurice of Battenberg. All other stones of a splendid make [*sic*].' Although he did not state it explicitly, there is a heavy implication that Maurice's grave had been left to deteriorate because he was German (and ironically remained so, as he retained his original German family name, rather than the anglicized Mountbatten). He added that he had photographed the graves in Ypres town cemetery and sent the photo of the Prince's grave to the King who 'graciously accepted' it.<sup>87</sup>

This latest controversy brought the Prince's unit, the King's Royal Rifle Corps, on to the scene as General Sir William Pitcairn Campbell took up the case. A former member of the regiment, Pitcairn Campbell was determined to gain the Princess's consent for the headstone. Replying to his approaches, a representative of the Princess stressed 'that H.R.H. would be the last person to "refuse to admit the equality of sacrifice", but she did dislike the stone not being in the form of a Christian Emblem.' At the same time, he stated that the Princess would withdraw her objection to 'the erection of the ordinary stone over the Prince's grave... if it is the wish of the Regiment'. But reassurance was sought that the grave marker would have 'the badge of the Regiment and H.R.H. would also like there to be a Cross on the stone.'<sup>88</sup> Quite remarkably, it seems that the Princess was still ignorant of the centrality of regimental insignia and the cross to the headstone design. Additionally, the Princess transferred voluntarily decision-making authority away from herself as mother of the deceased to her soldier-son's military family and home. Such a concession shows a profound change in the stance of the Princess over her son's body. A number of possible reasons for this can be put forward. By the time of these exchanges in 1932, the Princess was seventy-five years old and had been attempting to get her own scheme through for seventeen years. Possibly, she was simply exhausted by the struggle, had found that her nephew, the King, was not prepared to intervene on her behalf, and so wanted the matter resolved before her own death.

Realising that he was at last reaching closure, Ware gently hurried on the matter by reminding the Princess of her right to place an inscription at the bottom of the stone, which was duly provided in July 1932 (the same month as the redeveloped German cemetery at Langemarck was formally opened): 'Grant him with all thy faithful servants a place of refreshment and peace.'<sup>89</sup> Ironically, in this the Princess did not act like a Princess at all – there was no royal trumpeting of his status and exceptionalism in the statement. Once this was received, Ware pressed on ordering the cutting of the stone, its inscriptions and insignia, advising: 'Give every

care you can to see that it is well made'.<sup>90</sup> After all his insistence that the Prince should be treated in the same manner as every other soldier, his injunction was that this stone had to be made with special care. However, it was a case of ends justifying means. Battenberg's headstone was special in order to show that all were special in the sense of being carefully thought-out solutions designed to give each and every man his individual honour in the glorious equality of death for God, King, Country and Empire. On completion, Ware also implied that he wanted the headstone erected quickly as a final statement on the matter pre-empting any reconsideration on the Princess's part.<sup>91</sup> Once the stone arrived in Ypres, the existing grave markers were put into safe keeping until a decision was reached on their final disposal, while the grave itself was carefully marked out with a curb, which was required due to its position within the civilian portion of the cemetery. On 30 September 1932, Frank Higginson, the Commission's Director of Works, reported that the headstone had been erected and he had personally inspected it the day before.<sup>92</sup> With that coda, the long saga of Prince Maurice's grave came to a conclusion. Although she had visited the grave soon after the war, it appears that Princess Beatrice never saw it with its official headstone, and there is no record of her reaction to it.

The case of Prince Maurice's grave reveals the complexity of mourning the war dead. For his mother, as for countless others in a similar condition of grief, the issue was a simple one of familial, and especially maternal, sovereignty over the process of commemoration. While many realized that their wishes may not be enacted whilst the war was in progress, they did expect that right as soon as hostilities ceased. However, the British Empire had drawn manpower from across the globe, and had fought across the globe, meaning disinterment and repatriation was very nearly a practical impossibility. At the same time, the nature of the war meant there were some 150,000 graves containing unidentifiable bodies, and 315,000 entirely missing in France and Belgium alone creating an unprecedented crisis of commemoration.<sup>93</sup> Fabian Ware and the IWGC understood that the prosecution of the war had demanded unstinting effort from all sections of society which meant in turn that any sign of unequal treatment in death would break an unspoken covenant between the Empire and its peoples. Drawing support from organized male bastions, such as the armed services and the trade unions, Ware was able to deflect the demands of individual families and see through a plan of common commemoration. Princess Beatrice was included in that process and became a test case for the Commission's power and vision. As a royal and member of Britain's ruling elite, she was expected to sacrifice her personal feelings, and related sense of personal status, in order to set an example. She was asked to turn her son's body and memory over to an imperial organization to make a statement in which individuality was recognized, but made subordinate to a common identity for the greater good of the global imperial body.

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<sup>1</sup> For examples of these studies, see R. J. Q. Adams and P. P. Poirer, *The Conscription Controversy in Great Britain, 1900–18* (Basingstoke, 1987); S. Loveridge, *Call to Arms: New Zealand Society and Commitment to the Great War* (Wellington, N.Z., 2015); *The Conscription Conflict and the Great War*, ed. S. Scalmer, M. Goot, J. Damousi and R. Archer (Melbourne, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> The historiography of this subject is extensive. See, for examples, A. Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War* (Oxford, 2009), esp. pp. 110–59; A. King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Oxford, 1998); K. S. Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Carlton, Vic., 2001).

<sup>3</sup> P. Longworth, *The Unending Vigil: A History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission 1917–1967*, introd. E. Blunden (London, 1967). A revised edition was published by Leo Cooper/Secker & Warburg in 1985, repr. 2010. All quotations in this article have been taken from the original edition.

<sup>4</sup> Commonwealth War Graves Commission Archives (hereafter C.W.G.C.), ‘Archive Catalogue’, compiled by A. M. King, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> M. Connelly, *The Great War, Memory and Ritual: Commemoration in the City and East London, 1916–1939* (Woodbridge, 2002); P. Donaldson, *Ritual and Remembrance: The Memorialisation of the Great War in East Kent* (Newcastle, 2006); A. Gaffney, *Aftermath: Remembering the Great War in Wales* (Cardiff, 1998); A. Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919–1946* (Oxford, 1994); K. Grieves, ‘Investigating local war memorial committees: demobilised soldiers, the bereaved and expressions of local pride in Sussex villages, 1918–1921’, *Local Historian*, xxx (2000), 39–58; King, *Memorials of the Great War*; C. Moriarty, ‘Private grief and public remembrance: British First World War memorials’, in *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Martin Evans and Ken Lunn (Oxford, 1997), pp. 125–42.

<sup>6</sup> J. M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Basingstoke, 1986), ch. 9.

<sup>7</sup> A. Prost, ‘Verdun’, in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, iii: *Symbols*, ed. P. Nora, trans. A. Goldhammer (3 vols., New York, 1998), pp. 376–401; G. L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York and Oxford, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Compare J. Winter, ‘The generation of memory: reflections on the “memory boom” in contemporary historical studies’, *German Historical Institute Washington Bulletin*, xxvii (2000), 69–92.

<sup>9</sup> See J. Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men’s Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London, 1996). For a historiographical survey, see S. Goebel, ‘Beyond discourse? bodies and memories of two world wars’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, xlii (2007), 377–85. For a relatively rare indepth study of the relationship between body and name in war commemoration see D. J. Sherman, ‘Bodies and names: the emergence of commemoration in interwar France’, *American Historical Review*, ciii (1998), 443–66.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, T. W. Laqueur, ‘Memory and naming in the Great War’, in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. J. R. Gillis (Princeton, 1994), pp. 150–67; T. W. Laqueur, ‘Names, bodies, and the anxiety of erasure’, in *The Social and Political Body*, ed. T. R. Schatzki and W. Natter (New York, 1996), pp. 123–39.

<sup>11</sup> B. Scates, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the Battlefields of the Great War* (Cambridge, 2006); B. Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Crawley, W.A., 2007); see also M. Barrett, ‘Subalterns at war: First World War colonial forces and the politics of the Imperial War Graves Commission’, *Interventions*, ix (2007), 451–74.

<sup>12</sup> R. Kosselleck, ‘Kriegerdenkmale als Identitätsstiftungen der Überlebenden’, in *Identität*, ed. O. Marquard and K. Stierle (Munich, 1979), pp. 255–76.

<sup>13</sup> For studies of the establishment of the Graves Registration Unit and pre-history of the Commission, see Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, pp. 1–28; D. Crane, *Empires of the Dead: How One Man’s Vision Led to the Creation of WWI’s War Graves* (London, 2013), pp. 30–95; T. W. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton, 2015), pp. 460–88.

<sup>14</sup> See Longworth, *Unending Vigil*, pp. 13–14; Crane, *Empires of the Dead*, pp. 68–79.

<sup>15</sup> Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead*, p. 472.

<sup>16</sup> On the growth of state power, see J. Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870–1914* (London, 1994), ch. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Longworth, *Unending Vigil*, p. 14.

<sup>18</sup> See M. Connelly and S. Goebel, *Ypres* (Oxford, 2018), ch. 3.

- <sup>19</sup> For studies of the Imperial War Museum, see G. Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War: A Social History* (London, 1994); J. Wellington, *Exhibiting War: The Great War, Museums, and Memory in Britain, Canada, and Australia* (Cambridge, 2017).
- <sup>20</sup> See Bart Ziino, 'Requiem for empire: Fabian Ware and the Imperial War Graves Commission', in *Empires in World War I: Shifting Frontiers and Imperial Dynamics in a Global Conflict*, ed. A. Jarboe and R. Fogarty (London, 2014), pp. 351–75; Barrett, 'Subalterns at war'; J. Siblón, 'Negotiating hierarchy and memory: African and Caribbean troops from former British colonies in London's imperial spaces', *London Journal*, xli (2016), 299–312.
- <sup>21</sup> For details of his role in the fighting, see T. Spagnoly and T. Smith, *Salient Points: Cameos of the Western Front, Ypres Sector 1914–1918* (London, 1995), pp. 35–42.
- <sup>22</sup> For examples of the coverage see *Manchester Guardian*, 31 Oct. 1914; *Observer*, 1 Nov. 1914; *Sketch*, 4 Nov. 1914. For US newspapers, see *New York Times*, 29 Oct. 1914; *Los Angeles Times*, 29 Oct. 1914.
- <sup>23</sup> For details of Prince Louis's career and resignation, see J. B. Hattendorf, 'Battenberg', in *The First Sea Lords: From Fisher to Mountbatten*, ed. M. H. Murfett (Westport, Conn., 1995), pp. 75–90.
- <sup>24</sup> J. Woolfe, *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion, and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (Oxford, 2000), p. 260. For a study of the burial of British monarchs in the twentieth century, see I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Royal death and living memorials: the funerals and commemorations of George V and George VI, 1936–52', *Historical Research*, lxxxix (2016), 158–75.
- <sup>25</sup> For coverage of Prince Henry's funeral, see *Graphic*, 8 Feb. 1896.
- <sup>26</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 23 Nov. 1914.
- <sup>27</sup> C.W.G.C., 1/1/1/34/15, DGRE Grave of Prince Maurice, letter from Ware to Princess Helena, 29 June 1917.
- <sup>28</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Reginald Seymour to Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Creedy, 3 Dec. 1918.
- <sup>29</sup> This claim is made by both of her biographers, though neither quote a direct source. See D. Duff, *The Shy Princess: The Life of Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrice, the Youngest Daughter and Constant Companion of Queen Victoria* (London, 1958), p. 238; M. Dennison, *The Last Princess: The Devoted Life of Queen Victoria's Youngest Daughter* (London, 2007), p. 247.
- <sup>30</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Ware to Churchill, 5 Dec. 1918. Almost all of this correspondence was sent via Churchill's secretary, Edward Marsh.
- <sup>31</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Ware to Churchill, 5 Dec. 1918.
- <sup>32</sup> For examples of press coverage, see *Daily Mail*, 25 and 27 Nov. 1918; *The Times*, 2 and 6 Dec. 1918; Kenyon, *War Graves*, p. 9.
- <sup>33</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Viscount Stopford, report on interview with Princess Beatrice, 6 Sept. 1920.
- <sup>34</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Viscount Stopford, report on interview with Princess Beatrice, 6 Sept. 1920.
- <sup>35</sup> Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, p. 45.
- <sup>36</sup> 'War Graves' [letter], *The Times*, 4 June 1919.
- <sup>37</sup> Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, p. 45.
- <sup>38</sup> C.W.G.C., 1/1/9/B/11, Memorials to the Missing: Menin Gate contract and construction, 1922–6; The National Archives of the U.K. (hereafter T.N.A.), WO 32/5569, War memorials: suggestions for preservation of battlefield at Ypres as a memorial, 1919–21.
- <sup>39</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letters between Stopford and Viscount Corkran, 7 and 10 Sept. 1920.
- <sup>40</sup> *Le Monde Illustré*, 25 March 1916.
- <sup>41</sup> S. Malvern, *Modern Art, Britain and the Great War: Witnessing, Testimony and Remembrance* (New Haven, 2004), pp. 31–5.
- <sup>42</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Corkran to Ware, 19 Dec. 1918.
- <sup>43</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Ware to Churchill, 6 July 1920.
- <sup>44</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Ware to Colbourne, 20 May 1920.
- <sup>45</sup> For Ware's personal political views, see Crane, *Empires of the Dead*, pp. 13–29. For the wider political atmosphere of 1920, see J. Ramsden, *The Age of Balfour and Baldwin, 1902–1940* (London, 1978) pp. 115–19, 154–6.
- <sup>46</sup> Hatfield House Archives, QU127/46–49, Letter Sir Frederic Kenyon to Lord Hugh Cecil, 3 Feb. 1920; QU127/56, Letter Sir Frederic Kenyon to Lord Hugh Cecil, 11 Feb. 1920. We are grateful to George Williams for bringing this material to our attention.
- <sup>47</sup> For examples of press coverage and correspondence, see *Daily Mail*, 14, 27 May, and 18 Dec. 1919; *The Times*, 5, 6, 7, 8 June, 11 July, 23 Dec. 1919, and 15 March 1920.
- <sup>48</sup> For the sensitivity over a pauper funeral, see J.-M. Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870–1914* (Cambridge, 2005).

- <sup>49</sup> C.W.G.C., 1/1/5/10, Advertisement by Mr R. Kipling – suggestions by the public re. headstones, copy of letter from Countess Selborne to *National Review*, July 1920.
- <sup>50</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Interview with Princess Beatrice, 6 Sept. 1920.
- <sup>51</sup> Quoted in Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, p. 47.
- <sup>52</sup> CWGC, 1/1/5/24, Exhumation: France and Belgium, 1921; see also D. Dendooven, “‘Bringing the dead home’: repatriation, illegal repatriation and expatriation of British bodies during and after the First World War’, in *Bodies in Conflict: Corporeality, Materiality and Transformation*, ed. P. Cornish and N. J. Saunders (London, 2014), pp. 66–79.
- <sup>53</sup> Ziino, *A Distant Grief*.
- <sup>54</sup> See D. J. Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (Chicago, 1999), pp. 73, 77; A. Prost, ‘The dead’, in *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, iii: *Civil Society*, ed. Jay Winter (3 vols., Cambridge, 2014), pp. 579–83.
- <sup>55</sup> C.W.G.C., 1/1/5/14, Petition to the Prince of Wales, 1919.
- <sup>56</sup> See C.W.G.C., 1/1/5/21 & 1/1/5/22, War Graves Association, 1919–25, 1925–48; also see Dendooven, ‘Bringing the dead home’, pp. 66–79.
- <sup>57</sup> See H. Gosling, *Up and Down Stream* (London, 1927), pp. 222–3.
- <sup>58</sup> Hansard, H.C., 128, cols. 1929–72, 4 May 1920.
- <sup>59</sup> Hansard, 4 May 1920.
- <sup>60</sup> Hansard, 4 May 1920.
- <sup>61</sup> Hansard, 4 May 1920.
- <sup>62</sup> *The Times*, 2 Sept. 1920. On chivalric images in war commemoration, see S. Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914-1940* (Cambridge, 2007).
- <sup>63</sup> *The Times*, 2 Sept. 1920.
- <sup>64</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Ware to Corkran, 1 Oct. 1920.
- <sup>65</sup> C.W.G.C., 1/1/5/10, Advertisement by Mr R. Kipling – suggestions by the public re. headstones, letter from Mrs M. Carpenter, 19 Feb. 1919.
- <sup>66</sup> Hansard, 4 May 1920.
- <sup>67</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Ware to Churchill, 6 July 1920.
- <sup>68</sup> See Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, pp. 10–21; Crane, *Empires of the Dead*, pp. 59–68, 191.
- <sup>69</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Memorandum from Stopford to Ware, 6 Sept. 1920.
- <sup>70</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Ware to Churchill, 12 Sept. 1920.
- <sup>71</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Ware to Churchill, 6 July 1920.
- <sup>72</sup> See D. Dendooven, *Ypres as Holy Ground: The Menin Gate and the Last Post* (Koksijde, 2001), pp. 28–32; T.N.A., WO 32/5569, Letter from Beckles Willson, 5 July 1919.
- <sup>73</sup> Quoted in his autobiography, [H.] Beckles Willson, *From Quebec to Piccadilly, and other Places: Some Anglo-Canadian Memories* (London, 1929), pp. 324–5.
- <sup>74</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Arthur Ingpen to Ware, 12 Aug. 1920; see also C.W.G.C., 1/1/15/8 & /9, Ypres League, 1920–4, 1924–34; T.N.A., WO 32/5569, War memorials: suggestions for preservation of battlefield at Ypres as a memorial, 1919–21.
- <sup>75</sup> *News of the World*, 19 July 1925.
- <sup>76</sup> For a study of motherhood in the conflict, see Susan R. Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1999).
- <sup>77</sup> *News of the World*, 19 July 1925.
- <sup>78</sup> See *Ypres Times*, ii, no. 8, Oct. 1925, p. 211.
- <sup>79</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 18 Dec. 1918.
- <sup>80</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 20 May 1922.
- <sup>81</sup> *The King’s Pilgrimage* (London, 1922), ch. 2.
- <sup>82</sup> See, for example, Liverpool Records Office, 356 FIF 54/5, Lieutenant-General H.S. Jeudwine, general information on the adoption of the Red Rose of Lancaster as a divisional symbol, 1918; see also Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, p. 85.
- <sup>83</sup> Royal Archives, Windsor, H.M. King George V diary, 11 May 1922.
- <sup>84</sup> *Ypres Times*, i, no. 2, Jan. 1922, pp. 38–9.
- <sup>85</sup> Photographs of cemeteries in this period often show the slow transition to the permanent state. See Colonel H.T. Goodland’s photograph albums for examples (C.W.G.C., 1/1/5/42/1–7). For the impression made by the IWGC’s work, see the work of Western Front veteran, H.A. Taylor, *Good-bye to the Battlefields: To-day and Yesterday on the Western Front* (London, 1928), p. 27.

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- <sup>86</sup> C. Graves, *Gone Abroad* (London, 1932), pp. 219–20.
- <sup>87</sup> C.W.G.C., 1/1/8/37, Headstones for German graves in France and Belgium, letter from Major A.D. Gutschmidt, 20 Dec. 1931.
- <sup>88</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from F.E. Packe to Pitcairn Campbell, 23 June 1932.
- <sup>89</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from F.E. Packe to Pitcairn Campbell, 12 July 1932.
- <sup>90</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letters from Ware to Browne, 28 June 1932; Packe to Pitcairn Campbell, 12 July 1932.
- <sup>91</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Ware to H.R. Robinson, 20 July 1932.
- <sup>92</sup> C.W.G.C., WW 22352, Letter from Higginson to Ware, 30 Sept. 1932.
- <sup>93</sup> F. Ware, *The Immortal Heritage: An Account of the Work and Policy of the Imperial War Graves Commission during Twenty Years 1917–1937*, introd. E. Blunden (Cambridge, 1937), p. 63.