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The Commonwealth War Graves Commission: Online Resources

Published May 18, 2020

Written by Megan Kelleher.

As COVID-19 continues to be a key discussion point worldwide, the [heritage sector](#) is continuing to adapt to suit the needs of the public. One such organisation is the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), who care for the graves and memorials of the 1.7 million men and women who died in the armed forces of the British Empire during the First and Second World Wars. While the CWGC's work is often at the forefront of much of the commemorative services for key anniversaries of the two World Wars, much of the day to day work it conducts has only recently begun to be told to the public through their website and ever-increasing social media presence. Their digital output has grown dramatically in light of the current crisis, and details of a selection of some of these online resources are detailed below:

Go

The Centre for the History of War, Media and Society

The study of war and propaganda is well established at the University of Kent. The Centre for the History of War, Media and Society is interested in different types of conflict, from trench warfare and geopolitical standoffs to guerrilla and terrorist tactics and civil defence initiatives. It also considers the application of technology and medicine in warfare, the impact of the media on public opinion, along with the increasing importance of the home front in contemporary warfare. A further strand of research is the legacy and memory of war in the twentieth century.

NEWS

04/06/2019

New publication in honour of the Centre's founding director, Professor David Welch: *Conflict and Propaganda. War, Media and Shaping the Twentieth Century*, ed. Mark Cornelly, Jo Fox, Stefan Goebel and Ulf Schmidt (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).

09/05/2019

SPACES OF WAR: SPATIAL PERSPECTIVES OF MODERN WAR AND CONFLICT

A one-day, inter-disciplinary conference at the University of Kent, 28 June 2019

<https://spacesofwar.wordpress.com>

11/03/2019

The Centre for the Study of War, Media and Society will host the book launch of *British Exploitation of German Science and Technology, 1943-1949*, by Charlie Hall and published by Routledge, on 21 March 2019. It will take place in the Rutherford College Rogers Room on the

Digital Archives

In late April, the CWGC announced that some case files that had been newly released contained thousands of letters, pictures and other papers that had been sent between the Commission and the next of kin of First World War dead. The digitised files contain details surrounding the different emotions families left behind were feeling, including the story of Charles Dickens' grandson. The first wave of [e-files](#) have now been made freely accessible online and are part of a collection of nearly 3,000 files that have never been made publicly available before. Alongside these, a collection of more than 16,000 photographs held in negatives in the [Commission's archive](#) have been digitised, thus providing a number of important resources for both research purposes and those interested in how families grieved in the aftermath of the First World War.



Major Cedric Charles Dickens of 13th London Regiment (Kensington Battalion), whose e file includes correspondence between the Commission and his mother. Major Dickens is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

Online Exhibitions

As part of their commemoration of many key historical battles and events, the Commission have often created thematic online exhibitions to coincide with these activities. These continue to be available on their website and are worth a visit in order to learn more about some of the casualties in the CWGC's care. An example of this is [Shaping Our Sorrow](#), launched in 2018, which explores the ways in which the Commission shaped remembrance after the First World War.

place in the Rutherford College Rogers Room on the University of Kent campus from 6pm.

22/01/2019

Flanders House (Belgian Embassy) will host the launch of *Ypres*, co-written by Mark Connelly and Stefan Goebel and published by Oxford University Press on 22 January 2019.

02/10/2018

The Centre welcomes Professor Paul Sharp from the University of Minnesota Duluth as visiting professor in 2018/19. Professor Sharp will give a paper on 'Bad Leaders and Good Diplomacy' in the School of History Research Seminar at 4pm on 21 November 2018.

04/05/2018

Linsey Robb and Juliette Pattinson (eds.), *Men, Masculinities and Male Culture in the Second World War* (London, 2018).

In this new edited volume, Linsey Robb (Northumbria University) and Juliette Pattinson (Head of the School of History at the University of Kent) bring together collected essays exploring British masculinities and male culture during the Second World War.

23/04/2018

David Budgen, *British Children's Literature and the First World War: Representations since 1914* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

2018 sees the publication of *British Children's Literature and the First World War* by Dr David Budgen, Associate Lecturer in the School of History and member of the centre for War, Media and Society, University of Kent.

18/02/2017

Details for the 'Body and Soil: Corporeality and Territoriality in Great War Europe' International Conference to be held at the University of Kent between the 4th and 5th of May 2017 can be found on the 'Events Page.'

24/09/2016

Stefan Goebel and Jerry White co-edited a special issue, titled 'London and the First World War' in *The London Journal*. Their introduction is free available via <http://www.landonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03058034.2016.1212121>

The [Legacy of Liberation](#) project was launched last year by the Commission to commemorate some of the upcoming 75th anniversaries. It includes a sound archive, where veterans and members of the public can upload their own audio reflections of the events of the Second World War and Commission sites, and a podcast series that provides an overview of the various campaigns and the Commission sites associated with them.

One of their most recent launches was the '[Noor Inayat-Khan: A Woman of Conspicuous Courage](#)' exhibit. The digital exhibition at the Runnymede Memorial in Surrey was launched on 8th March 2020, International Women's Day. With the temporary closure of many Commission sites during the lockdown, the exhibition is a way of digitally engaging with the life of Noor Inayat-Khan and the wider work of SOE during the Second World War. The exhibition also includes free resources for teachers to use in order to tell Noor's story, along with information about other women the CWGC commemorates.



Section Officer Noor Inayat-Khan GC, whose story is told in one of the CWGC's latest online exhibitions.

Wall of Remembrance

One of the Commission's latest endeavours is to create a digital [Wall of Remembrance](#) that it is encouraging the public to engage with. Initially created to celebrate the 75th anniversary of VE Day, members of the public are able to submit their tributes or photographs by either uploading them onto the CWGC website or through using #ShareYourTribute on social media.

Podcasts

The Commission launched [The 1.7 Million Stories of the CWGC](#) series in early April, which explores some of the stories of those who lost their lives as a result of the First and Second World Wars, in addition to providing a history of the wars and information about how the CWGC is still doing its work today.

Journal. Their introduction is free available via <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03058034.2016.1216758>

20/09/2016

PhD Students Welcome Workshop, 9am, Stanley Rogers Room, Rutherford College, University of Kent

14/09/2016

David Welch released a new book, titled 'Persuading the People': British Propaganda in World War II <http://daily.ox.ac.uk/2016/09/14/david-welch-persuading-the-people/>

Special Issues

Annual Lecture

Book Reviews

Britain

Children's Fiction

Chinese Propaganda

Christmas

Digital (Military) History

Diplomacy

Events and Conferences

Fake News and Truth

Film Reviews

Health Propaganda

History

Humour and War

Maps and Propaganda

Materiality and War

Military Biographies

Military Occupations

Navalism and Imperial Propaganda

Neutrality

CWGC Blog

The CWGC's [blog page](#) provides information about the ongoing work that they are doing, in addition to telling the stories of some of the individuals in their care. These include posts about the origins of some of the personal inscriptions chosen by the casualty's next of kin and background information about certain cemeteries.

Facebook Live

Finally, the CWGC have created a series of [online talks](#) covering the work of the Commission and their role in commemoration. The talks cover a range of topics, from campaigns and battles to the horticultural side of their work and the archival material they hold. They are initially broadcast every Thursday at 14:30 BST via the Commission's Facebook page, with recordings of them available after on the CWGC's website.

These are just some of the examples of information and digital content that has been produced by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for public consumption in order to provide an idea of the kind of information available through their website and social media channels. The content listed above is outside of the other information available that may be more familiar, such as the 'Find War Dead' and 'Find Cemeteries and Memorials' functions of the website that can be used for research purposes.

If there is any uncertainty about what is available through the website, using the search function on the [CWGC's website](#) will usually provide the answers you need. Whether it is for research purposes or a leisure activity that you find yourself looking at the CWGC's content, the resources they have made available can appeal to a range of different groups. If you are unsure of something or require more information, their [enquiries team](#) are always on hand to answer your questions.

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Published in [Digital \(Military\) History](#)

[Occupied Germany](#)

[Publications](#)

[Sounds of War](#)

[The Spanish Civil War](#)

[War and Urban Spaces](#)

[What is Propaganda \(Studies\) Now?](#)

[World War 2](#)

[WW1 Centenary](#)

Archives

[December 2020](#)

[November 2020](#)

[October 2020](#)

[September 2020](#)

[June 2020](#)

[May 2020](#)

[April 2020](#)

[March 2020](#)

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