



CWGC
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

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MEDIA RELEASE

The Duke of Kent visits Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

- **The Duke of Kent visits Greece in September 2018 to participate in the Battle of Doiran centenary event, the culminating point, for Commonwealth forces, of the Salonika Campaign during the First World War**
- **On 30 September His Royal Highness visits CWGC's Doiran Memorial, which lies near Lake Doiran in northern Greece**
- **On 1 October The Duke visits the Skopje British Cemetery in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to pay tribute to 124 Commonwealth servicemen who lost their lives during WWI**

On 30 September, His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent will visit the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) Doiran Memorial in northern Greece, further to an official invitation by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the British Embassy in Athens.

The Duke, who is President of CWGC, will attend a remembrance ceremony at the memorial marking the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Doiran, the culminating point of the Salonika Campaign, for Commonwealth forces, during the First World War. His Royal Highness will also visit two other CWGC sites; Sarigol, and Karasouli military cemeteries, which are both in northern Greece. The Duke will be accompanied by CWGC Director of Mediterranean Area, Ian Hussein, and the Regional Supervisor for Greece and the Balkans, Eleni Kakkava.

The first British and French troops arrived in the Greek port of Thessaloniki in October 1915 and fighting continued in the region until the end of the war. The Doiran Memorial was designed by Scottish architect Sir Robert Lorimer and is constructed roughly in the centre of the line occupied for two years by the Allies in Macedonia, but close to the western end, which was held by Commonwealth forces. It contains commemorations to over 2,000 Commonwealth service personnel who lost their lives during fighting in the region of Macedonia who have no known grave.

The monument has a dual purpose as the place of commemoration for the Commonwealth missing, but also as the Battle Memorial for the British Salonika Force, who were deployed in the region between 1915 and 1921 and whose veterans partly funded its construction.

Ian Hussein, CWGC's Mediterranean Area Director, said: "The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is delighted to welcome His Royal Highness at the Doiran Memorial to honour the 100th anniversary of the Second Battle of Doiran and the end of the Salonika Campaign. The memorial at Doiran is an everlasting symbol of sacrifice and we are very pleased to be commemorating this centenary, standing alongside – now as then – our friends from the Greek Army."



On 1 October, His Royal Highness will visit the British Cemetery in Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and will lay a wreath in the memory of 124 Commonwealth servicemen buried or commemorated in this cemetery.

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Notes for editors:

1. Doiran Memorial

The DOIRAN MEMORIAL stands roughly in the centre of the line occupied for two years by the Allies in the region of Macedonia, but close to the western end, which was held by Commonwealth forces. It marks the scene of the fierce fighting of 1917-1918, which caused the majority of the Commonwealth battle casualties. The memorial serves the dual purpose of Battle Memorial of the British Salonika Force (for which a large sum of money was subscribed by the officers and men of that force), and place of commemoration for more than 2,000 Commonwealth servicemen who died in the region of Macedonia and whose graves are not known. The memorial was designed by Sir Robert Lorimer with sculpture by Walter Gilbert. It was unveiled by Sir George Macdonogh on 25 September 1926.

2. Sarigol Military Cemetery, Kriston

From April to June 1917, the 35th Casualty Clearing Station was at Sarigol. It was replaced by the 21st Stationary Hospital, which remained until December 1918. From these two hospitals, 150 burials were made in the cemetery. With a few exceptions, the burials were made from 31st Casualty Clearing Station between August 1916 and October 1918. Sarigol Military Cemetery now contains 682 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and 29 war graves of other nationalities.

3. Karasouli Military Cemetery

The cemetery was begun in September 1916 for the use of casualty clearing stations on the Doiran front. At the Armistice, it contained about 500 burials but was greatly increased when graves were brought in from other cemeteries. Karasouli Military Cemetery now contains 1,421 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 56 being unidentified.

5. Skopje British Cemetery

Skopje British Cemetery was created after the Armistice when burials were gathered together from Kumanovo British Cemetery, Prilep French Military Cemetery, Veles British and French Military Cemeteries and other burial grounds. The great majority of those who died were men of the RASC (MT), who died of influenza after the Armistice with Bulgaria. There are now 124 Commonwealth servicemen buried or commemorated in this cemetery. Six of the burials are unidentified and special memorials commemorate six servicemen buried in Uskub German Cemetery whose graves could not be found.



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5. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) commemorates the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during the two world wars. It also holds and updates an extensive and accessible records archive. The Commission operates in more than 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries and territories.

Get to know the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

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