



**CWGC**  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

**Funding raised by  
The National Lottery**  
and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



June 2018

Maidenhead, United Kingdom

**MEDIA RELEASE:**

# **The Commonwealth War Graves Foundation secures Heritage Lottery Fund support for national digital archive project**

- **The Commonwealth War Graves Foundation, the charitable arm of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has been awarded £87,800 by the Heritage Lottery Fund.**
- ***Lest we Forget: Keep Their Stories Alive* is an ambitious project to create a digital archive of First World War artefacts stored in bedrooms and attics across the UK.**
- **The project is a collaboration with Oxford University and will include public roadshows across the country where people will be able to bring along objects to find out more about them and have them digitised for the archive.**

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) today announces that its charitable arm the Commonwealth War Graves Foundation (CWGF) has received a National Lottery grant of £87,800 for the UK-wide, *Lest We Forget* project. The project, which is being delivered in partnership with Oxford University, has received the funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund's *First World War Then and Now* programme.

The project will stage events around the country making a call to communities across the regions to reach into their attics, bedrooms and cupboards; and bring along their First World War family heirlooms and valuables. They will be met by a team of experts and volunteers who will be able to tell them more about their object and create a digital record of it to be stored online as a lasting legacy.

The events will be managed by a nationwide team of volunteers who will help stage the events and ensure that each item is accurately recorded in the archive. It is anticipated the project will feature 900 volunteers in total, with 100 of those acting as Digital Champions which the HLF grant will help recruit, train and support this team. Applications for volunteers are now being accepted, further details can be found on the CWGC website [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org).

The free to use digital archive will be accessible on <https://lwf.web.ox.ac.uk> and will go live in November 2018 as the country marks 100 years since the end of the First World War. The data will also be shared with other major WW1 online archives. Alongside it will be a series of four heritage trails, which will be inspired by the items collected and will encourage communities to explore the First World War heritage across the UK by visiting some of the Commonwealth War Grave Commission UK sites.

Julian Evans, International and Community Engagement Director for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission said: "We are thrilled to have been awarded this grant and are grateful to all who play the National Lottery. The Commonwealth War Graves Foundation was launched in 2017 in honour of our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Working with Oxford University, this ground-breaking project will enable us to engage with communities across the UK,



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shining a light on their own heritage and sharing stories of those who served in the First World War.”

Dr Stuart Lee, Deputy CIO of IT Services, Oxford University said: “Lest we Forget began as an idea in 2017 building on ten years of successful projects around crowd-sourcing WW1 material. We want to support schools and local communities to run their own digital collection days to allow them to record those stories, objects and memories from the First World War which survive - not in museum collections or history books - but in the hearts and homes of the very many families and individuals affected. After a successful crowd-sourcing project we were able to launch the initial project in October 2017 and this collaboration with the Commonwealth War Graves Foundation will enable us grow even further as we approach the Armistice anniversary.”

Michelle Roffe, Head of HLF South East England, said: “The impact of the First World War was far reaching, touching and shaping every corner of the UK and beyond. Thanks to National Lottery players, HLF has already invested more than £90million to more than 1,700 projects – large and small - that are marking this global Centenary. We are delighted to support the “Lest we Forget” project in exploring the continuing legacy of this conflict.

The funding builds on donations raised through Oxford University’s crowdfunding platform, OxReach. Events will begin this summer and will be published on the CWGC website.

**For more information, images, spokespeople or more personal stories please contact:**

**Becca Hubbard, Communications Specialist 01628 507101 or 07464544824,  
becca.hubbard@cwgc.org**

**Peter Francis PR and Media Executive: 07766 255884 or 01628 507163,  
peter.francis@cwgc.org**

**Ends.**

**Notes for editors:**

### **1. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission ([www.cwgc.org](http://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.

### **2. Oxford University**

The University of Oxford is the world’s highest ranking University for the past two years (Times Higher). It is committed to teaching, learning, research and widening participation in Higher Education. It is a centre of excellence for digital humanities projects and has been working on digital projects related to the First World War since 1991.

### **3. The Heritage Lottery Fund and support for First World War heritage**

- Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under



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our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk). Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLottery and #HLFsupported.

- To date, almost £100million in HLF grants has been awarded to projects across the UK so they can mark the Centenary and explore all aspects of First World War heritage that matters to them. Through its First World War: then and now programme, HLF is making at least £1million available per year for six years until 2019. It is providing grants between £3,000 and £10,000 enabling communities and groups right across the UK to explore, conserve and share their First World War heritage and deepen their understanding of the impact of the conflict. To find out how to apply for funding visit [www.hlf.org.uk/thenandnow](http://www.hlf.org.uk/thenandnow) If a group needs a grant of more than £10,000 for a First World War project, it can apply to HLF through its open programmes [www.hlf.org.uk/firstworldwar](http://www.hlf.org.uk/firstworldwar)
- To join the conversation on social media please use #understandingww1