



CWGC
Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Malta
Tourism Authority

wirtartna



24th January 2019

Commonwealth War Graves Commission launches new heritage tourism initiative

- The Commonwealth War Grave Commission (CWGC) today launched a new project highlighting Malta's wartime past, providing tours in cemeteries, an extensive volunteer programme and an annual programme of events
- The initiative was unveiled by Victoria Wallace, Director General of the CWGC.
- Malta has a rich history and is known for its remarkable contribution during the First and Second World Wars. CWGC commemorates almost 6,000 Commonwealth service personnel on Malta and thousands of non-world-war casualties

Today, CWGC launched its new heritage tourism initiative at Imtarfa Military Cemetery. The new initiative encourages locals and tourists to visit Malta's war grave cemeteries and honour the people who fell in the two World Wars.

The project sees new tours introduced at Imtarfa and Pieta Military Cemeteries. The tours will be run by local volunteers, who have worked with CWGC to create an insightful journey of remembrance for visitors.

Malta has a fascinating history and played an important role in both world wars. Its vital contribution can be seen and best understood by visiting CWGC war cemeteries on the Island.

During the First World War, Malta gained the title of the "*Nurse of the Mediterranean*", and almost 140,000 service personnel were treated in 27 hospitals. During the Second World War, Malta's role is well documented. From 1940-1942 Malta was besieged and became the most heavily bombed place on earth.

CWGC commemorates many Commonwealth service personnel across fourteen unique sites on the Island. The cemeteries provide an opportunity for the public to understand a key period of Maltese history and reflect on the sheer human cost the World Wars.

This tourism initiative aims to encourage visitors and locals to the island to find out more about Malta's past and honour those who gave their lives. The initiative is supported by the Malta Tourism Authority, Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna and the Malta Aviation Museum Foundation. The initiative also aims to position the tours as essential to gain an understanding of Maltese history.

Victoria Wallace, Director General of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission said:

"The CWGC is delighted to launch this new tourism initiative with our partners on an island which played such an important part in both World Wars. The Commission cares for thousands of graves in Malta, commemorating servicemen and women from across the globe. The new tours introduced at the cemeteries provide an educational insight into the island's wartime history, telling the stories of the casualties, and show the human cost of war".

Dr. Gavin Gulia, the Executive Chairman of the Malta Tourism Authority said:

"Malta and the United Kingdom's history has often been intertwined, and the UK has always been a vital part of Malta's tourism industry. While the Maltese Islands are growing amongst other incoming markets, the UK is still Malta's number 1 source market. For the period January to November 2018, incoming tourists from the UK market rose by 14.8% when compared to the same period in 2017, which was a record breaking year"



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Mr Ray Polidano, Director of Malta Aviation Museum said:

“Inside the Air Battle of Malta Memorial Hangar we do not just exhibit examples of the two main aircraft, the Spitfire and Hurricane, used to defend our Islands during WWII, but most importantly we relate the stories of the pilots that flew them, most importantly the ones that made the ultimate sacrifice defending an island so far away from their homes. We must Never Forget Them.”

In conjunction with the new project, CWGC has launched “*Stories from Malta*”, a crowd sourcing project appealing for information on the men and women whom are commemorated on Malta. The project seeks to highlight the personal stories of the brave people who fell during the World Wars.

To upload your story, please visit <http://blog.cwgc.org/malta#stories>

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

Emily McGhie, CWGC Media Officer: emily.mcghie@cwgc.org or 00447464544847

Ends.

Notes for editors:

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

To find out more about CWGC’s commitment in Malta <https://www.cwgc.org/malta>

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.

Get to know the Commonwealth War Graves Commission:

Read: <http://www.cwgc.org/>

Follow: <https://twitter.com/CWGC>

Like: <https://www.facebook.com/commonwealthwargravescommission>

Watch: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuyv7WCJv_NYL04eKG3oyVA

2. Tour information: The tours at Imtarfa and Pieta Military cemeteries will be run by volunteers. The tours will be running every Friday and Monday from 10:00am-13:00pm and weekends on request. To book your tour please email maltatours@cwgc.org