

# CWGC VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY 2020-2025



DISCOVER LEARN REMEMBER



COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES



# WELCOME

## Motivated and enthusiastic volunteers play a key role in developing and maintaining the work that we do.

This strategy sets out our commitment to recruit and develop committed individuals who are keen to invest their time and energy to raise the profile of our organisation and the 1.7 million servicemen and women we honour.

I am delighted to launch our first Volunteer Strategy which sets out our commitment to volunteering and which I hope will allow us to gain better value and understanding of the role of volunteers within The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).

A key priority over the next five years is to harness our volunteers around the UK and potentially further afield and to build on their experiences. We want to develop best practice in managing volunteers and to deliver a personally rewarding experience for each volunteer.

Our promise to you is that everyone who volunteers for CWGC will be treated with respect if you join our team.

We will ensure that each volunteer receives the support and training they need to fulfil the role and we will ensure they feel valued and recognise their contribution.

Thank you for all you do for our organisation.

**Barry Murphy**  
Director General



**BARRY MURPHY**  
DIRECTOR GENERAL

## OUR MISSION

We honour and care for the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the First and Second World Wars, ensuring they will never be forgotten. Funded by six Member Governments, our work began with building, and now maintaining, cemeteries at 23,000 locations all over the world.

Today, over a century after we first began, our work continues through our staff, supporters and volunteers who preserve our unique cultural, horticultural and architectural heritage and ensure that the stories of those who died are told.



*LOWESTOFT NAVAL MEMORIAL, NORFOLK*

## CWGC CODE OF CONDUCT

Honouring the fallen of the two World Wars is a privilege, and places us all in a position of considerable sensitivity and trust. This Code of Conduct is intended to provide a framework for everyone involved with Commonwealth War Graves, at every level. It sets the expectations we have of everyone, and of how we all work together. It is aimed at protecting the reputation of the organisation and ensuring our important task of commemoration is never jeopardised by our own actions. The Code of Conduct is set out in full in our Volunteer Policy and our Volunteer Role Profiles.



THE GRAVE OF AIRCRAFTMAN 2ND CLASS GEORGE HAZEL RICHES. HE DIED ON 31 OCTOBER 1940, AGED 28 AND NOW LIES AT REST IN KING'S LYNN CEMETERY, NORFOLK.

## WHY VOLUNTEER FOR US?

### OUR VISION

**We want volunteers to feel motivated, valued and connected to our organisation by opportunities that enrich and encourage a diverse range of people to give their time and energy.**

Right now, we need volunteers to support our work, telling the stories of those of the fallen and introducing visitors to our sites and rich heritage. Volunteers are at the heart of our vision to engage the public with who we are and what we do.



LOCAL SCHOOL CHILDREN DURING A GUIDED VISIT TO HARROGATE (STONEFALL) CEMETERY, YORKSHIRE

JOIN OUR TEAMS OF FABULOUS VOLUNTEERS TODAY AND YOU WILL:

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**HAVE NEW EXPERIENCES.**

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**BE PART OF A FRIENDLY TEAM, WITH THE OPPORTUNITY OF MEETING NEW PEOPLE AND MAKING FRIENDS.**

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**HELP US PRESERVE OUR HERITAGE AND TELL THE STORIES OF THOSE COMMONWEALTH SERVICE PERSONNEL WHO FELL DURING THE TWO WORLD WARS.**

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## OUR COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEERING

### CWGC IS COMMITTED TO:

- Equal opportunities to everyone who wants to volunteer with us
- Matching you to a role, that will meet your goals and aspirations
- Providing you with opportunities to help us maintain our heritage and promote public understanding
- Providing you with appropriate training and support for all volunteers
- Creating a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, where your contribution is valued
- Listening to your views to ensure we build a positive volunteer experience together
- Offering you the chance to get involved and make new friends

### OUR EXPECTATIONS OF OUR VOLUNTEERS:

- Completion of our selection process (including Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS check), where required)
- Efficient and reliable volunteers who take pride in the role they play
- Working in partnership with our employees to deliver our goals
- Adhere to our mission, values, code of conduct and policies, acting appropriately and with integrity
- A wide range of skills and expertise
- Proactively protect the CWGC reputation
- Escalate concerns or problems to your CWGC contact



*EYES ON, HANDS ON TRAINING DAY,  
KING'S LYNN, 2019.*



*VOLUNTEERS AT IMTARFA CEMETERY ON  
MALTA GREET THE CWGC VICE CHAIRMAN,  
SIR BILL ROLLO, 2019.*

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

In 2017 we celebrated our one hundredth birthday in the midst of the international commemorations for the First World War and as a part of our activities during that year, we appealed for volunteers and were overwhelmed with the number of people who wanted to support our organisation.

Today, we are building on that legacy and recognise that volunteers are key, working with our staff, helping us engage a broader section of the public and raising the profile of what our extraordinary organisation stands for.



14-18 NOW POPPIES WAVE AT THE CWGC PLYMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL, 2017



LOWESTOFT NAVAL MEMORIAL

## ROLES

We currently have eight types of volunteer opportunities at CWGC. Detailed profiles of each of the roles and a registration form are available on our website [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org). Each of the roles is supported by our permanent staff and full training is given.

### EYES ON, HANDS ON

This project is funded by Annington Homes and enables those with an interest in our work to act as our eyes in their local area. Volunteers feedback information about the condition of war graves and may undertake minor work such as headstone cleaning and weeding in between our staff inspections.

**There are two specific roles:**

1

#### **'EYES ON' ACTIVITIES**

If you can spare just a few hours a month, then we will ask you to visit graves in your local area. The number will depend on your location and time commitment. We will provide you with the information you require to locate the graves.

2

#### **'HANDS ON' ACTIVITIES**

For volunteers who want to do more, then we will train you in simple additional tasks that are intended to maintain the headstones in a satisfactory condition. By doing this you will release our highly skilled workmen to focus on the more complex headstone maintenance activities (such as re-engraving or stone repairs using specialist tools).

### VOLUNTEER PROFILE MALCOLM PEEL

“ I have a great uncle buried in St Sever cemetery near Rouen in France, and a visit to his grave was my introduction to the CWGC.

I am always struck by the variety of cemeteries – no two are alike, other than in the care and attention given to the graves, the lawns and gardens.

The opportunity to become a volunteer in the Commission's *Eyes On, Hands On* initiative was a chance for me to help in some small way to maintain the graves which do not always receive the attention afforded by the public to those in the formal cemeteries throughout the country.”



### THE KANTOR SPEAKERS PROGRAMME

Funded by the Kantor Foundation, this programme aims to build a network of volunteers who will work alongside our Public Engagement Coordinators and deliver a range of talks about the varied work of the CWGC, its history but also, importantly, its work today. The volunteers will enable us to reach a far greater number of people of all ages and backgrounds and so enhance and grow the work of our Public Engagement Team.

**There are two specific roles:**

3

#### **VOLUNTEERS FOR ADULT PRESENTATIONS**

As well as delivering high quality presentations to groups, this group of volunteers will also be expected to promote membership of and/or donations to the CWGF, as well as actively seeking bookings for further talks.

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#### **VOLUNTEERS FOR SCHOOLS AND YOUTH ORGANISATIONS**

This group will have experience of working or volunteering with children or young adults. They will be DBS checked. Their focus will be on delivering presentations and engaging young people with the work of the CWGC. They will encourage young people to research casualties and find out more about the CWGC. In secondary schools, they will promote the CWGF interns programme.

### VOLUNTEER PROFILE ALASDAIR



“ I volunteer at the CWGC Archive in Maidenhead, where I do a number of different tasks. My main activity is helping to maintain the paper files which cover all aspects of the Commission’s work from the last 100 years.

It is an honour to be able to help, and reading the documents gives a fascinating insight into the history of the Commission.

It’s a friendly place, and you meet interesting people such as CWGC staff and other users of the Archive. It’s great to be able to talk to my fellow Great War enthusiasts where it’s not thought of as an unusual interest! The feedback I get is that we’re doing something valuable for the organisation, and I get a lot of personal satisfaction from working in a place so intertwined with my passion.”

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### VOLUNTEER TOUR GUIDES

CWGC Volunteer Tour Guides deliver tours of CWGC sites, highlighting the history and unique heritage of the organisation. They talk about the war graves and the heritage of our cemeteries, and tell the stories of the servicemen and women who are buried there. Tour guides deliver tours to groups both large and small throughout the year and during open day events.

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### ARCHIVE VOLUNTEER

Archive volunteers carry out a number of tasks which assist in the conservation and management of the collection. They conduct basic conservation work on our paper records, which involves gently removing loose dirt and dust from the paper, replacing rusting staples, pins and fastenings with brass paper clips, rehousing items in acid free folders and archive boxes, and flagging up any items which might need more specialist conservation treatment. Individuals with access to their own laptop also undertake cataloguing work, listing and describing items from the collection.

For those living further afield from our Head Office in Maidenhead, volunteers have been encouraged to undertake tasks using our online resources, which includes writing more detailed descriptions for some of our digitised collection, or transcribing scans of hand-written documents.



*CWGC VOLUNTEERS LEAD TOURS OF BROOKWOOD MILITARY CEMETERY, 2017.*

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### EVENT VOLUNTEER

Event volunteers represent the CWGC at local events managed by our Public Engagement Coordinators, informing the public about the history and work of the CWGC, about the war graves in the region and information about the Commonwealth War Graves Foundation, our charity. You may also be asked to provide support to newly trained event volunteers in your local area.

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### RESEARCH VOLUNTEER

CWGC care for the graves and memorials of over 300,000 casualties of the First and Second World Wars in the UK and the role of the research volunteer is to help find and collate information about the individuals we commemorate. The personal stories of each casualty, their war service, family and where they came from is valuable and can be shared on our website and social media and made available to local communities and visitors to our sites.



## WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

To date our volunteering activity has grown organically focusing on particular projects. In the future we will look at volunteering with us as a whole, drawing the strands of each activity together, harnessing the skills and expertise of volunteers across the UK and beyond.

We will look at models of volunteering that are flexible and concentrate on the time and skills people can give and ensure that staff feel better enabled to work with and support volunteers.

We will particularly look at volunteering opportunities that embrace cultural diversity, young people (including gap year students), and retirees.

We will embed a culture of volunteering across CWGC and enhance the training, support and involvement of our volunteers.

### WE SEE OUR VOLUNTEERS AS A VITAL PART IN HELPING US ACHIEVE KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES IN THE COMMUNITY:

#### CARING, SUSTAINABLY.

WE ARE THE GUARDIANS OF THE WAR DEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH, FOR NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE. AFTER 100 YEARS OF CARE, WE WILL FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY, IMPROVING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, AND CONSOLIDATING OUR CONSERVATION PROGRAMME.

#### PERPETUATING COMMEMORATION.

WE WILL CARRY ON THE LEGACY OF THE CENTENARY COMMEMORATIONS, ENGAGING YOUNGER PEOPLE AND BROADER AND MORE DIVERSE COMMUNITIES TO TELL THE STORIES OF ALL THOSE WE HONOUR, FROM BOTH WORLD WARS.

#### ENGAGING THE PUBLIC WITH OUR WORK.

WE NEED TO OFFER AN ENRICHING AND MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE FOR VISITORS, ENCOURAGING MORE VISITS BOTH TO OUR ONLINE RESOURCES AND TO OUR CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS.

### VOLUNTEER PROFILE TABITHA KOBINE



“ Volunteering for the CWGC has been one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. I feel that I am truly making a difference in the world by supporting the CWGC’s core aims and beliefs, and by helping to remember the sacrifices of those who went before me.

By holding memorial ceremonies in my local cemetery and at my high school, I felt very honoured to remember the men from my local area who fell during the world wars.

I have always felt supported and valued by members of the Commission and I am sincerely grateful for the opportunities they have given me.”

## OUR GOALS

### GOAL 1

VOLUNTEERS ENGAGE THE PUBLIC WITH OUR WORK TODAY AND OUR UNIQUE HERITAGE

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### GOAL 2

TO BE AN ATTRACTIVE ORGANISATION FOR VOLUNTEERING

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### GOAL 3

TO CREATE AN OPEN, FRIENDLY AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT WHICH ACTIVELY SEEKS TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION FROM A BROAD AND DIVERSE RANGE OF EXPERIENCES, BACKGROUNDS AND CULTURES

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### GOAL 1

**VOLUNTEERS ENGAGE THE PUBLIC WITH OUR WORK TODAY AND OUR UNIQUE HERITAGE.**

We will achieve this by	How we will achieve this
Raising the profile of CWGC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers feature and speak about the cultural, horticultural and architectural richness of our historic estate, showing how we conserve and maintain today</li> <li>• Volunteers will help deliver a nationwide programme of events across the UK during War Graves Week each year</li> <li>• Encourage new audiences to engage with CWGC</li> </ul>
Enriching individuals, local communities and stakeholders through a highly rewarding experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers help members of the public to trace relatives within our database</li> <li>• Volunteers give talks about our work today</li> </ul>
Raising awareness of the scale, spread and diversity of our reach in the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers engage local communities to re-connect with their local heritage</li> </ul>
Increasing visits to our sites and appreciation of our historic estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers give guided tours</li> <li>• Provide a range of high-quality information about our sites</li> </ul>
Reconnecting communities with the WW1 and WW2 stories in their local cemeteries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researching and engaging the public with the stories of those we honour</li> <li>• Volunteers highlight the CWGC historic archive</li> </ul>
Raising awareness of the Commonwealth War Graves Foundation (CWGF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising the profile of the projects CWGF support</li> <li>• Increasing Supporters and donations</li> </ul>

**GOAL 2**

**TO BE AN ATTRACTIVE ORGANISATION FOR VOLUNTEERING**

**We will achieve this by**

**How we will achieve this**

Ensuring volunteers feel a part of our team and have a rewarding experience

- Create opportunities for volunteers to meet other volunteers and staff locally and nationally both online and in person for support and networking
- Invite volunteers to meet staff
- Create opportunities for volunteers to participate and contribute through available communication channels
- Use feedback from our volunteers to help inform our approach to volunteering

Ensuring volunteers are appropriately equipped to carry out their role

- Volunteer training is appropriate to the role and induction about our organisation and history is available to everyone
- Provide access to free external training for volunteers

Highlighting the role of our volunteers

- We will use our website, newsletter and social channels to highlight volunteer stories
- Generate local media stories for local and national media

Ensuring a description of each volunteer role is available

- All volunteer roles will have a clear role profile

Recognising the value of volunteers' contributions

- A quarterly recognition award will be initiated, and volunteers will be invited to events

Maintaining a thriving volunteer function

- We will provide the support, expertise, enthusiasm and motivation to enable volunteers to have an outstanding experience which enriches their lives

Measuring the outcomes of each project in line with the target objectives

- Regular updates through newsletters and project reports
- Surveys to ask the opinions of volunteers on each project
- Celebrate the success of our volunteer community



USING A SOFT BRUSH AND WATER, EYES ON, HANDS ON VOLUNTEERS HELP TO MAINTAIN HEADSTONES BY KEEPING THEM CLEAN.

**GOAL 3**

**TO CREATE AN OPEN, FRIENDLY AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT WHICH ACTIVELY SEEKS TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION FROM A BROAD AND DIVERSE RANGE OF EXPERIENCES, BACKGROUNDS AND CULTURES**

We will achieve this by	How we will achieve this
A commitment to involving volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We value diversity and will actively seek and encourage diversity amongst our volunteer base</li> </ul>
Flexibility of volunteer roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will develop roles that are flexible and offer the time and skills people can give</li> </ul>
Establishing new volunteer roles through appropriate partnerships and funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek partners who will fund us to develop common approaches to volunteering</li> <li>Build strong links and work with other community and voluntary organisations to develop our volunteering</li> </ul>
Recruit a broader mix of volunteers from across the communities we work within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertise volunteer opportunities in the communities where we work</li> </ul>

**VOLUNTEER PROFILE  
HELEN ROBERTS**

“ I have always had a great love of history, with a particular interest in the First World War and local history, so working for the CWGC is a dream come true for me.

My work involves meeting and training groups of volunteers, giving them the knowledge and skills to assist the Commission with the care of headstones in their local areas. It has been wonderful playing a small part in helping to spread the word about the work of the Commission and I have been really pleased to see how quickly the work of our volunteers is making a difference.”

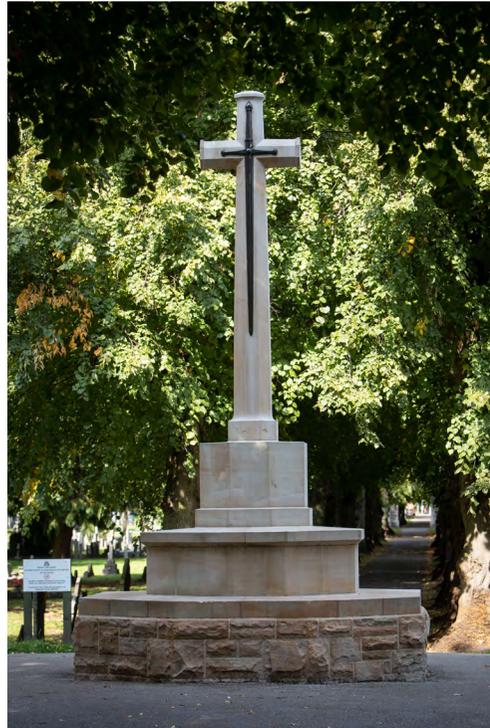


**VOLUNTEER PROFILE  
ANDY TYSOE**



“ Volunteering for the Commission has been an education since day one. Learning about the many war casualties in my local area has been a real eye opener, as I have discovered CWGC graves in the towns and villages surrounding my home of Totnes which I previously hadn't known about. It has been a fascinating and enjoyable experience.

I am now part of the Eyes On volunteer team and I keep any eye on the graves in my area and report any maintenance issues to the CWGC. Its a great feeling being part of the CWGC team and I feel I am making a real difference to the remembrance of the fallen.”





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