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War memory and the construction of hierarchy: representations of African and Caribbean colonial service personnel in the aftermath of the First World War

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2024

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,

Birkbeck College, University of London

Abstract

Before the First World War, one of the ways officials in British colonies in Africa and the Caribbean buttressed their regimes was through the racialization of individuals who were conceptually arranged in a phenotypic hierarchy of power. 'Whites' were at the apex, followed by those of mixed heritage in the Caribbean or Asians in Africa, and 'Black' subjects at the bottom. During the war, Britain and other imperial powers needed the 'manpower' of its colonies to secure defeat of their enemies. 'Black' South Africans and Caribbeans were permitted to volunteer in Europe. However, their service was racially codified within the theatres they were assigned to. On the Western Front, they were only allowed to serve as non-combatants which signified lesser status in a codified military hierarchy. In Africa, east and west African troops were combatants against askaris (colonial soldiers) under German command. At the end of the war, colonial officials deemed it politically imperative to return to the default racial hierarchical structure of white supremacy. This was partly achieved through cultural agency. Military, colonial, and governmental officials played their part in ensuring that, in the memory of the war, Black African and Caribbean servicemen were commemorated, appropriate to perceived status, in a constructed imperial hierarchy. I contend that most of the commemorative practices were constructed by remembering select groups whilst deliberately forgetting others. This practice sustained a false notion that the First World War was a victorious 'white man's war' assisted by 'loyal Aliens' and auxiliaries. I maintain that a conceptual intersectional hierarchy framed through visual cues shaped the memory of the conflict.

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A note on language and terminology

As I study subject peoples of the British empire over a hundred years ago, it is important to add a note on terminology used at the time. I use the term 'colonial' throughout to describe Africans and Caribbeans. It was once used as a blanket term to describe all subjects of the first British Empire and had derogatory connotations. With the onset of 'new imperialism' from the late nineteenth century, there was a reclassification and increasing differentiation between dominion and colony. The designations represented stages in their political development. The 'white' settler colonies, who were allowed a large measure of self-government, became known as dominions from 1907 onwards after the Colonial Conference of that year. Neither the British nor the dominion governments considered the peoples of the African and Asian colonies at a stage of development where they would be allowed to govern themselves. These territories held lower status in the empire. I use the term 'colonial' to help the reader differentiate between African and Caribbean service personnel and those from the dominions.

In 1931, in the Statute of Westminster, the government reconceptualised and rebranded the empire to take account of the growing autonomy of the dominions and the prospect that India might one day become a dominion. As a result, 'imperial' and 'colonial' gave way to 'commonwealth'. Many current histories of the First World War conflate the terms and use the latter. In the context of this thesis, the use of the term 'commonwealth' would be anachronistic as it reflects the ideals of a later

period. I will use the terms 'imperial', 'dominion' and 'colonial' throughout as they were still in use in the immediate aftermath of the First World War and are reflective of the hierarchies of the period.

In many former colonies, such as in east Africa and the Caribbean, white British settlers lived among the indigenous population. These settlers self-identified as 'white' and I will use this term throughout. The indigenous peoples of the colonies self-identified by ethnic group (or territory) but were phenotypically classified by officials in ways that were intended to define their status. 'Native' and 'negro' were terms applied to darker-skinned peoples and 'coloured' designated to those with lighter-skins, often mixed-heritage, but who were not considered 'white'.[1] Often 'natives' and 'coloureds' were collectively described as 'Black', especially in South Africa which by 1910 was a dominion. I will mostly use the geographical origins of servicemen from different parts of Africa and the Caribbean to avoid using these pejorative, socially constructed categories.[2] I will use 'Black' to provide an

[1] Skin colour was not the only use for the term 'coloured'. It was initially used in the Caribbean to differentiate between freed slaves ('coloured') and those who remained enslaved ('negroes'). See Jane Samson, *Race and Empire* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), p. 38.

[2] Professor Hakim Adi, a historian of 'Black British History', utilizes, but does not feel comfortable, using 'Black'. He favours the terms 'African' and 'Caribbean' which denote 'geographical cultural heritage and place of origin'. See Hakim Adi, *African and Caribbean People in Britain: A History* (Dublin: Penguin Books, 2023), p. vii.

alternative to using imperial designations and I capitalize the word throughout to highlight the construct against the normative 'white'.[3] There is a further reason for using the terms 'Black', African, and Caribbean, and that is to avoid the problematic use of 'non-white' or 'non-European' which, as the historian of South Asian experience in the First World War, Santanu Das, reminds us, 'defines people by what they are not, rather than what they are'.[4] The colonial designation, 'West Indian', will only be used in context or quotations in this thesis. Finally, as socially constructed notions of 'race' play a large part of the mentalities of the period, the term will be employed throughout. In doing so, I use the term, not to denote innate characteristics determined by biology, as argued by some at the time, but as a discursive term. Hereafter, I will avoid quotation marks when using 'race', except for emphasis, to ensure an easier reading experience.

[3] 'Black' is a contested term and I do not use it to signify a biological or genetic category.

[4] Santanu Das (ed.), *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 27.

List of Abbreviations

BWIR	British West Indies Regiment
CC	Cape Corps
CAC	Carrier Corps
CAHTC	Cape Auxiliary Horse Transport Corps
CWGC	Commonwealth War Graves Commission
IOR	India Office Records
IWGC	Imperial War Graves Commission
IWT	Inland Water Transport
KAR	King's African Rifles
SANLC	South African Native Labour Corps
TNA (UK)	The National Archives (UK)
TMPC	Trinidad Merchants' and Planters' Contingent
WAFF	West African Frontier Force
WIR	West India Regiment

Acknowledgements

I would first and foremost like to thank my supervisor, Professor Joanna Bourke. I will remain forever grateful to her for agreeing to supervise me in the first place and for her unfailing patience, wisdom, guidance, and support over the years. I could not have lasted the course without her, and she has made me a better writer and thinker. Many hands have supported me at Birkbeck, University of London. Professor Jan Rueger has made me feel a welcome member of the school. I have been lucky to have made supportive friends with fellow doctoral students: Hazel Croft and Linda Maynard. Clare Makepeace, to whom I owe a great debt, is tragically no longer with us but she will not be forgotten. Birkbeck also awarded me a Hobsbawn scholarship which allowed me to visit archives and cemeteries in Jamaica, Kenya, and Tanzania. I have had the privilege to discuss my thesis with Kate Donington and Anna Maguire who have not hesitated to offer critiques and advice. I would like to thank those working in the academy - Hakim Adi, Talat Ahmed, Caroline Bressey, Dominiek Dendooven, Margot Finn, Stefan Goebel, Hilda Kean, David Killingray, Laura King, Christopher Kissane, David Lambert, Deborah Madden, Michelle Moyd, Lucy Noakes, Layla Renshaw, Laura Rowe, Anne Samson, Martin Smith, Richard Smith, Vron Ware, and Jerry White - for encouraging and sharing my research. I have also received help from those engaged in the field of Black history: Winifred Assan, Suzanne Bardgett, Melissa Bennett, Jak Buela, Maxwell Danquah, John Ellis, Antony Firth, Clive King, Christoper Kreuzer, Hannah Lowe, Michael Ohajuru, Cliff Pereira, and Arthur Torrington.

I also need to thank the many archivists and librarians at the National Archives, The British Library, Senate House Library, SOAS Archives, The Caird Library, The Liddell Hart Centre, The Imperial War Museum, Durham University Archives, The London Metropolitan Archives, Brent Archives, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Jamaica Military Museum, The Jamaica Archives, The Institute of Jamaica, and The Kenya National Archives.

I would also like to thank my family for their love and support during my studies. My sisters, Feria, Jenny, and Jacqui and my mother, Juliette, are fantastic cheerleaders of everything I do.

Lastly, and most important of all, I would like to thank my wife, Jo, for always being there for me and never once complaining, in the time we have known each other, that my mind and time has often been occupied with my thesis. It is her unbounded love and support that has propelled me over the finish line.

Introduction

When I die, bury me at Zomba,

So that my heart should pain.

Hunger, hunger is painful, hunger.

Yes, when I die, when I die, bury me at Zomba.

So that my heart should pain, hunger,

Yes, hunger is painful.

Hunger is painful, hunger, bury me, bury me,

Hunger is painful, hunger.

A marching song sung by KAR soldiers on their way to war.[1]

Synopsis

The above quote is from an interview with Mualidi Mwina a Malawian veteran of the First World War who joined the King's African Rifles (KAR) in 1916. A written testimony from an African colonial soldier is rare, not just in the two world

[1] Mualidi Mwina, a KAR soldier, interviewed 15 August 1972 in Melvin E. Page, *Chiwaya War Voices: Malawian Oral Histories of the Great War in Africa*: *Volume 1* (Rickmansworth: TSL Publications, 2021), p. 85.

wars, but during the whole of the age of British imperialism.[2] The quote is chosen because it represents, as much as can be known, what African colonial soldiers from the former British Empire thought about how their lives and their war service should be remembered when they die. In this instance, Mualidi Mwina expressed a desire for a burial at Zomba in Malawi (formerly the British colony of Nyasaland) which was the military base of the KAR.[3] In 2002-3, I worked as a history teacher in Blantyre, Malawi. The students there followed a British curriculum and studied the First World War, but only the events on the Western Front. For a more textured learning experience, I took the students to a local cemetery, under the care of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), where they could view war graves connected to both World Wars.[4] There were three African graves from the Second World War in the cemetery. The First World War section contained only the graves of white South Africans, white German civilians, and nine 'coloured' Cape Corps from South Africa.[5] There were no graves of Black Malawian servicemen from

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[2] See David Killingray, 'African voices from two world wars', *Historical Research*, Vol 74, no. 186 (November 2001), pp. 425-443. In this article, Killingray acknowledges the paucity of sources on black servicemen but suggests starting points for future researchers.

[3] David Killingray, 'African voices from two world wars', p. 428.

[4] In 1917, the Imperial War Graves Commission came into being, charged with the marking, burial and creation of war cemeteries for the dead of British Empire in the First World war. In 1960, it changed its name to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

[5] https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/91602/blantyre-church-of-central-africa-presbyterian-cemetery/ accessed 25 April 2020. These records reveal that the Cape Corps originally had wooden crosses whilst all others had permanent iron crosses.

the First World War at all. On enquiry, I was told that Black African soldiers were commemorated in Zomba, close to the base of the KAR. However, whilst it is true that there is a colonial-era memorial to men from Malawi who served in both wars in Zomba, the only names inscribed on it are those who died in the Second World War.[6] This meant that, in terms of the First World War, there were no graves or Memorials to the Missing for Black African servicemen in the whole of Malawi. This was even though one of the first engagements of the war took place in August 1914 at Karonga, in the north of the country, where the KAR fought off a Schutztruppen and Askari invasion at the cost of fifty lives.[7] The official figure for war deaths in the First World War of KAR men from Nyasaland was 1,741 out of 20,000.[8] The number of recruits from the colony was proportionately the largest in British East Africa.[9] Where were the bodies of the 1,741 men?

[6] https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/91601/zomba-memorial/ accessed 25 April 2020.

[7] Peter Charlton, *Cinderella's Soldiers: The Nyasland Volunteer Reserve* (Thatcham: Dolman Scott, 2010), p. 57. *Schutztruppen* was the name given to the white Germans who served in the African colonies. *Askaris* were local Africans who enlisted to serve the German colonial regimes in Togoland, the Cameroons, and German East Africa.

[8] 'War Effort: Numerical Records of Nyasaland's Efforts in the War Against Germany', 1922, UK National Archives, hereafter TNA (UK), CO 534/49, F.421.

[9] 'Recruiting Situation, KAR, 1918', TNA (UK), CO 534/25.

First World War graves in Blantyre cemetery, Malawi (photo John Siblon)

The questions I asked myself after the visit to Blantyre Cemetery are the basis for the research underpinning this thesis. What happened to the bodies of African men who had died in the war? Had only white and 'coloured' bodies been retrieved? Why was there no public commemoration of local men in Malawi after the First World War? Did commemorative absence occur across all theatres of war and in the imperial metropole? Was commemorative forgetting a feature for all Black servicemen across the British Empire? What mentalities lay behind the commemorative decision-making process at the war's end? Can hierarchy inform both the absence and presence of men from the colonies? And, lastly, what impact did such forgetting have at the time and in the present day?

My thesis is a contribution to the work of scholars who have studied the human body and the way it has been inscribed through socially constructed 'frames' such as race, ethnicity, gender, religiosity, and class. One of the first historians to use a corporeal framework to analyse the relationship between soldier's bodies in war and their social construction - in this case their masculinity - was Joanna Bourke in her path-breaking book, *Dismembering the Male*. She used the First World War as the lens through which to investigate the impact of conflict on the male body using sources such as war diaries and memoirs. Her findings were also achieved through an interdisciplinary approach which allowed her to use a wider range of sources.[10] The bodies analysed by Bourke belonged primarily to working-class English soldiers who served on the former Western Front. Her focus on this demographic and geographical location, Bourke explains, was because it was here that most British servicemen were concentrated during the war and where most casualties were suffered compared to other theatres.[11] As part of her study, there is a chapter specifically focused on the corpses of dead soldiers. She examines how, during, and after the war, government officials were forced to confront the reality of an unprecedented loss of life, mass burial, and the need to construct vast war cemeteries for hundreds of thousands of bodies as recognition of military service

[10] Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War,* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996). Other historians who forged a trail for studies on the psychological impact of war on the mind and body were: John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Viking Press, 1976); Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[11] Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 27.

and as a space for mourning for relatives. She provides a brief comparison between the Western Front and the Mesopotamian theatre, which was characterised, in contrast, by the absence of bodies, due to the fear that bodies would be unearthed in the search for clothes and blankets.[12]

It is the absence of bodies, as much as the presence, symbolic or otherwise, which is the theme of my research. I believe there is a need to extend and build upon Bourke's research and explore the status of bodies, not just on the Western Front, but in all theatres. This is particularly true for Africa. Since the 1970s, 'new imperial' historians, have tried to fill a lacuna by establishing casualty figures for African soldiers and non-combatants in the First World War. In 1978, Geoffrey Hodges calculated that 10,000 soldiers and in excess of 100,000 carriers serving with the British were killed or died of illness.[13] More recent casualty estimates, which includes those from the British, French, and German colonial forces, suggests a combined figure of c200,000 – 250,000 deaths.[14] This approximation is far greater than the War Office's initial figure of 38, 235 casualties for Africans serving in British

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[12] Ibid. p. 216.

[13] G. W. T. Hodges, 'African Manpower Statistics for the British Forces in East Africa, 1914-1918', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 19, No. 1, World War I and Africa (1978), p. 115.

[14] Melvin E. Page (ed.), *Africa and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1987), pp. 14-16; Hew Strachan, *The First World War in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.3; Edward Paice, *Tip & Run: The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007), p. 392.

forces.[15] The lack of attention given to African colonial involvement in contrast to those serving in the European theatre demonstrates a lack of concern for the fate of Africans by military historians and is also replicated in cultural studies. Only one historian, Michele Barrett, has thus far investigated the cultural history of Africans in the war.

Barrett, a Professor of literature, used the archives of the CWGC to conduct research on corporeal absence in Mesopotamia and east Africa.[16] It was her interest in commemorative nominalism, brought on after seeing thousands of names on the Neuve Chapelle Indian Memorial in France, and the absence of discussion of policy towards Africans and Asians in existing literature, that led her to research the politics of inclusion and exclusion in the memorial landscape.[17] Barrett specifically

[15] War Office, *Statistics Of The Military Effort Of The Great War* (HMSO, 1922). p. 739.

[16] Michele Barrett, 'Subalterns at War: First World War Colonial Forces and the Politics of the Imperial War Graves Commission', *Interventions* Vol. 9, 3 (2007), pp. 451-474.

[17] Rudyard Kipling, *Graves of the Fallen* (London: HMSO, 1919); Fabian Ware, 'Building and Decoration of the War Cemeteries', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol. 72, No. 3725 (11 April 1924), pp. 344-355; Fabian Ware, *The Immortal Heritage. An Account of the Work and Policy of The Imperial War Graves Commission during twenty years 1917-1937* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1937); Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil: A history of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission 1917-1967* (London: Constable & Company Ltd, 1967); G. Kingsley Ward and Major Edwin Gibson, *Courage Remembered: The story behind the construction and maintenance of the Commonwealth's Military Cemeteries and Memorials of the Wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945*, (London: HMSO, 1989); Julie Summers,

identified variations in the treatment of Asian and African colonial bodies in IWGC cemeteries away from Europe, especially in east Africa, and in need of further study.[18] Barrett's corporeal approach and her interpretation of IWGC policy remains highly original and one of the reasons why I wanted, in this thesis, to extend the research she began in one theatre to cover all theatres in an interdisciplinary, transnational, comparative study. By including all the theatres Africans and Caribbeans served in, it is possible that commonalities might emerge which could explain their postwar representation and type of commemoration. An inter-theatre cultural study of the war service of African and Caribbean personnel will be the first of its kind.[19]

Remembered. The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, (London: Merrell, 2007). In these texts, Africans and Caribbeans are either not discussed or merely included as statistics; non-European theatres are referred to as 'sideshows'. No explanation is provided for the commemorative absence of thousands of African service personnel. David Crane's recent book situates the creation of the IWGC in imperial terms but does not discuss specific examples of sites of memory. See: David Crane, *Empires of the Dead: How One Man's Vision Led To The Creation Of WWI'S War Graves*, (London, William Collins, 2013).

[18] Michele Barrett, *The Politics of the Imperial War Graves Commission 1917-1939*, paper given at Queen Mary University of London, 22 May 2014.

[19] I will not be investigating the representation of Asian service personnel as there is a growing body of literature on the Asian military and the representation of their First World War service. See Santanu Das, *India, Empire, and First World War* Culture (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2018); idem, *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge; Cambridge University, 2011); Roger Sims, To The Memory of Brave Men: The Imperial War Graves Commission And India's Missing Soldiers Of The First World War. MA Thesis (University of Florida, 2018). Neither author

Another way I intend to contribute to the corporeal field is to connect the representation of black war service to memory studies, including how both living bodies and corpses were subject to inclusion and exclusion in the memory of the war and hierarchical representation. In writing a cultural and social history of Africans and Caribbeans in the war, I am providing an original contribution to the study of war, memory, and cultural studies. Within the thesis, I hope to answer a rhetorical question posed by the philosopher, Judith Butler, in her book, *Precarious Life*: 'what counts as a liveable life and a grievable death?'[20] Her enquiry resonates with my own questions regarding the absence of bodies in the post-war commemorative process.

In Butler's critical reflection of United States foreign policy, she posits that agents within power structures decide whose lives are grievable and whose are not. Such a concept can only be articulated through the public erasure of subjects deemed 'ungrievable'. Within this operation, difference is allocated to the degree that only one side in the binary is considered as normatively human while the other is not. Butler followed *Precarious Life* with a further reflection on 'grievable lives' in the context of war. In *Frames of War*, she posits that bodies are subject to a social ontology; to be considered as a 'life' or having 'lived', people are constituted through

examines Indians in the African theatre. I will intermittently compare African, Asian, and dominion representation.

[20] Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London, Verso, 2004), p. XIV.

norms which are recognizable within the broad operation of power. The lives of those outside these normative frameworks are 'not conceivable as lives' and are 'lives never lived'.[21] As the representation of colonial war dead is a central theme of this study, Butler's 'frames of recognition' will be useful as an analytic framework. According to Butler, frames are circulated to establish the hegemony of a power structure.[22] In this way, ontological arguments are connected to politics. I will compare post-war official commemoration policy on African bodies, who do not appear to have 'grievable deaths', with others who had 'livable lives', to explore the validity of Butler's thesis. I will also investigate how such a binary was represented.

In addressing such issues, my periodization will be the interwar year 1919-1939. This is for two reasons: Firstly, the conflict was like no other in human history due to the unprecedented loss of life and commemoration had to be rethought on an immense scale. Memorial practices devised after the war were used as precedents for future ceremonials and have direct relevance in the present day. This process began in 1919. Secondly, commemoration policy became more inclusive after the Second World War for a variety of reasons which will discussed in the conclusion. Accordingly, I am investigating the interwar 'exclusionary' period which, I argue, had the greatest impact on memory. As I have limited the bulk of this study up to the outbreak of war in 1939, the focus will not be the changing nature of war

[21] Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2009), pp. 1-3.

[22] Ibid, pp. 6-12. Butler had previously discussed the materiality of the body in relation to sex and gender in *Bodies That Matter: On the discursive limits of "sex"* (London: Routledge, 1993).

memorialisation, but, specifically, discourse on the nature of representation of African and Caribbean bodies in spaces and places and the rationale for absence and presence by the agencies responsible for the memory of their service and the war in general.

Africans and Caribbeans, who are the focus of my investigation, served as both combatants and non-combatants in multiple theatres. On land, Caribbean soldiers served in Europe, Palestine, Mesopotamia, east and west Africa. African military service was mostly confined to the African continent, but 'native' South Africans served in Europe in Labour Corps, and some west Africans were sent to Mesopotamia to work in the Inland Water Transport Service (IWTS). In the maritime theatre, African and Caribbean sailors and merchant seamen served mostly in the Atlantic Ocean. It is vital for the investigation that I discuss all theatres of war. As such, I aim to navigate and negotiate the constructed binaries 'Western Front', 'sideshow'; 'metropole' and 'periphery'; giving equal importance to all discursive spaces. Efforts to transcend Eurocentric history and to discuss metropole and colony together have been termed 'new imperial' history.[23]

By adopting such an approach, I also aim to reposition colonial war service within the 'global turn' in First World War and cultural studies. Such histories aim to constitute Africans, Asians, and other marginalised ethnicities into the mainstream

[23] See Kathleen Wilson, (ed.) *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

narrative of the wars and to avoid the language and terminology of Eurocentrism such as 'contribution' and 'war effort', which only discusses colonial participation in terms of their use value to the European powers.[24] Avoiding a Eurocentric approach befits the study of a conflict which, since 1945, has come to be known as a 'World War'. Hew Strachan sees in the title 'Great War' a connotation of a civil war between the 'civilized' nations of Europe which has the effect of downplaying the imperial dimension.[25] I will eschew using 'the Great War' throughout, unless in context, as 'World War' correlates more directly with my view that the conflict was both significant *and* geographically extensive.

Aligning with the 'global turn' has many benefits, it avoids perpetuating a false notion that the war was only catastrophic or significant on the Western Front and not in campaigns away from Europe, or that the deaths of one group of servicemen were more significant than those of another. In the historiography of the war, the African theatre has been considered as a 'sideshow'. Hew Strachan and Edward Paice, who have written monographs about the war in Africa, have cautioned that describing fighting in Mesopotamia, the Middle East, and parts of

[24] Heike Liebau, Katrin Bromber, Katharina Lange, Dyala Hamzah and Ravi Ahuja (eds.), *The World in World Wars: Experiences, Perceptions and Perspectives from Africa and Asia* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010); John Connor, *Someone Else's War: Fighting For The British Empire In World War I* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2019).

[25] Hew Strachan, 'The First World War as a global war,' *First World War Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March 2010), pp. 3-6. He argues that the use of the term 'world' was more about importance than geography.

Africa in such a manner has the effect of trivializing the importance of these theatres to the whole war and veiling the dramatic impact of war on those regions.[26] John H. Morrow has proposed that historiography which follows Kitchener's wartime pronouncement of 'sideshows' is rooted in Eurocentrism and urges a widening of perceptions to include colonial 'contributions'.[27] Michelle Moyd, has pursued the argument against Eurocentrism furthest by arguing that African perspectives have been ignored by most historians, including imperial historians, and need be taken into account for a more nuanced, localized, and inclusive account of the war.[28] Attempts by historians to ensure a more inclusive, global account of the conflict have nevertheless been criticized by both those who discount the view that imperialism was a cause of war and those who argue that 'new imperial' approaches have not gone far enough in integrating colonialism into the narrative.[29]

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[26] Hew Strachan, *The First World War In Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 12; Edward Paice, *Tip & Run: The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa* (London: Phoenix, 2008), p. 4. Both historians have written of the importance of African theatre, but to the European powers.

[27] John H. Morrow, Jr, *The Great War: An Imperial History*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 53. In this case, Morrow argues that the causes of the war were not conflicts between nation states but were intertwined with imperial rivalries.

[28] Michelle R. Moyd, 'Centring a Sideshow: local experiences of the First World War in Africa', *First World War Studies*, 7, 2 (2016), pp. 111-130.

[29] The former argument is made by Michael S. Neiberg, 'Revisiting the Myths: New Approaches to the Great War', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (November 2004), pp. 514-15. He argues that the conflict was a European war fought in Africa or an African War fought by Europeans. The latter argument is made by Michelle R. Moyd in, 'Centring a Sideshow', p. 113. She argues that Africa could

The negotiation of 'imperial' spaces and places will involve demonstrating that policies on commemoration had an impact centripetally on Britain as well as centrifugally so that decisions made in the colonies made as much difference as those made in imperial Britain.[30] Historians negotiating colony and metropole and the spaces in between have been at the forefront of the 'postcolonial turn' in imperial studies. They include Catherine Hall, Anne Laura Stoler, and Frederick Cooper. They have argued that events in Britain and its colonies are deeply connected to the extent that they should not be studied separately but together in a 'single analytic frame'.[31] They believe the history of British colonialism should be reconnected to the mainstream of British history.[32] Within these conceptual spaces, the key literature

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be the centre of analysis in new histories which connect the local to the global. Something which I shall attempt in Chapter Six.

[30] John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The manipulation of British public opinion 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 2.

[31] Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), p. 4; Hall, Catherine (ed.), *Cultures of Empire: A Reader. Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Manchester; Manchester University Press, 2000); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Oxford: Polity, 2002); Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[32] See Paul Gilroy on the need for the British to reconnect with its imperial past which he believes has been 'buried and disavowed': Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture? Multiculture or Postcolonial Melancholia?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. xii.

which has shaped this thesis lie at the intersection of studies of race, gender, and class (which in this study will be synonymous with rank in the military).

Race

Studies of race and connected subjectivities will be at the core of this thesis. My study focuses on the inter-war period when, temporally and spatially, peoples of all shades believed in the concept of race, differences between races, and racial superiority and inferiority. Marius Turda and Maria Sophia Quine have argued that modern ideas of race were ethnocentrically produced in Europe and the West. The idea of race, as construction and concept, held a pre-eminent place in culture and science and, between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, theorists in the Western hemisphere 'consolidated and exported a racist worldview which placed white Europeans above all others.'[33]

It is the embodiment of racial difference, its portrayal as hierarchy, and the performativity of race and whiteness in literature and praxis, which will be investigated in this thesis. There is a vast literature on race and its foundations. Those who posit race as a construct point to its development as an idea, along with the rise of science, in the wake of the Enlightenment and the foundation of disciplines such as biology, ethnology, and anthropology. With a scientific explanation for race, humans came to be viewed as a sub-divided species by the

[33] Marius Turda and Maria Sophia Quine, *Historicizing Race* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018) p. 6.

mid-nineteenth century with separate, biologically-inherited, traits.[34] Nicholas Hudson, a historian of the early modern period, has argued, using an analysis of seventeenth and eighteenth century literature, that alongside the use of science to frame difference, language in the Western hemisphere changed to reflect a division between ideas of 'race' and 'nation'. The latter was used to connote America and Europe, but 'savage' and 'tribe' referred to places outside of these two areas or to 'Negroes' within them.[35] Hudson also argues that the new scientific doctrine of race 'invested traditional "folk" prejudice with a new intellectual authority' and enabled, for example, the justification of transatlantic slavery as an example of the inferiority of Africans in a racial hierarchy which placed white Europeans at the top.[36]

Christine Bolt, who has studied race in the nineteenth century, argues that race was not just about language and biology, but also linked to cultural

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[34] Nancy Leys Stepan, 'Race, gender, science and citizenship' in Catherine Hall (ed.), *Cultures of empire: colonizers in Britain and the empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 66-7. Peter Wade, *Race: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 3.

[35] Nicholas Hudson, 'From "Nation to "Race": The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Spring, 1996), p. 248.

[36] Ibid, p. 252; One of the most notorious attempts to promote ranking by race is the book by Josiah. C. Nott & George. R. Gliddon's, *Types of Mankind* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1854). They were both polygenists and illustrated what they believed to be the different classifications of species. In their drawings, the skulls of Chimpanzees were inflated, and the jaws of Africans extended to give impression that Africans ranked lower than apes.

characteristics: ‘civilized’ versus ‘non-civilized’ or ‘savage’. She believes that due to this overlap, race came to be the ‘the prime determinant of all the important traits of body and soul, character and personality, of human beings and nations.’[37] The interrelation between language, biology, culture, and ‘nation’ allowed space for the entrenchment of these elements as central tenets in race discourse. In the scientific field, race theorists used numerous scientific methods to find new ways to classify difference in humans. Craniometry, language, skin colour, climate: all were used to emphasise innate difference and racial superiority of the ‘white race’. As Bolt has explained ‘Almost all methods of classifying the human species, in fact, whether by language, brain, physical features or colour resulted in the European coming out on top.’[38] The cultural dimension to race engendered much ignorance and misunderstanding of African cultures to prevail and allowed Europeans to claim that Africans were inferior in every way compared to them. It was a short step for race theorists to promote selective breeding and the separation of the races to ensure that the ‘civilised races’ did not suffer contagion through everyday contact and miscegenation. Francis Galton and Herbert Spencer are renowned for applying Darwin’s theory of natural selection to humans. Galton promoted ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ eugenics to ensure that the ‘better elements’ survived and thrived whilst arguing that the ‘dangerous’ characteristics of ‘inferior’ beings should be eliminated through social intervention. Herbert Spencer urged that governments should enact

[37] Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, 1971), p. 9.

[38] Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race*, p. 208.

policies which favoured the 'survival of the fittest'.[39] In each case, Galton and Spencer argued that 'uncivilized' peoples would perish or survive by becoming 'civilized'. In the late nineteenth century, due to violence meted out to Africans, Asians, and others, questions were asked as to whether Darwinian principles of 'natural selection' were being enacted through the numerous 'colonial' or 'small' wars, and state policies which led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of colonial subjects.[40]

As part of my thesis, I will investigate whether theories of race science had an impact on the representation and commemoration of individuals in different parts of the British Empire; in particular, through the construction and maintenance of racial hierarchies in the colonies that were political, social, and cultural. Jane Samson has highlighted the crucial difference between 'imperialism' and 'colonialism'. In her view, the former connotes a system of government, but the latter is linked more closely to race through exploitative policies of 'backward' peoples. In this way, empire and race are part of a symbiotic relationship that benefitted the colonial power.[41] In the nineteenth century, the 'civilising mission' was promoted, in part, as

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[39] Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry Into Its Laws And Consequences* (London: Macmillan, 1869); Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 3rd edition, 1895).

[40] See Sven Lindqvist, *'Exterminate all The Brutes'* (London: Grant Books, 1997) who argues that race science was used to justify genocidal practices by European governments and settlers in Africa.

[41] Jane Samson, *Race and Empire* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), pp. 4-5.

bringing the benefits of science to 'backward peoples' but there is also evidence which demonstrates that colonies were also used as 'imagined laboratories' where race science had a role to play in differentiating and classifying indigenous peoples to better control them.[42]

Stephen Jay Gould, the evolutionary scientist, has researched how theorists, since the eighteenth century, have used science in non-objective ways to prove the inherent difference between races and the superiority of whites. In his treatise against biological determinism, Gould shows how time and again, scientific views on race merely served as reflections of social movements.[43] He wrote that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, scientists, determined to construct evidence of racial ranking, turned to numbers and measurement as criterion to prove their case.[44] Gould shows how one such theory, recapitulation, put forward by the zoologist, Ernst Haeckel, had consequences in the colonization of Africa and the racialization of individuals.

Haeckel argued that bodies, in their growth, pass through a series of stages representing adult ancestral forms. For scientists wanting to bolster theories of racial

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[42] Warwick Anderson & Ricardo Roque, 'Imagined laboratories: colonial and national racialisations in Island South East Asia', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 49, Issue 3 (October 2018), pp. 358-371.

[43] Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1987; first published 1981), p. 22.

[44] Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, p. 24.

hierarchy, the notion that adults of 'inferior' groups were like children of 'superior' groups were applied to adult African men and women who were cast as living representatives of an ancestral stage in the evolution of white males.[45] Gould has highlighted a pivotal moment in the development of race science. He points out comparing Africans to children was no longer just a metaphor of bigotry; it now embodied a theoretical claim that 'inferior' people were literally 'mired in an ancestral stage of superior groups.'[46] In 1898, Benjamin Kidd, the sociologist, used the science of difference to promote British colonialism. He contended that 'We are dealing with peoples who represent the same stage in the history of the development of the race that the child does in the history of the development of the individual' and, calling for the partnership of colonialism and the 'civilising mission', Kidd continued, 'the tropics will not, therefore, be developed by the natives themselves.'[47] Discourse on race was not confined to the colonies.

In the metropole, debates over identity formation have recognised the multiplicity of constructed or imagined identities at work in any society. Historians have focused on 'imagined communities' and the construction of 'Englishness' and

[45] Ibid., pp. 114; 115.

[46] Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, p. 116.

[47] Benjamin Kidd, *The Control of the Tropics* (New York: Macmillan, 1898), p. 51.

‘Britishness’.[48] They have noted that ‘Englishness’, though an ethnicity like any other, tends to displace and marginalise other identities in the English imagination. It has been argued that this was possible because ‘Englishness’ and ‘Western’ identity were created in relation to ‘others’, and the ‘othering’ of different ethnicities.[49] This construction of English identity was historically specific and built on notions of superiority over other ethnic identities. In the age of imperialism, the identities of European colonisers were constructed upon white racial identities; of the superiority of ‘white race’ over the ‘black race’ and represented as whiteness.

Catherine Hall has investigated racialized selves in her studies of Jamaican colonial society in the mid-nineteenth century. She has written how white settlers in the colonies ‘were as much concerned with constructing their own identities as with defining those of others, and those identities were always classed and gendered as well as ethnically specific.’[50] The settlers’ capacity to define all others stemmed from their position of authority and power in which they had placed themselves in colonial society due to their military power. They chose to classify the colonised as

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[48] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging The Nation 1707 – 1837* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1992); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, first published 1983 (London: Verso, 1990).

[49] See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited, 1978). He writes that the ‘Western’ identity was created in relation to views of the ‘Orient’.

[50] Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1992), p. 207.

'black' and 'native' and in doing so, categorised themselves as 'white'.[51] The identities of coloniser and colonised were mutually dependent on each other. It is through this constant configuration of identities that the unequal relations of power between white colonisers and Black colonised can be interpreted.

In *Civilising Subjects*, Hall contends that race, identity construction, and culture were firmly connected. As she puts it,

> The time of empire was the time when anatomies of difference were being elaborated, across the axes of class, race and gender. These elaborations were the work of culture, for the categories were discursive, and their meanings historically contingent... it was colonial encounters which produced a new category, race, the meanings of which, like those of class & gender, have always shifted and been contested and challenged.[52]

Hall stresses that there is not a single, monolithic form of racism. She cites how 'cultural differentialism' and scientific racism are not different from each other

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[51] Ibid, pp. 211-12.

[52] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination*, 1830-1867 (Oxford: Polity, 2002), p. 16.

but often co-exist; one form slipping into the other and vice-versa.[53] Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler have researched the anxieties caused by cultural differentialism, and the 'grammar of difference', within the British Empire. They explain relations between coloniser and colonised as in a constant state of tension where 'the otherness of the colonised persons was neither inherent nor stable' and 'his or her difference had to be defined and maintained.'[54] Writers such as Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha have demonstrated how culture was used in colonial societies to 'other' the subject population; to make them feel 'outsiders' in their own territory.[55] Whereas, Frantz Fanon, has explored the psychological effect of such practice on Black people in the French colonies.[56] Fanon used concepts drawn from psychology and corporeality to account for white people's belief in their superiority over Black men and women and why Black colonial subjects self-constitute themselves in relation to the whites, often believing they are inferior. He explains this phenomenon as 'epidermalization': a process whereby the Black body has racial difference inscribed upon it and constituted as hierarchy and the norm in colonial society.[57] Blackness and whiteness, as construct and identity, will be discussed in

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[53] Ibid, p. 17.

[54] Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1997), pp. 3-4; 7.

[55] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[56] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London, Pluto Press, 1986, first published by Editions de Seuil in 1952).

[57] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 110-112.

this thesis to determine if they have any bearing on how African and Caribbean war service was represented.[58] Was there any contention from those racialized as Black or those who were not characterized as 'martial'?

Gender

I have used 'personnel' in the title as women served in auxiliary roles behind the frontlines and in various roles in the European 'home front' in the war. African and Caribbean females were not officially recruited into the colonial armies until the Second World War.[59] There is evidence, however, that African women were an integral part of military campaigns in east Africa as followers. Their job was to feed the armies of both sides, to accompany their husbands, and to carry provisions, supplies, and ammunition, suffering all the privations that the soldiers endured. Their presence is not acknowledged in most histories of the war in Africa, rendering them invisible.[60] Neither were women invisible in the process of colonization and

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[58] See Stuart Hall and Mark Sealy, *Different: A historical context: contemporary photographers and black identity* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2001) for an explanation of the term 'black' and 'blackness' as contested ideas.

[59] Marika Sherwood, *Many Struggles: West Indian Workers and Service Personnel in Britain (1939-45)*, (London: Karia Press, 1985); Ben Bousquet & Colin Douglas, *West Indian Women At War: British Racism in World War II* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1991).

[60] Timothy J. Stapleton, *West African Soldiers in Britain's Colonial Army 1860-1960* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2021), pp. 237-258. See also Michelle R. Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries: African Soldiers, Conquest, and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa* (Ohio: Ohio University Press,

everyday social relations in the colonies. It is important to the argument of this thesis that multiple aspects of gender relations, especially military masculinities, are investigated to explore their role in the representation of African and Caribbean war service.

As Susan Grayzel and Tammy Proctor have argued '"gender" is a term that becomes code for "women", but it is a powerful tool for understanding men's lives as well, especially in wartime.'[61] In the expansion and defence of the British Empire, wars had been used as demonstrations of the racial and technological superiority of Europeans over the armies of the indigenous populations.[62] But when war was declared in 1914, some African and Caribbean men saw it is an opportunity to raise their status and prove their manliness. The prospect of large numbers of Black volunteers caused consternation amongst officials across metropole and colony. The anxiety of imperial officials towards the physical presence of Africans, Caribbeans (and Asians) in close proximity to white women and fear of 'miscegenation' has been

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2014). The focus is on women who served with German colonial forces. For a longer-term view of women in African armies: Stephen J. Rockel, *Carriers of Culture: Labor on the Road in Nineteenth Century East Africa* (Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2006), pp. 117-130.

[61] Susan R. Grayzel & Tammy Proctor (eds.), *Gender & The Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 5.

[62] Kim A. Wagner, 'Savage Warfare: Violence and the Rule of Colonial Difference in Early British Counterinsurgency', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 85 (Spring 2018), pp. 217-237.

explored by a number of historians.[63] Richard Fogarty, has argued that in the post-war period there was a call in the USA and Europe for a 'return to normalcy' and a re-establishment of gender roles and the 'colour line'.[64] Such anxieties over race and gender held ramifications for post-war commemoration policy.

In recent times, historians have built on a framework established by feminists such as Kimberley Crenshaw, who posited that identity politics often 'conflates or ignores intragroup differences'.[65] She employed an intersectional approach to explore 'the ways the multiple forces of sex, gender, race, class, sexual orientation, disability status… develop and work together simultaneously to shape experience and identities'. In this case, Crenshaw was investigating violence against African

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[63] Philippa Levine, 'Battle Colours: Race, Sex and Colonial Soldiery in World War 1', *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 9, no. 4 (1998), pp. 104-130; Ann L. Stoler, 'Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in Twentieth-Century Colonial Cultures', *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Nov, 1989), pp. 634-660; Ann L. Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Lucy Bland, 'White Women and Men of Colour: Miscegenation Fears in Britain after the Great War', *Gender & History*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (April, 2005), pp. 29-61.

[64] Richard S. Fogarty, 'Gender and Race' in Susan R. Grayzel & Tammy Proctor (eds.), *Gender & The Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 84.

[65] Kimberle Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color', *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (July, 1991), pp. 1241-1299; Richard S. Fogarty, 'Gender and Race', p. 70.

American women.[66] The wartime experiences of the BWIR and the SANLC, who served in Europe as well as other theatres, can be explained through an intersecting race, rank, and gender framework. A key text, explaining the workings of race and gender is by Richard Smith, who has written a postcolonial history of the men of Caribbean military units in the First World War: *Jamaican Volunteers in the First World War*.[67] His subjects are Jamaican men from the BWIR and the West India Regiment (WIR), as they comprised the majority in these regiments. In his book, Smith uses a corporeal approach to investigate how Black 'military bodies' were viewed within a racial imperial hierarchy: 'The military body was the territory on which the desires and ideals of the nation and empire were mapped out'.[68] In the case of the Jamaicans, they were held up by colonial authorities as examples of manhood when they volunteered but discriminated against, infantilized by the military, and treated differently through being assigned 'less manly' non-combatant duties. Smith argues that Black bodies were a latent threat to white masculinities and imperial authority and so had to be diminished.[69] I will explore their status as non-combatants to see if they held parity of status with combatants. I wish to expand upon Smith's research

[66] Kimberle Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color', p. 1245.

[67] Richard Smith, *Jamaican Volunteers in the First World War. Race, masculinity and the development of national consciousness* (Manchester University Press, 2004).

[68] Richard Smith, *Jamaican Volunteers*, p. 7.

[69] Richard Smith, 'The Black Male Body in the White Imagination during the First World War' in Paul Cornish & Nicholas j. Saunders (Eds.), *Bodies In Conflict: Corporeality, Materiality and Transformation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 39-52.

on Black bodies by studying a wider sample of servicemen from across the Caribbean and Atlantic: primarily from Jamaica, Trinidad, and Bermuda. In the latter cases, segregated military units were established so that men could enlist separately to the BWIR and the WIR.[70] It is important to my study of hierarchy and representation to investigate any differentiation between Caribbean units as well as between Caribbean and African units. No such comparison has been completed before.

Another aspect of race and gender which needs to be explored for representation is that of the so-called 'martial races'. The racialization of male bodies was a feature of the British imperial army, especially in India, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries where a view developed after the rebellion of 1857 that some ethnic groups such as Sikhs were martially 'worthy', and other groups 'unworthy'. The former were seen to hold a biologically 'savage' disposition which made them suitable for warfare.[71] In Africa, historians have explored this concept in relation to ethnic recruitment into Britain's colonial army.[72] I wish to explore this phenomenon

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[70] Captain H Dow, *Record of Service of Members of the Trinidad Merchants' and Planters' Contingent 1915 to1918* (Trinidad, 1925); Jennifer M. Ingham, *Defence Not Defiance: A History of the Bermuda Volunteer Rifle Corps* (Bermuda, Island Press Limited, 1992).

[71] David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1994); Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture 1857 -1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

[72] Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, '"Damnosa Hereditas": ethnic ranking and the martial races imperative in Africa', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 3:4 (1980), pp.393-414; Timothy H. Parsons,

in an African context and to investigate whether there was any overlap between 'martial' status and those allowed to fight. In recent years, a field of study has developed which explores the experiences of combatants and non-combatants. Historians have contended that those engaged in combat are perceived as superior to those of auxiliary status. They also believe that hierarchy is entrenched in this way, leading to constructs which 'reflect and reproduce hierarchical orders of gender, race, and class'.[73]

Race and class

Other historians such as David Cannadine, have argued that social class, not race or ethnicity, was the dominant factor in the construction of imperial hierarchies. Cannadine refutes Said's thesis on 'orientalism' where the 'other' is constructed by those in the West who require stereotypical figures to confirm their superiority.[74] In his book, *Ornamentalism*, Cannadine agrees with historians who interpret the British Empire as a homogenous, contiguous entity. He states that 'Britain was very much part of the Empire, just as the rest of Empire was very much part of Britain' and

'"Wakamba Warriors Are Soldiers of the Queen": The Evolution of the Kamba as a Martial Race, 1890-1970', *Ethnohistory*, 46.4 (1999), pp. 671-701; Gavin Schaffer, 'Racializing the soldier: an introduction', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 46, Nos. 3-4 (2012), pp. 209-213.

[73] Katharine M Millar and Joanna Tidy, 'Combat as a moving target: masculinities, the heroic soldier myth, and normative martial violence' in Amanda Chisholm and Joanna Tidy (eds.), *Masculinities At The Margins: Beyond The Hegemonic In The Study Of Militaries, Masculinities And War* (Abingdon; Routledge, 2020; first published 2019), pp. 48-50.

[74] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited, 1978).

focuses on the interconnection between the local and the global. He conceptualises the Empire as 'not just a political construct but also a social entity' with inherent class relations. [75] His contention is that a social hierarchy based on a 'traditional, enduring and commonplace notion of the layered, individualistic hierarchy' was the way in which most people made sense of their homeland, the Empire and the 'unequal social world'.[76] He argues that the British Empire was not exclusively concerned with the creation of 'otherness' on the presumption that the imperial periphery was different from, and inferior to, the imperial metropolis: it was at least concerned with the 'construction of affinities' on the presumption that society on the periphery was the same as, or even on occasions superior to, society in the metropolis.[77]

As evidence, Cannadine points to a system of hierarchy - the order of precedence - which was exported from Britain to the dominions, the colonies, and the mandates as a mechanism through which colonial societies operated. However, whilst precedence was a useful tool of differentiation in segregated societies, it's importance should be viewed alongside intersecting features such as race and gender. Cannadine's focus is solely on the ruling elites across the Empire rather than

[75] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How The British Saw Their Empire* (London: Penguin Books, 2002; first published 2001), p. xvii.

[76] Ibid. p. xviii.

[77] Ibid. p. xix.

wider society and he does not explore intersectionality. Nevertheless, class and status are important components of a social hierarchy.

Bodies on the battlefield

Even new approaches to the study of bodies remain focused on the Western Front and on the bodies of the white allies. Few historians of the British Empire, or battlefield archaeologists, have studied corpses on battlefields, graves registration, temporary burial, exhumation, or inhumation. American historians have led on this, due to such a large loss of life during the Civil War. The focus of these books is primarily policy.[78] Ross Wilson has investigated policy regarding the burial of bodies on the Western Front.[79] A number of contributors to the *Journal of War &*

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[78] Edward Steere, 'Genesis of American Graves Registration', *Military Affairs*, vol. 12, No. 3 (Autumn, 1948), pp. 149-161; Michelle A. Krowl, '"In the Spirit of Fraternity": The United States Government and the Burial of Confederate Dead at Arlington National Cemetery, 1861-1914', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 111, No. 2 (2003), pp. 151-186; Ian Michael Spurgeon, 'The Fallen of Operation Iceberg: U.S. Graves Registration Efforts and the Battle of Okinawa', *Army History*, No. 102 (Winter, 2017), pp. 6-21; Judith Keene, 'Bodily Matters Above and Below Ground: The treatment of American Remains from the Korean War', *The Public Historian*, Vol. 32, No. 1, Where Are the Bodies? A Transnational Examination of State Violence and its Consequences (Winter 2010), pp. 59-78; Jack Leemon, *War Graves Digger: Service with an Australian Graves Registration Unit* (Sydney: Australian Military History Publications, 2010).

[79] Ross Wilson, 'The Burial of the Dead: the British Army on the Western Front, 1914-1918', *War and Society*, Volume 31, Issue 1 (2013), pp. 22-41.

Culture Studies have considered the recovery of bodies and commemoration after the First World War in a post-colonial context. Within the journal, Vron Ware has written about the Muslim burial ground in Britain and its role in present-day multiculture, whilst other articles relate to the commemoration of white servicemen from Europe, Australia, Canada, and the United States.[80] There are no contributions on colonial Africans and Caribbeans.

The IWGC and agency

The agency of individuals in deciding who should be remembered or not, in this case, in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, is at the heart of this study. It is one of the aims of this thesis to investigate the official post-war graves policy of the British government, colonial authorities, and the newly formed Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC). The IWGC was the brainchild of a Red Cross Officer, Sir Fabian Ware, and was established by the British government

[80] Layla Renshaw, 'The Recovery and Commemoration of War Dead from Post-Colonial Contexts', *Journal of War & Culture Studies* (2017), pp. 267-271; Lizzie Oliver, '"Like Pebbles Stuck in a Sieve": Reading Romushas in the Second Generation Photography of Southeast Asian Captivity', *Journal of War & Culture Studies* (2017), pp. 272-286; Vron Ware, 'From War Grave to Peace Garden: Muslim Soldiers, Militarized Multiculture and Cultural Heritage', *Journal of War & Culture Studies* (2017), pp. 287-304; Derek Congram, 'Grave Influence; The Impact of Britain and the U. S. on Canada's War Dead Policy', *Journal of War & Culture Studies* (2017), pp. 305-323; Layla Renshaw, 'Anzac Anxieties: Rupture, Continuity, and Authenticity in the Commemoration of Australian War Dead at Fromelles', *Journal of War & Culture Studies* (2017), pp. 324-339.

during the war to oversee the location and burial of bodies. After the war, their job became to exhume the bodies of servicemen from battlefields across the various theatres and bury them in military cemeteries regardless of race, rank, or creed; and to inscribe the names on Memorials to the Missing, those whose bodies could not be traced.[81] Historians, who have written about the IWGC or the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) as it became known in 1960, have foregrounded the extraordinary feat of recovering so many bodies of service personnel across many theatres, the provision of headstones to individual soldiers, the inscription of names on Memorials to the Missing, and the maintenance of cemeteries as tranquil places to visit and mourn the dead. They also draw attention to the Commission principle of egalitarian commemoration. It was this radical proposal of equality in death which enabled the Commission to win widespread support for its establishment.[82] In this thesis, I will investigate their reluctance to bury African soldiers and carriers in military cemeteries alongside white British, Dominion, Indian, and 'coloured' colonial service personnel as I had witnessed in Blantyre, Malawi. Why did the Commission make a distinction between the bodies of servicemen in death?

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[81] David Crane, *Empires of the Dead: How One Man's Vision Led to the Creation of WWI's War Graves* (London: William Collins, 2013).

[82] Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil: a history of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books, 2010; first published 1967), p. 28; T. A. Edwin Gibson and G. Kingsley Ward, Courage Remembered: The story behind the construction and maintenance of the Commonwealth's Military Cemeteries and Memorials of the Wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 (London: HMSO, 1989), pp. 51-52; Julie Summers, *Remembered: the history of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (London: Merrell, 2007), p. 16.

The political importance of memory

Ludmilla Jordanova has described the multifaceted nature of war memorials and cemeteries: their primary purpose is to 'pay respect to those who lost their lives in the process [of war]. They provide a location and object for mourning for those left behind'.[83] In the case, of the war cemetery in Blantyre, after the war, it served a purpose for one demographic but not for another. In the present, it serves a different purpose: as a space to educate future generations about key events of the past. I wish to interrogate such sites as spaces for the construction of a usable past where a collective sense of the past can be nourished.[84] The one-hundredth anniversary of the First World War in August 2014 highlighted how governments use war cultural commemoration for political purposes.[85] Politicians seek to control and manipulate such events to reiterate national narratives or to serve a political purpose. Karine Varley has charted how since the nineteenth century governments have sought to represent the deaths of soldiers as heroic self-sacrifice in a noble cause to counter

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[83] Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in Practice* (London: Arnold, 2000), p. 149.

[84] Ibid, p. 147

[85] The cultural aspects of the one hundredth anniversary of the Great War events was spearheaded the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, who established an interdepartmental umbrella organisation called First World War Centenary: https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/first-world-war-centenary However, in the months leading towards 4 August 2014, there had been arguments amongst Eurosceptic MPs who felt that the commemorations were designed not to offend Germany. See Daniel Boffey, 'Eurosceptics go on the offensive in new row over war centenary', *The Observer*, 23 March 2014, p. 19.

narratives by those who believed the war and subsequent deaths to be futile. The deaths of thousands of soldiers were legitimised through the trope of sacrifice and so enabling the deaths to be portrayed as the ultimate act of devotion to their country. The dead were heroic martyrs, and the living had a duty to honour their sacrifice through acts of remembrance. In France, after the Franco-Prussian War, the government withdrew from directing war commemoration and, from 1878, French war memorials were funded by public subscription, with local communities and political and religious groups organising their own commemorations. Each group constructed their own understanding of what the soldiers had been fighting for, linked to their own identities. Such contestation kept memory of war alive and had meaning for different groups. In this way, free of government intervention, there wasn't a singular narrative of glory or tragedy.[86] In Britain, successive post-war governments have led on commemoration and created official rituals based on the 'sacrifice' made by the armed forces. Yet for much of recent British history, nation was not the only imperative. The British Empire also required soldiers to fight their wars and undertake vital support roles. Large numbers volunteered or were conscripted, and many died in the service of an empire they could never hope to see or an ideal they did not understand. Deconstructing the popular memory of African

[86] Karine Varley, 'War commemorations and politics: Lessons from the nineteenth century', 20 January 2014 http://www.historyandpolicy.org/opinion-articles/articles/war-commemorations-and-politics-lessons-from-the-nineteenth-century

and Caribbean war service framed in the aftermath of the war is the purpose of the thesis.

Identity construction and the importance of memory

Dan Todman, a historian specialising in memory studies, has proposed that some of the commemorative responses to the First World War were extremely modern in form, whilst others reached back to more traditional representations of war, sacrifice and heroism in a search for comfort and understanding. Remembrance practice differed from country to country. Forms of remembrance were conditioned by practical issues but determined by factors which were political and cultural. In Britain, the large scale of casualties meant that war commemoration, in which almost a million British and Imperial troops died and over two million were wounded, had to be managed by state officials so as not to appear triumphalist.[87] The erection of a permanent Cenotaph; the burial of Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey; the construction of war cemeteries and memorials he argues 'were able to legitimise wartime death in terms of a crusade to defend civilisation.' National remembrance, however, can be 'bottom up' as well as 'top down'. Todman describes how the construction of a permanent cenotaph in Whitehall originated from the strength of feeling over the temporary structure built

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[87] *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire during the Great War, 1914-1920* (HMSO, 1922) p. 237.

for the July 1919 Peace Parade.[88] Government officials felt compelled to accommodate the public demand for a memorial where they could mourn the loss of loved ones. Todman argues that it is the nature of war commemoration to privilege some versions of the war whilst discounting others: memorials were a means of forgetting as well as remembering. For example, remembrance reflected a world in which some empires had survived the war and others not. He acknowledges that beyond the Western Front, after the First World War, neither Britain nor France memorialised Asian and Black African service personnel in the same way as their white counterparts. Todman is representative of a historiography which privileges nation over empire when it comes to discourse on the collective memory of the war. It is the intention of this thesis to investigate reasons for this omission by comparing commemoration practice in both metropole and colony in the aftermath of the war.

As remembrance is a major theme of my study it seems sensible to set the research within the framework of recent scholarship on the dialectical relationship between memory and remembrance and to link it to cultural remembrance of colonial war service. Interdisciplinary historians of remembrance such as Todman, Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan have emphasised the importance of human agency in the construction of modern memory. They argue that what is termed as memory is first and foremost a human function; a cognitive psychological process which

[88] Dan Todman, 'Remembrance and Memorials', British Library Website: http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/remembrance-and-memorials, accessed 8 September 2014.

primarily serves to store and retrieve information and images.[89] Daily experience provides the raw material for remembering. Each experience leaves a trace in the brain as episodic memory. The density and longevity of the memory depends on the nature of the experience and how much importance is attributed to the experience by the individual. Emotions weigh heavily in the creation of autobiographic memory which is a form of long-term memory.[90] Enduring memory traces are subject to retroactive and proactive interference or the 'layering' of one memory atop another. The psychological process of individual memory-creation does not exist outside of individual experience.

Winter and Sivan argue that individual memories are socially framed when people come together in any social group to remember 'they enter a domain beyond that of the individual memory.'[91] This collective process, outside of the private sphere, has been termed collective memory. Maurice Halbwachs, the sociologist, explained this phenomenon: 'a person remembers only by situating himself (sic) with the viewpoint of one or several groups and one or several currents of collective thought.'[92] In this way, what an individual recalls is affected by the culture and

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[89] Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; first published 1999), p. 1

[90] Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2005), p. 10.

[91] Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and Remembrance,* p. 6.

[92] Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, translated by F. I. and V. Y. Ditter (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), p. 24.

viewpoint of the social group amongst which remembering has taken place. Scholars in the field of memory work, describe the process of the transformation of private memory to collective memory as rehearsal: the constant retelling of their narratives, created through memory traces and interference. It is through rehearsal that both remembering and forgetting take place. Todman explained rehearsal:

> Rehearsal highlights certain aspects of the story; necessarily so, because this learning of the key signposts is one of the factors that enables easier future recollection. Yet this highlighting also leads to the emphasis of these aspects, adding a further level of potential distortion. Some elements of the story will fit the myths prevalent in the social group... and hence become more likely to be repeated and remembered. Others will not and are more likely to be unrehearsed and forgotten.[93]

Todman underscores how in the process of public rehearsal myths are both created and sustained. The place of myth, or beliefs held by individuals and social groups, in the construction of historical narratives and what is considered as the past has been investigated by cultural historians such as Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson in their studies of the uses of oral history and subjectivities. They underline the importance of myth as a fundamental component of human thought

[93] Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory*, p. 11.

and demonstrate how myth is linked to processes of construction and transmission vital for individuals to make sense of the past.[94]

Roland Barthes, in *Mythologies*, undertook a study of the relationship between myth and its transmission into the everyday sphere as a set of symbols which can be easily understood.[95] One of its symbolic forms Barth analysed was the purpose and effect of what he termed the spectacle. The main purpose of state-organised spectacles at the peak of imperial expansion and consolidation was to project imperial power to its subject peoples and the rest of the world. Such connections between culture and imperialism have been studied since the 1980s as part of the postcolonial turn. Cultural historians have analysed 'imperial' processes at work in both metropole and colony.[96] More recently, historians have investigated the role of space, place, spectacle, and pageant in cementing citizens to the nation state or the 'imperial' concept. John Mackenzie, among others, has argued that such state-

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[94] Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (eds.), *The Myths We Live By,* first published, 1990 (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 4.

[95] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (St. Albans: Granada Publishing Ltd, 1979); first published in Paris in Paris in 1957 and in London in 1972).

[96] John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The manipulation of British public opinion 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); John MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993); David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British saw their Empire*, (London: Allen Lane, 2001).

sponsored activities were an important medium in transmitting the idea of an 'imperial' identity amongst the British people.[97] Eric Hobsbawm pointed out that such activities were part of what he termed an 'invented tradition', which grew to prominence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These 'traditions' were a set of practices, usually of a ritualistic or symbolic nature, which by their repetition both inculcated norms and values to the population and established continuity with a suitable historic past.[98] I wish to contribute to this dialectic between culture and memory by investigating whether state officials used ceremonial and 'imperial' spaces such as in the metropole and colonies for political purposes, the invention of tradition, or cultural amnesia.

An often neglected but important component of memory studies is forgetting. A significant part of my investigations will be how agents 'forgot' to include Black Africans and Caribbeans, not just in the narrative of the war, but also in post-war commemoration which informed their treatment of the bodies of African service personnel. Both Paul Connerton and Aleida Assmann have drawn attention to the

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[97] John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire* (1984), p. 7.

[98] Eric Hobsbawm, Inventing Traditions in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; first published 1983), p. 1.

different ways that people forget and the different types of forgetting, and I will draw upon their works extensively when explaining absence from sites of memory.[99]

Methodology

I will undertake my investigation using a transnational approach to avoid a narrow, national or Eurocentric focus. Any investigation of Black African and Caribbean service in the war would not be served by a limiting framework, which focuses on discourse emanating from the metropole alone. Such an approach would involve acceptance that the nation was not an 'imagined community' but an 'unchanging social entity'.[100] It was not until relatively recently that scholarship moved away from such approaches. Yet, ironically, there is a real danger that, the 'global turn' notwithstanding, popular memory of the wars will remain rooted within a hermetically-sealed national framework due to attempts to forge a new, multicultural British identity out of the remains of the former British Empire. Historians of identity have cautioned against treating identity as fixed. I believe it is

[99] Paul Connerton, *The Spirit of Mourning: History, Memory and the Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Aleida Assmann, Forms of Forgetting, Public lecture at Castrum Peregrini, 1 October 2014.

[100] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 15; Eric J. Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 9.

important to keep relations between the former metropole and colony within critical reach of each other as the actions of one had direct consequences on the other which is why I situate my investigation within a single analytical framework.[101] African and Caribbean perspectives on the memorialisation of their service will be as crucial to the investigation as 'Western' perspectives. African troops are present in the archive only when discussed in dispatches by white colonial officials or officers and so it becomes imperative to 'read against the grain'.

The memory of service of African and Caribbean forces will be compared to British, Indian, and dominion troops within the British Empire to examine the extent of the racialisation of their service. Was racial classification and the construction of hierarchies an intrinsic constituent of British imperial rule or were extrinsic forces at work? In trying to investigate any construction of a collective memory of Black colonial military service I believe it is important to adopt an approach which does not just theorise structures but also recognises the centrality of human agency. Winter has previously argued that 'states do not remember; individuals do, in association with other people.'[102] Such an approach would allow me to explore the agents responsible for the remembering and forgetting of African and Caribbean colonial service.

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[101] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Oxford: Polity, 2002), p. 8.

[102] Jay Winter, *Remembering War*: *The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 4.

Sources

I will mostly use official government and military archives for my thesis. The intention is not to produce another survey of political attitudes but to attempt to understand the psychological imperatives behind decisions which may have led to remembering and forgetting, privileging, and displacement. The main source of material will be the National Archives at Kew. In particular, the archives used will be those of the War Office, Colonial Office, Dominion Office, Cabinet Office and the Works Department. Officials from these offices of state as well as colonial governors were crucially involved in decisions which affected the recruitment and deployment of African and Caribbean servicemen, and their decisions were informed not just by precedent but also by a multiplicity of contemporary attitudes regarding race, class and gender. The service records for the BWIR are believed to have been destroyed in a bombing raid in 1940 so the remaining official documents attain greater significance.[103] I will also use archives in the former colonies of Jamaica and Kenya to investigate the mentalities of officials from both the former metropole and colonies. The former colonial archives in both Kenya and Tanzania have been subject to a purge by the British government of those documents deemed to be embarrassing or problematic to Britain as it tried to hide its excesses and abuses in its the former

[103] Guy Grannum, *Tracing Your West Indian Ancestors* (Richmond: Public Record Office, 1995), pp. 63-64.

Empire.[104] Such episodic purges, have not just occurred in former colonies. Closer to home sensitive files have gone missing limiting the ability of historians to investigate past actions to a fuller extent.[105] It is with these restrictions in mind that the available archives in Jamaica and Kenya will be utilized.

The archives of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission relating to the treatment of African and Caribbean war dead will also be explored. The Commission was charged with the crucial decision of how to commemorate the war dead from the entire empire. However, there are some omissions which need to be taken into account to ensure a balanced thesis. There is no equivalent volume of *Soldiers died in the Great War*, 1914-19, for African and Caribbean troops in the archive; so exact figures of Black colonial dead and missing is hard to establish. Local archives will also be used, especially the London Metropolitan Archives which holds material on ceremonies in the 'imperial centre' and Brent Archives. Lastly, the military archives of the Imperial War Museum, the National Army Museum, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and the Liddell Hart Centre will be explored for any voices of Africans and Caribbeans as a counterpoint to government and military officials in this study.

[104] Leander Schneider, 'The Tanzania National Archives', *History in Africa*, Vol. 30 (2003), p. 448.

[105] BBC News, 'More than 400 government files missing from National Archives', 3 August 2016.

I will focus on spaces and places where there are prominent sites of memory. By space I mean non-specific areas where people are free to imagine and construct meaning while places are fixed locations but also contain meaning for those who inhabit or visit those locations. My employment of the spatial terms, metropole and colony, is in no way intended to represent a binary where the former represents Britain's 'national' community or to signify the hegemony of one space over another but rather to signify different but interconnected, conceptual 'imperial spaces' where the commemorative rituals of empire were performed and overlapped. In investigating the importance of space and place in the siting of post-war monuments, I will aim to move beyond an imperial geography approach where cities with connections to 'far flung territories of Empire' are explored in ways which privilege the metropole.[106] The aim is to situate the places and spaces where monuments were erected within a conceptual transnational framework. Doreen Massey has argued that places 'are always constructed out of articulations of social relations... which are not only internal to that locale, but which link them elsewhere.'[107] Places, therefore, have pasts that are not merely local or national but have global interconnections. Monuments erected in Lagos in the colonial era were created by decision-makers in London and monuments in London were constructed with colonial considerations in mind. Massey also argued that people gaze upon

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[106] Felix Driver and David Gilbert, 'Imperial cities: overlapping territories, intertwined histories in F. Driver and D. Gilbert (eds.), *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 1.

[107] Doreen Massey, 'Places and Their Pasts', *History Workshop Journal*, No. 39 (Spring, 1995), p.183.

places temporally as well as spatially and imagine the pasts of a place within a time frame linked by tradition: 'The identity of places is very much bound up with the histories which are told of them, how these histories are told, and which history turns out to be dominant.'[108] In this way, some places are defined as imperial or not. Their identities are contested.

Within these spaces and places I will investigate whether the belief in the imperial project was a factor in the symbolism of permanent monuments at a time when colonialism and imperialism were supported by scientists as an evolutionary and civilizing project.[109] I will compare statuary and other monuments of British, Dominion, Indian, African, and Caribbean servicemen for symbolism and any signs of an imperial racial hierarchy in their design.[110] Were such monuments shaped by processes in 'engagement, attraction and opposition' – the tensions of empire - as phrased by Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler?[111] The aim is to investigate as much incongruence and dislocation as commonalities in commemoration practice.

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[108] Ibid. p. 186.

[109] Laura Rice, 'African Conscripts/ European Conflicts; Race, Memory, and the Lessons of War', *Cultural Critique,* No.45 (Spring, 2000), pp. 116-7.

[110] For a plea on the need to write transnational histories of the First World War see: Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History Of The First World War: Volume I: Global War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 1-12.

[111] Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), p. viii.

Chapter Outline

The first chapter of this thesis is an attempt to explain the imperial military framework which operated in Britain and the colonies. The racialized policies of the British imperial army were determined by the Committee for Imperial Defence in the First World War and the War Cabinet. The members of the bodies aimed to balance the needs for military victory against the maintenance of an imperial racial hierarchy within the British Empire. When Africans and Caribbeans were recruited into the imperial army, both the War Office and Colonial Office ensured that, as best as possible, their service conformed to the guidelines of the *Manual of Military Law*, which determined the conditions of service for all troops. The military service of Africans and Caribbeans was regulated under an ideology which aimed to keep future wars as 'white men's war'. However, during the war, the need for more soldiers and war-related labour meant that colonial units were expanded. The chapter provides a context for postwar representation by investigating how imperial authorities had to balance the deployment of African and Caribbean units to theatres where they would serve among a white population whilst aiming to maintain a strict race, rank, and gender hierarchy. Resistance to such restrictions will also be explored.

The second chapter is the first of five whose purpose is to explore remembrance and commemoration of African and Caribbean servicemen in the interwar period. It is customary after the defeat of an enemy in war to organise a victory parade in the imperial centre. Using mostly government documents, I will investigate official attitudes to the involvement of Black colonial troops in the London Peace Parade in 1919. Within the chapter, I will also explore military representation of the African and Caribbean colonies at the Wembley Exhibitions of 1924 and 1925. I will consider attempts by individuals and groups in the colonies to mediate their inclusion and exclusion in cultural commemorations through a reading of colonial-era newspapers and official documents.

In the third and fourth chapters, I will begin my investigation into the official representation of colonial servicemen in the metropole. In particular, I will investigate the role of the IWGC, using their archives, in commemorating Black African and Caribbean troops. The stated principle of the Commission was to ensure that all subjects of the British Empire killed in the war would be treated equally in death, promoting an equality that did not exist in life. However, despite the pronouncement, I contend that this principle was not adhered to and that a hierarchy was built into the design of memorial and within Commission-designed war cemeteries.

In the fifth chapter, I will investigate the commemoration of Black and 'coloured' South African units and Caribbean units in the metropole and in the colonies. As their treatment by officials was different to east and west Africans, I will explore how racial codification worked in the post-war memorial landscape in Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean.

In the sixth chapter, I will investigate the treatment of the corpses of African soldiers, carriers, porters, guides, and followers in the former theatres of war on the African continent. I will attempt to answer the question I asked in the introduction. What happened to the bodies of African service personnel during and after the war? Why were they subject to different burial and commemoration policy compared to those from Britain, the dominions, India and even the Caribbean?

In concluding, I will aim to prove my contention that the service of Africans and Caribbeans, whose deployment had been racially codified, were included in commemorations in former theatres in the years after the First World War but in ways which represented their perceived differences. In the colonies, where wars were seen as 'white men's wars', it was imperative for the British colonial regimes that they exclude Africans from the commemorative landscape and the memory of the war.

Chapter One – The Imperial Framework

In this chapter, I will conduct a study of the service of African and Caribbean men in the British Army before and during the First World War. I aim to establish whether Black men were racially codified in the military, whether they were treated differently compared to all other units in the army, and their status in an intersecting hierarchy. An exploration of the imperial framework is a vital part of my argument that the negotiation and representation of ethnic ranking had a profound effect on the popular memory of the war.

During the 1914-18 war, Africans and Caribbeans were a significant presence on land and sea. They served as soldiers and non-combatants in Africa, Europe, Palestine, and Mesopotamia and as sailors in the navy and merchant fleets. Once enlisted or conscripted, their bodies were effectively owned by the colonial authorities who thrust them into an armed conflict despite few of the men understanding its cause. The African colonial regiments and corps who will be considered in this study are: the King's African Rifles (KAR), the West African Frontier Force (WAFF), the West African Regiment, the Carrier Corps, African porters, scouts, and followers, the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC), the Cape Corps (CC), the Cape Auxiliary Horse Transport Company (CAHTC), the Nigerian Marine (NM), the Coloured Section of the Inland Water Transport Corps (IWTC), the Camel Corps, the Egyptian, Mauritius, and Seychelles Labour Corps. In

the Mercantile Marine, the service of west African Krumen and east African Sidis will also be examined.

The Caribbean units studied are the West India Regiment (WIR); The British West Indies Regiment (BWIR); the Trinidad Merchants' and Planters' Contingent (TMPC); the Bermuda Volunteer Rifle Corps (BVRC), the Bermuda Contingent of the Royal Garrison Artillery (BCRGA) and Caribbean sailors and merchant seamen. African and Caribbean units were treated differently, not just in comparison to British, dominion, and Indian ones, but also to each other. They also viewed each other differently. Black colonial servicemen held the lowest status in military hierarchies, which were arranged in an 'order of precedence', which ranked colonial units on their importance to the armed services.[1] I argue that the lowly position of Africans and Caribbeans was also determined not just by their military value but also by their perceived relation to conceptual whiteness which was a factor in racial taxonomies.[2] Contemporary views on race science informed the classification of Black bodies. Their perceived status, whether still in service or deceased had direct consequences on the memory of their war service.

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[1] Major T. J. Edwards, 'Precedence of Regiments and Corps', *Royal United Services Institute Journal*, Vol. 101, Issue 601, (1956), pp. 66-75; A. S. White, 'The Order of Precedence of Regiments', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. 5, No. 19 (January–March, 1926), pp. 17-23.

[2] Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, 1971), p. 17.

Black men from Africa and the Caribbean had been a presence in the British Army, from the seventeenth century onwards. Captured Africans were acquired by British regiments to serve as bandsmen, primarily, trumpeters or drummers rather than for combat. They fulfilled this role both in Britain and in the colonies. Unfree Black musicians became a 'tradition' in British army.[3] In the eighteenth-century, there was a craze for Turkish music and instrumentation in military bands with an emphasis on drums and trumpets.[4] This new fashion led to more Black musicians in military bands, often dressed flamboyantly in the 'Turkish' fashion to signify their non-combatant status. A consequence of this development was the creation of a stereotype of Black servicemen as only being fit to play music. However, the reality was that Black bandsmen did not just add exoticism to regiments, they often took part in fighting too, serving as stretcher-bearers or in the ranks, even though this was not their primary role.[5]

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[3] Revd Percy Sumner, 'Army Inspection Returns – 1753-1804', *Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research*, Vol. III (1924), p. 244. See also J. Paine, 'The Negro Drummers of the British Army', *Royal Military College Magazine & Record*, XXXIII (1928), p. 22.

[4] Henry George Farmer, 'Turkish Influence in Military Music', *Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research*, Vol. XXIV (1946), p. 181.

[5] John D. Ellis, 'Drummers for The Devil? The Black Soldiers of the 29th (Worcestershire) Regiment of Foot, 1759-1843', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. 80, No. 323 (Autumn 2002), pp. 195-196; John D. Ellis, 'They were there too – Black soldiers at the Battle of Waterloo', unpublished paper.

During the American War of Independence, 1775-1782, the British appealed to enslaved Africans to run away from their plantations and enlist in the British Army with the promise of freedom. Failing that, they used force to coerce enslaved Africans to join their regiments. Such actions led to the formation of Black military units such as 'Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment'.[6] Other Black units such as the Carolina Corps were posted to Jamaica to serve as artificers and pioneers. When the occasion arose, they were used to quell local disturbances among the enslaved population.[7] A pattern was established that Black units were non-combatant auxiliaries who were occasionally authorized for combat against enslaved insurrectionists or African units of enemy forces. In the late eighteenth century, Black men were sought as soldiers in Africa and the Caribbean due to the extremely high rates of mortality among white British soldiers and the belief that Africans were inured to the worst aspects of the climate there. In a memorandum addressed to the Duke of York, Brigadier-General Thomas Hislop, who pioneered the use of African troops in the Caribbean, complained about 'How dreadfully fatal the Climate has … proved to our European Regiments.'[8] British soldiers, unaccustomed to the tropical

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[6] Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 111-133; Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles; The Loss of America and the Remaking of the British Empire* (London: Harper Press, 2012; first published 2011), pp. 48-49.

[7] René Chartrand, 'The British Army's Unknown, Regular, African-West Indian Engineer and Service Corps, 1783-1840's', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, No. 89 (2011), pp. 118-121.

[8] Roger N. Buckley, 'Brigadier-General Thomas Hislop''s Remarks on the Establishment of The West India Regiments — 1801', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. 58, No. 236 (Winter, 1980), p. 212.

climate in the Caribbean, succumbed in large numbers to diseases such as yellow fever or malaria. The high mortality from these diseases was compounded by a vitamin-deficient diet, unsuitable clothing, and insanitary camps. The figures for non-combat deaths soared and were deemed unsustainable. British Commanders believed the solution lay in the purchase of enslaved Africans at £75 each to serve in a Caribbean unit called the West India Regiment (WIR), and so preserve the lives of white British soldiers.[9] Although, these men were no longer considered slaves under the Mutiny Act of 1807 their conditions of service were different to all troops. They had to serve for life and were placed under the command of white officers and NCOs, signifying their place in a racialized military hierarchy as subservient to whites.[10]

The WIR could only serve in British colonies in the Caribbean and Africa, even though they were part of the British army.[11] Some of the men - such as 'Coromantees',

[9] Roger N. Buckley, 'Brigadier-General Thomas Hislop's Remarks on the Establishment of The West India Regiments — 1801', p. 214.

[10] Brian Dyde, *The Empty Sleeve*: *The story of the West India Regiments of the British Army* (Antigua: Hansib Caribbean, 1997), p.20; a BBC documentary suggests the 1807 Mutiny Act created the first 'Black Britons' but does not explain that they were never likely to see Britain or be considered as British. See: BBC History DVD, *The First Black Britons* (2005).

[11] The Mutiny Act meant that any military unit came under the King's jurisdiction and the Articles of War governed the conduct of that force. See E. Samuel, *An Historical Account of the British Army: and of the law military* (London, 1812).

'Fantees', and 'Angolas' - were favoured as 'intrepid' and 'hardy' by the British.[12] This perception by military commanders that certain African 'races' possessed biological immunity to disease and a 'martial' disposition to warfare in tropical climates predates the 'martial race' theory which came to the fore after the rebellion in India in 1857.[13] By 1800, there were twelve West India Regiments. Black soldiers were still viewed by whites in the Caribbean as barbarous and uncivilised and they continued to be treated as inferior. In an effort to placate hostile white settlers into accepting the existence of these regiments, the British government made allowances which institutionalised inferior treatment of Black soldiers. These concessions, which lasted beyond the ending of the slave trade and slavery, included periodic relocation of black regiments away from the islands, the confinement of Black soldiers away from populous centres, no promotion beyond NCO, and limiting the number of Black soldiers in garrisons.[14]

After the abolition of slavery in 1833, military authorities ensured that the supply of African recruits to the WIR did not diminish. Instead, a 'recaptives' policy

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[12] Roger N. Buckley, 'Brigadier-General Thomas Hislop''s Remarks on the Establishment of The West India Regiments — 1801', p. 213. Despite the wish for specific 'tribes' most of the WIR were Ibos who were the largest enslaved group.

[13] This is argued for in the case of Senegalese by the French. See: Sarah D. Westwood, 'Ceddo, Sofa, Tirailleur: slave status and military identity in nineteenth-century Senegambia', *Slavery & Abolition*, Vol. 39. No.3 (2018), pp. 518-539.

[14] Roger N. Buckley,' Slave or Freedman: The Question of the Legal Status of the British West India Soldier, 1795-1807' in *Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 3/4 (Oct., 1977 - Jan., 1978), p. 102.

was introduced where enslaved Africans were taken off vessels which had been illegally trading in slaves and forcibly enlisted into the British Army or Navy. A clause in the 1807 Abolition Act had permitted such involuntary enlistment.[15] The colonial body dealing with the 'recaptives', the Courts of Mixed Commissions, released the formerly enslaved men into the British possession of Sierra Leone and so provided a regular source of Africans for the British armed services.

At the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars, most of the West India Regiments were wound down. By 1819, only two remained. Many of the former WIR soldiers were settled in Sierra Leone, whilst the remaining regiments were officered by white French prisoners-of-war or deserters, allowing white British troops to be posted away from the tropics.[16] David Lambert, a specialist in colonial military history, has described the experience of Black colonial troops before emancipation as examples of 'martial liminality': as existing against the logic of slave societies. He contends that

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[15] 'An Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade', 1807, p. 7 states: 'such officers, Civil or Military, as shall, by any General or Special Order of the King in Council, be from Time to Time appointed and empowered to receive, protect and provide for such Natives of Africa as shall be so condemned, either to enter and enlist the same, or any of them, into his Majesty's Land or Sea Service, as soldiers, Seamen or Marines, or to bind the same, or any of them, whether of full Age or not, as Apprentices, for any Term not exceeding Fourteen Years .... and every such Native of Africa who shall be so enlisted or entered as aforesaid into any of His Majesty's Land or Sea forces as a Soldier, Seaman or Marine, shall be considered, treated, and dealt with in all respects as if he had voluntarily so enlisted or entered himself.'

[16] Roger N. Buckley, 'Slave of Freedman', p. 113.

once external threats to Britain's colonies receded, Black colonial soldiers came to be considered as lower status and reliable only under the command and discipline of white officers and NCOs.[17] Rene Chartrand has recently discovered the existence of other discrete Black units in the Caribbean which did not even appear on the Army Lists or in any record of expenditure. This suggests that the British Army wanted to continue to use Black men as non-combatant auxiliaries but that they did not want their presence to be made public. These units were the Jamaica Pioneers (1799-1838) and the Corps of Military Labourers (1802-1888). Chartrand has also found evidence of a short-lived unit, The York Rangers (1803-5), which was based in Britain, and raised 300 'men of colour'. He suggests that, because the unit was reserved for service in the colonies, it was unsuccessful due to the men's fear that they would be returned to enslaved status.[18] The consequence of the non-recording of former enslaved status was to create an 'invisibility' of the presence of Black soldiers, sailors, and labourers in the colonial armed forces.

John D. Ellis, who has researched individual black soldiers in British regiments using attestation and pension records, contends that, by the 1840s, the

[17] David Lambert, '"[A] Mere Cloak for their Proud Contempt and Antipathy towards the African Race": Imagining Britain's West India Regiments in the Caribbean, 1795–1838', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 46:4 (2018), p. 643.

[18] Rene Chartrand, 'The York Rangers of 1803-5', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. 80, No. 322 (2002), pp. 162-163

British Army stopped recruiting Black men in Britain and Ireland.[19] His research suggests that there does not appear to be single, concerted decision to discharge these men in British units, but rather existing numbers were allowed to decline before dying out altogether in the 1840s.[20] This period of non-recruitment led to the operation of an unofficial 'colour bar' in the British Army on British soil which remained up until 1914 and was a signal that, in the eyes of the military, Black men were only fit to serve in the colonies in low-status regiments such as the RAC and WIR. They were used primarily to crush uprisings and punitive expeditions in Africa and the Caribbean to spare the lives of white soldiers. The victims of their violence would be Black not white and so racial hierarchy would not be disrupted.

Having established a clear demarcation between the status of white and Black soldiers by the mid-nineteenth century, a debate emerged in the military establishment over whether Africans or Caribbeans were the better auxiliaries. The primary motive for the recruitment and deployment of Black garrisons in the Caribbean remained the high mortality rates for white Europeans soldiers in the

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[19] John D. Ellis, 'Nineteenth Century Culture and Society: The Virtual Representation, Role and Origin of Black Soldiers in British Army Regiments During the early Nineteenth Century', *Black and Asian Studies Association Newsletter*, No. 30, (April 2001), pp. 16-20

[20] Ibid, p. 20. The 'colour bar' in the British Army in this period was not total. See: Jeffrey Green, *Black Edwardians: Black People in Britain 1901-1914* (London, Frank Cass, 1998), pp. 68-70 for the case of James Durham, employed as a 'mascot' for the Durham Light Infantry.

colonies and in the expanding areas of British control in West Africa.[21] The military had no answer to the endemic malaria and yellow fever epidemics that ravaged their colonial possessions alongside sleeping sickness, Guinea worm, bilharzias, yaws, and dysentery. Scientific explanations for the pattern of epidemics were undeveloped, which upheld the belief in Europe that Africans were immune to such diseases.[22] Sir Charles Adderley, M.P., even called for British withdrawal from the continent on health and racial grounds. He argued to a Select Committee that west Africa was 'notoriously unfit for occupation by the Anglo-Saxon race'.[23]

Whilst such thinking prevailed, the WIR played a vital role in garrisoning forts across west Africa. The regiments were also seen at that time as a more cost-effective form of security than local levies who military officials viewed as unreliable and difficult to train. In 1853, Captain S. J. Hill, the governor of the Gold Coast settlement, maintained in a letter to the Duke of Newcastle, Commander of the Cape Coast Castle, that '1,000 men from the West India Regiments, with their bayonets, would do more than ten times that number of natives'.[24] At the same time as Hill composed this letter the WIR's request to fight in the Crimean War was refused by

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[21] Philip D. Curtin, *Migration and Mortality in Africa and the Atlantic World, 1700-1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 103.

[22] Philip D. Curtin, *Migration and Mortality in Africa and the Atlantic World,* p. 97.

[23] Timothy H. Parsons, *The Rule Of Empires: Those Who Built Them, Those Who Endured Them And Why They Always Fall*, (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 293.

[24] Sam C. Ukpabi, 'West Indian Troops and the Defence of British West Africa in the Nineteenth Century', *African Studies Review*, vol. 17, No. 1 (1974), p. 138.

the War Office reinforcing the official policy of not using Black units outside of the colonies.[25] By the 1860s, as the size of British territories in Africa increased, there was a marked change of attitude in the policy of deploying the WIR instead of local forces in West Africa.

There were many factors which led to this change of view. Firstly, as the WIR was an imperial unit; colonial officials had to ask the War Office for permission to use them. In west Africa, colonial governors now thought it more pragmatic to use locally raised troops, such as Hausas. Secondly, the supposed immunity of the men of the WIR to tropical diseases was increasingly questioned by military and colonial officials at the same time as European mortality was being reduced due to the increased use of quinine.[26] Thirdly, views on 'martial races' were becoming more developed after the Indian rebellion of 1857-8. Captain Andrew Clarke of the Royal Engineers provided an example of the changing views. In 1864, he informed the Secretary of State that the 2nd battalion WIR, made up of African 'recaptives', were 'a fine body of men, clean and soldier-like on parade and steady in quarters.' He thought they were better soldiers than the 3rd and 4th battalions, recruited in the Caribbean. The 4th battalion was composed of Caribbean 'Creoles' and were described as the worst regiment since they suffered a great deal from the climate, dysentery, and homesickness. White soldiers were still considered the best soldiers.

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[25] Brian Dyde, *The Empty Sleeve*, p. 147.

[26] Sam C. Ukpabi, 'West Indian Troops', p. 144.

Clarke believed that '200 white soldiers could do a better job than 1,600 men of the WIR.'[27]

Another argument used against the WIR's deployment in Africa was cost. In 1874, after British victory against the Ashanti, Henry Herbert, the Earl of Carnarvon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, declared in the House of Lords that 'a West Indian costs £100 a year, whereas a Hausa costs only £30… we could maintain 1,000 Hausas who would be more effective than 300 West Indian troops now cost.[28] Although, Herbert's pleading was couched in economic language, his championing of the Hausas demonstrated the onset of ethnic recruitment and an acceptance of the concept of martial races in Africa. Sir Garnet Wolseley, the Commander of the force against the Ashanti, was willing to test the pseudo-scientific martial race theory in practice. His first request had been to send for the white British 42nd Highland Regiment who, he considered, bore a 'martial spirit'.[29] African Hausas and Fantes were also in his force but the 1st and 2nd battalions of the WIR were relegated to carrying supplies for the British regiments.[30] Wolseley was a believer in race science,

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[27] Captain A. Clarke, Confidential Memorandum, June 1864, The National Archives, Kew, hereafter: TNA (UK), WO 33/13.

[28] The Earl of Carnarvon, 'Our Policy On The Gold Coast', *The Times*, 13 May 1874, p. 6.

[29] 'Major-General Sir Garnet Wolseley to Edward Cardwell, Gold Coast Forces', 13 October 1873, TNA (UK), CO 879/6/6. See also: Joanna Bourke, '"Irish Tommies": The Construction of Martial Manhood 1914-1918', *Bullan*, 6, (February 1998), pp. 13-30.

[30] Brian Dyde, *The Empty Sleeve: The story of the West India Regiments of the British Army* (Antigua: Hansib Caribbean, 1997), p. 202.

in particular the view that climate shaped the biology of races, and that Africans were 'savages' and inferior to Europeans in every way. The 'savagery' of the Africans defined their 'martial' nature.[31] Reflecting on his adversaries and allies in the Gold Coast campaign, he concluded that Ashanti were 'manly' and 'warlike', because they originated from a highland environment, whereas Fantes were 'weak' and 'cowardly' because they had been 'creolized' and inhabited the lowlands where climate and ecology did not produce men capable of martial traits.[32] His views on the courage of the Ashanti in wars did not stop him from representing them as semi-human, with instincts similar to 'dogs', and 'childlike' in the presence of white men.[33] Wolseley's influential pronouncements set in train a recruitment and deployment policy. His believed that the WIR had suffered 'an infusion of white blood, which … does not improve them physically' and affected their ability to withstand tropical climates. This view led to their demotion in the military and racial order of precedence.[34] In their place, locally recruited African units, under white leadership, such as the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) were established to expand and maintain British colonial empire.

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[31] T. C. McCaskie, 'Cultural Encounters: Britain and Africa in the Nineteenth Century' in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 677.

[32] General Viscount Wolseley, 'The Negro as a Soldier', *The Fortnightly Review*, CCLXIV (1888), pp. 689-703.

[33] Ibid. pp. 689-60.

[34] General Viscount Wolseley, 'The Negro as a Soldier', p. 691.

In west Africa, colonial officials had compiled tables of racial distribution to assist recruitment into the WAFF. They described the southern peoples of the Niger Coast Protectorate as 'debased races' and the Hausa and Fulani peoples of the Northern Territories as the 'finer types'.[35] The British army would have liked to recruit the Ashanti but colonial officials saw them as a danger and a threat to their authority, so they refused to levy them.[36] Instead, the military hoped to enlist mostly Hausa into the colonial forces but were stymied by the fact that Hausaland was not yet fully under British control and free-born Hausa were unwilling to enlist.[37] Colonial and military officials, therefore, had to make do with whichever Africans were prepared to enlist. Military and colonial officials were not able to cultivate a warrior race myth in Africa to the extent they had been able to do elsewhere but Africans could be combatants. Military units in Africa comprised of a hybrid group of men from all parts such as Yoruba, Hausa, Wangara, Grunshi, Kanjara, Fulani, Dagarta, Dagomba, Mende, and Senegalese.[38]

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[35] Colonel A. Haywood & Brigadier F. A. S. Clarke, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden Ltd, 1964), pp. 11-16.

[36] Memorandum on 'Enlistment of Ashantis', November 1905, TNA (UK), CO 445/21.

[37] Sam C. Ukpabi, 'Recruiting for the British Colonial forces in West Africa in the Nineteenth Century' in *Odu: A Journal of West African Studies*, no.10 (July, 1974), p. 94.

[38] Sam C. Ukpabi, 1974, op. cit, p.94. See also: Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, '"Damnosa Hereditas": ethnic ranking and the martial races imperative in Africa', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 3:4 (1980), pp. 393-414.

Despite the expansion of the WAFF, there was no consideration of disbanding the WIR. They were still an important in colonial wars, garrisoning colonial outposts of the British Empire, and saving white lives. Another use was found for them in representing the 'soft power' of the empire at imperial exhibitions and military processions in Britain. In the exhibition spaces, visitors were permitted an ethnographical window into the widely different cultures of the subject peoples of the British Empire. Africans, in particular, were represented as interposed between humans and animals on an evolutionary scale.[39] John Mackenzie has described how they were presented as 'visual living taxonomies' in the 'villages'.[40] At the 'Greater Britain Exhibition', one of the most popular attractions was a show called 'Savage South Africa, a vivid realistic and picturesque representation of LIFE IN THE WILDS OF SOUTH AFRICA.'[41] The show consisted of three parts whose intended effect was for the audience to marvel at the martial abilities of the 'savages' whilst taking relief in the fact that ultimately they had been defeated and subdued by a superior race who were more technologically, militarily, and culturally advanced. The WIR was displayed at several exhibitions and military processions as an example of Britain's civilizing mission and its ability to use loyal and disciplined Black troops in wars

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[39] Daniel Mark Stephen, "The White Man's Grave": British West Africa and the British Empire Exhibition of 1924-1925', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol.48, No.1 (January 2009), p. 105.

[40] John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire,* p. 105.

[41] Ben Shephard, 'Showbiz Imperialism: the case of Peter Lobengula' in John M. MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 94-112.

outside Europe.[42] The regiment had previously appeared at many world fairs in the late nineteenth-century as band musicians in their new 'Zouave' uniforms designed by Queen Victoria. Their visually striking uniform of a turban wrapped around a fez, red waistcoat with yellow braiding, and blue pantaloons codified them as exotic 'others' compared to even their white officers who wore more practical military attire.[43] Members of the regiment participated in the military procession at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1897 and Edward VII's coronation in 1902. The WIR were often displayed in direct comparison to other African native groups who were not seen as developed or advanced as the Caribbean troops.[44] The appearance of the regiment at these spectacles also resurrected the stereotype of some Black soldiers as only capable of playing music and non-combatant roles.

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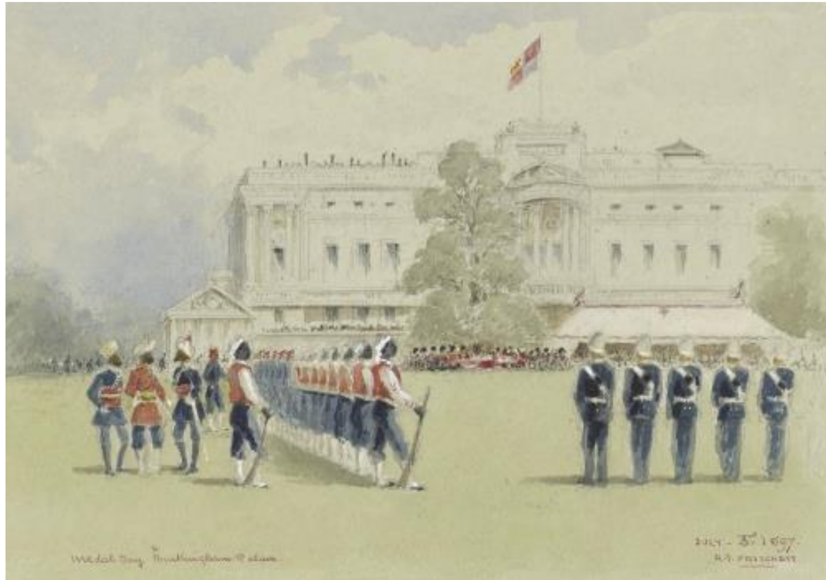
[42] Melissa Bennett, 'Picturing the West India Regiments: Race, Empire, and Photography c.1850-1914', PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2018, p. 26.

[43] W. D. Cribbs, 'Campaign Dress of the West India Regiments, *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. 70, No. 283 (Autumn 1992), pp. 174-188.

[44] Melissa Bennett, '"Exhibits with real colour and interest": representations of the West India Regiment at Atlantic World's Fairs', *Slavery & Abolition*, Vol. 39:3 (2018), pp. 558-577.



1.1 Painting of the WIR at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee procession in London, 1897 by Robert Pritchett.[45]

At the coronation of King Edward VII, in 1902, commentators and journalists frequently commented on the 'black skins' of the native African soldiers in the procession from the 'Dark Continent' noting that they were 'the descendants of West Indian slaves.'[46] Apart from the Royal Family and the British troops, the crowd's excitement was generated by the appearance of colonial troops and, in particular, Sudanese troops of the KAR who marched the whole route of the procession barefoot.[47]

[45] 'Distribution of medals to colonial troops', 3 July 1897, The Royal Collection, RCIN 920904/ DM 4491.

[46] John Edward Courtenay Bodley, *The Coronation of Edward the Seventh: A Chapter of European and Imperial History* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1911), p. 227.

[47] 'The Prince and the Colonial Contingents', The *Times*, 2 July 1902, p. 12.

1.2 ‘Unidentified Sergeant and Three Privates of the King’s African Rifles’: Photograph of African soldiers at King Edward VII’s coronation in London 1902: National Portrait Gallery x125434.

White officers and NCOs

The role and behaviour of white British officers and NCOs were vital in maintaining white supremacy in the colonial military and the most immediate representation of racial superiority and hierarchy in the armed forces. Lord Lugard, the Officer-Commanding of the WAFF viewed African soldiers under his charge as ‘savages’.[48] His successor, General James Wilcox, spoke to his African soldiers ‘like one would to children’ and ‘found it judicious never to give the coloured man an idea that his assistance was sought against other white men, no matter to what race

[48] ‘Lord Lugard to Under-Secretary of State to the Colonies’, 26th July 1898, TNA (UK), CO 445/1.

they belonged.'[49] Africans enlisted into colonial military formations were designated as 'native', the lowest in status, and not only perceived as inferior but treated as inferior in every respect.[50] The pay of a native NCO was significantly less than their European counterparts.[51] They were supplied and fed less than Indian or white British soldiers.[52] They had to serve as batmen for their white officers, which was a job usually given to the white other ranks.[53] There is evidence that punishments for misdemeanours committed by African soldiers were far more severe than for white British servicemen. They were routinely flogged on the buttocks, a practice which had been outlawed in the British Army in 1881.[54] The primary purpose of African troops remained to preserve white lives in colonial wars. Dr Felix Roth, a surgeon on the 'punitive expedition' in Benin in 1897, describes how 'our black troops, with the

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[49] General Sir James Wilcox, *The Romance of Soldiering & Sport* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1925), pp. 103; 150.

[50] 'Native' was a separate status to 'Colonial' which was previously used to describe white settlers.

[51] Conditions of Service for British Warrant and Non-Commissioned Officers of the West African Frontier Force, African (West), no 554, dated March 1898, TNA (UK), CO 879/53.

[52] David Killingray, 'The Idea of a British Imperial Army', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 20, No.3, (Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 421.

[53] Melissa Bennett, PhD thesis, University of Warwick (2018), pp. 88-89.

[54] Captain Goldie-Taubman complains that he has been singled out for criticism for ordering the flogging of African troops, which he claims is a common practice, in a letter to Lt. Colonel Pilcher on 19.1.1898 in TNA (UK), CO 445/1. See also: David Killingray, 'The "Rod of Empire": The Debate over Corporal Punishment in the British African Colonial Forces, 1888-1946', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (1994), pp. 201-216. Killingray notes the excessive violence against native African troops in the era of new imperialism.

scouts in front and a few maxims, do all the fighting.' He continued 'Luckily no white man was hit...'.[55] Similar to other texts from the period, Roth only accounts for white European casualties in his reports. Black casualties were rarely included in war diaries, gazettes, newspapers, and field reports. Information on whether African troops had marked or unmarked graves was routinely absent.

'White men's wars'

As a concept, imperial defence emerged out of the steady growth of the British Empire in the era of 'new imperialism'. The new acquisitions needed to be defended and maintained. The question was by whom? The self-governing colonies or 'white' dominions increasingly sought more responsibility but were not necessarily willing to pay for defence costs. The Colonial Defence Committee was established in 1885 and decreed that self-governing colonies should contribute to the upkeep of naval stations and harbour facilities, which the Royal Navy would be required to protect in times of emergency.[56] British naval power would be the main guarantor of the security of the empire. The British army and the Indian army would provide land forces and, if necessary, the two armies would be supplemented by the

[55] Henry Ling Roth, *Great Benin: Its Customs, Art and Horrors*, (Halifax: F. King & Sons, Ltd, 1903), Appendix, p. vii.

[56] Franklyn A. Johnson, *Defence by Committee: The British Committee of Imperial Defence 1885-1959*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 18.

naval and military forces of the dominions.[57] In this way, a new tripartite system of military power was established between Britain, the dominions, and India. Using Britain's Black colonial forces for tasks beyond policing and punitive expeditions was not considered.

Colonial defence arrangements were revised after the disastrous performance of British forces in the Second South African War of 1899-1902. The urge for a new strategy was partly shaped by the positive voluntary contributions during the conflict from the dominions of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand; and from Indian non-combatants on the side of the British.[58] John Maynard, an Australian First Nation historian, reminds us that not all the imperial forces who volunteered were white: among them there were indigenous Australians, Maoris from New Zealand, and First Nation scouts from Canada.[59] Yet it was the participation of white volunteers which was publicly acknowledged and ensured that the imperial dimension would be a consideration in future conflicts. Despite the war being

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[57] Ashley Jackson, *Distant Drums; The Role Of Colonies In British Imperial Warfare*, (Sussex, Academic Press, 2010), p. 13.

[58] Douglas Edward Delaney, *The Imperial Army Project: Britain and the Land Forces of the Dominions and India, 1902-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 15; Vahed Goolam, 'Indians in the White Man's War, 1899-1902', *South African Archives Journal*, Vol. 41 (1999/2000), pp. 49-55.

[59] John Maynard, 'Let us go' ... it's a 'Blackfellows' War': Aborigines and the Boer War', *Aboriginal History*, Vol. 39 (2015), pp. 143-162.

described as a 'white man's war' by imperial historians such as Charles Prestwood Lucas and others, Black Africans were involved in all aspects of the war.[60]

Peter Warwick has estimated at least 30,000 Black Africans served with the British army in the South African War, with another 100,000 involved as scouts, spies, guards, servants, and messengers. At least 14,000 lost their lives, either in fighting or through incarceration in concentration camps.[61] A major reason the war became known as a 'white man's war' was due to the lengths British military officials went to deny African involvement. The erasure was led by high profile military figures such as Major-General Robert Baden-Powell, the commander of British forces in the siege of Mafeking from 1899-1900, and whose exploits had made him a national hero in Britain.[62] During the siege, he had received a letter from an Afrikaner Commander, General Piet Kronje, accusing him of arming Basters, Fingos, and Baralongs, who had been ordered by Baden-Powell to defend the town. Kronje petitioned him to 'pause and even at this 11th hour, reconsider the matter and even if it costs you the loss of Mafeking, to disarm your blacks and thereby act the part of a white man in a white man's war.'[63] Baden-Powell replied to Kronje that he was not

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[60] Charles Prestwood Lucas, *The Empire at War, Volume I*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 302.

[61] Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War 1899-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); John L. Comaroff (ed.), *The Boer War diary of Sol T. Plaatje: An African at Mafeking* (London: Macmillan, 1973).

[62] W. Francis Aitken, *Baden-Powell: The Hero of Mafeking* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1900).

[63] Sol T. Plaatje, *The Boer War Diary*, pp. 33-5.

using Black troops. During the war, the participation of the Baralong in the defence of Mafeking had been censored in the newspapers and, after the war, their service was written out of the official histories. Baden-Powell denied they had been involved in any military operations, although he admitted arming them for self-defence. He claimed, untruthfully, that they had run away once he had done so. They did not receive war medals or other forms of compensation for their losses. The 'Coloured Contingent' and Mfengu peoples, who were mixed-heritage Christian allies of the British and who had also served at Makefing, both received medals.[64] The contrasting treatment was partly due to a political divide-and-rule strategy, but there was also the belief in South Africa that Black Africans were racially inferior, even to other 'coloured' Africans, and so the military conspired to write them out of the memory of the war.

Many Africans noted and contested the description of the war as white-only. During the siege of Mafeking, Chief Montshiwa of the Baralong had appealed to the magistrate to arm his men (which the British eventually did). Sol Plaatje, who at this time worked for the town magistrate, kept a diary of the siege, and described the negotiations with the Chief:

> He [the Magistrate] replied … that it was a white man's war, and that if the enemy came, his majesty's white troops would do all the fighting and protect the territories of the Chiefs… Chief Montshiwa … went round the magistrates

[64] Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War 1899-1902,* p. 50.

chair and crouching behind him said: 'let us say, for the sake of argument, that your assurances are genuine, and that when trouble begins we hide behind your back like this, and, rifle in hand, you do all the fighting because you are white; Let us say, further, that some Dutchman appear on the scene and they outnumber and shoot you: what would be our course of action then? Are we to run home, put on skirts and hoist the white flag?'

At this point, the Chief showed his bullet scars from a previous Afrikaner-Baralong war. Montshiwa continued: 'until you can satisfy me that his majesty's white troops are impervious to bullets, I am going to defend my own wife and children. I have got my rifle at home and all I want is ammunition.'[65] His request was eventually granted.

Nevertheless, after the war, it was psychologically and political important for the prestige of white British and Afrikaner settlers to represent the conflict as 'white'. Africans were disarmed and Clause Eight of the Treaty of Vereeniging, which ended the war in 1902, resolved that no decision be made on extending political rights to Black Africans until Afrikaner self-government had been achieved. This left the Black population unable to resist the legal segregation, colour bars, and exploitative labour conditions, all of which became institutionalised when the Union of South Africa was created in 1910.[66] The hopes of Black Africans were crushed in the

[65] Sol T. Plaatje, *The Boer War Diary*, p. 31.

[66] Ibid. pp. 164-5.

aftermath of the war which was a satisfactory outcome for the British High Commissioner in South Africa, Lord Alfred Milner. In 1897, he had strategized 'You have only to sacrifice "the nigger" absolutely and the game is easy.'[67] Milner strongly advocated post-war Anglo-Afrikaner solidarity and, ultimately, imperial federation. The creation of a myth of a 'white man's war' in South Africa, where black Africans did not assist whites in a meaningful way, thereby diminishing their status, was an important cultural construct in fomenting a national identity for the new white dominion of South Africa within the British Empire. White racial solidarity was also promoted across Britain's self-governing colonies as an idea capable of establishing and maintaining the British Empire. Such was its perceived value in forging unity among whites that it was integrated into official British military policy.

The Committee for Imperial Defence

The move to greater military collaboration between Britain and the dominions came in 1902, in the aftermath of the Second South African War, when the Colonial Defence Committee was replaced by the Committee for Imperial Defence (CID). The key difference to its predecessor was that it was a permanent structure with its own secretariat (including statesmen from the dominions), alongside cabinet members, military leaders, and civil servants. A key decision of this body was to form an Imperial General Staff to co-ordinate all aspects of imperial defence in any future

[67] Lord Alfred Milner to H. H. Asquith, 18 November 1897, The Asquith Papers, CMD ID 12629, the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

conflict with a European power. Smaller versions of the General Staff were established in the dominions. Thus, wartime imperial collaboration was institutionalised with the proviso that the dominions accept British leadership in military and foreign affairs ensuring the maintenance of imperial hierarchy.[68] The Secretary of State for the Colonies attended the committee meetings, but Black servicemen were not accorded a key role.[69] The CDC proclaimed that:

> 'The main burden of a great struggle between the British Empire and one or more states of European race or descent must be borne by the white subjects of the King... Military contingents therefore of other than men of European descent need not be considered.'[70]

This formulation was not just an announcement of post-war military restructuring but delineated a racialized imperial hierarchy with British and white dominion personnel at the top and, below them, the Indian Army and disparate

[68] Franklyn A. Johnson, *Defence by Committee: The British Committee of Imperial Defence 1885-1959*, p. 110; 'European' was a linguistic formulation for 'white'.

[69] Ashley Jackson, *Distant Drums*, p. 2.

[70] "Colonial Troops for Imperial Service in War: Memorandum by the Colonial Defence Committee, prepared by Lt-Col E.A. Altham (Assistant Quartermaster General) & J. E. Clauson Sec, CDC, (Department of the HQ staff)." June 1902, The National Archives, thereafter TNA (UK): CO 14682; WO 091/2242 No. 293 M.

Black units such as the WIR, the KAR, and the WAFF.[71] The CID maintained African militia forces in east and west Africa at the minimum level necessary to maintain internal order, and to guard and extend frontiers. They would not consider sending European troops to Africa despite warnings of potential German aggression. White men would be needed closer to home.[72] The CID view was that African forces would have to do their best and, if necessary, Indian troops or local white volunteers could be raised in an emergency. The issue of the African colonies would be dealt with by victory in the 'main theatre' – Europe - or at a peace conference thereby relegating Africa to 'sideshow' status. Requests to increase the number of KAR or WAFF were ignored.

The First World War and racial deployment

At the start of the First World War, the balance between expediency and racial codification was outlined in the British Army's *Manual of Military Law*, which explained that 'Troops formed of coloured individuals belonging to savage tribes and barbarous races should not be employed in a war between civilised states.'[73] The War Office classification of Africans as 'savage' and 'barbarous' is consistent with

[71] Timothy H. Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), p. 1.

[72] 'The Position of the East and West African Protectorates in the Event of War with a European Power', May 1911, TNA (UK), CAB 38/17.

[73] War Office, *Manual of Military Law* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1914), p. 242.

views of their commanders and accommodates the construct of a 'white man's war'. However, dispensation to enlist Asians, Caribbeans, and Africans, should they be needed, was recognised within the manual in two ways. Firstly, in discrete 'coloured' colonial corps:

> The enrolling, however, of individuals belonging to civilized coloured races and the employment of whole regiments of disciplined coloured soldiers (e.g. such troops as the Indian Army, the African troops of the French Army, and the Negro regiments of the United States Army) is not forbidden.[74]

And, secondly, within units of 'His Majesty's regular forces':

> Any negro or person of colour, although an alien, may voluntarily enlist … and when so enlisted, shall be deemed to be entitled to all the privileges of a natural-born British subject.[75]

David Killingray has suggested that, although the British Army was 'racially exclusive' from the nineteenth century, attempts to continue a 'colour bar' in the armed services were undermined by wartime manpower shortages and the introduction of conscription thereby allowing Black individuals to serve in the

[74] Ibid., p. 242.

[75] Ibid., p. 471.

British Army.[76] In the colonies, there were different conditions of service between Black soldiers raised within a colony such as the KAR and WAFF, who were under the control to the Colonial Office, and those imperial units such as the BWIR, WIR, and the WAR, who came under War Office control. They could, in theory, serve in any part of the world.[77] In all cases, 'negroes' and 'persons of colour' could not attain a rank higher than warrant officer or non-commissioned officer.[78] The reference in the Army manual to 'civilized coloured races' would also allow the British Army discretionary powers to use lighter-skinned servicemen. The instructions in the manual reveal that the concept of a 'white man's war' did, in fact, allow for Black service personnel to participate in future wars but in a subservient status as auxiliaries and labourers. The War Office also recognised the reality that Black soldiers from France and the United States were 'citizen soldiers' and therefore obliged to fight in all wars.[79]

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[76] David Killingray, 'All the King's Men? Blacks in the British Army in the First World War, 1914-1918, in Rainer Lotz and Ian Pegg, *Under The Imperial Carpet: Essays in Black History 1780-1950*, (Crawley: Rabbit Press, 1986), pp. 164-181.

[77] *Manual of Military Law,* p. 195.

[78] Ibid., p. 471.

[79] Richard S. Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), p.2 points out that French colonial troops were imperial subjects but had to serve wherever sent; in Chad L. Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), p. 5 Williams describes black American troops as 'citizen soldiers'.

The use of Indian soldiers in Europe

Plans for a 'white man's war' were tested when the British government declared war against Germany on 4 August 1914. The announcement led to immediate offers of support by colonial governments. Three years earlier, the CID had made provision for three divisions of Indian soldiers to be sent to Europe in the advent of war if necessary.[80] In 1914, the War Office only accepted offers of contingents from Australia, Canada and New Zealand and declared that Indian troops should be sent to protect the Suez Canal not Europe.[81] However, as casualties among the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in France and Belgium mounted in August 1914, the War Cabinet reverted to its original decision to send an Indian Expeditionary Force (IEF) to Europe which duly disembarked in Marseilles in September 1914. The Cabinet understood better than the War Office the need for an expansive imperial response for political as well as military reasons. The Viceroy of India, Lord Hardinge, praised the decision to end the 'race-based' restriction that Indians should not fight against white soldiers in Europe. The deployment of Indians in Europe did little to dislodge racialised views of their status in an imagined hierarchy. Their Commander in Europe, Lieutenant General James Willcocks, believed that Indian Officers 'can never replace ... the natural instincts of

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[80] Committee of Imperial Defence: Minutes of the 114th Meeting, 23 August 1911, TNA (UK), CAB 38/19/49, pp. 2; 17-18.

[81] John Connor, *Someone Else's War: Fighting For The British Empire in World War I (London: I. B. Tauris, 2019)*, p. 57.

the white man' and any poor performance by Indian troops would not be down to a lack of training but demonstrate their 'natural inferiority'.[82] The authors of *The Times History of the War* represented the service of Indians as 'dusky native troops' being given 'the privilege of taking its space beside British troops' and that the natural instinct of the British was to be 'reluctant' to 'employ coloured troops against a white enemy.'[83]

Their deployment in Europe was temporary, however, as most Indian infantry on the Western Front, except for one Cavalry division, were sent to Mesopotamia by the end of 1915. This was a relief to some members of the military hierarchy. Sir William Robertson, the Chief of the General Staff, made clear his belief that the war should be a 'white man's war'. He wrote to General Foch in May 1915 instructing him that 'French troops must not be 'coloured' in the forthcoming Ypres offensive and that the British had ensured that the Indian soldiers had 'now been relieved by white troops.'[84] After the war, Charles Lucas explained the Indian deployment in Europe more positively:

> The South African war had been ruled a white man's war; a far greater issue was now at stake, and a far wider view was demanded and taken. The

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[82] Willcocks to Hardinge, 30 December 1914, TNA (UK), WO 33/713.

[83] *The Times History of the War*, Vol 1, (London: The Times Publishing Co., 1914), p. 155.

[84] 'Letter from Chief of the General Staff Robertson to General Foch', 3 May 1915, TNA (UK), WO 158/201 w260.

> strength of India was at once thrown in, never so welcome and never so sorely needed as in the first critical months of the war.... As the needs increased, and the issues became more imperative and more clearly defined, distinctions of race and colour receded more and more into the background ... it was little short of a new birth of empire.[85]

Lucas's benign interpretation of events obscured a much uglier reality. Far from distinctions of 'race and colour' receding, as the conflict expanded, colonial and military officials, behind the scenes, colluded to maintain racially discriminatory policies against Black and 'coloured' formations, whilst ensuring such decisions were kept away from the public gaze.[86] When the Indian troops arrived in France, and later in Britain, they found themselves policed and under strict surveillance. What taxed the minds of the authorities was not just concerns over military capability but also the notion that Indians might develop intimate relationships with white women and 'miscegenate'; something they would not allow, not just in the class-conscious, racialised, gendered, and segregated society of the British Raj but in

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[85] Charles Prestwood Lucas, *The Empire at War, Volume I*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 302.

[86] David Killingray, 'All the King's men? Blacks in the British Army in the First World War, 1914-1918, in Rainer Lotz and Ian Pegg, *Under The Imperial Carpet: Essays in Black History 1780-1950*, (Crawley: Rabbit Press, 1986), p. 173.

Britain and the colonial empire too.[87] To many British officials, what was at stake was nothing less than the survival of the imperial project in all its facets.

Indian soldiers and labourers were not the only coloured or black servicemen in the European frontline. The French had recruited north and west Africans from their colonial empire to fight the Germans and immediately deployed them on the Western Front. Their decision was less about 'colour-blindness', as portrayed in official versions of the war, but more to do with the shortage of manpower after the Franco-Prussian war and the desire to preserve the lives of white French soldiers.[88] Other European powers such as the Belgians and the Germans, also saw the conflict

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[87] Jeffrey Greenhut, 'Race, Sex and War: The Impact of Race and Sex on Morale and Health Services for the Indian Corps on the Western Front, 1914', *Military Affairs*, Vol. 45, no. 2 (April, 1981), pp. 71-74; Philippa Levine, Battle Colours: Race, Sex and Colonial Soldiery in World War 1, *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 9 No.4, (1998), pp. 104-130; For miscegenation fears after the war see: Lucy Bland, 'White Women and Men of Colour: Miscegenation Fears in Britain after the Great War', *Gender & History*, Vol.17 No.1 April 2005, pp. 29–61.

[88] Victor Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes to Other Cultures in the Imperial Age*, (London: Serif, 1995; First published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969), p. 218; Richard S. Fogarty, *Race & War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2008); Joe Lunn, '"Les Races Guerrieres": Racial Preconceptions in the French Military about West African Soldiers During the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34:4, 1999, pp. 517-36; Myron Echenberg, Colonial Conscripts: *The Tirailleurs Senegalais in French West Africa 1857-1960* (London: James Currey, 1991).

in Europe as a 'white man's war'.[89] The Germans were aggrieved at the use of Black colonial troops on European soil and complained about this to the Allies.[90] The British, however, did not intend to use Black colonial soldiers as combatants on the Western Front for as long as possible.

Black British and Caribbean volunteers in Europe

Many colonial Africans and Caribbeans were resident in Britain when the war broke out and others travelled to Britain to enlist. Jacqueline Jenkinson's study of Liverpool in the First World War has revealed that one in seven of the colonial population served in the armed forces.[91] There were also many Black British men who volunteered for the armed services.[92] On the same day that the Cabinet decided to deploy Indians on the Western Front, the Colonial Office made an enquiry into the

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[89] Charles J. Balesi, *From Adversaries to Comrades in Arms: West Africans and the French Military, 1885-1918* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Crossroads Press, 1979), p. 2.

[90] In 1915, the German Foreign Office circulated a memo titled *Employment, contrary to International Law, Of Colored Troops upon the European Theatre of War by England and France* cited in Heike Liebau, Katrin Bromber, Katharina Lange, Dyala Hamzah and Ravi Ahuja (eds.), *The World in Wars* (2010), p. 128.

[91] Jacqueline Jenkinson, 'All in the Same Uniform'? The Participation of Black Colonial Residents in the British Armed Forces in the First World War', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40:2 (2012), p. 207.

[92] Stephen Bourne, *Black Poppies: Britain's Black Community and the Great War* (Stroud; The History Press, 2014), pp. 29-61; Ray Costello, *Black Tommies: British Soldiers of African Descent in the First World War* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), pp. 40-76.

feasibility of recruiting a Black Caribbean contingent for overseas service. The War Office rejected the suggestion and informed them that the Army Council 'are of the opinion that the residents of the West Indies will be most usefully employed at present in denying supplies, etc., to the enemy's commerce destroyers, and maintaining order, if necessary, in the islands.'[93] The rebuff was not intended for white Caribbeans wishing to enlist however. Many had already joined British and Canadian regiments with the blessing of their colonial governments.[94]

In Barbados, a Citizen's Contingent, made up of lighter-skinned men, was formed and integrated into British units.[95] The largest contingent of white Caribbeans came from Trinidad and Tobago where 276 men served in a private contingent of lighter-skinned Trinidadians of British and French extraction called the Trinidad Merchants' and Planters' Contingent; their name proudly associating them with the Caribbean plantocracy who had overseen slavery on the islands. In October 1915, the First Contingent of men left Trinidad and landed in England on 2 November 1915. After they arrived in London, they were inspected by the Lord Mayor and were entertained at the Mansion House. The *Times* newspaper described

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[93] The War Office to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, 2 September 1914, TNA (UK), CO 318/333/50055.

[94] Frank Cundall, *Jamaica's Part in the Great War* (London: The West India Committee for the Institute of Jamaica, 1925), pp. 21-22.

[95] Dominiek Dendooven, *The British West Indies Regiment: Race And Colour on the Western Front* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2023), p. 20.

these men as 'white men of British blood'.[96] The Second Contingent left Trinidad on 29 December 1915. They were also inspected and entertained by the Lord Mayor. Between 1915 and 1918, seventeen contingents of Merchants' and Planters' were sent to Europe from Trinidad.[97] The majority of the men served with the 4th Battalion, City of London Regiment of the Royal Fusiliers where they were engaged in combat. The establishment and attention given to the Merchants' and Planters' Contingent demonstrated an official race and class prejudice that operated in favour of white, lighter-skinned, upper-class Trinidadians compared to those with darker skins and considered lower status. Initially, Trinidadian men of 'East Indian' descent were discouraged from enlisting. The War Office declared that their inability to speak English and different diet meant that they would not become efficient soldiers.[98] There is evidence, however, that, as the war progressed and manpower shortages became acute, 'East Indians' from across the Caribbean were permitted serve as non-combatants in Europe.[99]

Bermuda was another island close to the Caribbean where men who wished to enlist for service overseas were segregated into different military units depending

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[96] *The Times History of the War*, Vol 16, (London: The Times Printing House, 1918), p. 77.

[97] Captain H. Dow, *Record of Service of the Members of the Trinidad Merchants' and Planters' . 1915-1918* (Trinidad, 1925), pp. ix-xiii.

[98] War Office to Colonial Office, 30 October 1915, TNA (UK), CO 318/336.

[99] My own grandfather, Private Siblal (16891), who was indentured from India to British Guiana in 1900, served in the 12th battalion, BWIR. See: 'B. W. & V. Medals: Br. W. I. R; B. C. R. G. A.', TNA (UK), WO 329/2327.

on their skin colour. White Bermudans served in the Bermuda Volunteer Rifle Corps (BVRC).[100] 125 men enlisted in this unit and were sent overseas to be attached to the 1st Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment and saw combat. Meanwhile 234 Black Bermudans served in the Bermuda Militia Artillery (BMA), which was attached to the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) and known as the Bermuda Contingent of the Royal Garrison Artillery (BCRGA). Contingents of the BCRGA served in Europe from 1916 onwards in a non-combat role.[101]

In the early stages of the conflict, both the Colonial Office and the War Office struggled to find a suitable deployment for a Black Caribbean contingent that would not undermine their racial codification. Colonial officials employed previous arguments such as cost and climate against a Caribbean fighting contingent serving in Africa.[102] Another suggestion that they might serve in Egypt against Ottoman forces was also rejected. Whilst the War Office prevaricated, many Black Caribbeans circumvented the official reluctance to recruit them by paying their own passage to Britain to enlist in the army. Lord Dundonald informed the Colonial Secretary that 'several men have paid their passage from the West Indies to join Lord Kitchener's

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[100] Ray Costello, *Black Tommies: British Soldiers of African Descent in the First World War* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), pp. 114-115.

[101] Clara F. E. Hollis Hallett and Edward Cecil Harris, Bermuda Contingents and those who served overseas in the Great War, 1914-1918, *Bermuda Journal of Archaeology and Maritime History*, Vol. 16 (2005), pp. 7-72.

[102] War Office memo to Colonial Office, 16.12.1914. TNA (UK), CO 318/333/50043.

army. The lighter coloured men have, I am told, been taken.'[103] The following month, Gilbert Grindle, a Colonial Office official wrote, 'I hear privately that some recruiting officers will pass coloured men. Others however will not, and we must discourage coloured volunteers.'[104] Grindle's comments reveal a lack of official preparedness for enforcement of a blanket 'colour bar' in the British Army. Military regulations allowed for 'aliens' to be enlisted if the numbers remined low and they were not promoted to the rank of officer which was reserved for men of 'pure European descent'.[105]

The separate request for a Black Caribbean contingent to serve overseas gathered momentum from December 1914, when a female philanthropist wrote to King George V suggesting that such a contingent should be formed.[106] The King expressed approval of this view and his Private Secretary, Lord Stanfordham, wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Lewis Harcourt, expressing the King's wish for the formation of a Caribbean regiment. In his reply, Harcourt conveyed the Colonial Office's objections to this idea, quoting verbatim that their value would be 'doubtful'. He stated that, if they were sent to Africa, local soldiers would be cheaper

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[103] Lord Dundonald to Lewis Harcourt, Colonial Secretary, 23. 11. 1914, TNA (UK), CO 318/333/46453.

[104] Memorandum from Gilbert Grindle, Colonial Office, 21.12.1914. TNA (UK), C.O. 318/333.

[105] 'Special Reserve of Officers', *Manual of Military Law: War Office 1914*, (HMSO, 1914), p. 198.

[106] I have not been able to trace the name of the woman in the records. The official concerned wrote of a "Lady whose name I forget", 17 April 1915, TNA (UK), CO 318/333.

to recruit, and that ‘the West Indian negro, moreover, is not much more exempt from West African diseases than the white man’.[107] Harcourt’s letter was then shown to the King who asked Lord Kitchener, the Secretary for War, for his opinion. Kitchener told the King that the War Office had never had any objection to the formation of a Caribbean contingent and that recruitment could begin immediately on condition that they must serve wherever they were ordered.[108] It remains a matter of dispute whether Kitchener lied to the King or that he had confused the proposed Caribbean formation with the WIR in his discussions with George V. Inadvertently or not, the result was that it was now possible for Black volunteers to enlist in large numbers for service outside of the Caribbean. Thus, as Glenford Howe correctly argued, the decision to recruit black West Indians for overseas service was forced upon reluctant Colonial and War Offices and was ultimately a political decision and not a military one.[109]

The new regiment, The British West Indies Regiment (BWIR) formed in May 1915, was, like the WIR, an imperial unit under War Office control, meaning it was liable for service overseas. The ‘colour issue’ was a constant feature in the history of the regiment. This was made clear in a War Office reply to a query about Black

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[107] Lewis Harcourt to Lord Stanfordham, 20 April 1915, TNA (UK), CO 318/333.

[108] Cedric L. Joseph, ‘The British West Indies Regiment’, *Journal of Caribbean History*, 2, (May, 1971), p. 98.

[109] Glenford Howe, *Race, War and Nationalism: A Social History of the West Indian in the First World War* (Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 2002), p. 38.

Jamaican men who wished to apply for commissions in the new battalions. The Army Council, they noted, were:

> averse to any officers being appointed to commissions in the Jamaica contingent who are not of unmixed European blood. If, under these circumstances, the Governor of Jamaica is unable to find the necessary number of officers I am to add that the deficiency will be supplied from the trained and partially-trained officers in this country.[110]

Despite their preference to keep 'aliens' to a minimum in the British Army, the War Office accepted that some 'coloured' men had already been enlisted in the British army.[111] It would have been unthinkable, however, for them to allow any of these black men to become officers, who would exercise command or power over white men.[112] In the defence of a race and rank hierarchy in the army, the Colonial Office agreed with the War Office. The new Colonial Secretary, Andrew Bonar Law, made sure that the War Office's position on the prohibition of those 'not of unmixed

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[110] War Office to Colonial Office, 14 December 1915, TNA (UK), CO 318/336/57697.

[111] David Killingray, 'Race and Rank in the British Army in the twentieth century', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 10, Number 3, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, July 1987) pp. 277.

[112] Section 95.1, *Manual of Military Law: War Office 1914*, (HMSO, 1914), p. 471. In Note 3 of this section, it states that aliens may hold honorary ranks in the British Army as long as the possessor of such a rank does not 'exercise any command or power'.

blood' was telegraphed to the Governors of the West Indian islands.[113] By September 1917, with increasingly high casualty rates amongst officers, some ground on the 'colour issue' was privately conceded when the War Office indicated that they were prepared to accept 'slightly coloured persons' as officers in the BWIR provided that they were British subjects and 'suitable in every respect'. Restrictions remained. The commissions would be temporary ones awarded at the discretion of Governors and not King's commissions, which held a higher status.[114] In this way, the 'colour bar' against officers in the British Army would remain mostly in place whilst making a strategic and limited exception for a proposed contingent. [115]

The War Office recognised that Black colonial men wished to serve in Europe so they enacted a policy of trying to keep them out of British regiments by

[113] Andrew Bonar Law to the Governor of Grenada for forward transmission to the Governors of Jamaica, the Leeward Islands, Barbados, Trinidad, and British Guiana. Sent on 18 December 1915, TNA (UK), CO 318/333/57983.

[114] War Office to Colonial Office, 30 September 1917, TNA (UK), CO 318/344/46724.

[115] Historians of the Black presence in Britain have debated the existence of a colour bar in the British armed forces in the First World War, especially regarding commissions. Walter Tull became a 2nd Lieutenant in the Middlesex Regiment. He was one of five mixed-heritage men to receive a commission in the regular army in the war. The other officers were Dr James Risien Russell, a captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps, David Clemetson of the Welsh Regiment, George E. K. Bemand of the Royal Field Artillery, and John Gordon Smyth of the Royal Lancaster Regiment. This small sample shows mixed heritage men accepted as officers later in the war due to shortfall in officers but does not disprove a colour bar.

transferring them to the non-combatant BWIR, where their deployment could be controlled. In this way, Black volunteers were kept away from combat roles, where they would have been fighting alongside white soldiers and against white Germans. One loophole remained, however. Caribbeans who were resident in the United States or who could travel there were entitled to enlist in the British Army under an agreement with the USA. In doing so, they could expect the possibility of joining combat units. In August 1918, the Army Council, fearing a loss of face with the United States if they asked them to disallow 'coloured' men from joining up, were forced to allow recruitment on American shores to continue but explained the type of 'coloured' men they were willing to accept:

> The intention of the Army Council was, and is, to provide a place in the combatant arms of the British Army for British subjects of colour resident in Great Britain and the United States and also for the better class British subject of colour or half caste resident in the Colonies for whom no appropriate combatant unit exists in the colony in which he resides.[116]

It was not until October 1918 that any consideration was given to forming a combat battalion of Black Caribbeans for service in Europe. Even in this case, there was a condition that any contingent should be 'composed of coloured men of higher

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[116] War Office to Under- Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 24 August 1918, TNA (UK), CO 323/782/41475.

social standing than are usually enlisted in that regiment'.[117] There was also the stipulation that sufficient numbers of this class of men had to come forward before the establishment of such a regiment. As the war ended just a few weeks later it is unknown whether there was any real intention to employ such a regiment in the European theatre.

Such codification ensured that the BWIR would never be combatants in Europe. After the men had completed their training at Seaford in Sussex, the battalions were despatched to Alexandria (Egypt), where they awaited clarification as to what their role would be. There, at first, they were restricted to guarding ammunition dumps.[118] Recruitment was discontinued in the Caribbean whilst negotiations continued between the Colonial and War Offices regarding their deployment. Any possibilities that existing battalions of the BWIR might form a fighting brigade were dashed by the breaking up of the regiment into separate contingents. Two battalions were sent to East Africa, to be attached to the WIR for garrison duties in captured German territory. One hundred men from the BWIR were sent to Mesopotamia for work on the Inland Water Transport System (IWTS) and two battalions were sent to Europe. In France, the regiment handled ammunition for frontline troops, dug cable trenches and gun emplacements,

[117] War Office to Colonial Office, 1. 10. 1918, TNA (UK), CO 318/347/47280.

[118] C. L. R. James, *The Life of Captain Cipriani; An Account Of British Government in the West Indies* (Nelson: Lancashire: Coulton & Co. Ltd, 1932), p. 27.

constructed light railways, and loaded and unloaded at docks, often under fire.[119] During the war, the assignment of Caribbean men to ammunition duties was represented, not as demeaning, but as a role 'their conspicuously fine physique made them pre-eminently suitable [for]' and that the men 'could handle five tons of ammunition were a white man could move three'.[120] Here, the bodies of the men were racialized in manner reminiscent of the days of slavery when the enslaved Africans were characterised as suited for labour only. Even this decision to send two battalions to France as non-combatants was a controversial one. In 1915, when Bonar Law had sided with the War Office against the recruitment of a Black contingent; he had reiterated the official line that 'West Indian troops could not face a European winter campaign.'[121] Now Caribbean servicemen were expected to face a European winter, but as non-combatants. Necessity had forced a compromise, but in a manner which did not disrupt race and rank hierarchies.

In November 1916, a conference was convened in Cairo, where the future deployment of the regiment was discussed. Lieutenant-Colonel Wood Hill, the Commanding Officer of the 1st battalion BWIR, argued strongly that the non-combat role assigned to the regiment was having a detrimental effect on the men who wanted a more active service role. Wood Hill's attempt to secure a combat role was

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[119] Cedric L. Joseph, 'The British West Indies Regiment', p. 112.

[120] *The Times History of the War*, Vol 16, pp. 90-91.

[121] Andrew Bonar Law, 'Question of raising Native Troops for Imperial Service', 18 October 1915, TNA (UK), CO 537/604.

undermined by the officers and NCOs serving with the two battalions in France. They maintained that the men were happy with their task of carrying shells and did not want to return to Egypt. Wood Hill was undeterred by this setback and continued to press for a combat role for the regiment. He wrote to the War Office stating that after 18 months of training the BWIR was battle–ready and determined to show its worth. His persistence paid off and, in July 1917, General Allenby gave permission for a machine-gun detachment from the 1st and 2nd battalions to be attached to a brigade for action at Umbrella Hill in Palestine. This was the first offensive action involving the BWIR. Their 'coolness under fire' and effectiveness in two raids drew praise from their commanding officer.[122] As a consequence, the two battalions were allowed to take part in further offensive action in the Jordan Valley, which lasted until October 1918. The detachment was again mentioned in dispatches. Both the War Office and the Colonial Office would have been satisfied that they had limited the BWIR's experience of combat against the darker-skinned men of the Ottoman army. This was also the case in East Africa where the contingent was mostly assigned to guarding railway stations, bridges, tracks, and Prisoners of War. Their enemy, on this occasion, were the African Askari fighting for the Germans ensuring the Army's racialized deployments were maintained.[123] On the cessation of hostilities in November 1918, all BWIR battalions were posted to Camino Camp in Taranto, Italy.

[122] Cedric L. Joseph, 'The British West Indies Regiment', pp. 115-7.

[123] EA LOC BWIR: Dec 1916 –To Feb 1918: Army Troops, TNA (UK), WO 95/5370/7.

At the camp, the regiment faced overt racial discrimination at the hands of senior officers, who viewed the regiment stereotypically as 'coloured natives' and 'niggers'.[124] They were segregated from white troops, asked to guard ammunition dumps, and given duties, usually performed by labour battalions, such as washing dirty linen and cleaning latrines for the Italian Labour Corps at the camp, despite their recent experience of combat. The order to perform menial labour duties was interpreted by the men as a deliberate attempt to remind the regiment of their inferior status within the army and the British Empire. To add further insult, they were not awarded a pay rise that was given to all other British servicemen posted overseas in 1918. The official explanation for their exclusion was that the BWIR had been reclassified as a 'native' regiment and, so, not entitled to any pay rise awarded to British soldiers.[125] Such a loss of status was bound to cause consternation given that race and status were so closely bound in the colonies. On hearing these orders, several battalions refused to carry out work and fatigues they considered of a discriminatory nature; many engaged in acts of insubordination. The Sergeants also established a Caribbean League to push for political reform across the islands.[126] The response of the military authorities was to disarm the men and imprison the ringleaders. [127] The pay rise was eventually granted in February 1919 after the

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[124] Cedric L. Joseph, 'The British West Indies Regiment', p. 119.

[125] The War Office, *Diary of the 2nd Battalion British West Indies Regiment*, TNA (UK), WO 95/4732.

[126] 'Correspondence', 17 December 1918, TNA (UK), CO 318/350.

[127] W. F. Elkins, 'A Source of Black Nationalism in the Caribbean: The Revolt of the British West Indies Regiment at Taranto', *Science & Society*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring, 1970), pp. 99-103

mutiny and with some urging by the Colonial Office who were worried about the effect of the issue in the Caribbean. Wood Hill later wrote that the 'colour question' was never so much in evidence as at Taranto and never were Caribbeans so humiliated and badly treated.[128] In the aftermath of the 'mutiny', it was decided to demobilise the battalions, repatriate them, and disband the regiment. This was achieved before the end of 1919. The regiment had only existed for four years.

The popular memory of the BWIR in the First World War has overshadowed the long history of the WIR, which had been in existence since the eighteenth-century. When war broke out in 1914, one battalion of the WIR was in west Africa and another in the Caribbean. Both battalions engaged in combat in the Cameroons campaign, mostly carrying out reconnaissance, signalling, and operating machine guns. They also served in east Africa, from 1916-18, where they were used more offensively, operating Stokes mortars.[129] In 1918, they were posted to Ludd, in Palestine, to guard ammunition dumps. In May 1919, they mutinied over the non-award of a pay rise, which had been awarded to all British soldiers, including the BWIR, by this point. Only their white officers and NCOs had been granted the rise. The action taken by the men of the WIR resulted in an increase in pay for the whole

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[128] Lieutenant-Colonel C. Wood Hill, *A few notes on the history of the British West Indies Regiment* (privately published in 1919 for the Institute of Jamaica), p. 10.

[129] '1 West Africa – Cameroons: 2 B WIR October & November 1915', TNA (UK), WO 95/5388; EA LOC 2B WIR July 1917 – To February 1918: Garrison Troops, TNA (UK), WO 95/5370/8.

regiment.[130] The WIR was formally disbanded in 1927 as part of a cost-cutting exercise.[131]

The two Caribbean regiments shared many common experiences in the First World War. Neither was allowed to fight white men in Europe but allowed to fight dark-skinned men from the Ottoman and German empires; neither was considered 'martial' and so viewed with distrust by the military; neither was considered capable of serving in a temperate climate, which ostensibly, was reserved for white European servicemen but was an excuse for excluding black troops from combat in Europe; and both regiments were radicalized by their wartime experiences, and the discrimination they faced, which contributed to the growth of nationalism across the Caribbean.

A crucial difference, however, between the two corps was their perceived status in the imperial hierarchy. The WIR was classified as a 'native' unit and served under inferior conditions, even to those of the BWIR. An indicator of the different status of the two units was the military band of the WIR in east Africa had to perform the music whenever the BWIR conducted their sports days.[132] Indeed, many

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[130] Richard Smith, *Jamaican volunteers in the First World War*, pp. 136-8.

[131] Brian Dyde, *The Empty Sleeve*, pp. 262-67.

[132] 'Confidential War diary of OC BWIR 1.11.16 to 30.11.16, East Africa army Troops – British West Indies Regiment – 1916 July – Nov; 1918; March – September (1918 July Missing) from LOC to LOC', TNA (UK) WO 95/5318/6.

men of the BWIR held the view that the WIR was a 'second-class colonial force' with lower status. When a suggestion of a merger between the two regiments was mooted by the military authorities in east Africa, there was so much unrest in the BWIR that the instruction was withdrawn.[133] The suggestion may well have been militarily pragmatic, but the order would have involved BWIR men accepting 'native' status which was stratified as even lower status. In the Caribbean, the WIR was considered an African regiment. The incident highlights the phenomenon Fanon described as 'epidermalization', where colonial Africans perceived themselves through a racialized hierarchy constructed to maintain white supremacy.[134] Catherine Hall has described how the many layers of Caribbean identity have often been constituted as 'West Indian-ness', a psychic construct which assisted individuals to self-identify as white, 'coloured' or Black, but never 'negro' or 'native', which was considered at the bottom of a race and class hierarchy.[135] Indeed many black middle-class Caribbeans, including some in the BWIR, identified firmly as British.[136] Whatever identity the men self-constituted, amalgamation would have been felt as a loss of status on top of the emasculation the men felt at being denied combat in Europe. In this

[133] Glenford Howe, *Race, War and Nationalism*, p. 108.

[134] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 110-112.

[135] Catherine Hall 'What is a West Indian? 'in Bill Schwarz (ed.), *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 35.

[136] Anne Spry Rush, *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 2.

intersectional hierarchy in the colonies, such subtle gradations in the military order of precedence carried huge consequences for the men in these military formations.

'Native' and 'Coloured' South African Units

The characterization of some African units as 'martial' permitted them to engage in combat against other Africans in west and east Africa. At the same time, their designation as 'native' meant that they held an inferior status to the BWIR in the imperial hierarchy; even though Caribbeans were denied combat in Europe. Such asymmetrical ranking can be explained by considering their deployments as codified under a race, rank, and gender hierarchy. The principle was established, that Black troops serving in the British Army would not be allowed to fight alongside white troops and kill white men in the European theatre of war as this was considered the surest way for Black Africans and Caribbeans to demand equality and self-government on conclusion of hostilities. Black political representatives such as Felix E. M. Hercules, the Editor of the *African Telegraph* and Secretary of the Society of Peoples of African Origin, had toured the Caribbean Islands calling for an extension of the franchise.[137] In Britain's African colonies, there was also deep unease at the prospect of Black soldiers killing white Germans which could destabilize

[137] *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 2 August 1919, pp. 21-22.

white supremacy on the continent, and so there was a requirement for strict control over the Black armies by the War Office and the Colonial Office.[138]

Once hostilities commenced, the War Cabinet requested that the Union of South Africa recruit labour battalions from the local population to provide lines of supply to British and Indian troops in the African theatre. The Union government, like their British and colonial counterparts, believed that it would be unacceptable for Black Africans to fight in a 'white man's war' as this would undermine the racial policies of the newly formed dominion. The editor of the *East Rand Express* newspaper declared in 1914: 'The Empire must uphold the principle that a coloured man must not raise his hand against a white man'.[139] The Union government complied with the British request, however, as any contingent would be imperially funded and non-combatant. The South African military had already enlisted 34,000 'native' and 'coloured' servicemen for their campaign in German South-West Africa in auxiliary roles such as carriers, drivers, and pack animal leaders.[140] The South African Native Labour Contingent (SANLC) was formed in 1916 to meet the needs for lines of supply in east Africa and labour in Europe. The Union government

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[138] David Killingray, 'All the King's Men? Blacks in the British Army in the First World War, 1914-1918', p. 175.

[139] *Quote from the East Rand Express* in B. P. Willan, 'The South African Native Labour Contingent, 1916-1918', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 19, No 1, World War One and Africa (1978), pp. 61-86.

[140] Timothy C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 78.

placed strict conditions on the deployment in Europe including their segregation from white servicemen. Jason Jingoes, an African in the Contingent, recalled 'we have brought the [Bantu] system with us – look at the confusion … caused by the word Native; this word has been written on our lavatories so that Whites and Blacks need not use the same ones.'[141] The men remained under South African military law and under Union officers; and they were not allowed to be employed in the combat zone. The South African Government sent an officer, Colonel Prichard, to ensure that these conditions were adhered to. There were other draconian restrictions as well. The SANLC were based in compounds with six-feet high walls, topped with barbed wire. They were not allowed out unless escorted by officers or NCOs. They were not allowed to purchase alcohol. They were not allowed to enter any French person's house, and they were not allowed near white women.[142] Brian Willan suggests that the Union government' strict control was due to their fear that 'coloured' servicemen might be 'contaminated' by encounters with white servicemen which could lead to the breakdown of the social colour bar in South Africa and foster a united working class after the war. The fear was shared by the British Army. A War Office report in 1915 on the possibility of recruiting and training African 'native' troops for service in Europe concluded that 'the return to Africa of a large body of trained and disciplined black men would be a serious threat to the supremacy of the white

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[141] Stimela Jason Jingoes, *A Chief is a Chief by the people: the autobiography of Stimela Jason Jingoes,* recorded and compiled by John and Cassandra Perry (London; Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 83.

[142] B. P. Willan, The SANLC, p. 71.

man.'[143] Another War Office official, used arguments circulating in South Africa to voice concerns over race and gender boundaries. He wrote in 1915:

> I don't know whether there has been much truth in France with regard to coloured troops and white women but in view of the 'black peril' cases which have occurred on South Africa the Union is likely to be sensitive on this point.[144]

Racially codified deployment also applied to the 'coloured' population of the dominion of South Africa who wished to serve in Europe to advance their claims to full citizenship. The Cape Corps (CC) sent 8,000 men and the Cape Coloured Regiment (CCLR) and the Cape Auxiliary Horse Transport Company (CAHTC) sent 4,500 men. But, like the SANLC, they were employed as non-combatants and segregated from white service personnel. The key difference was that, after 1916, the CC engaged in combat in the East African theatre and Palestine.[145] In each of these

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[143] War Office Memorandum, 9.10.1915, TNA (UK), CO 537/604.

[144] War Office Memorandum, 9.10.1915, TNA (UK), CO 537/604. For the 'Black Peril' or the fear of rape of white women by black males, see Gareth Cornwell, 'George Webb Hardy's The Black Peril and the Social Meaning of 'Black Peril' in Early Twentieth-Century South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 22, No. 3, (September 1996), pp. 441-453.

[145] Albert Grundlingh, 'Pleading Patriots and Malleable Memories: The South African Cape Corps during the First World War (1914–1918) and Its Twentieth-Century Legacy', *Wicazo Sa Review* , Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring 2017), pp. 29-47.

cases, however, like the BWIR and WIR, their deployment was still codified as they would not be killing white men in these theatres.

West and East Africa

Despite the years of pre-war planning, military and colonial authorities, the heavy losses suffered on the Western Front meant that there was no prospect of sending large numbers of white British officers, NCOs, and other ranks to Africa. British military strategy now focused on closing the 'peripheral' African theatre as quickly as possible in order to focus on the 'core' theatre in Europe. To this end, they intended to use the 'martial' forces of the WAFF to destroy the wireless stations in the German colonies of Togoland and Cameroon, whilst South African forces aimed to achieve the same goal in German South West Africa. In German East Africa, a combination of British, white South African, white Rhodesian, Indian, and KAR units were deployed to protect the railways in British East Africa, to capture the major ports, and to force the surrender of German-led forces in their colony. If these campaigns were concluded quickly then imperial hierarchies in Africa would have been maintained without any loss of 'white prestige'.[146] The *East Africa Standard* had cautioned that the 'duty of Europeans was not to fight each other but to keep control

[146] Frank Furedi, 'The demobilized African soldier and the blow to white prestige' in David Killingray and David Omissi (eds.), *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers c.1700-1964*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 191.

of the Africans'.[147] As in South Africa, colonial and military officials believed that a conflict on African soil might rekindle warrior traditions, which they had aimed to eradicate. They also feared that the spectacle of whites in conflict with each other would be damaging to their rule but, worst of all, they were troubled by the prospect of Black Africans killing large numbers of whites in battle.[148]

A large portion of British imperial strategy in Africa was accomplished when the military campaigns against German-led *askaris* were concluded successfully in Togoland, German South West Africa, and Cameroon by 1916. The campaign in German East Africa continued however, due to the evasive tactics of the German field commander, Paul von Lettow Vorbeck, who pursued a campaign designed to tie up forces who would otherwise be deployed in Europe. Over 150,000 allied troops and over one million carriers and porters were deployed in the east African theatre.[149] The death rate in the campaign was twenty per cent, comparable to the rates on the major fronts of the war. There is still debate over precise death and casualty rates for carriers, porters, and followers as no reliable figures were kept by the military or colonial governments. It is also clear that African carriers were firmly

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[147] *The East Africa Standard*, 22 August 1914, quoted in Donald C. Savage and J. Forbes Munro, 'Carrier Corps Recruitment in the British East Africa Protectorate 1914-1918', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1966), p. 314.

[148] Huw Strachan, *The First World War in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 2.

[149] Edward Paice, *Tip & Run: The Untold Tragedy Of The Great War In Africa* (London: Phoenix, 2008; first published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007), p. 6.

at the bottom of the imperial racial hierarchy and were used in place of pack animals and motor vehicles. They were expected to carry 50 – 60 lbs a day for indefinite periods, on meagre rations, which severely debilitated the men and resulted in a high fatality rate.[150] They were also forcibly conscripted in ways comparable to the era of slavery. A District Commissioner wrote how a call for carriers resulted in only three volunteers, whereupon the police 'raided the town by night and under the exigencies of martial law forcibly collected 200.'[151] Like the African soldiers, carriers were routinely given twenty-five lashes of the whip for disobedience.[152] Conscription was formalized through the 1915, Native Followers' Recruitment Ordinance.[153] Estimates for carrier deaths in the campaign range from 70,000 to 200,000: a casualty rate higher than those for dominion and Indian forces combined in all theatres.[154] In 1934, a Colonial Office official remarked on the high casualty rate

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[150] David Killingray and James Matthews, 'Beasts of Burden: British West African Carriers in the First World War', *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Vol.13, No. 1/2 (1979), pp. 7-23; Geoffrey Hodges, *The Carrier Corps: Military Labor in the East African Campaign, 1914-1918* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 143.

[151] Mervyn Beech, District Commissioner in Malindi, 4 March 1915, quoted in Donald C. Savage and J. Forbes Munro, 'Carrier Corps Recruitment in the British East Africa Protectorate 1914-1918', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1966), p. 317.

[152] Interview with Dinala Ndala in Melvin E. Page, *Chiwaya War Voices: Malawian Oral Histories of the Great War* (Rickmansworth: TSL Publications, 2021), p. 4.

[153] Ibid., p. 320.

[154] Huw Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, p.2; G. W. T. Hodges, 'African Manpower Statistics for the British Forces in East Africa, 1914-1918', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 19, No. 1, World War I and Africa (1978), pp. 101-116.

among African non-combatants, stating bluntly that the 'rate of mortality in East Africa only stopped short of a scandal because the people who suffered most were the carriers - and after all, who cares about native carriers?'[155]

There was no intention to use the KAR in a leading role at the start of the campaign in east Africa. Indian forces, and later, white South Africans, were intended to do the bulk of the fighting, albeit supported by African troops, carriers, scouts, and porters. The latter were indispensable in maintaining lines of supply in the African bush. By the end of 1916, years of campaigning by the Allied forces had not led to the defeat of the German-led *askaris*. Indians, white British, Rhodesian, and South African soldiers suffered high casualty rates, due as much to tropical illness as to wounds inflicted by fighting. Under these circumstances, the military authorities decided to repatriate them and replace them with African soldiers and increased levies of auxiliaries and carriers.[156] Thereafter, a policy of 'Africanisation' was pursued whereby African troops would bear the brunt of the fighting until its

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[155] A. J. Fiddian, 'RWAFF and KAR: appointment of Inspector General', 19 May 1934, TNA (UK), CO 820/17/3.

[156] For example, as white Rhodesian forces were sent elsewhere, they were replaced by native units. See: Tim Stapleton, 'The Composition of the Rhodesia Native Regiment during the First World War: A Look at the Evidence', *History in Africa*, Vol. 30 (2003), pp. 283-295; Tim Stapleton, *No Insignificant Part: The Rhodesia Native Regiment and the East Africa Campaign of the First World War* (Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006).

conclusion.[157] The official historian of the war, Charles Lucas admitted that, after 1916, the allies were 'determined to use as few white troops as possible'.[158]

From 1917, the way the war in the African theatre was represented by officials began to change too. Previously, African involvement had been explained in terms of loyalty to the British whose actions 'won their sympathy and even their gratitude; because they are intelligent enough to perceive that we are fighting on the side of liberty for mankind'.[159] In that year, the CID reported on the campaigns in Togoland and the Cameroons. They acknowledged that the bulk of the fighting was carried out in these territories by over 6,500 'mostly black' troops with some Indian involvement, and the assistance of 8,000 French African troops.[160] Official reports of the east African Campaign understated the Black African contribution. General Smuts, who had earlier commanded the campaign in East Africa, and was now a member of the newly-constituted Imperial War Cabinet, represented a picture of an invaluable white South African contribution above all others.[161] Union forces had departed the East African campaign, not because of high casualty figures in the

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[157] Huw Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, p. 165.

[158] Charles Lucas (ed.), *The Empire At War, Volume IV*, p. 182.

[159] Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Black Man's Part In The War: An Account of the Dark-Skinned Population of the British Empire; How it is and will be affected by the Great War; and the Share it has Taken in Waging that War* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Ltd, 1917), p. 10.

[160] 'Committee of Imperial Defence: Sub-Committee on Territorial Changes. Second Interim Report', 22 March 1917, TNA (UK), CAB/24/3/51.

[161] 'Gen. Smuts's Tribute To His Troops', *The Times*, 29 January 1917, p. 5.

brigade, according to Smuts, but because the job was almost complete, and the German colony now only needed forces capable of 'policing' the territory and engaging in 'mopping up' exercises.[162] The effort to downplay and denigrate the role of African servicemen had begun even before the war was over. The Colonial Secretary, Walter Long, when addressing The Royal Geographical Society in January 1918, only paid tribute to the white South African and Rhodesian troops who had served in the east African theatre. The service of African soldiers was not mentioned and obscured by the language of 'African loyalty'.[163]

Smuts' successor in east Africa, Brigadier-General Arthur Hoskins (a former Inspector General of the KAR) saw the situation differently and expanded the strength of African units from 8,000 to 35,000 troops. By February 1918, ninety per cent of combatants on either side were Black Africans.[164] Yet, at the same time, the CID ignored the large African contribution, focusing instead on the effort of whites. Their report stated that 'probably no section of the Empire which in proportion to its numbers and resources has made greater sacrifices in connection with the war than the white community in that country.[165] Remarks such as these were intended to

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[162] Corey W. Reigel, *The Last Great Safari: East Africa in World War I* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), p. 32.

[163] *Rhodesia Herald*, 1 February 1918.

[164] Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa 1914-1918*, (Harmondsworth: Viking, 1987), pp. 319-332.

[165] Committee of Imperial Defence: Sub-Committee on Territorial Changes. Second Interim Report, 22. 3. 1917, TNA (UK), CAB/24/3/56, Appendix B.

cement British rule over any captured territory on conclusion of hostilities. Even the eventual victory in East Africa in November 1918 was represented as down to white South African troops. In 1934, this version of events was questioned by the CID military historian, Major Henry FitzMaurice Stacke. He used an interview with the Director of Medical Services in the East African Force, amongst others, as evidence and concluded that white troops such as the British, North and South Rhodesians and South Africans, as well as Indian troops were debilitated by the climate and should not be deployed in Africa in a future war unless as a 'useful stiffener to African battalions'.[166] He also posited that African troops were, not only suited to fighting in tropical climates, but better bush fighters than white or Indian troops. He suggested learning the lessons of the campaigns against the French in the Caribbean in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, where African troops did the fighting. He claimed that after the eventual expansion of the KAR to twenty-two battalions it was 'Those battalions actually finished the war, bearing the whole brunt of the fighting during 1918'. In the accompanying notes, it appears Major Stacke was reminded of the official explanation for failure to defeat the Germans in east Africa,

[166] The East African Campaign 1914-1918 – A lesson learnt about the suitability of different types of troops for warfare in East Africa by Maj. H. FitzM Stacke, Military Branch, 16 July 1934, TNA (UK), CAB 48/27.

which was the higher ratio of white officers to 'natives' in German forces and their 'white cadre'.[167]

The racial and cultural representation of Africans was also much more overtly pseudo-scientific in official and non-official publications than for Caribbean and 'coloured' service personnel. Black African troops were characterized as 'savage' and 'pagan' and 'loyal'. Journalists in *The Times* described 'pagan natives' from the 'dark continent' as 'British' due to their loyal support for the war.[168] Later, readers were reminded that 'natives were still, as they had been in those old days, pagans liable to outbursts of barbarous fetishism, when a cannibal banquet would have excited qualms neither of conscience nor appetite.'[169] In *Blackwood's Magazine*, an article called 'The Apes at Sea' was penned by an officer in the WAFF in 1918, who revealed that officers referred to the African rank and file as 'apes' and portrayed the men from Nigeria in terms of the worst racial stereotypes.[170] Another soldier, Captain Downes of the Nigerian Regiment, wrote in his war diary, when supervising the men of the WAFF on shore leave in Durban:

[167] The East African Campaign 1914-1918 – A lesson learnt about the suitability of different types of troops for warfare in East Africa by Maj. H. FitzMaurice Stacke, Military Branch, 16 July 1934, TNA (UK), CAB 48/27.

[168] *The Times History of the War*, Vol 16, (London: The Times Printing House, 1918), p. 435.

[169] Ibid., p. 446.

[170] Ba-Ture, 'The Apes at Sea', *Blackwood's Magazine*, 202 (January – June 1918), pp. 539-548. 'Ba Ture' was a name given to a camp commander.

‘The monkeys in the Zoo never failed to please their black soldier cousins. To me there is nothing more amusing than to watch a black man with an ape, making faces at each other; one then realizes that there must be something in Darwin’s theory’.[171]

The prospect of African troops serving outside colonies

The success of African troops from 1917 onwards made some officials advocate for the deployment of a Black African army in Europe to save white lives.[172] In 1916, the War Office had contacted the Colonial Office proposing the use of 6,000 African non-combatants for supplying the siege battalions of the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) with ammunition. This request was robustly declined by the Colonial Office. In his rejection, John Flood, a Clerk at the Colonial Office wrote ‘I think it is high time that the War Office were told that the idea of collecting a huge force from the thinly populated West African colonies is chimerical.’ He then added, ‘in any case we could not agree to let West African Negroes be murdered by France’s winter climate simply to make an RGA holiday’. Later in the memorandum, Flood

[171] W D Downes, *The Nigerian Regiment In East Africa: On Campaign During The Great War 1916-1918* (Yorkshire: Leonaur Ltd, 2008); originally published as *With the Nigerians in German East Africa,* London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1919), p. 49.

[172]See Hansard, House of Commons Debates, 12 May 1915, Vol. 71, cc1623-4; 19 May 1915, Vol. 71, c2314; 03 August 1916, Vol. 85, cc494-6; 21 August 1916, Vol. 85, cc2291W; 14 November 1916, Vol. 87, cc546-7; 20 December 1916, Vol. 88, cc1427-8; 22 January 1918, Vol. 101, cc806-7; 30 July 1918, Vol. 109, cc229-30.

used crude stereotypes to describe 'African Personnel of a similar stamp' suggesting that 'any recruits would probably be naked savages who can't speak English!' Colonial officials had signalled that they were not prepared to employ African or 'coloured' servicemen in Europe, using the well-rehearsed justification of their perceived aversion to a 'cold climate'. However, they were prepared to sanction their use in the 'subordinate theatres'.[173] The policy of the army for Black volunteers from 1916 -1918 was to either send them to the BWIR or enlist them in a 'coloured section' of the Royal Engineers and post them to Mesopotamia where they served as labour in the Inland Water Transport Service (IWT) rather than as pioneers.[174]

By 1918, both the Colonial Office and the Army Council indicated that, in the event of a long war, west African troops might be used as 'a reserve for employment in any suitable theatre in any emergency that may arise'. In the same document, the Council made clear that they still intended to employ west Africans in Salonika, the Middle-East, Mesopotamia and Africa 'but not against Germans in Europe'.[175] With the prospect of the war continuing into 1919, one final attempt was made to follow the French policy of using Africans as front-line soldiers in Europe in September

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[173] Memorandum on the Assistance of the Colonies and Protectorates in the War, Imperial War Cabinet, 1917, TNA (UK), CAB 24/8/2.

[174] The IWT comprised black servicemen from Britain, the Caribbean and Africa. See: Lieut. Col. L. J. Hall, *The Inland Water Transport in Mesopotamia* (Plymouth; The Mayflower Press, 1921), p. 186; 'Grievances – complaints of the Pioneer Section of the R. E. Mesopotamia', General 1918 (Vol.20) Miscellaneous Offices (Jan – Mar)', 29 January 1918, TNA (UK), CO 323 /786.

[175] War Office to Colonial Office, 8 May 1918, TNA (UK), CO 445/45/21634.

1918, when the War Office proposed the use of Black troops in British Divisions. Once again, the Colonial Office rejected their deployment in a European theatre.[176]

Race and rank hierarchy in the Royal Navy

Thousands of Africans and Caribbeans served on warships and merchant vessels in the war. Like the Army, the Royal Navy was organised along hierarchical lines of military rank, social, and ethnic status. The naval order of precedence was established in the *Navy List* which provided the career history of every serving officer, and which was published regularly from the early nineteenth century. The *Navy List* was arranged with the King at the top of the naval hierarchy, followed by every rank in a decreasing order of precedence.[177] Later, as India and the dominions began to build up their own navies (apart from South Africa), information on their officer class was included in the *Naval List*; but, in keeping with the imperial order of precedence, their ranking was found at the end of the book as the 'home' countries were always ranked higher. The Indian Navy and the Royal Indian Marine were at the bottom of the naval hierarchy due to their non-dominion status and also racial ranking. According to the 1906 'Regulations for the Entry of Naval Cadet Officers of the Royal Navy', persons not of 'pure European descent' could not be considered for

[176] David Killingray, 'The Idea of a British Imperial African Army', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1979), pp. 426.

[177] His Majesty's Stationary Office, *The Navy List for December 1918 Correct to 18 November 1918* (London: J. J. Keliher & Co. Ltd, 1918).

officers.[178] During the war, regulations which served to privilege the recruitment of other ratings of 'pure European descent' were eased or altogether shelved for hostilities only.[179]

From the nineteenth century, the merchant navy had come to rely on indigenous mariners in oceangoing seafaring as the extent of the British Empire and trade grew. Different ethnicities were employed under white British officers in different oceanic zones: Chinese and Japanese crew worked on ships in the Pacific Ocean, men from the Indian sub-continent, known as 'Lascars', served the Indian Ocean routes along with Zanzibari and Somali crewmen who began to appear on census returns after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.[180] Crews working the Indian Ocean routes were called 'Seedies' (Sidis in east Africa and India) by the Admiralty. In the Atlantic Ocean, the Kru people of Liberia based in Sierra Leone, men from the Gold Coast, and Nigeria were the favoured choice of ship's captains.[181] Caribbean men also served in the Royal Navy and Mercantile Marine in the Atlantic

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[178] Cliff Pereira, *Black Liberators: The Role of African and Arab sailors in the Royal Navy within the Indian Ocean 1841-1941* (UNESCO website: accessed 4 April 2016).

[179] Cliff Pereira, *Black Liberators: The Role of African and Arab sailors in the Royal Navy within the Indian Ocean 1841-1941* (UNESCO website: accessed 4 April 2016).

[180] Cliff Pereira, *History of Chinese-Canadian seamen in the First World War* (unpublished paper on Academia.edu).

[181] Diane Frost, 'Diasporan West African Communities: The Kru in Freetown and Liverpool', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 29 (2002), pp. 285-300.

Ocean.[182] The war disrupted this system as Asian crew were increasingly employed on ships in the Atlantic. These multi-ethnic and multi-national crews of merchant ships across the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic oceans were stratified above and below deck.

There were economic and racial imperatives at work in the employment of ethnic seafarers on ships which replicated the racial and social hierarchies across the British Empire. African, Caribbean and Lascar seamen were paid a fraction of the wages of white seamen and beliefs in race science sustained a mythology that African seamen were suited to working in tropical climates, more amenable to discipline, and immune to tropical diseases.[183] On board ship, the myth that black seamen thrived in hot conditions justified the segregation of tasks by racial hierarchy. Stokers, firemen, greasers and donkeymen who worked in the heat of the engine room were likely to be African, Caribbean, or Asian. Above deck, the more technically skilled crew and all the senior positions were held by white Europeans.[184] When war was declared, an estimated 8,000 British seamen joined the army and 9,000 foreign nationals now at war with the British and French Empires were

[182] Ray Costello, *Black Salt: Seafarers of African Descent on British Ships* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), see p. 143 for the example of Marcus Bailey from Barbados who served in the Merchant Navy and Royal Navy during the First World War.

[183] Diane Frost (ed.), *Ethnic Labour and British Imperial Trade: A History of Ethnic Seafarers in the UK* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), p. 3.

[184] Ray Costello, *Black Salt*, p. 137.

sacked.[185] Their places were taken by African, Caribbean, and Asian seamen. During the First World War, 193,000 seamen served in the Mercantile Marine. 15,000 seafarers were killed, and 2,500 ships sunk.[186] Exact figures for ethnic seafarers in the employment of the Royal Navy or on merchant shipping; and the number of deaths is difficult to estimate as the entries for 1913-17, Fourth Register of Seamen were destroyed.[187] The position of colonial seamen below decks meant that fatalities were likely to be higher than for white crew.[188]

Conclusion

Black Africans have served in the British Armed forces since the seventeenth century. At first, they held an exotic status as musicians representing Britain's imperial power but, during the wars against the French and their allies from the late eighteenth century onwards, enslaved Africans were purchased in large numbers to fight in combat and primarily to save white lives. During the conflict, the WIR, a Black regiment under white officers and NCOs, was established to garrison British colonies in the Atlantic region, fight Britain's enemies, and to spare white troops

[185] Paul Gordon and Danny Reilly, 'Guestworkers of the sea: racism in British shipping', *Race & Class*, vol. 28, no. 2 (1986), p. 75.

[186] Ray Costello, *Black Salt*, p. 148.

[187] http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/merchant-seaman-serving-after-1917/ accessed 15 April 2016.

[188] Jacqueline Jenkinson, *Black 1919: Riots, Racism and Resistance in Imperial Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), p. 57.

from serving there. In the mid-nineteenth century, Black soldiers in the British Army disappeared but the use of Black troops in the colonies continued due to the scientific belief that native Africans were biologically immune to tropical diseases and were 'martial' in their savagery. Nevertheless, white soldiers were considered the best 'martial' troops in Britain's imperial army.

As European colonization expanded into more African territory, more local colonial forces were needed to control British-occupied lands and led to the expansion of local African units and the denigration of Caribbean units, whose martial abilities, it was argued had been compromised by 'miscegenation'. The WIR, nevertheless, played a useful role in exhibiting Britain's 'soft power' and 'civilizing mission'. In the early twentieth century, the notion of 'white men's' and 'black men's' countries was established along with the idea of 'white men's wars'. The main 'white man's war': the Second South African War, from 1899-1902, however, was fought with Africans in auxiliary roles on both sides. The participation of Black troops shows that 'white men's countries' were not envisaged as white-only territories of empire but as places where whites ruled over Black subjects with absolute power to exploit native labour to the maximum. The racialized military and class hierarchies intersected in this way and complemented each other. When the First World War broke out, it was not possible for Britain to enact its pre-war planning due to manpower shortages. Yet, Britain and its main dominion in Africa still deployed African and Caribbean men in a racially codified way across the theatres to maintain white supremacy during the war and after.

At the war's conclusion, the 'colour bar' at officer rank in the British army, despite a few notable exceptions, had been maintained. African contingents and Caribbean formations had been excluded from combat in the European theatre and Black units who had engaged in combat in Africa and Palestine were still regarded as inferior in status to white soldiers in the imperial army. In 1919 and 1927 respectively, the BWIR and the WIR were disbanded. The WAFF and the KAR were reduced in size and reverted to a colonial 'policing' role. Their war service in Africa was represented as loyal but secondary in importance to the white British and dominion forces, especially white South African troops. The popular memory of African and Caribbean colonial service in Europe, was as non-combatant labour serving behind-the-lines. Caribbeans also served in the Royal Navy and Mercantile Marine whilst Africans served mostly in the Mercantile Marine. They were deployed in all transoceanic theatres but were conferred lower status due to racialized pseudo-scientific notions which delineated where African and Asians should serve both on board a ship and in which ocean. In the next chapter, I will discuss how military and colonial officials collaborated in their cultural representation of the African and Caribbean war service which shaped the narrative and memory of the war.

Chapter Two – metropolitan commemoration of the living

In this chapter I will investigate the representation and cultural commemoration of Black African and Caribbean service personnel in the immediate aftermath of the war by the military, politicians, and colonial officials. During the war, Caribbeans and Africans had migrated to metropolitan spaces as soldiers, seamen, and labourers, disturbing the distance between colonial subjects of empire and the white British population. Caribbean service personnel were accorded a temporary 'British' status in recognition of their war service and represented as such in war propaganda. Would the conferred identity now be reconfigured or permanently established in the aftermath of the conflict? Amidst discussions of 'self-determination' at the Paris Peace Conferences, would the populations of Britain's African colonies achieve self-rule and status as a reward for war service?

The events of the year 1919 afford some clues to the post-war thinking of governmental officials. The year began with economic crisis, rising unemployment, and mass industrial disputes in Britain. In the colonies, primarily Egypt, India, and Ireland, nationalist movements commenced struggles for independence. As well as political representation, cultural representation is also a key signifier of status. It was decided, early in 1919, that when peace terms were agreed, a victory procession would take place in London. Would the event be a continuation of tiered imperial spectacles of the Victorian and Edwardian eras or a more egalitarian attempt to represent victory as a product of Britain's allies and the entire British Empire?

I will also investigate another imperial spectacle just five years later: the British Empire Exhibition, held at the newly built Empire Stadium in London, 1924-5. I will examine how the remaining Black African and Caribbean military formations were represented in the metropole. In my study of these two events, I aim to foreground the role that 'invented traditions' and 'imagined communities' played, along with the role of politics, in embodying colonial service personnel and maintaining the racial apparatus vital in maintaining the empire at home and abroad. I contend that the official cultural representation of living colonial subjects shaped the public memory of the war in the immediate aftermath of the war and established an exclusionary commemorative practice which has barely changed in one hundred years.

Hopes for equality at the Paris Peace Conferences

Did the end of the war signify the beginning of a new world order which would transform the status of Britain's African and Caribbean colonial subjects, including those who had volunteered for military service in the hope of such a reconstruction? During the war, hopes for change had been promoted by some officials. In 1917, Harry Johnstone, a colonial administrator with extensive knowledge of Africa, had written *The Black Man's Part in the War*, in which he chronicled the loyalty of the African and Caribbean colonies and provided examples

of bravery in the service of the British Empire.[1] He recognized that, after the war, British politicians and administrators would need to take account of the war record of Africans, Caribbeans, and others. He suggested some changes which would make the empire more inclusive: a new flag, coloured black, white, and yellow, to represent the races of the empire; an accelerated programme of education in the colonies to facilitate eventual progress to self-rule; and a call for the Aborigines Protection Society to represent the colonies in London until self-government was achieved.[2] Many Black colonial servicemen wanted more far-reaching change than Johnston's tokenistic suggestions. Etienne Dupuch, a Bahamian Private in the BWIR, wanted to see nothing less than the end of racial inequality. In his memoir, he described a life-changing encounter with an Indian soldier in France, who related his inferior position at home. By this point, Dupuch had witnessed many examples of racial prejudice and discrimination against Caribbeans and Asian servicemen which made him determined that, on his return, he 'might be instrumental in helping to break down racial barriers in the Bahamas.'[3] On a larger scale, when a number of battalions of the BWIR mutinied against their discriminatory treatment at Taranto in 1918, a group of fifty to sixty sergeants formed the 'Caribbean League' to promote a

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[1] Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Black Man's Part In The War: An Account of the Dark-Skinned Population of the British Empire; How it is and will be affected by the Great War; and the Share it has Taken in Waging that War* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Ltd, 1917).

[2] Ibid., pp. 116-128.

[3] Sir Etienne Dupuch, *A Salute to Friend & Foe: My Battles, Sieges and Fortunes* (Nassau: *The Tribune*, 1982), p. 55.

Black-led, cross-island federation.[4] Their demands that a 'black man should have freedom and govern himself in the West Indies and that force must be used… if necessary, bloodshed, to attain that object' represented a hope of a less-white dominated, more democratic, post-war Caribbean society.[5]

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the hopes for an equitable world were centred around Paris, where peace terms between representatives of the victors and the vanquished were being discussed. For many Black ex-servicemen and colonial populations across the globe, there was an expectancy that their desires - the right to be treated with dignity, greater freedoms, more participation in government, self-rule within empires or even independence - would be accommodated in the treaties. The person who came to personify these aspirations for greater freedoms was the American president, Woodrow Wilson. His 'fourteen points' offered a vision of 'self-determination' for subjugated peoples in Europe and, seemingly, in Africa, Asia, and beyond.[6] In 1919, at the peace conferences, there was a determined attempt by the Japanese delegation to introduce a racial equality clause into Article 21 of the League of Nations covenant, which guaranteed religious freedom, and, if passed, would

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[4] W. F. Elkins, 'A Source of Black Nationalism in the Caribbean: The Revolt of the British West Indies Regiment at Taranto', *Science & Society*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring, 1970), pp. 101-102.

[5] 'West Indies 1919: Volume 3', 17 December 1918, TNA (UK), CO 318/350.

[6] Erez Manela, 'Imagining Woodrow Wilson in Asia: Dreams of East -West Harmony and the Revolt against Empire in 1919', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 111, No. 5 (December 2006), pp. 1327-1351; Shane Ryland, 'Edwin Montagu in India, 1917–1918: Politics of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report', *South Asia* Vol. 3 (1973), pp. 79–92.

oblige the major powers to proclaim universal equal rights for all of their colonial subjects.[7] The proposal ran into determined opposition from the British delegation, which also comprised representatives from the dominions and India. The most determined to reject the proposed clause was the Australian Prime Minister, Billy Hughes. In his view, the motion would damage the 'white Australia' policy and encourage Asian immigration into the dominion.[8] The British representatives equivocated between projecting the empire as a civilising and democratic project whilst allowing the racially exclusive dominions to direct policy. The British empire delegation explained that their opposition to the principle of equality was based on concern over immigration which was, in their view, a legitimate concern for the dominions.[9] The British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, was more forthcoming in his discussions with Colonel House, Woodrow Wilson's negotiator, when he stated that, while he sympathised with the Japanese proposal, he didn't believe in racial equality. He added that 'no man in Central Africa was created equal to a European'.[10] The Colonel, appreciating how embarrassing the issue might become in American domestic politics where Wilson relied on the votes of the racist southern political establishment, relayed his concerns to the President noting 'the trouble is

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[7] Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality: the racial equality proposal of 1919* (London: Routledge, 2006; first published: Abingdon: Routledge, 1998), p. 6.

[8] Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 290.

[9] Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality*, p. 118.

[10] David H. Miller, *The Drafting of the Covenant* Volume I (New York, 1928) p. 183.

that if this commission should pass it, it would surely raise the race issue throughout the world'.[11] Despite the majority of delegates voting in favour of the proposal, Woodrow Wilson, as Chair of the conference, would not allow it to become part of the covenant on account of the British Empire's opposition towards the clause. On hearing news of the defeat of the proposal, the former Japanese Prime Minister, Marquis Okuma, declared 'Some whites…aimed to organise a "league of white nations" to perpetuate white supremacy in the world'.[12] Okuma was expressing an Asian perspective on the demonstration of 'white solidarity' by Britain, the 'white dominions', and the United States.

Decades before, such a high-profile display of solidarity had been the hope of those such as Charles Dilke, who had imagined an 'Anglo-Saxon' federation called 'Greater Britain', which would maintain white Anglo-Saxon dominance over the world's peoples.[13] The effort by Britain, the dominions, and the USA to derail any threat to the racial basis of their power was formulated as 'whiteness' by the black American intellectual, W. E. B. DuBois. He conceived whiteness as a transnational form of racial identification in the Western hemisphere which aimed to ensure white supremacy in their polities. In his essay, the 'Souls of White Folks', Du Bois had

[11] David H. Miller, *The Drafting of the Covenant*, p. 461.

[12] Marquis Okuma, 'Illusions of the White Race', *Asian Review*, 1921 cited in K. K. Kawakami (ed.), *What Japan Thinks* (New York: Macmillan, 1921), pp. 6-7; 161; 170.

[13] Sir Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English-Speaking Countries during 1866 and 1867* (New York: Harper, 1869).

asked himself 'what on earth is whiteness that one should so desire it?' His conclusion was that 'whiteness is the ownership of the earth, forever and ever, Amen!'[14] In this way, the behaviour of the great powers in Paris did not surprise him and encouraged him to advocate even more determinedly for change.

In the May 1919 edition of the organization's organ, *The Crisis*, DuBois revealed that he had been residing in Paris since the end of 1918 in the hope of influencing the peace conferences. Despite not being invited, he had eventually been given permission by the French authorities to organize a Pan-African Congress there. In this undertaking, he had been assisted by the Senegalese-French Deputy and Under-Secretary for War, Blaise Diagne. Together they organised the Congress which convened in February 1919.[15] The majority of the fifty-eight delegates were from the United States, Britain, Africa, and France. As such, the Congress represented the most significant attempt at improving the status of Black men and women across the globe outside of the peace conferences. The delegates passed important resolutions which they hoped the victorious powers would listen to and pass legislation uplifting the status of 'Negroes of the world'. One key resolution

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[14] W. E. B. DuBois, 'The Souls of White folk' in Henry Louis Gates, Jnr (ed.), *Darkwater: voices from within the veil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014; originally published San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1920), p. 16.

[15] 'Opinion of W. E. B. DuBois', *The Crisis*, Volume 18, No. 1, May 1919, p. 7.

urged the newly constituted League of Nations to act on behalf of the Black subjects of nations and empires:

> Whenever it is proven that African natives are not receiving just treatment at the hands of any State or that any State deliberately excludes its civilized citizens or subjects of Negro descent from its body politic.[16]

Another resolution, implored governments to award 'civilized' Africans more rights in polities around the world but was framed in gradualist language designed not to disrupt existing hierarchies in society:

> Wherever persons of African descent are civilized and able to meet the tests of surrounding culture, they shall be accorded the same rights as their fellow citizens; they shall not be denied on account of race or colour a voice in their own Government, justice before the courts and economic and social equality according to ability.[17]

DuBois's cautious approach had gained him official permission to organize a conference, where universal rights for those of African descent were discussed, but this did not translate into official action on their behalf by the major powers. DuBois corresponded with Woodrow Wilson but did not meet him. The American president

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[16] Ibid., p. 8.

[17] Ibid., p. 8.

did, however, send the African-American President of the Tuskagee Institute, Robert Moton, to Paris to talk to Black soldiers there and to encourage them not to demand equality on their return home or to appear 'arrogant'.[18] Lloyd George, the British Prime Minster, promised he would give the Congress's resolutions 'his careful consideration' but his French counterpart, Georges Clemenceau, would make no such commitment.[19] DuBois had hoped that 'self-determination', the right of nations to rule themselves, would not be a white privilege but universal. Woodrow Wilson, however, was prepared to see the continuation of colonialism outside Europe where the former German colonies such as Togo, Cameroon, German East Africa, and German South West Africa became 'mandates' under British, French, and South African 'stewardship' in return for acceptance of the formation of the League of Nations.[20] In this way, the British and French empires actually expanded at the peace conferences at the same moment that the empires of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottomans had ceased to exist. Now that Asian and African politicians had

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[18] Ibid., p. 9.

[19] Clarence G. Contee, 'Du Bois, the NAACP, and the Pan-African Congress of 1919', *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (January 1972), p. 26.

[20] Jay Winter, *Dream of Peace and Freedom: Utopian Moments in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 50; Tyler Stovall, *Paris And The Spirit Of 1919: Consumer Struggles, Transnationalism, and Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 3; See also: Susan Pederson, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) for the paternalism of the Mandate system.

failed in their efforts to shift the powers away from colonialism and its consequences would the military, at least, recommend change based on the military participation of African and Caribbean subjects in the war both as combatants and non-combatants?

Among the high command of the military, the belief in political and racial domination over African subjects still very much existed. Major-General Sir Edward Northey, the commander of 'Norforce' in the East African Campaign and now the Governor of British East Africa, gave a speech in November 1918 where he aimed to persuade the audience that Britain needed to be in control of German East Africa after the war. His justifications were a mixture of political economy and race, foregrounding the potential of fashioning the territory along the lines of British East Africa for white settlement. He explained that 'about 300 miles from the sea, you have got uplands which are extremely healthy for Europeans, and which can be properly called the white man's country'.[21] In his view, the conquered territory would also boost the British economy. He suggested that settlers would be able to 'grow rubber, wheat, rice, tea, coffee, sisal and many other things that are required all over the world'.[22] Lastly, he lambasted Germany for having failed the 'civilizing mission' in their colony stating that 'Germany cannot; until she has altered her

[21] Edward Northey, 'The East African Campaign', *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. 18, No. 70, January 19I9, pp. 81-87. See also: Hugh Clifford, *German Colonies: A Plea for the Native Races* (London: John Murray, 1918).

[22] Edward Northey, 'The East African Campaign', p. 86.

ways… be allowed to govern a country containing millions of simple natives.'[23] Here Northey and other officials aimed to convince delegates attending the peace conferences that the British would treat Africans in a more humane way than their previous rulers. Lurking at the back of his mind were military considerations such as preventing Germany from threatening British colonies again by using African natives as armed forces against them. However, Northey reveals that an imperium like Britain saw Black Africans in the colonies, first and foremost, as cheap or free labour for white settlers along the South African model in 'white men's countries'. In west African 'black men's countries', another soldier, Lord Lugard, had promoted 'indirect rule' as the best way to maintain British rule over its colonies.[24] In this way, the military, along with politicians wedded to the concept of imperialism, were at the forefront of policy-making in the colonies and were guardians of the status quo and hierarchy there. These same military and colonial officials would also shape the cultural commemoration of war service across the empire and through their involvement in planning committees for victory celebrations in the metropole.

The Peace Celebrations Committee

Along with dominion troops, many Black servicemen remained in Britain and Europe due to hospitalization or awaiting demobilization. The government knew

[23] Ibid., p. 87.

[24] Sir Frederick D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1923).

that a peace agreement would be forthcoming in 1919 and, rather, than let the mass of the population celebrate in their own way when the announcement was made, they sought to organise official 'celebrations' which would not be disruptive to the economy or lead to 'premature rejoicing'.[25] In February 1919, the War Cabinet appointed a sub-committee from their number to oversee when and what form the 'peace celebrations' would take place.[26] The most significant ministers and officials on the sub-committee were those who held strong views on the British Empire and its continued expansion. These men were Lord Curzon, the Foreign Secretary, who was also the Chair of the Committee, Lord Milner, the Colonial Secretary, and George Fiddes, the Permanent Under Secretary for the Colonies. Curzon and Milner have been described by the imperial historian, David Gilmour, as 'zealous, high-minded, and hard-working imperialists'.[27] Fiddes, was a protégé of Milner who, along with a number of Oxford graduates, had followed him to South Africa to assist in his aims of uniting white British settlers and Afrikaners at the conclusion of the Second South African War so they could create a 'white man's country'. This circle of 'race nationalists' became known as 'Milner's kindergarten'.[28] After Milner returned to Britain, his acolytes followed him and continued the project of persuading the

[25] 'War Cabinet, Peace Celebrations Committee', 18 June 1919, TNA (UK) CAB 27/52.

[26] 'War Cabinet 534', 19 February 1919, TNA (UK), CAB 23/9/21.

[27] David Gilmour, *Curzon: Imperial Statesman* (London: Penguin Books, 2019; originally published by John Murray, 1994), p. 247.

[28] Saul Dubow, 'Colonial Nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the Rise of "South Africanism", 1902-10', *History Workshop Journal*, No. 43 (Spring, 1997), pp. 53-85; Walter Nimocks, *Milner's young men: the kindergarten in Edwardian imperial affairs* (Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1968).

white settler colonies, the dominions, and the United States, to form an Anglo-Saxon imperial federation. They established the 'Round Table Movement', which acted as a pressure group and published a quarterly journal.[29] During and after the war, men such as Fiddes were in senior positions in the Colonial Office and able to use their influence to support Milner's federalist aims. They were also well placed to shape the direction of war commemoration in the metropole.

London was the obvious choice for a victory ceremonial. As the capital city of the empire, royal processions and imperial spectacles had been held there on many occasions.[30] The committee asked the Colonial Office to send a representative to their meeting to discuss colonial participation in the proposed celebrations. Unlike the Imperial War Cabinet, which included politicians from the self-governing dominions, the colonies were represented solely by the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Viscount Milner. His Under-Secretaries were Alexander Fiddian, Gilbert Grindle, and Henry Lambert. Rather, than recommending colonial representation at the proposed celebrations, they instead proposed that the occasion should be a 'purely domestic affair' with the possibility of some dominion

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[29] Andrea Bosco, *The Round Table Movement and the Fall of the Second British Empire, 1909-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017); For attempts to apply imperial federation to Britain see: J. E. Kendle, 'The Round Table Movement and "Home Rule All Round"', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1968), pp. 332-353.

[30] Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 29-33.

involvement.[31] Their reluctance to contemplate Black colonial servicemen in the metropolis revealed a racialized imagining of a programme of events, where only white troops would be on display in a 'hierarchy of whiteness', with British servicemen and women having a higher prominence than the dominions in the imperial hierarchy.[32] The proposal underlined the fluid and contingent nature of the concept of whiteness which facilitates, not only the ranking of bodies in a hierarchy of white over black, but also degrees of whiteness.[33]

In their refusal to contemplate the participation of colonial servicemen in the proposed London parade, officials were spurning what Eric Hobsbawn has termed an 'invented tradition' of imperial processions in London in which colonial forces had previously been invited (see Chapter One).[34] The acceptance of their recommendation might have been made easier by an earlier disruption to the coronation 'tradition' when African colonial troops were not invited to attend the coronation procession of George V in 1911. In the official record of the event, the Coronation Executive Committee bluntly stated that 'no black troops (rank and file)

[31] War Cabinet to Colonial Office, 8 April 1919, TNA (UK), CO 323/813/23.

[32] Arne Lunde, *New Directions in Scandinavian Studies* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2010), pp. 176-180. Lund explores Swedes in Hollywood and concludes that at different times, they were constructed as hyperwhite, normatively white or not even white.

[33] Steve Garner, *Whiteness: An introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 77.

[34] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1-7.

should be invited'.[35] No reason is given for the exclusion, but it had been suggested anecdotally that this was because 'English women had lavished so much attention on black soldiers' during Edward VII's coronation in 1902.[36] Whether rumour or fact, the report that Africans had been excluded because their presence was considered a sexual threat to white women and an affront to white male masculinities was circulating in the colonies. The editor of the *Gold Coast Leader* declared the explanation as 'fatuous and futile' and not only blamed colonial officials for the 'deletion' but, in a comment demonstrating the intersectional nature of race, gender and class hierarchies, he also noted 'the disappointing *morale* of the British girls and women concerned.'[37] The exclusion also demonstrated the mutable nature of ceremonials. Whatever the reasons for the 1911 exclusion, Colonial and War Office officials would have known about the importance of cultural precedent in the form and content of state-sponsored spectacles. Colonial officials in 1919, however urged that not even colonial representatives should be invited to London and the colonies should keep celebrations 'local'.

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[35] 'Preparation of a record of the War Office arrangements in connection with the coronation of King George V', TNA (UK), WO 32/14716. See also: '1911 Coronation', TNA (UK), WORK 21/29/31 containing confirmation that there will be 'no black troops'.

[36] Sheila Tully Boyle and Andrew Bunie, *Paul Robeson: The Years of Promise and Achievement* (Boston: Sheridan Books, 2001).

[37] The *Gold Coast Leader*, 15 April 1911, p. 2.

This contrasted with how they dealt with dominion requests for participation.[38] As self-governing territories with increasing political influence, the dominions had advocates in high places supporting official recognition of their war service. In April, Lord Denman, the former Governor-General of Australia, enquired in the House of Lords whether there would be a march through the capital of dominion and colonial troops. His question was supported by Viscount Harcourt, the former Colonial Secretary, who urged that any 'triumphal march' must include 'coloured' troops from the Caribbean as a tribute to the sacrifices they had made. He also stated that the 'memory' of east and west African troops should be represented if possible. This is evidence that the contribution of Black colonial troops was recognised by some at an official level. Viscount Peel, representing the government, replied that it had been decided that there would be a march of 'overseas' troops through London. However, he then explained that 'the word "overseas troops" has a rather wide application.'[39] Peel's obfuscating use of the term 'overseas' referred to a planned march of dominion forces only and his coded response to the application of the term implied that Black colonial forces would not be included in any march through London. Indeed, on 3 May 1919, 12,000 white dominion troops from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Newfoundland, and South Africa did march through London. The military procession was accorded the highest status and was attended by the King and Queen. I have not found reasons for holding the march but there appears to have been political pressure at the highest governmental levels to

[38] War Cabinet to Colonial Office, 5 May 1919, TNA (UK), CO 323/813/23.

[39] *Hansard*, House of Lords Debates, 9 April 1919, Volume 34 cc242-3.

include dominion forces in a military parade as a sign of gratitude before they were demobilised and to placate the governments of the dominions. The procession continued the long line of imperial spectacles in the capital with 12,000 men from different parts of the empire accorded the honour of receiving the acclaim and gratitude of a crowd numbering over 100,000. The *Times* drew on wartime propaganda when it reported that the soldiers and the cheering crowds 'were not strangers, but members of one big family'.[40] Black colonial members of the 'family' were not included in the article which was reflective of the normativity of whiteness in the metropole.

The Peace Celebrations Committee met again on 9 May. Earlier that day, members of the Colonial Office held a separate meeting to determine the unresolved issue of Black colonial involvement in the celebrations. A minor official, C. R. Darnley, and two serving members of the military, took the opportunity to argue the case for some Black colonial troops to be participants. Darnley proposed that a small detachment of volunteers from the BWIR might remain in Britain before demobilisation to take the King's salute.[41] Major Alexander Beattie, who had served in the Nigerian Regiment of the WAFF in west Africa, relayed the hope of its Inspector General, Sir Charles Dobell, that a detachment of both WAFF and KAR would be allowed to participate in the Peace Celebrations. He added that he was 'fully aware of the objections that there are to bringing African native troops to this

[40] 'Dominion Troops Day: A Great London Greeting', *The Times*, 5 May 1919, p. 19.

[41] "Peace Celebrations Report 2, 9 May 1919, TNA (UK), CO 323/804/14.

country'.[42] At this point in the discussion, Sir Gilbert Grindle, made a decisive intervention arguing:

> If contingents of coloured colonial forces were available, I would suggest including them, but (i) in view of recent experiences (ii) in view of the objections to having coloured men stationed in this country, it seems going out of our way to invite trouble to bring them over for the function.[43]

Grindle was supported in his argument by his counterpart, Henry Lambert, who posited it was absurd that 'when we are straining every nerve to get men repatriated to bring people here for show purposes'. He believed the proposal should be 'strenuously resisted'. Another official added that 'we shall be inviting trouble if we attempt to arrange for coloured detachments in our recent experience'.[44] Why were colonial officials so determined to prevent Black colonial forces from attending the Peace celebrations in London, even to the extent of portraying them as 'troublemakers'? It was true that the BWIR were being demobilized but Caribbean servicemen were in Britain at the time and the Colonial

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[42] Minute by Major Alexander Beattie, "Peace Celebrations Report", 9 May 1919, TNA (UK), CO 323/804/14.

[43] Minute by Sir Gilbert Grindle, "Peace Celebrations Report", 9 May 1919, TNA (UK), CO 323/804/14.

[44] Minute by Sir Henry Lambert, "Peace Celebrations Report", 9 May 1919, TNA (UK), CO 323/804/14.

Office had received only a handful of letters complaining about the continued presence of 'coloured troops' in post-war Britain.[45] Grindle's reference to 'objections to having coloured men stationed in this country' may have referred to the wartime Colonial and War Office policy of trying to keep black troops spatially distant from the European theatre. Most likely, the references to 'recent experiences' relate to mutinies of the BWIR and WIR at Taranto and Ludd in early 1919.

Lambert's remark that the government was 'straining every nerve to get men repatriated' was unlikely to mean demobilization. Rather, it refers to the Home Office's efforts to deal with the issue of violent attacks by white mobs against Black African, Arab, and Caribbean seamen in ports across the country. The repatriation of 'coloured' men and women was the main response of the Government to a series of 'race riots', which occurred in Glasgow, South Shields, East London, Liverpool, and Cardiff from January to August 1919. After demobilization, there was greater competition for jobs in a contracting industry. African, Arab, Chinese, Indian, and Caribbean service personnel from across the British empire had been recruited to fill wartime labour shortages in shipping but were now viewed as unwelcome economic competitors.[46] The 'riots' as they were termed in the press, had an overt racial

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[45] Letter: 'West Indian Negroes in British regiments should be demobilised at once', 6.1.1919 TNA (UK), CO 318/352/55 ff. 418-422.

[46] See: Wendy Ugolini, '"When are you going back?" Memory, ethnicity and the British Home Front' in Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson, *British Cultural Memory And The Second World War* (London:

dimension and were essentially acts of mob violence against any dark-skinned seaman who resided in the port towns. African and Caribbean seamen were described in newspapers in tropes which invoked a racialized hierarchy. The reports also revealed white anxiety over sexual relations between Black men and white women. Newspapers used the term 'black' when describing seamen and not 'British' which had been applied in wartime.[47]

Many newspapers were at the forefront of stoking up tension and division by explaining white mob violence as justified through the actions of Black men themselves. The editor of the *Liverpool Courier* contended that

> large numbers of demobilised soldiers are unable to find work while the West Indian negroes, brought over to supply a labour shortage during the war, are able to 'swank' about in smart clothes on the proceeds of their industry' …[to the annoyance of] the white man who regards him as part child, part animal and part savage.[48]

This report was written a day after a white mob of 2,000 men had assembled to hunt down and lynch any Black man they found in Liverpool and just days after

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Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 89-110 for the rapid change of view on the presence of colonial men and women in Britain after the Second World War.

[47] 'Black Men and White Girls', *The Times*, 1 July 1919, p. 4.

[48] The *Liverpool Courier*, 11 June 1919, p. 4.

the murder there of a Black Bermudan seaman, Charles Wotten, who had served in the Royal Navy during the war.[49] He had been wrested from police protection by a large crowd and thrown into the dock where rioters pelted him with rocks until he drowned.[50] Protestations by Black seamen that they were British subjects and deserved better treatment were dismissed in the press. The *Times* did not regard the seamen as Britons who had served the empire in its time of need. Instead, they sneered at the seamen's loyalty, declaring 'the negro is … pathetically loyal to the British Empire and he is always proud to proclaim himself a Briton', adding that 'his chief failing is his fondness for white women'.[51] The police, who had at times intervened to protect Black seamen from mob violence, resisted blaming the white rioters. Detective-Inspector Hugh Burgess, explained to the Liverpool coroners that the 'hostility had been engendered by the conduct of the negroes towards white women and their boasting of their superiority over white men.'[52]

The Government accepted these conclusions and moved quickly to repatriate as many African and Caribbean seamen as possible, which is what the white mobs, their trade unions, and the press had been demanding. Black servicemen, who had served loyally and in great danger during the war, found themselves not hailed as

[49] Jacqueline Jenkinson, *Black 1919: Riots, Racism and Resistance in Imperial Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), p. 80.

[50] 'Negro Baiting in Liverpool', The *Leeds Mercury*, 11 June 1919, p. 10.

[51] 'Race Rioting at Cardiff', The *Times*, 13 June 1919, p. 9.

[52] Ibid., p. 10.

heroes but labelled as a problematic presence by the police, government, military officials, and unions without taking into consideration the racial antagonism that they faced in Britain. In contrast, the many instances of violence involving white dominion troops in Britain were overlooked, even when the police reported that Australian troops were directly involved in causing violence in Cardiff.[53] The government response suggests the need to avoid a class confrontation at home with ex-service personnel and the trade unions. Removing Black seamen was one way to achieve a quick resolution. Lord Milner justified the policy of repatriation as a necessary defence of colonialism stating the 'riots are serious enough from the point of view of the maintenance of order in this country, but they are even more serious in regard to their possible effect in the colonies.'[54] For white supremacy to be maintained in the colonies, Black seamen (and their wives) had to be removed from the metropole. Later in the year, the 1919 Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act was passed which gave the Home Secretary the power to deport and to deny entry to 'aliens' without appeal to the courts.[55] The effect was to signify to the British population that the government was on their side in ensuring 'British jobs for British workers' whilst Black colonial seamen were divested of any notion that they were

[53] Jerry White, *Zeppelin Nights: London in the First World War* (London: Vintage, 2015, pp. 208-9; first published by London: The Bodley Head, 2014); *The Western Mail*, 13 June 1919, p. 5.

[54] 'Offices: miscellaneous', 23 June 1919, TNA (UK), CO 323/814, pp. 282-3

[55] In 1925, the Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order was passed which restricted opportunities for Black seaman while the Black population was forced to register as 'Aliens'.

considered 'British' or that their war service accorded them a special status. They had returned to 'Alien' status.

The violence against Black seamen was used not only as a pretext for their exclusion from Britain and change of status, but also as a justification for not inviting them to the proposed victory march. On 9 May, at the full meeting of the Peace Celebrations Committee, Sir Harry Batterbee, the Colonial Office representative, conveyed their decision that, in their opinion, neither colonial nor dominion troops (as the latter had marched already) need be invited to participate in the proposed Peace Day celebrations in London. The finality of the Colonial Office decision meant that the full committee need only debate whether the form of the proposed march would be 'national' or 'imperial'; it had already decided that its complexion would be white. When the committee next met on 1 July, hostilities had been formally ended by the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June. Initial plans for four days of celebrations in August were scrapped and it was decided that the focus of the peace celebrations should be confined to just one day: Saturday 19 July, heightening the importance of the victory march as the main event. American forces were in London on that date and Lord Curzon felt they should be part of the march alongside Britain's other allies. The suggested inclusion of American troops forced a reaction from the Colonial Office. Having previously suggested that only British service personnel should march, they now argued that the dominions would 'resent the participation of American forces' if imperial forces were not included.[56]

[56] "War Cabinet: Peace Celebrations Committee", 1 July 1919, TNA (UK), CAB 27/52.

Cabinet Office papers reveal a change of mind on the participation of dominion and Indian troops.[57] However, it has not been possible to trace the reasons for this. Their belated inclusion may have been influenced by information coming from France which described the forthcoming Paris Victory March on 14 July. French colonial troops from north and west Africa were to be a prominent feature of the Paris parade.[58] This may have prompted a desire by the British to also display their imperial forces at the event to which they had been invited. At the Paris Victory March, the 1,098- strong British Contingent made up of soldiers from the occupying Army of the Rhine, included a small detachment of white Australian, New Zealand, and South African dominion forces numbering 35 in total. The records also show that, had the Indian contingent set sail earlier, they too were reserved a place in the Paris march behind the South Africans in an imperial order of precedence. The inclusion of the Indians reflected a new reality: that it was impossible to ignore their contribution to victory. Yet there was no reconsideration of Black colonial servicemen for inclusion in the London procession.[59]

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[57] "Ministry of Works: Ceremonial – Part 2 – Peace Celebrations 1919", 23 June 1919 TNA (UK), Works 21/74.

[58] Colonel Requin, 'The Valour of the Native' describing the Paris Victory Parade and the contributions of French colonial forces. *The Times*, 6 September 1919, p. 30.

[59] "Order of Battle of Troops from Great Britain taking part in Victory March Paris 14 July 1919", TNA (UK), WO 32/5238; "Peace Conference: British delegation: Files 2139/1/1 – 2180/1/1", Telegram dated 6 July 1919 shows 1098 British troops despatched from the Army of the Rhine to Paris, TNA (UK), FO 608/269/28.

The official programme for the 19 July 1919 shows that the Americans and the Allies led the victory march as a political gesture to emphasise their importance in the victory. The French Contingent, as in Paris a few days earlier, included one company of colonial infantry composed of Zouaves and Tirailleurs from France's north and west African territories. The dominion forces marched after the British units in the order of precedence and were represented by 108 Australians, 36 New Zealanders and 24 South Africans and a small contingent of Canadians under General Currie.[60] Curiously, the official programme included provision for 20 Sudanese 'other ranks' to march.[61] However, these were not soldiers. The Sudan Defence Force was not formed until 1925. The space had been reserved for a party of Sudanese notables who had remained loyal to Britain during the Egyptian disturbances of 1919. Their inclusion was a political decision but, as *The Times* reported, they were not, in fact, part of the 19 July Peace Procession in London as they had 'arrived too late'.[62] The crowd witnessed mostly white service personnel representing their nations, with the exception of the French colonial troops and minor Asian contingents, and would have left believing that the war was fought mostly by white service personnel. The historian, Peter Fryer, drew attention to the

[60] *The Times*, Monday 21 July 1919, p. 15.

[61] Ministry of Works, "Ceremonial Part 2: Peace Celebrations 1919", Appendix GA, TNA (UK), Works 21/74; Official Programme of Peace Celebrations, TNA (UK), CAB 27/52.

[62] 'Sudan Loyalty: Chiefs' deputation to the King', *The Times*, 29 July 1919, p. 7.

exclusion of 'black troops' in his history of Black people in Britain: *Staying Power*.[63] More recently, another historian of the Black British presence, Ray Costello, has suggested that the absence of Africans and Caribbeans 'only applied to national units from British colonial countries taking part in parades, rather than black individuals enlisted in mainland British Army units'.[64] The first part of his contention is correct in that Black colonial troops were not invited to participate, however, the BWIR and the WIR represented many islands which were colonies, not 'national units'. Both were regular army units under War Office not Colonial Office control which, in theory, meant they were not considered as 'colonial' in military terms. He does not consider imperial 'tradition' which saw colonial troops regularly take part in parades in London and elsewhere. Costello also suggests that Black servicemen in British army units could have taken part in the parade but provides no evidence that this was the case. Given how difficult it was for Black men to be enlisted in the British Army, it is hard to see that any Black British soldiers remained in the armed services after demobilisation or who were invited to participate in the victory parade. In trying to claim that not all decisions regarding Black British servicemen were racially motivated, Costello ignores the transnationality of the everyday decision-making across the British Empire which could be centripetal as

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[63] Peter Fryer, Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain (London, Pluto Press, 1984), p. 315.

[64] Ray Costello, *Black Tommies: British Soldiers of African Descent in the First World War* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), p. 25.

well as centrifugal.[65] When Black soldiers in the colonies were racialized, due to the mentalities of colonial rulers all Black servicemen were subject to the consequences of this type of thinking regardless of unit, achievement or status.

Some white officers felt uncomfortable at the exclusion of Black African troops from the Peace Parade. Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Godwin Coles, a serving officer in the Nigerian Regiment of the WAFF, wrote to the Governor of Nigeria, Sir Hugh Clifford, to protest at the exclusion of Africans from the London march. He felt that their service had been ignored and no reason given for their exclusion. Clifford wrote to Colonial Secretary asking for an explanation. Lord Milner replied that 'short notice' was the reason that African troops were not asked to participate in the procession even though transportation arrangements were never discussed by his officials.[66] One such official, Colonel Jenkins, reminded administrators of the 9 May discussion of the sub-committee where it was decided that 'it would be impolitic to bring to this country coloured detachments to participate in the peace celebrations'.[67] Jenkins urged officials to explain to interested parties that as the date of the parade had been brought forward it was not possible for west African troops to arrive in time. He gave as an example, the fact that Indian troops had not arrived in time for the Peace Celebrations because of the changed date. Both claims were

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[65] John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The manipulation of British public opinion 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 2.

[66] Nigeria: Volume 5, 15 June–21 August 1919, TNA (UK), CO 583/76.

[67] Nigeria: Volume 5, 15 September 1919, TNA (UK), CO 583/76/51430.

untrue as there was no intention of inviting Black colonial troops after 9 May and some of the detachment of Indians had only missed the procession by hours and every effort had been made to ensure their participation.[68] The Colonial Office evidently felt this issue was sensitive enough to mislead a colonial Governor, military officers, and the public at large.

The invitation for an Indian contingent to participate in the march, in fact, dispels the false explanation that Africans and Caribbeans were not invited due to 'short notice'. Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Cox, the Military Secretary to the India Office, had written to the War Office requesting Indian representation in the London procession as early as April 1919.[69] His request was considered by the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montague, and the Viceroy of India, Viscount Chelmsford, who made a formal request to the Secretary of State for War, Winston Churchill, for Indian inclusion. With such powerful advocates, the request was sanctioned on 9 May, the same day it was decided that the Black colonial troops could not participate.[70] As it happened, the three ships carrying the 2,000 strong Indian contingent were delayed due to monsoon weather, bouts of influenza on board, and transport delays in France and arrived late. Thirty Indian officers had been rushed

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[68] "Peace Celebrations", 8 July 1919, TNA (UK), ADM 1/8550/35.

[69] 'Native Officers and Men – deputation to England and the Colonies: Peace Celebrations 1919. Report by Brig-Gen E W Costello', 1 April 1919, British Library India Office Records (hereafter BL/IOR), BL/IOR/L/MIL/7/5873.

[70] Ibid., 9 May 1919.

from Egypt to stand at the saluting base on 19 July to symbolize Indian involvement. As a gesture of gratitude, and so the public could see the Indian troops, the entire contingent of Indian soldiers were given the opportunity to march through London from Waterloo via Whitehall to Buckingham Palace Gardens on 2 August 1919 where they were received by the King (2.1). Why had Indians, who were often considered as 'native' in the imperial racial hierarchy, been allowed to the honour of a march in London but not Africans or Caribbeans?

The Indian Army served in all theatres of the war and were now considered part of a tripartite system of imperial defence. Within this arrangement, Indians occupied a liminal space. They had not achieved dominion status but were considered 'higher' in a race and rank classification than African troops but lower than white British and dominion service personnel. On 13 April 1919, hundreds of Indian civilians had been massacred by the British Indian Army in Amritsar in the Punjab and British officials in India, were nervous of growing nationalism and feared rebellion.[71] The inclusion of Indian troops in the London parade may have been an expression of gratitude to the rulers of the Princely States for the provision of Indian personnel and resources in the war and to guarantee their continued loyalty. It could also have been a gesture to nationalist politicians to demonstrate that the massacre was an 'un-English' aberration, and that Britain acknowledged

[71] Kim A. Wagner, *Amritsar 1919: An Empire of Fear and the Making of a Massacre* (London: Yale University Press, 2019).

their war service.[72] A further reason, made clear by the military, was to impress upon the contingent the 'might of England'. During their extended stay, officials had arranged many visits around the county. The commander of the contingent, Brigadier-General Costello, particularly wanted them to see the naval fleet at Southend to remind them of British military power and their station in the imperial hierarchy.[73] The whole trip cost £80,000 and was months in the planning, demonstrating that neither money or distance was an obstacle if senior members of the military or the government wanted an Indian presence in London. The inclusion of Indians in 1919 served political objectives in the same way as the exclusion of Africans and Caribbeans. The presence of dark-skinned colonials in cultural ceremonials in the metropolis was determined by power relations where loyalty to white institutions was rewarded by visible inclusivity.[74]

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[72] Ibid., p. 239.

[73] 'Peace celebrations: visit of fleet to London: march through London of the contingent from the fleet', 8 July 1919, TNA (UK), ADM 1/8550/35.

[74] 'Indian Peace Contingent: Shipping Arrangements', BL/IOR/L/MIL/7/5872.

2.1. ‘Peace Celebrations Indian Troops Marching Down Whitehall, 1919’ by Dora Meeson: National Army Museum, 1951-03-15-1.[75]

[75] When I first accessed an online link to this painting by the Australian artist, Dora Meeson, on the National Army Museum’s website (27 October 2013) it explained that Indians were part of the Victory parade. I contacted them about this error and the information on their website now reflects that the Indian contingent missed the 19 July procession: https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1951-03-15-1 accessed 4 August 2022.

Reaction to metropolitan exclusion in the colonies

The decision to exclude Black colonial troops in the metropole did not go unnoticed by Africans and Caribbeans across the empire. In Britain, the editor of the *African Telegraph*, Felix E. M. Hercules, pointed the paper's readership to the 'official silence' over the 1919 'race riots' and the exclusion of Black troops from the peace celebrations and asked what Black people had achieved by their struggle to defend the 'white man's home'. He concluded 'the answer, in effect, comes clear, convincing, and conclusive: "*Get back your kennel, you damned dog of a nigger*!".[76] In the Caribbean colonies, the Peace Day Celebrations organised for the 19 July became the focus for organised expressions of discontent by demobilised ex-servicemen at their racist treatment at the hands of the military during the war and by the authorities in Britain during and after the riots of 1919. There were disturbances in Jamaica during which a soldier was killed. Elsewhere, veterans disrupted peace parades across the island, whilst crowds refused to pay their tram fares.[77] In Trinidad, most veterans chose to boycott the ceremonies and booed and heckled those who participated. Later that day, white civilians and sailors from *HMS Dartmouth* who had

[76] 'Discrimination and Disintegration', *African Telegraph*, I/13 (July – August 1919), p. 253.

[77] Glenford Howe, *Race, War and Nationalism; A Social History of West Indians in the First World War* (Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 2002), p. 193; *The Jamaica Times*, 9 August 1919, p. 16; *The Jamaica Times*, 22 July 1919, p. 1.

participated in the peace parade were attacked by ex-servicemen and members of the public.[78] There were also disturbances in Grenada and British Honduras.[79]

African newspapers of the period appear to confirm that in most cases the Peace Celebrations, planned over different days in July and August 1919, passed without incident.[80] In Freetown, Sierra Leone, riots did occur during peace celebrations although the causes were rice shortage, price rises, and the demand for a war bonus. Nevertheless, a large portion of the rioters were identified as discharged members of the Carrier Corps and deported merchant seamen from Britain thus contributing to the mix of reasons for the riot.[81] The editor of the *Gold Coast Leader* accepted the British explanation that African troops were not invited due to 'short notice' and blamed it on pressure by the American government to exclude Black soldiers thus absolving British officials. It was true that General John Pershing, the Commander-in-Chief of U. S. forces, made clear that he did not want African American troops in the victory parade in Paris although I have not been able

[78] *The Trinidad Guardian*, 23 July 1919, p. 8.

[79] *Federalist and Grenada People*, 30 August 1919.

[80] *The Nyasaland Times*, 31 July 1919; *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 9 August 1919, p. 5; 23 August 1919; pp. 3&5.

[81] Ibrahim Abdullah, 'Rethinking the Freetown Crowd: The Moral Economy of the 1919 Strikes and Riot in Sierra Leone', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 28, No.2 (1994), pp. 197-218.

to find evidence of pressure on British officials.[82] Victor Allen of Lagos, an African nationalist, was not so willing to forgive the colonial administration. He wrote in a letter to the editor of *West Africa*:

> In your issue published the week after the Victory March in London, you asserted that Africans could not be in the march because there was no time to get them to England owing to lack of transport. You mean to say that Great Britain could not afford to send out two men-of-war to bring them if they had been wanted? They were fit to assist in breaking the aggression of Germany, but they were not fit to be in the Victory March. We live and learn.[83]

In October 1919, Colonial Office officials discussed the riots in the metropole and colonies. Gilbert Grindle exonerated Britons and colonial policy; instead, he explained that the causes of the 'race riots' in Britain and the colonies were the 'slights and insults' from dominion troops towards 'coloured' men, the volatile situation in the USA, and 'general unrest all over the world'. He concluded by stating that 'We can provide against disorder, improve conditions, and be careful over questions of race, but nothing we can do will alter the fact that the black man

[82] Arthur E. Barbeau & Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: African - American Troops in World War I* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 1996; originally published Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), p. 166.

[83] Victor Allen, *West Africa*, 11 October 1919.

has begun to think, and feel himself, as good as the white.'[84] This was as close to admitting that 'white' imperial polities feared the threat of rising Black nationalism and the potential loss of white prestige. It would explain the reasons behind the harsh treatment of colonial servicemen in comparison to those from the self-governing colonies and Britain. The British and American governments were obsessed with the twin threats of Black Nationalism and rising socialism among colonial populations. Both governments had monitored the activity of Black African nationalists and socialists.[85] This fear had led to a deliberate erasure of Black African and Caribbean service in the war and, instead, constructed a state-sponsored version of the war as a 'white man's war' supported by 'loyal' Asians.

Was a cultural precedent established?

Did the London Peace Parade of 1919 conform to a previously invented tradition or establish a precedent for future state ceremonials? The 'tradition' of imperial ceremonials had been meddled with in 1911 and again in 1919 but the object of 'tradition', as Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out, was to maintain the status

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[84] Internal Colonial Office Memorandum by Gilbert Grindle, Assistant Under-Secretary, 7 October 1919, TNA (UK), CO 318/352.

[85] W. F. Elkins, 'Unrest among the Negroes', A British Document of 1919, *Science & Society*, Vol. 32, no.1 (Winter, 1968), pp.66-79; W. F. Elkins, 'Hercules and the Society of Peoples of African Origin', *Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 11, no.4 (January 1972), pp. 47-59.

quo as opposed to 'custom' which does not preclude change or innovation.[86] Where does the exclusion of Black troops fit in a continuum of state ceremonials? The next major spectacle was the coronation of King George VI on 12 May 1937. Official records of the event reveal that a small imperial contingent of Indian, dominion, and Black colonial troops numbering 1,100 was invited to take part in the procession.[87] However, Indian troops aside, the records show that most of the colonial contingent was comprised of white European officers and other ranks who far outnumbered the 'coloured' officers and other ranks; indeed, the number of Black troops was only 65. Nevertheless, the contingent included servicemen from west and east Africa. The 'Tradition' of inviting Black colonial servicemen to the imperial centre appears to have been re-established, for royal events at least. A small note written by Sir Harry Batterbee, the Assistant Permanent Under-Secretary of State in the Dominion Office, to officials in the War Office explains why the reversion to earlier precedent may have taken place. Batterbee wished to rearrange the order of the coronation procession and drew upon the Peace Celebrations of 1919 as precedent. The War Office replied that 'a victory march is really no criterion for a full state function' indicating that they considered military ceremonials in the capital as malleable and holding a different and even 'lesser' status than royal occasions. Coronations were considered part of an inherited 'tradition' that should not be subject to interference.[88]

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[86] Eric Hobsbawm, 'Inventing Traditions' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* p. 2.

[87] Coronation arrangements 1936-1937, TNA (UK), WO 32/4660.

[88] Official Programme of National Peace Celebrations, 19 July 1919, TNA (UK), WO 32/5238.

The 1919 Victory Celebrations could, therefore, be considered part of 'custom' and so free to include or exclude, to remember or forget, and representative of military and colonial imperatives. The flexibility within cultural protocol explains how colonial and military officials could exclude Black soldiers from King George V's coronation in 1911 and the Peace Celebrations in 1919 and, also restore them to King George VI's coronation in 1937 but without providing an explanation for the lack of continuity. It was more likely that the fear of rising Black nationalism and corresponding loss of white prestige was behind the post-war exclusion. The invitation extended to black colonial troops to participate in King George's coronation did not mean, however, that attitudes had become more enlightened since the 1920s. Stereotypical views of Africans as oversexed still prevailed. A memo by a War Office official suggested that African soldiers attending the 1937 ceremonial should be attached to an infantry battalion 'to keep them occupied and therefore out of mischief' he added, 'the less they see of white women the better.'[89] Public spectacles, where Black troops were allowed to participate, were intended to represent imperial unity but in fact served to display a racialised order of precedence and hierarchy with white Britons at the top, followed by the white dominions, India, and then the colonies at the lower end . Whether black troops participated or not in ceremonials, their inferior status was visually configured through their inclusion or exclusion and by the order of precedence. The 1919 Peace Parade played a role in

[89] Dominion and Colonial Coronation Arrangements: miscellaneous questions 8 June 1937, TNA (UK), WO 32/17746.

constructing whiteness as the norm in military processions in the imperial metropolis.

The British Empire Exhibitions 1924-5

Imperial exhibitions (see Chapter One), as well as military processions, also displayed black colonial soldiers as part of the demonstration of the British Empire's 'soft power' but, usually, in subordinate roles to British and dominion servicemen. Would such representations change in the post-war era due to the participation of Black servicemen in the empire's 'time of need'? After the catastrophe of the First World War imperial enthusiasts, not just in Britain, but also in the dominions and colonies, wanted to create an image of a united empire collaborating economically, politically, and militarily for mutual benefit. Despite victory in the conflict, the British Empire faced many challenges. The loss of life and trade during the war had damaged the economies of empire and there was the potential for loss of power and privilege both globally and within the empire. The post-war period also saw a global tide of rising nationalism which had the potential to complicate normal relations within the Empire. These issues needed to be dealt with immediately if Britain and its empire was to regain its foremost position in the world. Notwithstanding, the threats and challenges, the British Empire was at the apogee of its extent and many government officials wanted its power to be projected globally. One of the ways in which Britain had traditionally represented imperial power and unity was through

imperial exhibitions and there was much enthusiasm in government to see such an 'exercise in indoctrination' repeated.[90]

During the First World War, imperial propaganda had to be toned down for the consumption of an international audience, particularly the United States, but now the war was over, a pre-war idea for a British Empire Exhibition, which had been put on hold, was revived.[91] There was strong financial backing from the British government, the dominions, and the colonies for the exhibition. The British Empire Exhibition of 1924-1925 cost £12 million and was the most expensive imperial exhibition so far and, with 26 million visitors, the largest in terms of extent of public participation and popular reception. It was the greatest of all the imperial exhibitions.[92] A study of the two British Empire Exhibitions at Wembley in 1924 and 1925 forms part of my thesis because of the appearance of Black colonial servicemen in the African and Caribbean pavilions. Due to their exclusion from the Peace Parade of 1919, this was the first time Black soldiers, sailors, and policemen had officially been invited on metropolitan soil since the coronation of Edward VII in 1902. Would the representations of Africans and Caribbeans be represented in a more considerate, egalitarian manner to a large audience than had been the case at previous exhibitions or would there be continuity with previous imperial spectacles?

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[90] Jan Morris, *Farewell the Trumpets: An Imperial Retreat* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), p. 299.

[91] Jan Morris, *Farewell the Trumpets,* p. 158.

[92] John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*: *the manipulation of British public opinion 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 107.

In his studies of the impact of imperialism on the British population, John MacKenzie has maintained that imperial exhibitions were first and foremost vehicles of propaganda which were conceived to celebrate 'the white man's successful transplantation to the farthest reaches of the globe, and his creation there of societies modelled on European lines.'[93] MacKenzie focused on the agencies which transmitted imperial propaganda to assess their impact on metropolitan popular culture. He argued that, whilst post-war imperial exhibitions used new technologies to convey messages about the British Empire, they ultimately communicated and consolidated pre-existing notions of an imperial and racial hierarchy.[94] Tom August has argued that imperial bonding at Wembley was not a high a priority for the participants in the exhibition. He contends that for Britain, the dominions, and the colonies, the need to develop markets, attract financial investment, encourage emigration, and develop tourism was paramount in the post war period. As such, the dominant theme was economic competition with each other. An important dimension inherent in this pan-imperial competition, however, was the depiction of the indigenous peoples of the dominions and colonies in the pavilions. In his study of the 'West Indian Pavilion', August contends that these spaces were designed to represent the cultural values of white European settlers, not those of the indigenous populations of the colonies; it was also to encourage white emigration to the overseas territories. To be able to achieve such a dominant representation over its

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[93] John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*. p. 100.

[94] Ibid. p. 110.

subject peoples, August contends that the 'the subaltern voice needed to be suppressed and omitted.'[95] Daniel Stephen, in his analysis of the representation of the 'West African Pavilion' at Wembley, emphasises that, in a period of imperial transition, a more inclusive and 'polite' Empire needed to be on display, not just for the metropolitan visitors, but also for those visitors from the colonies too. He argues that the inclusion of Black servicemen in the exhibitions was necessary to demonstrate how much progress had been achieved by the British with their Black subjects in west Africa.[96] Stephen maintains, however, that the exhibitions ultimately exposed an 'irresolvable contradiction': all efforts to portray a more liberal colonial discourse co-existed with a need to preserve older relations of power which, in the post-war era, meant a strengthening of authoritarian control over colonial peoples.[97]

One of the ways imperial hierarchies and the power structure in the settler colonies was represented was through the scale and design of their buildings inside the exhibition space at Wembley. The largest pavilions were allocated to Britain, the dominions, and India as they had made the most financial contributions to the

[95] Tom August, 'The West Indies Play Wembley', *New West Indian Guide*, Vol. 66, No. 3-4 (1992), p. 196. This view is supported by Jonathan Woodham in his analysis of the African pavilions. See: Jonathan Woodham, 'Images of Africa and Design at the British Empire Exhibitions between the Wars', *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1989), pp. 15-33.

[96] Daniel Mark Stephen, '"The White Man's Grave": British West Africa and the British Empire Exhibition of 1924-1925', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 102-128.

[97] Ibid. p. 103.

staging of the exhibition.[98] The Canada and Australia pavilions resembled the neo-classical dominion high commissions which had been recently constructed in the prime locations around Trafalgar Square, the Strand, and Aldwych in the capital city of Empire.[99] The West Africa Pavilion was the fourth largest building in the exhibition confirming the growing importance of Africa in the post-war economy of Empire. In contrast, the structures, designed by Europeans, were a replica of a former slave-trading fort on the Gold Coast and a large, mud-baked, walled town, representative of Kano in Northern Nigeria. The much smaller East Africa Pavilion was designed in an 'Arabic' style suggestive of Swahili architecture.[100] Africans who were brought over from Britain's west and east African colonies to represent local inhabitants and populate the 'native villages' were classified under 'races in residence' by the exhibition organisers.[101] In reviving racial typology to differentiate indigenous peoples of the colonies from white settlers, the conference organizers were recalling a practice of previous imperial exhibitions which displayed indigenous peoples in these 'villages' in a demeaning manner and drew upon pseudo-scientific ideas of 'backward' peoples.

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[98] *Official Guide to the British Empire Exhibition* (1924), pp. 60-61.

[99] John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire,* p. 100.

[100] John MacKenzie, Ibid, p. 108.

[101] Anne Clendinning, 'On The British Empire Exhibition, 1924-5', *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, (Ed.), Dino Franco Felluga, *Extension of Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* (accessed 4 April 2017).

In the post-First World War era, there was a slight suggestion that conference organisers might adopt a different approach in their portrayal of west Africans at least, especially as the exhibition's organisers envisaged it as a tribute to the dominion and colonial contribution to the war effort.[102] On 15 June 1923, a public ceremony was held to lay the foundation of the Gold Coast Pavilion. The Governor of the Gold Coast, Gordon Guggisberg and his wife, Lady Decima Guggisberg, were in attendance. Sir Travers Clarke, the Deputy Chairman of the Wembley Exhibition, presided over the ceremony and congratulated the soldiers of the Gold Coast for their wartime service and reminded the audience that members of the colony's WAFF had achieved one of Britain's first victories in the war by capturing a radio communication station in the neighbouring German colony of Togoland.[103] Stephen argues that the exhibition organisers wanted to promote more examples of such liberal discourse regarding the future of the British Empire but had to balance this desire with a need to encourage the public to 'think imperially' and to achieve this meant drawing on popular assumptions regarding hierarchies of race, gender, and other forms of difference in displays and in the Exhibition literature.[104] The design of the pavilion was endorsed by the arch-imperialist Rudyard Kipling, a close friend of Viscount Milner. He had been invited to the Exhibition a few weeks before the

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[102] Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), p. 26.

[103] Daniel Mark Stephen, *The Empire of Progress: West Africans, Indians, And Britons At The British Empire Exhibition, 1924-25* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 64.

[104] Ibid, p. 66.

formal opening. Kipling wrote a private letter to the Governor of Nigeria, Sir Hugh Clifford, about his visit stating that: 'It's the biggest thing man ever set hand to, in design and in certain grandiosity' adding that 'the West Africa building is full of the spirit. One almost smells the Nigger passing by'.[105]

There was also a continuity of attitude on the part of organisers with the way Africans had been transported to Wembley from Britain's west African colonies and the official handling of Indian soldiers on metropolitan soil during the First World War. Hausa, Yoruba, Mendi, Ashanti, and Fanti men and women had been brought over to populate the west African 'native village and workshop'; but these soldiers, policemen, and civilians were forced to sleep in the constructed 'villages' for the duration of the Exhibition, were always chaperoned at the Wembley site, and only allowed outside on escorted trips on Sundays. The deliberate isolation of Black Africans into confined places within metropolitan space has echoes of the fear of Black men meeting and consorting with white women which was a feature of colonial and metropolitan society and considered inimical to white male masculinities.[106] Government officials also feared that many Africans would not return home after the Exhibition.[107]

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[105] Hugh Clifford to Gowers, 17.4.24, Rhodes House Library, MSS Afr.s.1149.

[106] Lucy Bland, 'White Women and Men of Colour: Miscegenation Fears in Britain after the Great War', *Gender & History*, Vol.17 No.1 April 2005, pp. 29–61.

[107] Daniel Mark Stephen, *The Empire of Progress,* p. 72.

Upper and middle-class Africans visiting to the exhibition fared no better; when a British Assistant Exhibition Commissioner for Sierra Leone wrote to the Colonial Office suggesting they subsidize the visit of Chiefs and craft producers who had contributed to the 'native villages' the reply was 'If he … chooses to bring a bush native to London, it is up to him to look after the said native, and he should have thought of the difficulty before bringing him over'.[108] Had the Colonial Office agreed to such a request, it would have meant that west Africans would have equality of status with the white dominions who were subsidizing the cost of travel and sustenance for their workers in the pavilions; and this was something the Colonial Office was not prepared to do. In treating Africans differently than other participants, it can be argued that the purpose of the constructed pavilion spaces was to represent indigenous peoples of the colonies as 'non-Britons', lower in an imperial racial hierarchy, and to display their societies as intrinsically inferior to Western Civilisation.[109]

Mackenzie and Stephen have both drawn attention to the fact the African pavilions were partly conceived with racial hierarchies in mind. By presenting the 'walled city' and 'native villages' as quaint and the actors within them as savage and exotic they were demonstrating the superiority of Western civilisation over the uncivilized peoples of Africa. Colonial subjects would need to be guided towards

[108] J H Reid, 'West Africa Correspondence Vol. 3', 29 January 1924, TNA (UK), CO 554/64.

[109] Burton Benedict, 'International Exhibitions and National Identity', *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (June 1991), p. 7.

modernity through the policy of 'indirect rule': the justification for continued British rule over Africans.[110] In the mind of colonial governors, Africans were not yet capable of self-rule and needed the guiding hand of the British and, in return, they were expected to pay taxes and show deference. The Exhibition was an opportunity to showcase the policy which was a guiding principle in the organisation and representation of Africans at Wembley. African chiefs had been asked to contribute gifts, peoples, and materials. West African students were involved in organising cultural activities including lectures, dances, and social gatherings, but all the big decisions on representation were in the hands of Governor Guggisberg and his wife.[111]

It has been argued elsewhere that the Governor of Nigeria, Sir Hugh Clifford, was not a supporter of the 'Dual Mandate' and believed in the elective principle for Africans but was not supported in his belief by the Colonial Office, who favoured the continuation of 'indirect rule', due to their fear of emergent nationalism across the Empire.[112] Yet the literature and guidebooks accompanying the West Africa Pavilion and written by Clifford were filled with stereotypes of Africans and which contained photos of Africans in poses suggestive of racial taxonomies.

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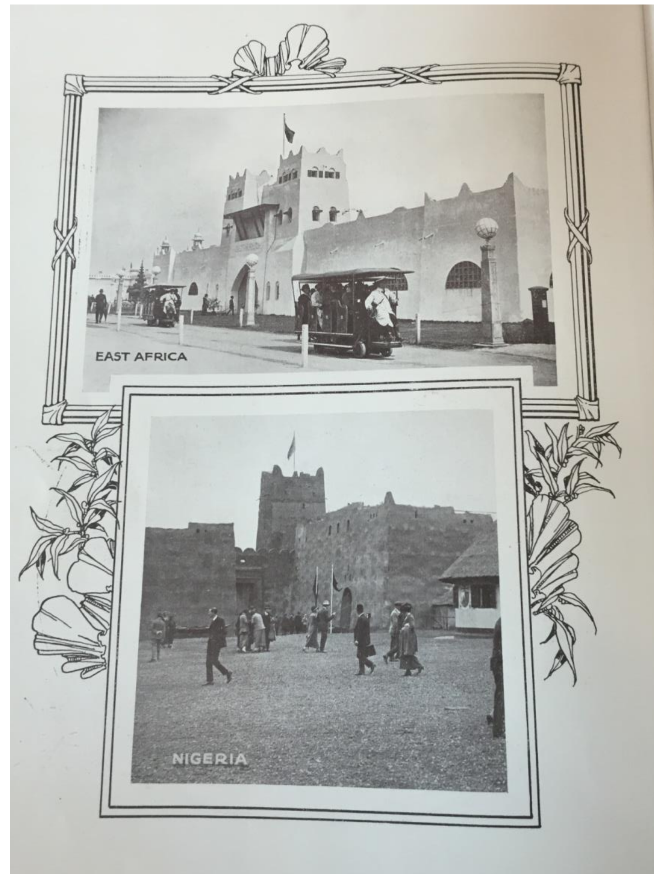
[110] Daniel Mark Stephen, Op. Cit. p.103. See Lord Frederick D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: Blackwell and Sons, 1922).

[111] Daniel Mark Stephen, *The Empire of Progress*, pp. 69-70.

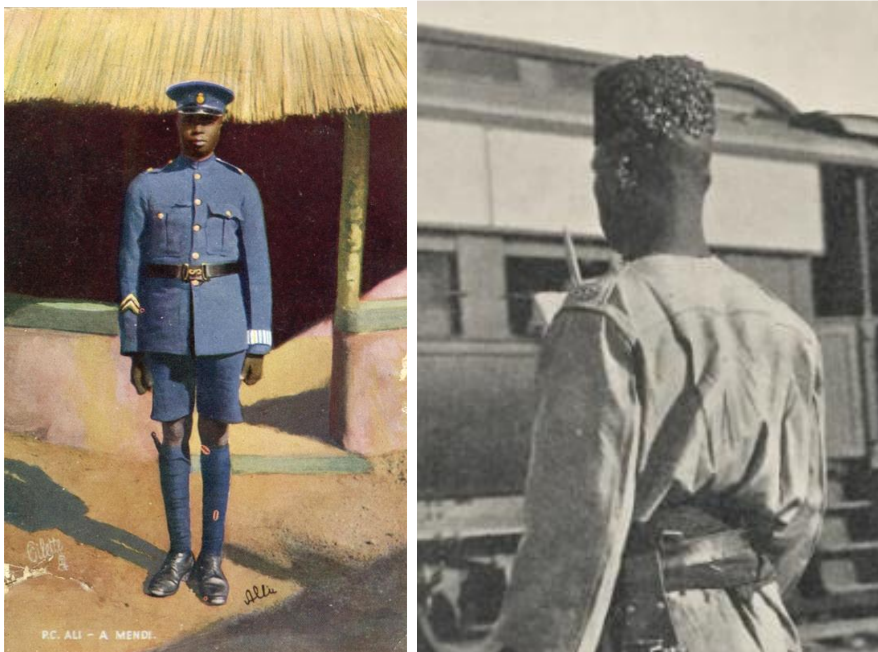
[112] S. J. S. Cookey, 'Sir Hugh Clifford as Governor of Nigeria: An Evaluation', *African Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 317, (Oct., 1980), pp. 531-547.



2. 2. The East Africa and West Africa Pavilions at the British Empire Exhibition (courtesy of Brent Museum and Archives).

The West Africa Pavilion displayed racial hierarchy in two ways: firstly, the pavilion, designed as a 'walled city' typical of the Sokoto Caliphate, was chosen for its symbolic significance. Lugard had defeated the Caliph in 1903 and territories under Caliphate control were organized into the Northern Nigeria Protectorate, complete with a Sultan appointed by the British. During the First World War, the Sultan demonstrated his loyalty to the British by conscripting men into the WAFF. The choice of the 'walled city', a miniature version of Kano, was intended to attest to

both white British dominance over Africans and the renaissance of Fulani of the former Caliphate under benevolent British rule. It was an example of the success of the policy of 'indirect rule'. Secondly, an African racial hierarchy, constructed by the British, was also on display. One of the aims of the 'villages' within the pavilions was to demonstrate that the lighter-skinned Fulani people could be guided, through civilizing, to be an ally against the darker-skinned 'pure negro races' such as the Hausa and Yoruba, who were seen as threat to the civilising mission and rule in West Africa.[113]



2. 3. Constable Ali in the Sierra Leone Pavilion and a photo of a WAFF soldier withstanding bee stings to his head from the official guide to the West Africa Pavilion.[114]

[113] Daniel Mark Stephen, *The Empire of Progress*. p. 109.

[114] Philip Grant, 'Sierra Leone at the British Empire Exhibition in 1924', Wembley History Society (February, 2014); *Nigeria: Its History and Products: British Empire Exhibition Wembley 1924*.

Hausa soldiers from the WAFF and Mendi police constables were prominently on guard at the pavilion. The employment of Black policemen was to demonstrate how the British had brought law and order to their colonies and the soldiers were there to display their 'martial' nature. African soldiers were constructed as at the lower end of the evolutionary scale, more children than men, and always needing the guidance of white officers.[115] The photo above (2.3.) of a soldier allowing himself to be stung by bees is titled 'Discipline' and continues the stereotype that Africans in the service of Britain were insensitive to pain and different from white soldiers.[116] Examples of African colonial war service was contained in the booklets that were distributed at the pavilions. Such images in booklets designed for mass consumption would have been taken home, read, and unquestioned by thousands of visitors.[117] Both the West and East African Pavilions aimed to demonstrate that only continued white dominance over the African colonies could organise and discipline' martial races' for more productive purposes.[118]

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[115] Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-To-Face Killing In Twentieth Century Warfare* (London: Granta, 1999), pp. 121-127.

[116] For an investigation into how Africans were situated in a 'great chain of feeling' see: Joanna Bourke, 'Pain Sensitivity: An Unnatural History from 1800 to 1965', *The Journal of Medical Humanities*, 35 (3) (2014), pp. 310-319.

[117] 'Nigeria: Its History and Products', *British Empire Exhibition Wembley 1924* Booklet.

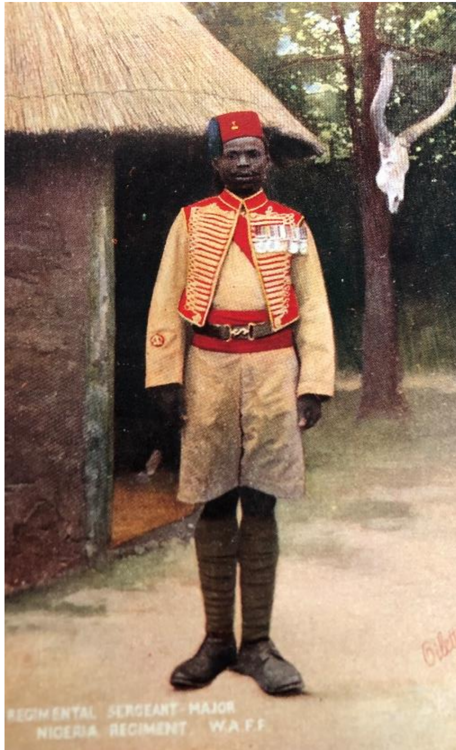
[118] Daniel Mark Stephen, *The Empire of Progress.* p. 109.

Visitors were also able to meet a real-life war west African hero in the person of Belo Akure of the Nigerian Regiment of the WAFF (2.4). Regimental Sergeant-Major Akure, was presented as the most decorated African soldier alive and had been brought over along with another WAFF veteran, Belo Ojo, to provide security for the 'native villages' and to embody the notion of the fearless 'martial' soldier who was intensely loyal to Britain. Akure had been cited no less than five times for outstanding courage in both the west and east African campaigns and was awarded the African Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) with two bars, and the Military Medal. In his most famous action, in the Cameroons in 1914, he remained behind on one side of the Mungo River, whilst being shot at, to provide covering fire for his troops while they used a canoe to escape to trenches on the other side of the river. Only when all the men were safe did Akure swim over to join them.[119] Captain Walter Downes of the Nigerian Regiment declared 'I have several times seen this Sergeant-Major in action and can honestly state that I have never seen a braver man.'[120] What the public didn't know was that Akure, and many African soldiers like him, should, in all likelihood, have received the highest award for gallantry, the

[119] *Birmingham Daily Post* – Friday 11 May 1917, p. 7; The *Leeds Mercury* 11 May 1917, p. 6.

[120] W D Downes, *The Nigerian Regiment In East Africa: On Campaign During The Great War 1916-1918* (Yorkshire: Leonaur Ltd, 2008); originally published as *With the Nigerians in German East Africa,* London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1919), p. 92.

Victoria Cross, during the war but there was an official policy to only award the African Distinguished Conduct Medal to Africans from colonial units.[121]



2. 4. 'Oilette' postcard of Regimental Sergeant Major Belo Akure at the 'native village' (courtesy of Brent Archives).

Keith Steward, in his investigation into the non-award of the Victoria Cross to Colour Sergeant George Williams, a Sudanese soldier in the KAR, who had been recommended this award by Major General Tighe in East Africa in 1915, suggests that he did not receive the Victoria Cross due to a disagreement between the War

[121] In the colonial era, only three soldiers of African descent have received the Victoria Cross: William Hall, a Canadian sailor in the Crimean war and two black soldiers, Samuel Hodge, and William Gordon, from the West India Regiment. The WIR was part of the British army which might explain the different approach to African colonial units: See Brian Dyde, *The Empty Sleeve: the story of the West India Regiments of the British Army* (Antigua: Hansib, 1997), pp. 196; 215-6.

Office and Colonial Office at the time. Williams had extricated his men to safety under heavy gunfire after one of his officers had been killed and the other wounded. He had also retrieved the platoon machine gun after the carriers were killed and wounded.[122] Steward does not, however, explore whether the administrative burial of Williams' recommendation was racial discrimination. In fact, correspondence between the Colonial Office and the War Office over the award of the DCM reveals that the Colonial Office persistently maintained their view that 'natives' should not receive an award higher than DCM. In 1916, Gilbert Grindle wrote to the War Office stating that 'every effort should … be made to avoid giving to soldiers of the two forces … [KAR AND WAFF] a DCM.[123] Some high-ranking officials were prepared to put on record their disapproval of this discrimination against African soldiers. Sir Hector Duff, the acting Governor of Nyasaland after the war, wrote 'I have never been able to understand why native African soldiers should be treated as ineligible for the Victoria Cross'.[124] In this way, servicemen like Akure were viewed as brave members of a 'martial race' but not as brave as white British or dominion soldiers. Indian soldiers were allowed to receive the Victoria Cross from 1911, but Black

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[122] Keith Steward, FRGS, 'Colour Sergeant Williams 1/3 King's African Rifles DCM and BAR: the award of the Victoria Cross was not confirmed' (Paper: accessed 23 September 2013).

[123] Gilbert Grindle, 'Extension of African Distinguished Conduct Medal to all natives throughout the African continent', 26 November 1916, TNA (UK), WO 32/4977. He was worried that an abolition of the African DCM would lead to awards such as the imperial DCM or higher.

[124] Sir Hector Duff, *African Small Chop* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), p. 183.

African servicemen could never be allowed to be seen as equal to white service personnel and were thus only eligible for the African DCM introduced in 1895.[125]

London-based West African students who visited the exhibition took offence at the representation of Africans in the 'native village' as well as against a series of articles which appeared in newspapers at the time of the Wembley exhibition portraying Africans in derogatory and stereotypical ways. Members of the Nigerian Union of Students of African Descent (USAD) sent a resolution to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Jimmy Thomas, conveying their displeasure. Despite, an initial reluctance by the Colonial Office to accept responsibility for press misrepresentations of the 'African villages' the USAD did gain the support of Sir Frederick Guggisberg who intervened to curtail press coverage and closed the West African 'village' to prevent any further protests.[126] Had the organisers of the African pavilions convinced visitors that Africa was being led toward progress by their colonial rulers? One visitor from Aberdeen remarked that he thought that the exhibition was helping African men 'to climb up a ladder from savage to civilized gentleman'. He also stated:

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[125] John Arnold, *the African D.C.M.: Awards of the King's African Rifles and West African Frontier Force Distinguished Conduct Medal* (Surrey: The Orders and Medals Research Society, 1998).

[126] Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain 1900 – 1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998), pp. 24-26; Sarah Britton, '"Come and See the Empire by the All Red Route!": Anti-Imperialism and Exhibitions in Interwar Britain', *History Workshop Journal*, No. 69 (Spring 2010), pp. 71-75.

> I came across a West African soldier-perfectly turned out in trim Khaki. He was a private and as black as coal, but in dress, discipline, and deportment he could have taken his place in a parade of any crack British regiment and shamed the man next to him. I noticed too, in him that air of cool civility and self-confidence which is the mark of the well-trained professional soldier in his dealings with civilians.[127]

The inference of the quote is that, after having visited the African pavilions, it was possible for large numbers of the public to leave with the impression that Africans in the colonies were making 'progress' under the benevolent guidance of white colonial rulers and the policy of trusteeship. In this way, despite the protests of African students, the organizers had largely achieved their aim. The huge impact that African soldiers and carriers had made in the war and their role in victory was not at the forefront of the representations at the exhibition.

The representation of Caribbean servicemen

The Caribbean pavilion, named the 'West Indian and Atlantic Pavilion' (as the Falklands Islands were included in the same building) was suitably British in its conception. The representation of the islands was placed in the hands of the London-based West India Committee who had dominated Caribbean politics for two

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[127] Both quotes from 'World's Greatest Exhibition to be Opened Today', *Aberdeen Journal*, 23.4.1924.

hundred years. One of the Committee's foremost members, a white Briton, Frank Cundall, the Secretary and Librarian at the Institute of Jamaica, and Chair of the Jamaica War Memorial Committee was put in charge of the design. In his position, Cundall had unrivalled access to the war experiences of the BWIR and the WIR as well as other aspects of Jamaican society. In a guidebook intended for visitors to the pavilion, Cundall portrayed the BWIR as combatants, stating 'In the recent war the BWIR loyally did their best to forward the cause of the Allies, and whenever they were called upon to face fire they did so unflinchingly.'[128] Cundall was sensitive to the politics of the islands which required recognition of the war service of Black veterans. His guidebook ignored metropolitan reluctance to enlist darker-skinned Caribbeans at the start of the war, which had been noted by the editor of the *Jamaican Daily Gleaner*, Herbert de Lisser.[129] In Cundall's version of events, Black Caribbeans served in France, not due to political pressure from the Colonies, but due to loyalty as 'England expressed a wish for troops from the West Indies' and men were willing to volunteer to help out their colonial superiors.[130] A miniature of the Jamaica War Memorial, unveiled in Kingston in 1922, was displayed prominently in the central

[128] Frank Cundall, *Jamaica in 1924: A Handbook Of Information For Visitors And Intending Settlers With Some Account Of The Colony's History* (Kingston: The Institute of Jamaica, 1924), p. 53.

[129] Herbert G. de Lisser, *Jamaica and the Great War* (Kingston: Gleaner Press, 1917), pp. 33-4.

[130] Frank Cundall, *Jamaica in 1924*, p. 39.

area of the Jamaican section of the pavilion; ensuring that, at the very least, the war service of men from the island was acknowledged to visitors.[131]

Cundall's version of war service of men from the islands can be attributed to his desire to represent the Black Caribbeans as loyal citizens of Empire, both as a representation of the colony to the metropole, but also to encourage white emigration to Jamaica and the other islands. Another reason was Cundall's own views towards the Black population. He had previously characterized them as 'thriftless' and, in a chapter called 'A People in the Making', he contended that 'the Negro race has at present gone but a short way on the path to civilization. The individuals are still as children, childlike in belief and faith'.[132] In this way, Cundall's own views echoed recapitulation theory and represented, in microcosm, the aims and purpose of the exhibition: to present the colonies in the best light to encourage white emigration, but also to convey a message that the Black indigenous population would remain in a subaltern position to whites.[133]

In keeping with the West India Committee's Eurocentric representation of the Caribbean as a sunny, planters' haven, complete with a 'Planters Punch Bar', there

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[131] Algernon Aspinall, *The West Indian Pavilion: The British Empire Exhibition 1925* (London: West India Committee, 1926), p. 14.

[132] Frank Cundall, *Jamaica in1924*, p. 52.

[133] For discourse on the idea of the 'Subaltern' see: Gayatri Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 244-311.

were only a few Black workers in the Pavilion. One of them was a woman called 'Sunny J' (Sunny Jamaica) and another was a man named Joseph Oie.[134] Whilst the Black staff worked behind the scenes, visitors were able to interview a 'white planter', Robert Haynes, so maintaining a familiar racial hierarchy.[135] No African or Caribbean military formation took part in the military parade in the opening ceremony.[136] By the time of the Exhibition, the BWIR had long been disbanded. However, a British Guiana Military Band played music daily in amongst the 'palm groves' and, for six weeks in 1924, the band of the WIR were a feature in the exhibition bandstand. Here, they were fulfilling a familiar role as military bandsmen used for ceremonial occasions.[137] The band of the WIR were primarily known in the metropole, not for their war service since the late eighteenth century, but for their appearances at colonial exhibitions such as the Colonial and Indian Exhibitions in London in 1886 and Crystal Palace in 1905.[138]

At Wembley, the WIR were summoned to participate, not as examples of martial masculinity like the African guards in the West Africa Pavilion, but to play music in their unthreatening exotic ceremonial *Zouave* outfits in the exhibition

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[134] Ibid, p. 7.

[135] Tom August, 'The West Indies Play Wembley', p. 197.

[136] Opening Ceremony Programme, Brent Museum and Archives, 19241/PRI/3/2.

[137] Melissa Bennett, 'Picturing the West Indies Regiment', Africa's Sons Under Arms blog: http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/asua, 3 September 2015.

[138] Jeffrey Green, *Black Edwardians: Black People in Britain 1901-1914* (London, Frank Cass, 1998), p. 5.

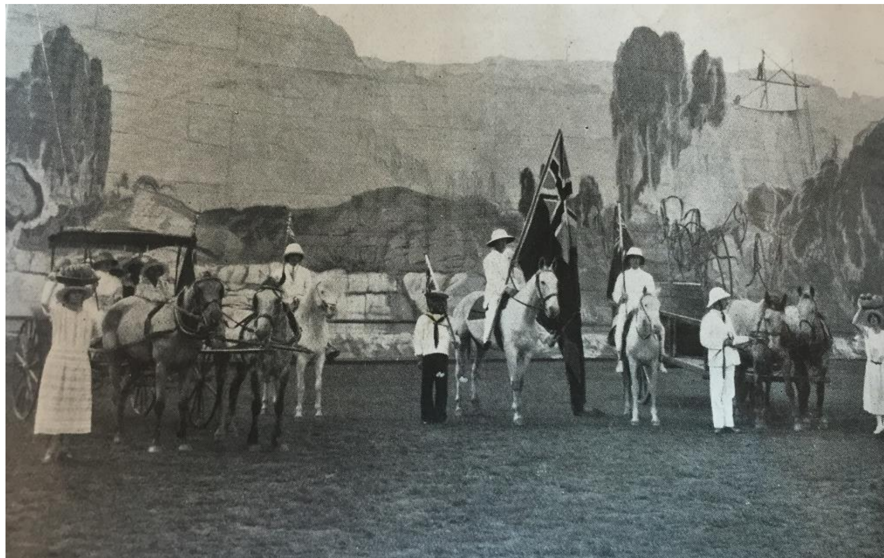
bandstands (2.5). The exhibition programme exoticized the regiment in starkly racial terms explaining that 'it was felt that black troops would lend themselves best to wearing this unique uniform.'[139] Similar to the participation of African and Caribbean soldiers in imperial spectacles, their appearance in 1924 at Wembley can be considered a continuation of the tradition of imperial spectacles and underlined the way officials were selective in the way they wished to represent Black colonial formations in metropolitan space. As a military band, the WIR was not considered as threat to the white metropolitan onlooker.[140]

2.5 The West India Regiment Band at Wembley (Courtesy of Brent Museum and Archives)

[139] The West Indian and Atlantic Pavilion, Brent Museum and Archives, WHS/0/1/5/64, p.14.

[140] Melissa Bennett, 'Cricket, Marching Bands and Empire', Africa's Sons Under Arms blog: http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/asua, 19 September 2016.

Before the Exhibition closed permanently in 1925 there was one final imperial spectacle - a ‘Pageant of Heroes’ - performed in the purpose-built Empire Stadium. Small groups from the dominions, India, and the colonies pledged their loyalty in a dramatic piece dedicated to the ‘mother country’. The pageant was followed by a procession made up of all the units of the British Empire. The Caribbean element in the procession was led by Robert Haynes, the ‘white planter’, driving three Jamaican hat weavers in a buggy. The last person in the procession was the black worker, Joseph Oie, wearing a Royal Navy uniform and carrying a Union Jack (2.6).[141]



2.6 Joseph Oie stands (centre) in the ‘West Indian Group’ dressed as ‘Jack Tar’ (Courtesy of Brent Museum and Archives)

I have not been able to find out whether Oie was a sailor but, given the colour bar in the Royal Navy at that time, it is highly improbable. Most likely, he was included in the pageant as a figure of fun for the vast audience due to his short size

[141] The West Indian and Atlantic Pavilion, Brent Museum and Archives, WHS/0/1/5/64, p. 20.

and his dark skin. Oie was playing the role of 'Jack Tar' in the procession and 'Tar's' name may have alluded to Oie's blackness. In imperial imagery of the late nineteenth century, 'Jack Tar' was the archetypal, heroic, white Englishman who often used racist abuse to defend England's honour. In semiotic terms, the representation, despite its outward appearance of progressive values, can also be construed as a coded image which played the necessary role of portraying the Empire's dark-skinned indigenous peoples in the most humiliating way, and at the bottom of an intersecting racial, military, gender, and class hierarchy.[142]

Conclusion

Despite the participation of Black African and Caribbean servicemen in the war – some served in Europe as non-combatants - colonial and military officials still considered their presence in metropolitan space as a threat to the prestige of white males in the immediate aftermath of the war. When Black colonial seamen were attacked by white mobs, the Colonial Office responded by repatriating the servicemen, many who had families and had made their livelihoods in Britain, to Africa and the Caribbean. The government also passed legislation making it difficult for Black men to seek employment in shipping in Britain and effectively removed

[142] J. S. Bratton, Richard. A. Cave, Breandan Gregory, Heidi J. Holder and Michael Pickering, *Acts of supremacy: The British Empire And The Stage, 1790 – 1930* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 33-34.

their citizenship. Officials also sought to punish colonial service personnel for acts of disloyalty and insubordination in the war. To invite Black servicemen to a victory parade would have elevated their status in the eyes of officials which was a threat to their continued rule in the colonies too. Exclusion from the 1919 Peace Parade was their method of achieving the diminution of African and Caribbean war service necessary for upholding white prestige in the metropole and colonies and was a continuation of a policy enacted against black colonial service men in 1911. Custom and tradition in ceremonials are contingent and were employed proportionately to the perceived level of threat to the British Empire.

Another factor which affected the representation of black servicemen in the post-war period, was the fact that the key positions in the government were held by high-profile imperialists such as Churchill, Milner, and Curzon, so the Peace Parade became a metaphor for a discourse regarding the future direction of Britain and its Empire. The key issue of government was whether 'Britishness' and domestic policy should be the main driver in politics or should the empire come together on a more equal basis to ensure the continuation of British power. By the mid-1920's officials felt confident enough to reassert pre-war values. The Wembley Exhibitions did not reveal a more liberal discourse of a 'new Black' to the public but instead offered pre-existing stereotypes with 'pure negroes' at the bottom of a racialised imperial hierarchy. The conflict appears to have only strengthened official resolve to maintain white supremacy and hierarchy in the metropole and colonies and aspects of culture were weaponised to help achieve that aim. In the next section, I will

investigate the memorialization of the conflict and how the African and Caribbean war dead were commemorated across the Empire.

Chapter Three - Metropolitan commemoration of the African and Caribbean war dead

In this chapter, I will explore how, after the war, state-sponsored commemorative rituals for the war dead were established in the metropole and the extent to which they were meant to represent all the war dead of the British empire including those from the African and Caribbean colonies. Would post-war memorials be used to signify the conflict as a 'white man's war' in the commemorative landscape, as had been the case after the Second South African War, or would they be utilised in a way that renegotiated hierarchies in an inclusive, egalitarian manner?[1] I will investigate which bodies government officials wanted the public to commit to memory in the 'imperial centre' by using case studies of state ceremonials at the Cenotaph, the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey, and the inauguration of Armistice Day. I will also examine the establishment of the Imperial War Museum, the Imperial Camel Corps Memorial, and the Cavalry of Empire Memorial. I aim to show that underpinning state-sponsored commemoration, was a shared determination by individuals in government and the

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[1] Sir James Gildea, *For Remembrance and In Honour of Those Who Lost Their Lives in The South African War 1899- 1902* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, Ltd, 1911). In this book, produced for Empire Day 1911, Gildea catalogued all the memorials in Britain and across the empire to those who died in the Second South African war. Despite his meticulous research he fails to note that not a single black African is commemorated or has a memorial. In this way, by failing to challenge the notion of the 'white man's war' in the memorial landscape, Gildea helped to bolster the myth.

military to use sites of memory and material culture to frame remembrance of the war in a manner that would help unite the 'white empire' whilst accommodating the contributions of Indian troops. This could only be achieved by creating places for rituals and mourning that acknowledged the grief of millions of individuals of all classes, gender, religion, and race but which, nevertheless, represented only select names of those who served and died in the war, mostly white, and excluded or marginalized others. I will argue that this policy existed across metropole and colony. In consequence, the establishment of new commemorative 'traditions', and the construction of functional monuments to the war dead perpetuated a distorted remembrance of the war.

Lutyens and the Cenotaph: a memorial for all the Empire?

The appearance of a war memorial in central London and the associated ceremonies around it had their origins, not in the first official Armistice Day on 11 November 1919, but in the organization of the Peace Parade of 19 July 1919 discussed in the previous chapter. On that day, there was a mood among the population, not just to celebrate victory, but also to officially commemorate the war dead in a manner appropriate to their perceived 'sacrifice'. In June 1919, after peace terms had been agreed at the Versailles conference, the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, met with his French counterpart, Georges Clemenceau, to discuss the forthcoming peace celebrations. Lloyd George was informed that the French intended to have a catafalque - a temporary structure designed to look like a

receptacle for the remains of a dead combatant - close to the Arc de Triomphe, as part of their victory ceremony in Paris on 'Bastille Day' on 14 July.[2] Lloyd George was so impressed with the idea of honouring the dead as well as marking victory that he was determined to ensure that a similar structure, representing a dead British serviceman, would be part of the London celebrations planned for 19 July.[3] Sir Alfred Mond, the Minister of Works, turned to leading British architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens, for the task of producing a similar tribute. Lutyens had been employed by the IWGC as a Principal Architect since 1917 and had previously worked with Mond on designing a temporary war shrine in Hyde Park which had not come to fruition.[4] Whilst in France and Belgium, Lutyens had courted controversy by employing abstract forms in his designs for war memorials in cemeteries, rather than the expected Christian symbolism such as the cross. Lutyens' insistence on equality and uniformity in memorial design was partly due to his pantheistic beliefs and his appreciation that the dead were of many faiths.[5] Mond asked him, at short notice, to produce a similar, temporary, non-denominational structure for the Peace Parade.

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[2] War Cabinet Peace Celebrations Committee, 18 June 1919, TNA (UK), WORK 21/74.

[3] Allan Greenberg, 'Lutyens's Cenotaph', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 48, No.1 (March 1989), p. 7.

[4] National War Memorial and Museum, 21 August 1917, TNA (UK), CAB 23/3/69; See Alan Borg, *War Memorials: From Antiquity To The Present* (London: Leo Cooper, 1991), pp. 140-2 for initial designs for imperial memorialization in central London after the First World War.

[5] Andrew Crompton, 'The Secret of the Cenotaph' *AA Files*, No. 34 (Autumn 1997), pp. 65; Eric Homberger, 'The Story of the Cenotaph, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 12 November 1966, pp. 1429-30

Lutyens did not design a catafalque, however, but a cenotaph, an empty tomb made of wood and plaster in the 'elemental mode'; drawing on a classical style, free of religious ornamentation.[6] The words, 'The Glorious Dead' were inscribed on the structure, using 'high diction' to emphasise Lutyens' refusal to merely celebrate victory.[7] The words also succeeded in bringing the 'dead into history'.[8] On the morning of 19 July 1919, the temporary cenotaph was unveiled in Whitehall, along the route of the military procession, and, within an hour, wreaths and flowers placed by the public were piled high around the base of the plinth.[9] During the celebrations, the Cenotaph was used by marching troops as the point to salute the King and so ensured it was the focal point of the day. After the march-past had finished, it was estimated that, over a three-day period, 400, 000 people visited the Cenotaph, considering it as their national war memorial; queuing patiently and respectfully to grieve and pay homage to the dead.[10] The reaction of the people visiting the Cenotaph and the reporting of the numbers visiting the temporary structure in the

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[6] David A. Johnson and Nicole F. Gilbertson, 'Commemorations of Imperial Sacrifice at Home and Abroad: British Memorials of the Great War', *The History Teacher*, Vol.43, No. 4 (August 2010), p. 568.

[7] Andrew Crompton, 'The Story of the Cenotaph', p. 65; For the use of 'high diction' as a linguistic means to avoid the realities of war see: Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 22.

[8] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 104.

[9] Allan Greenberg.' Lutyens's Cenotaph', p. 9.

[10] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 96.

newspapers led to calls for the Cenotaph to become a permanent feature in Whitehall. This call for perpetuity had come from below, from a public who desperately needed a site to mourn those whose bodies lay in cemeteries overseas which were not easily accessible to mourners.[11]

Jay Winter, a historian of memory, contends that the appearance of the Cenotaph, and the public reaction to it, transformed London into 'an imagined cemetery'.[12] In the aftermath of the war, he observes, the imperial metropolis became associated with death and mourning. Winter is among a number of historians who have maintained that post-war memorials and commemoration practices evolved out of the need to resolve the emotional trauma of war.[13] In invoking emotionality, these historians were reacting against those who proposed that the purpose of post-war commemoration lay solely in the calculation of governments who needed to arouse patriotism or promote nationalism in uncertain and unstable times.[14] Winter proposes that commemoration in this period contained both political and emotional

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[11] Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2005), p. 50.

[12] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, p. 104.

[13] Eric J. Leed, No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); David Cannadine, 'War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain', in Joachim Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death* (London: Europa Publications Ltd, 1981), pp. 187-242; Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946 (*Oxford: Berg, 1994).

[14] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*; Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London, 1990)

elements with the political symbolism eventually obscuring the ritual significance after 'the moment of mourning has long passed'.[15]

Whilst accepting the emotional dimension in the creation of war memorials in the post-war period, including structures such as the Cenotaph, it is nevertheless important to explore whether state-sponsored memorials were conceptualized by officials as not just national but also imperial. What was the nature of the demographic they were intended to serve? David Johnson and Nicole Gilbertson, in an article meant for History teachers, suggest that the Cenotaph, through its abstract form and lack of religious symbolism, 'served as an inclusive cultural symbol to memorialize the sacrifice of the citizen-soldier' and that Lutyens 'recognized the religious and racial diversity of Britain's military forces' in the First World War.[16] It is worth investigating whether the Cenotaph was conceived in the inclusive manner described above. Winter sees it as both a British and imperial war memorial.[17] Alex King, in his study of post-war memorials, reminds us that individuals of all faiths, classes, and ethnicities drew their own, often contested, meanings from the Cenotaph and other memorials.[18]

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[15] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 93.

[16] David A. Johnson and Nicole F. Gilbertson, 'Commemorations of Imperial Sacrifice at Home and Abroad: British Memorials of the Great War', pp. 568; 573.

[17] Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century,* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006), p. 176.

[18] Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The symbolism and politics of remembrance* (Oxford: Berg, 1998). p. 6.

I have outlined in earlier chapters how the existence of a racialized military hierarchy operated before, during, and immediately after the war and how Black colonial servicemen were represented as inferior to 'martial' British troops and excluded from the narrative of the war where possible. Did Lutyens transcend such efforts to downplay the service of Black colonial troops when he was asked to design the memorial representing the British war dead? If it was designed as an imperial monument, then the bodies of dead African and Caribbean (and Asian) servicemen might conceivably be amongst those imagined in the community of 'sacrifice' by the metropolitan public and their war service given permanent acknowledgement by the government.[19] But if it was conceived as a national monument, given the concept of 'Britishness', the even narrower construct of 'Englishness', and the invisible discourse of 'whiteness', it can be argued that such a formulation, in the context of the war, meant only the bodies of white British servicemen were meant to be remembered and mourned in the commemorative process.

The evidence regarding the purpose of the Cenotaph suggests that the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, wanted a tribute to the 'imperial' war dead during the Peace Parade. Mond's choice of architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens, known for his usage of an imperial style, was an important indication that the Cenotaph and its unveiling at

[19] See Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2005), p. 53 on how memorials validate notions of 'redemptive sacrifice' – they [the dead] sacrificed themselves for us.

the Peace Celebrations were conceived as a temporary adjunct to London's 'imperial landscape'.[20] As I have discussed in Chapter Two, officials only decided to showcase the soft power of the British Empire just days before the 1919 ceremonial. Representatives from across the empire were in attendance on 19 July; soldiers from the dominions (and a handful from India) were in the military procession; a 10,000 strong Imperial Choir sang at the Peace Day celebrations, and similar events were expected to take place across the British Empire on the same day or close to the 19 July.[21]

How the Cenotaph was perceived overseas was of vital importance to politicians. In a letter written by Bonar Law, the Lord Privy Seal, addressed to the MP, Viscount Wolmer, he explained that there was a considerable body of opinion in the country who expressed a desire to see a Christian inscription on the Cenotaph but, in Law's words, this would cause 'considerable difficulty' given the popularity of the memorial. He informed Wolmer, arguably with India in mind, that the words 'To the Glorious Dead' had been deliberately chosen so as 'to guard against giving offence to the many non-Christian nations of the Empire who also contributed a large extent to the armies of His Majesty'. This suggests that the memorial was envisaged by officials as an imperial one.[22] Lutyens, confirmed the multi-faith aspect

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[20] Pamela Gilbert reminds that us that 'there are no Londons other than that of the imagination' see: Pamela K. Gilbert (Ed.), *Imagined Londons* (Albany: University of New York Press, 2002), p. 1.

[21] Eric Homberger, 'The Story of the Cenotaph', p. 1429.

[22] Bonar Law to Viscount Wolmer, 'Erection of Cenotaph', 29 July 1919, TNA (UK), WORK 20/139.

when he declared that the memorial was intended to appeal to 'all creeds and denominations'.[23] In 1920, when discussing the unveiling of a permanent Cenotaph in Whitehall, members of the Cabinet were reminded by Lord Curzon that the Cenotaph was 'an imperial monument commemorating men of many races and creeds'.[24] Lord Haig described the Cenotaph both as the 'symbol of an Empire's unity' and as a marker of the 'nation's glory'.[25] After the permanent Cenotaph was unveiled Lloyd George wrote to Lutyens and thanked him for designing a 'shrine not only for the British Isles but also for the whole of the British Empire.'[26] In the years following the unveiling, Lutyens resisted many calls to add religious symbolism to its design.[27] If this had been agreed, it would have destroyed the consensus around its original non-denominational form and subverted the intention of the memorial.[28]

Whilst politicians used public platforms to emphasise the imperial nature of the memorial, one cannot know with any certainty which 'empire' Lutyens wanted

[23] Sir Edwin Lutyens, Cenotaph: Whitehall, TNA (UK), WORK 20/226.

[24] 'Conclusions of the Cabinet Meeting', 14 October 1920, TNA (UK), CAB 23/22/17.

[25] 'Lord Haig's Message', *The Times*, 10 November 1920, p. 14.

[26] Lloyd George Papers, House of Lords Record Office, 17 November 1920, F/95/52.

[27] Sir Edwin Lutyens, Cenotaph: Whitehall, TNA (UK), WORK 20/226.

[28] Erection of Cenotaph, 15 October 1919, TNA (UK), WORK 20/139; Allan Greenberg, 'Lutyens's Cenotaph', p. 12; Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, p. 144; For the similarities between nation states and empire see: Krishan Kumar, 'Nation-states as empires, empires as nation states: two principles, one practice?', *Theory and Society*, 39 (2010), pp. 119-143.

to represent in the Cenotaph. He certainly had strong connections with India through his pantheistic beliefs and his marriage to Emily Bulwer-Lytton, the daughter of Lord Lytton, the former Viceroy, who maintained her Indian connections.[29] Historians have debated whether his classical western forms were in the service of the British Empire. David Crellin has posited that Lutyens wished to express and embody, in his architecture, 'an inclusive, liberal empire.'[30] Jane Ridley, Lutyens' great-granddaughter, maintains that, compared to Herbert Baker (his architectural co-worker in New Delhi), he should not even be considered an imperialist.[31]

Lutyens' personal diary provides some insights into his thinking on African and Asian subjects of empire. In 1910, Lutyens had travelled to South Africa to visit Baker, a close friend of Cecil Rhodes, an associate of Lord Milner and his 'kindergarten', and later a Principal Architect for the IWGC.[32] Whilst there, Lutyens designed the Johannesburg Art Gallery and the Rand Regiments Memorial, to British

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[29] Jane Ridley, *The Architect and His Wife: A Life of Sir Edwin Lutyens (*London: Chatto and Windus, 2002).

[30] David Crellin, 'Some Corner of a Foreign Field': Lutyens, Empire and the Sites of Remembrance' in Andrew Hopkins & Gavin Stamp (eds.), *Lutyens Abroad: The Work Of Sir Edwin Lutyens Outside The British Isles* (London: The British School at Rome, 2002), p. 101.

[31] Jane Ridley, 'Lutyens, New Delhi and Indian Architecture' in A Hopkins & G Stamp, *Lutyens Abroad*, p. 185.

[32] Saul Dubow, 'Colonial Nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the Rise of "South Africanism", 1902-10', *History Workshop Journal*, No. 43 (Spring, 1997), p. 71.

troops who died in the Second South African War, which was appended to the gallery. Lutyens would have been aware of Baker's strong feelings on the British imperial project. In Pretoria, Baker, had designed the Union Buildings, the parliament buildings of the new Union of South Africa to symbolize white unity 'between the Boers and the British' and a 'partnership of equals'.[33] Lutyens did not reveal, in his diaries, his thoughts on the position of Black South Africans in the new dominion beyond his exoticizing comment that 'black people interest me enormously. Their faces, the soles of their feet and their white tongues'. [34] His usage of the colonial term 'Kafir' to describe Black South Africans suggests he did not contest their supposed inferior status.[35] However, in travelling to South Africa in the year it became the latest dominion of the British empire, and designing a new art gallery in Johannesburg, Lutyens was explicitly associating himself with Lord Milner's project to reconcile the differences between white English settlers and Afrikaners in order to create a new 'white dominion' where white supremacy over the majority black African population was a fact of life.[36]

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[33] Roderick Gradidge, 'Baker and Lutyens in South Africa, or, the Road to Bakerloo' in A Hopkins & G Stamp, *Lutyens Abroad*, p. 156.

[34] Clayre Percy and Jane Ridley (eds.), *The Letters of Edwin Lutyens to his wife Lady Emily* (London: Collins, 1985), p. 206.

[35] Ibid., p. 208.

[36] Lutyens had made his name designing country houses in a distinctly 'British' vernacular. See: Gavin Stamp, *Edwin Lutyens: Country Houses* (London: Monacelli Press, 2009). In Johannesburg, he had been commissioned to contribute to the creation of a 'city beautiful'.

Lutyens had also collaborated with Baker in British India to construct buildings such as the Viceroy's House and other government offices for the new capital of the Raj in New Delhi. The intention of the structures was to dominate the city's skyline and to remind Indians of the dominance and permanence of the British presence and the place of Indians in the colonial hierarchy.[37] In India, Lutyens had written to his wife that 'India, like Africa, makes one very Tory and pre-feudal Tory!'[38] In his diaries he identified himself as 'white' and Indians as 'black' and wrote of his horror at the thought of seeing 'a black man embrace a white woman'.[39] It is conceivable that, whilst Lutyens' mental world view took into consideration the contributions of Indians in the war, to him, 'empire' meant the continued dominance of the Anglo-Saxon race and the white dominions connected, not only by their political institutions, but by their Britishness and their whiteness. Lutyens accommodated the religious sensibilities of Indians into his design, but a question mark remains about their status, and the place of Africans and those of African descent in considerations of those represented by the monument in Whitehall. Ceremonials, instituted around the permanent Cenotaph, provide clues as to who was selected for remembrance and who was not.

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[37] Robert Grant Irving, 'Architecture for Empire's Sake: Lutyens Palace for Delhi', *Perspecta*, Vol. 18 (1982), p. 14.

[38] Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (London: faber and faber, 1989), p. 234.

[39] Clayre Percy and Jane Ridley (eds.), *The Letters of Edwin Lutyens to his wife Lady Emily*, pp. 230-32; 253.

The primary purpose of Lutyens' Cenotaph, proclaimed by politicians as symbolic of the suffering of the whole empire, was to assist in the process of grieving across the British Empire. The structure also served as a proxy for reminding the subjects of empire that commemorative precedent was set in the imperial capital by British politicians for others to follow. The presence of a new war memorial in the symbolic centre of the metropolis served to reassure officials across the empire that their military service had been acknowledged commensurate to their growing status; but the core of empire remained Britain, the white dominions, and India. The lack of visual cues on the Cenotaph helped officials represent it as an ostensibly imperial monument whilst they privately accepted that the British public imagined it as a national one. At the unveiling ceremony (and the interment of the Unknown Warrior) on 11 November 1920, the dominions were represented by their High Commissioners; India by royalty from the Princely states; the colonies were represented by retired British governors hand-picked by the Colonial Secretary, Lord Milner. Sir Frank Swettenham, the former Governor of the Malay States, represented the 'Easter and Pacific' colonies, Sir George LeHunte, the former Governor of Trinidad and Tobago, represented the West Indian colonies, Sir Frederick Lugard, the former Governor of Nigeria, represented west Africa and the Mediterranean colonies; and Sir James Hayes Sadler, the former Governor of the British East Africa Protectorate, represented the east African colonies.[40] In choosing white officials to

[40] H. F. Batterbee to Sir Lionel Earle, 'Unknown Warrior', 29 October 1920, TNA (UK) WORK 20/1/3; 'The King's Wreath', *The Times*, 10 November 1920, p. 14.

represent the black colonial empire, Milner was displaying a racialized British imperial hierarchy on a world stage in a visible and explicit way. He was also signalling that the deaths of British, dominion, and Asian servicemen were the only contributions that needed to be remembered. His actions reveal how remembering and forgetting are in a dialogue with each other and complementary.[41] Just as in the Peace Parade in 1919, to invite Black African and Caribbean statesmen or servicemen might be interpreted as a sign of racial equality in the empire. This was something Milner was not able to countenance so he used his position to exclude black colonial servicemen from imperial ceremonials in consecutive years. As I have argued in the previous chapter, he will have also been aware of the impact of the symbolism of formal occasions and to deliberately exclude Black participants would have the effect of highlighting the whiteness of the remaining invitees. In doing so, he was establishing a new precedent whereby white officials embodied Black colonial subjects in the imperial centre, signifying to the public, if they did not know already, the power dynamic of white over Black peoples in the overseas colonies. Once established as an annual arrangement, these rituals associated with remembrance of the war dead at the location of the Cenotaph every November, including the non-invitation of Black colonial units or officials, became firmly established as 'tradition' despite claims that the monument was inclusive of all subjects of empire. Georgie Wemyss posits that a 'dominant discourse' privileges and naturalizes white

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[41] Ana Guglielmucci, Luciana Scaraffuni Ribeiro and Margot Olavarria, 'Site of Memory and Site of Forgetting: The Repurposing of the Punta Carretas Prison', *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 43, No. 5 (September 2016), p. 141.

histories, suppresses alternative histories, and makes the white subject invisible by normalising it. These are the conditions where whiteness is established as the norm. In this way, the memorial itself, by virtue of its association with exclusive commemoration practice, also came to be associated with 'imperial whiteness'.[42]

The Tomb of the Unknown British Warrior

When the War Cabinet was finalizing its plans for the unveiling of the permanent Cenotaph, a decision was also made to bury a British serviceman in Westminster Abbey on the same day as part of the ceremony. In October 1920, Herbert Ryle, the Dean of Westminster, acting on the suggestion of David Railton, a padre who had served on the Western Front, made a formal request to the government for a public funeral in the Abbey using a surrogate body for the benefit of those families who were unable to visit the war cemeteries in France and Belgium.[43] Ryle had the support of Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, who argued that the armed forces were unanimously behind the proposal. The Cabinet agreed to the proposed burial on the basis that no single body was being favoured in the proposed public ceremony as the identity of the soldier would be unknown. They believed that the public would appreciate the

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[42] Georgie Wemyss, *The Invisible Empire: White Discourse, Tolerance and Belonging* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), p. 3.

[43] Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), p. 236; Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, p. 23.

opportunity to honour an anonymous body of a 'fighting man' in the absence of gravesites in Britain as the public could imagine that the body in the coffin might be a (male) relative. The Cabinet also agreed to the adoption of a neutral word 'Warrior' for the body, thereby representing all three armed services in the proposed ceremonial but which signified 'martial' traits.[44] Maurice Hankey, a former soldier and the Secretary to the Cabinet in 1920, was put in charge of the Memorial Services Committee and Lord Curzon was given the job of designing the ceremonials.[45] In France, a British army officer, Brigadier-General Louis J. Wyatt, organized the exhumation of four bodies without identifying marks from locations in Ypres, Arras, the Somme, and the Aisne. The bodies were placed in coffins and taken to a chapel in St. Pol, near Arras in Northern France, where a blindfolded officer selected an anonymous coffin containing one of the bodies to be transported by a navy Destroyer to England for burial.[46] A reading of the correspondence of the Memorial Services Committee suggests that the ritual was designed to have an imperial aspect whilst on French soil, but there was a conscious effort to change the 'language' of the ritual once in England. In Boulogne, the body had been accompanied to the ship, *HMS Verdun*, by French, dominion, and British troops but once on board the

[44] 'Conclusions of the Cabinet Meeting', 15 October 1920, TNA (UK), CAB 32/22/18.

[45] 'Arrangements for conveying Body of Unknown Warrior from France to London', 8 November 1920, TNA (UK), WO 32/3000.

[46] Brigadier-General Louis J. Wyatt, 'Letters to the Editor', *Daily Telegraph*, 11.11.1939.

Committee decided that from that moment the ceremony should 'assume a purely British character'.[47]

Despite these efforts behind the scenes many people, including the national newspapers, speculated that the body of the Unknown Warrior could be any soldier of any race from within the British empire who had served on the Western Front over the whole period of the war. *The Times* Newspaper asserted that:

> 'The Unknown Warrior whose body was to be buried may have been born to a high position or to low; he may have been a sailor, a soldier, an airman; an Englishman, A Scotsman, a Welshman, an Irishman, a man of the Dominions, a Sikh, a Gurkha. No one knows.'[48]

David Railton went further in an article written for *Our Empire*, in 1931. He maintained that 'Many people have not yet grasped the fact that he may have come from any part of the British Isles, or from the Dominions or Colonies'.[49] Adrian Gregory has pointed out, however, that, despite the rhetoric of the body being from

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[47] 'Arrangements for conveying Body of Unknown Warrior from France to London', 4 November 1920, TNA (UK), WO 32/3000.

[48] 'The Unknown Warrior: What We Know of Him', *The Times*, 11 November 1920, pp. 15-16. It is in this article that the correspondent promoted the idea that the body could be from any year of the war and be of any ethnicity; see also: 'In The Abbey: The Warrior Laid To Rest', *The Times* Supplement, 12 November 1920, p. ii

[49] David Railton, 'The Origin of the Unknown Warrior's Grave', *Our Empire*, Vol. VII (1931).

any part of the empire, it could not have been Navy, Air Force, dominion, colonial, Indian, a Kitchener Volunteer, a conscript or territorial.[50] This was because the Memorial Services Committee was determined that the ceremonies should be of a British Character honouring a British body.[51] When Herbert Ryle had suggested exhuming a body from the Western Front, he hoped that it would be the 'bones of someone who died in early days of war, suggesting a regular soldier.[52] Ryle's request was acted on by the Adjutant-General in his instruction to the Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiry of the IWGC. He specified that 'dates of original burial should be as far back as possible'.[53] This time-specific stipulation suggests that, although the bodies would be chosen anonymously, they could only be selected from specific locations where fighting had occurred as far back as 1914. The only imperial forces in France with the British Expeditionary Force at that time were the Indian Corps, whose first engagement was in one of the later battles at Ypres in October 1914, two months after British forces had fought the German Army at the Battle of Mons.[54] It is plausible to suggest that Dean Ryle knew that, by limiting the scope of where the body was obtained by year and location, the consequence would result in the corpse of a white British male being honoured. In 1935, Brigadier-

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[50] Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, p. 25.

[51] Ibid, p. 25. In a footnote, Gregory suggests that 'truth could still be sensitive today' in the preference for a body of a British servicemen but does not expand on this.

[52] Herbert Ryle, 'Unknown Warrior', 19 October 1920, TNA (UK), WORK 20/1/3.

[53] 'The Unknown Warrior', CWGC / ADD 6/1/16: 1/11/1920-22/10/2009.

[54] George Morton-Jack, *The Indian Empire at War* (London: Little, Brown, 2018), pp. 121-141.

General Wyatt wrote in his personal papers that he had decided that: 'The body must be a British soldier, and that there could be no means of him being identified.'[55] The 'British' character of the interment was given permanence by the location chosen by the Dean for the body in Westminster Abbey and the wording on the tomb. The anonymous serviceman was buried in the Nave, a central position opposite the Great West Door, so it could be easily seen and identified by the public. Part of the inscription read – A British Warrior Who Fell In The Great War 1914-1918 For King And Country.[56]

3.1 The coffin of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey (image courtesy of the CWGC)

Historian Ken Inglis has suggested another factor which may have caused Dean Ryle to propose a body to be interred in Westminster Abbey. He argues that the clergymen in the Church of England were unhappy at the secularity of the

[55] Personal papers of Brigadier-General Louis J. Wyatt, IWM, Catalogue Reference, 14122.

[56] 'Conclusions of Cabinet meeting', 15 October 1920, TNA (UK), CAB 23/22/18.

permanent Cenotaph and were determined that the national church had to be involved in post-war commemoration to offer religious sentiment in some way: the burial of the Unknown Warrior offered that opportunity.[57] In this discourse, the body of the unnamed serviceman, in its journey from the Cenotaph to the Abbey, was used to channel the commemorative focus from being notionally imperial to a ceremony and site more identified with the established church and to the imagined nation.[58] Connections were encouraged between public mourning for a surrogate body, the rhetoric of patriotism, and the Christian iconography of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey.[59] The choice of the Abbey for the burial was an affirmation of the ecclesiastical desire that the body should be buried in a Christian church, in a ceremony of a Christian character, in a tomb with Christian symbolism. The body had been laid to rest in a coffin made of wood from Hampton Court Palace, suggestive of a royal lineage from the nation's past, and decorated

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[57] Kenneth S Inglis, 'Ten Questions for Historians', *Geurres mondiales et conflits* contemporains, no.167, Les Monuments Aux Morts De La Premiere Guerre Mondiale (July 1992), p. 11.

[58] Kenneth S. Inglis, 'Unknown Soldiers: From London and Paris to Baghdad', *History and Memory*, Vol. 5, No.2 (Fall – Winter, 1993), p. 7; See also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, first published 1983 (London: Verso, 1990); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, first published 1983 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) especially chapters 1 – 4.

[59] Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, p. 27.

with a 'crusader's sword', suggestive of historical continuity with the martial nobles of centuries past who were willing to give their lives for a Christian cause.[60]

Whilst Dean Ryle or Brigadier General Wyatt cannot have known the religion of the serviceman, by laying him to rest in Westminster Abbey, the nation's church, with Christian inscriptions on a marble headstone, the body came to be associated with Christian iconography and, in time, the body was assumed to be Christian as opposed to, for example, a Hindu, Muslim or Sikh serviceman, whose religious rites were taken seriously by the military to avoid causing offence. In 1921, S. I. Levy, a Principal in a Hebrew School, visited the Abbey and took offence at a line in the inscription which read 'In Christ shall all be made alive'. He wrote to the Dean asking if this line could be amended. The Dean wrote back defending the Christian character of the inscription. Ryle explained that whilst Westminster Abbey was a Christian Church, the body may be of a different faith, even a Jew. He clarified that the text defined the faith only of those who buried the body but not necessarily of the body itself. He further explained that the great majority of mourners were Christian who were pleased with the inscription and that 'the great majority of our brothers who fell in France were Christians either by conviction or profession.'[61] In the correspondence the Dean implied that, even a year after its interment, the body

[60] Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 44.

[61] Rev. Maurice H. Fitzgerald, *A Memoir of Herbert Edward Ryle* (London, Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1928), p. 314.

of the Unknown Warrior had come to be defined by its location in Westminster Abbey as an iconic symbol of Christian sacrifice. In this way, the original idea of honouring a body in an egalitarian manner had been usurped by the need for a commemorative practice which placed much emphasis on Christian and feudal symbolism to achieve an effect of historical continuity with a mythical national past implying the body was both Christian and British. Whatever the ethnicity, status, and religion of the serviceman, the body, having served its original purpose as a surrogate for all classes of mourners and the empire, had been purposely elevated to iconic status by its disposition in Westminster Abbey. It had also been codified by the committee in overtly 'national' terms through visible Christian symbolism and semantically by the inscription of the word 'British' as opposed to 'imperial' on the memorial at a time when, in the public imagination, to be British meant to be white.[62]

[62] John R. Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom: Commemoration, ritual and British transatlantic slavery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 59.

3. 2 The inscription on the tomb of the Unknown British Warrior (photo courtesy of the CWGC)

Armistice Day and the Order of Precedence, 1920

On 11 November 1920, the twin ceremonies of the unveiling of the Cenotaph and the interment of the body of an unknown serviceman in Westminster Abbey took place. These new ceremonies engendered a need for a military 'order of precedence' for the processions which became established in the annual ritual of remembrance, demonstrating how post-war 'invented traditions' often overlapped with those of earlier periods.[63] Most historians of memory have little to say on the order of precedence of 1919 and 1920 but I contend it is a crucial element in the negotiation of hierarchy and empire. Members of the Memorial Services Committee

[63] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, pp. 2-6.

stressed that the remembrance ceremonials of 1920 needed to be different to the Peace celebrations. Officials urged that 'the unveiling and burial ceremonies should be regarded as domestic functions … only peoples of the British Empire should participate'.[64] The use of the word 'domestic' denoted that the allies should not be invited so that only a British and imperial hierarchy would be on display. Leading the funeral procession, and at the apex of the hierarchy, was the Royal Family, who would accompany the gun carriage holding the body of the Unknown Warrior from Victoria Station to Whitehall and Westminster Abbey. At the Cenotaph, India, and the dominions were represented symbolically by imperial officials such as the Secretary of State for India, Sir Edwin Montague, three loyal Indian princes representing the Princely States, and five high commissioners from the dominions.[65] The colonies were represented by British officials recommended by Lord Milner as discussed earlier in the chapter.

After the unveiling ceremony, and the two minutes silence, there was a march past of 800 servicemen and ex-servicemen in a military order of precedence led by the Navy, the Army, and the Air Force.[66] The British armed services would lead,

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[64] 'Unknown Warrior', 5 November 1920, TNA (UK) WORK 20/1/3.

[65] 'Arrangements for conveying Body of Unknown Warrior from France to London', 8 November 1920, TNA (UK) WO 32/3000.

[66] The two-minute silence was proposed by Lord Milner to the King and approved. The idea originated from Sir Percy Fitzpatrick in South Africa, where the dead were publicly remembered in a two-minute silence. See: David Cannadine, 'War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain', in Joachim Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death* (London: Europa

followed by Indian troops, and those from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Newfoundland. The Committee produced a diagram to show how the order of precedence was to be followed. The sketch shows that spaces were also reserved for the BWIR, the KAR, and the WAFF in the procession after the dominion forces, which had also been the case for the 1919 Peace Parade and previous royal coronations. By 1920, however, the BWIR had been disbanded and the KAR and WAFF much reduced in size. In 1919, there had been at least the pretence of a discussion over the attendance of Black colonial servicemen but in 1920 they were not even discussed at all. This suggests that the precedent of excluding Black servicemen from processions in London in 1911 and 1919 had resulted in a new 'custom' of exclusion in war remembrance.[67] Apart from the procession, the service in Westminster Abbey was attended by various dignitaries and widows of deceased servicemen. Negotiations were complicated by a naval officer insisting that a 'Lascar' seaman be included in the procession. In the end, the Committee allowed two Indian seamen in the procession as representatives in the Mercantile Marine for this occasion only.[68]

Publications Ltd, 1981), p. 222; A Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, p. 9: Gregory posits that the silence was a 'dominion idea' and emphasises the unity between political representatives of the dominions and the metropolis.

[67] 'Arrangements for conveying Body of Unknown Warrior from France to London', 8 November 1920, TNA (UK), WO 32/3000; Eric Hobsbawn 'Inventing traditions' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, p. 2

[68] 'Unknown Warrior', 30 November 1920, TNA (UK), WORK 20/1/3.

In 1921, there was a change of emphasis in the annual service. At the end of the war, there was a critical need for a conduit for public mourning and so officials provided a central war memorial, a surrogate body to symbolize service personnel buried overseas, and new rituals of remembrance. In November 1921, *The Times* newspaper reported a shift in the tone of the Government in advance of the Armistice Day service. It was announced that the Memorial Service Committee expressed a desire that the day should not just be used to 'commemorate the sacrifice and suffering of war' but urged the public to celebrate 'the winning of victory and the dawn of peace' and to this effect the day should be characterized 'not so much by grief and mourning as by honourable pride and grateful remembrance.'[69] This would be achieved by 'a certain amount of ceremonial display, which should centre around the Cenotaph' which underscored 'a commemoration of a great occasion in the National history'.[70] This was a shift in emphasis away from the imperial to the national and from mourning to pride. No dominion, Indian or colonial troops were invited to participate in the 1921 military procession after the service in Whitehall. For the watching public, it was only British servicemen and ex-servicemen who now came to be associated with the annual march-pasts.[71] In this way, through annual repetition, the imperial character of the Armistice Day service

[69] 'Armistice Day: Ceremonial at the Cenotaph', *The Times*, 17 October 1921, p. 12; 'Cenotaph: arrangements for services', 12 October 1921, TNA (UK), CAB 27/142.

[70] *The Times*, 17 October 1921, p. 12.

[71] 'Armistice Day: Parade of Troops', *The Times*, 9 November 1921, p. 5.

in London diminished, and its associated rituals came to be read as emblematic of Britishness and whiteness.[72]

Arguably, the only other force capable of altering the course of the remembrance of war in this period were the many ex-servicemen's organisations that sprang up during the war and its immediate aftermath to serve the various needs of demobilised servicemen and women. Historians have focused their research on the tensions between the government and the veterans' organizations or within the organizations themselves and the culture of remembrance practice.[73] Niall Barr's history of veterans between the wars is the only one of these histories to make a connection with the organizations and the politics of the Empire but his major focus is on the British veterans. Barr explains that several official bodies existed for ex-servicemen such as the Empire Services League, which was founded by Earl Haig and Field Marshal Jan Smuts, with affiliations from dominion organizations.[74] The

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[72] 'Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet', TNA (UK), CAB 23/27/4, 7 October 1921, instructs the dominions and the colonies to partake in their own two-minute silence. Beyond the dignitaries invited to participate in the Armistice Day ceremonial to lay wreaths, the imperial military link last showcased in 1919 was effectively broken in November 1921.

[73] Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919-46* (Oxford; Berg, 1994); Graham Wootton, *Official History of the British Legion* (London, 1956); Graham Wootton, *The Politics of Influence* (London, 1963); Charles Kimball, 'Ex-Service Movement in England and Wales 1916-30', PhD. Stanford, 1986; Niall Barr, *The Lion and The Poppy: British Veterans, Politics and Society, 1921-1939* (London: Praeger, 2005).

[74] Niall Barr, *The Lion and the Poppy*, p. 4.

main organizations amalgamated in 1921 to form the British Legion, with the Prince of Wales as its Patron and Earl Haig as President. The Legion achieved dominance amongst all other groups but at the cost of the potential for disagreement and protest.[75] Barr argues that the British Legion was comprised of patriotic individuals proud of their war service. However, the involvement of officers meant that the Legion was organized along traditional hierarchical lines and reflected the division of rank, class, and gender within both within the armed services and wider British society.[76] Barr also described how the Legion had a role in helping ex-servicemen and their families migrate to British colonies.

In the British Legion's founding programme, one of its early aims was to develop contacts with ex-servicemen 'throughout the Empire and our Allied countries' with the aim of instituting a 'National Day of Commemoration' and to 'co-operate and federate' with similar organizations to the British Legion.[77] This meant that the Legion also had imperial aims in its programme as well as the promotion of peace. One of these objectives was to help ex-servicemen who wished to settle in the white dominions. Earl Haig spoke to veterans about this policy at the 1926 British Legion conference. He explained 'Here is a sound scheme of settlement. We want the vacant lands of our Empire peopled with settlers of our own flesh and blood'.[78] He

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[75] Ibid, p. 21.

[76] Ibid, p. 67;74.

[77] Niall Barr, *The Lion and the Poppy*, Appendix E: National Constructive Programme, p. 151.

[78] 'Haig presidential speech – Annual conference', British Legion Archives, AC 1926.

referred to the 'lands' as the dominions, and specifically, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The role of the Legion would be to provide settlement grants.[79] In this way, British Legion officials were actively assisting the pre-war ambition of a 'Greater Britain' and a federation of 'white men's countries'. In its practice, the Legion do not appear to have countenanced acting on behalf of Black colonial servicemen which would be at odds with the settlement schemes.[80] The only challenge I have found to the Armistice Day practice established by government and military officials from 1921 was an attempt to include the flag of the disbanded West India Regiment in the 1936 march past. The Black veterans requested a presence as they 'cannot and will not cause to die those beautiful memories of happy days '. The Colonial Office, to whom the request was made, passed the letter to the Army Council who stated it was nothing to do with them.[81]

Lewis Greenstein interviewed some ex-servicemen from the KAR in 1973 and it appears that some African NCOs joined the British Legion in the interwar period, as was their right to do so, but having joined could not define the benefits of membership beyond a medal they received which they displayed on their coats and

[79] Barr, *The Lion and the Poppy*, pp. 107-9.

[80] I contacted both the British Legion and the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League. Neither was able to provide any information on whether African or Caribbean servicemen had attempted to affiliate or been invited to affiliate in the immediate aftermath of the First World War.

[81] 'Ex-West India Regiment Association: request for a banner for ceremonial occasions.', 29 February – May 1936, TNA (UK), CO 137/810/9.

blankets.[82] When the Legion was asked to take over the organization of the Armistice Day ceremonials and march past in 1927, the 'traditions' had already been invented and the nature of the Legion was to fall in line and not subvert the recently established practice.

From 1921, many of the rituals that are still observed in the present were embedded once the British Legion was formed. In that year, the Legion began selling Flanders poppies to raise funds for ex-servicemen and to remember their service. In October of that year, Lord Curzon informed the Cabinet that the rituals of the 1921 Armistice Day ceremony would be the 'type for the future'.[83] In 1923, the first Festival of Remembrance was held in the Royal Albert Hall, and in 1928, the Empire Field of Remembrance was established outside Westminster Abbey.[84] I argue that these rituals constructed around Armistice Day from 1919 onwards had at least some of their origins in imperial and national notions of racial exclusiveness originating from a military racial hierarchy which privileged the white bodies of the imagined martial nation over all others.

Before the Cenotaph had been conceived as the empire's war memorial, an imperial war museum had been proposed. It has been suggested that the Imperial

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[82] Lewis J Greenstein, 'The Impact of Military service in WW1 on Africans: the Nandi of Kenya', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 16, No. 3 (1978) p. 507

[83] 'Cenotaph: arrangements for services', 12 October 1921, TNA (UK), CAB 27/142.

[84] David Cannadine, 'War and Death, Grief and Mourning', pp. 225-6.

War Museum, opened on 9 June 1920, at the height of demands for war commemoration, should be considered, alongside the Cenotaph and the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, as a third national war memorial. Jenny Macleod has argued that the Museum originated out of the post-war need to construct an 'Imperial Britishness'.[85] She believes that the purpose of subsuming a national, 'English' identity in the period was to ensure that the British sustained their domination over the rest of Great Britain and the British Empire. As such, 'Britishness' was a contingent identity forged for political reasons. Despite its title, the Imperial War Museum, was part of the project which aimed to promote the 'British' aspect of the war above all else. In the proposal stage, from 1917 onwards, it was known as the 'National War Museum'.[86] The collecting was organised along committee lines with sub-committees reporting to the Museum Committee. Despite the desire for a national war museum, a dominions sub-committee was nevertheless established.[87] In an explanation of its purpose, given to the armed services in April 1917, the Committee explained that they wished to draw attention to the regiments, localities, and different theatres, and 'the Esprit de Corps of Colonial troops'.[88] Here, 'Colonial'

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[85] Jenny Macleod, 'Britishness and Commemoration: National Memorials to the First World War in Britain and Ireland', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (October 2013), p. 650.

[86] Gaynor, Kavanagh, 'Museum as Memorial: The Origins of the Imperial War Museum', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (January 1988), p. 77.

[87] Ibid, p. 83.

[88] 'National War Museum Committee Minutes', 5 April 1917, IWM DP001/002.

is used to refer to dominion and Indian servicemen not African and Caribbean servicemen.

In June 1917, in a memorandum on the scope of activities of the proposed museum, the Director General, Sir Martin Conway, wrote to Sir Alfred Mond explaining that one of the purposes of the Museum was to record all the activities 'at home, in the dominions, and in India, at all fronts and on the sea'.[89] The activities of the colonies in Africa and the Caribbean were not considered from the outset and so no requests for material culture from these colonies were authorized. Gaynor Kavanagh explains, that even for the dominions, it was envisaged that their role on the sub-committees was to be little more than liaison. Indeed, the Museum Committee had made clear that the scope of the Museum was to be limited 'as far as possible to the British effort'.[90] In August 1917, plans for the establishment of a National War Museum were set back and it was shelved temporarily. In the meantime, a Ministerial Committee examined the detail of the proposals. One of the recommendations of the Dominions Sub-Committee was that the Museum should be called the Imperial War Museum to reflect the contribution of the dominions, and this proposal was accepted by the Ministerial Commission. By the time the Museum officially opened, a collections practice existed which had at its focus, the activities of

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[89] 'Memorandum on the Scope of the National War Museum', Sir Martin Conway to the First Commissioner, HM Office of Works, TNA (UK), CAB 24/22/ GT1650; IWM C/F, A13.

[90] 'First Annual Report of the Committee of the IWM 1917-18', House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1918, Cd 9061 xiv 761.

white British servicemen and women, followed by those of the dominions and, to a lesser extent, those of India. In this way, the contribution of the Black servicemen in the colonies came to be written out of the narrative and memory of the war. Such an omission at rituals and sites of remembrance can be argued to be examples of selective and preservative forgetting. In the first instance, by only remembering the contributions of British and dominion service personnel, the actions of black colonial troops were erased, and, in the second instance, the cultural memory of the conflict held in the museum's archive does not represent a true picture of the war when on display.[91]

The Imperial Camel Corps Memorial

So far in this chapter, I have concentrated on official memorials or rituals created by governmental bodies such as the Memorial Services Committee which was directly answerable to the Cabinet. I will now consider two war memorials that were proposed independently by former officers in the Imperial Camel Corps (ICC) and the Cavalry regiments which were permitted into London's statuary landscape. The Imperial Camel Corps Memorial and the Cavalry of Empire Memorial are the only war memorials in the capital which represent the service of the dominions and India as well as those from Britain. The Imperial Camel Corps Memorial was unveiled in Victoria Embankment Gardens, London, on 22 July 1921 and dedicated to 346 men of the Imperial Camel Corps who died while serving in Egypt, Sinai, and

[91] Aleida Assmann, 'Forms of Forgetting', lecture at Castrum Peregrini, Amsterdam (1 October 2014)

Palestine. The 'Imperial' in the title of the sculpture reflects the desire to recognise the service, not just of British soldiers, but also those from the dominions and India, thus emphasising the 'togetherness' of the imperial military effort in a time of threat to the British Empire. The memorial was designed by a former officer in the ICC, Major Cecil Brown, and had powerful supporters such as Major Lord Winterton, MP, and Lt. Colonel Robert Buxton, both of whom served in the Corps.[92] As such, the memorial represents an elite military view, on who should be commemorated and how, albeit sanctioned by 'enablers' in government bodies such as the Office of Works.[93] The historian, Michael Heathorn, has contended that the post-war erection of statues in the capital represented an 'intersection of aesthetic and practical concerns' but acknowledges that it was 'very much personal connections that got memorial ideas erected within London's public spaces'; on condition that they reflected continuity with the existing memorial landscape.[94]

In displaying a moment of imperial collaboration and a tripartite hierarchy of British, dominion, and Indian, there is no doubt that the statue, despite initial

[92] 'Imperial Camel Corps Memorial; Victoria Embankment Gardens', TNA (UK), WORK 20/134.

[93] The most important position in the Office of Works was the Permanent Secretary; this position was held by Sir Lionel Earle, who was related by marriage to Sir Edwin Lutyens. All monuments in London's congested landscape had to be officially sanctioned by Earle and the First Commissioner, Sir Alfred Mond. See: Michael Heathorn, 'The Civil Servant and Public Remembrance: Sir Lionel Earle and the Shaping of London's Commemorative Landscape, 1918-1933', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Aug., 2008), pp. 259-287.

[94] Ibid., p. 264.

reservations about its small size, would have been permitted as it fitted the post-war political desire for greater imperial co-operation; only debates about its proposed location complicated its installation.[95] I contend that the memorial represents an imperial hierarchy as confirmed after the First World War (see Chapter Two). The largest aspect is a bronze figure of a British soldier (a Yeoman) riding a camel. Below the sculpture are four brass panels encased in the plinth recording the engagements of the unit with inscriptions of the names of all the men of the Imperial Camel Corps who died in action, including those from Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and India.[96] On one side of the plinth, a British officer is represented standing next to a camel, underscoring the value of the use of animals in the allied victory. Another plate depicts an Australian and a New Zealander running together (3.3).

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[95] 'Imperial Camel corps Memorial; Victoria Embankment Gardens', 10 March 1921, TNA (UK), WORK 20/134.

[96] Geoffrey Inchbald, *With The Imperial Camel Corps In The Great War: The Story of a Serving Officer With The British 2nd Battalion Against The Senussi And During The Palestine Campaign* (Leonaur Ltd, 2005; originally published London: Johnson, 1970), p. 208.

3. 3. The Imperial Camel Corps Memorial, London (Photos by John Siblon)

At the planning stage, a fund was established to raise £350 for the memorial. At the same time, it was announced that if an extra £300 was raised by the

'Australian side' a second sculpture of an Australian mounted on a camel would also appear alongside the Yeoman.[97] The money did not materialize but the ANZAC representation on one of the bronze panels was the compromise. Despite the nominal inclusion of Indians from the Sikh Mounted Battery, based in Hong Kong, and the Singapore Royal Garrison Artillery on the plinth they are not represented figuratively in the reliefs. Whilst it could be argued that the visual omission was because they suffered fewer deaths and casualties than British and dominion forces in the corps, they were still a significant contributor comprising 240 out of a force of 835 men.[98] Military histories of the Imperial Camel Corps record how the mounted Indian troops (nicknamed 'the Bing Boys') were considered a vital part of any action, firing nine-pound shells at enemy positions.[99] As such, the reliefs are allegorically expressing the comradeship between British soldiers and the ANZACs, which was the limit of its symbolism; with the British represented as higher in status than the dominions. The premiers of Australia and New Zealand, Billy Hughes and Bob Massey, were present at the unveiling in 1921, as they were attending the Imperial Conference of that year in London. In this way, the memorial fulfilled its intended

[97] 'Imperial Camel Corps: War Memorial Fund', *The Times*, 25 April 1919, p. 9.

[98] Geoffrey Inchbald, *With The Imperial Camel Corps In The Great War*, p. 55.

[99] Frank Reid, *The Fighting Cameliers: The Exploits Of The Imperial Camel Corps In The Desert & Palestine Campaign Of The First World War* (East Yorkshire: Leonaur Ltd, 2005; originally published: Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934), p. 29.

political purpose of promoting unity between Britain and the self-governing dominions.[100]

The Cavalry of Empire Memorial

The Cavalry of Empire Memorial, located in Hyde Park, which was planned in 1920 and eventually unveiled in 1924, also displays a tripartite hierarchy with the British military contribution explicitly represented as above the dominion and Indian contributions (3.4). On this memorial, designed by Captain Adrian Jones, a former army veterinary surgeon and equine specialist, the larger-than-life bronze sculpture atop the plinth is not of a cavalryman or depiction of military action but the mythical figure of St. George on a horse raising his sword after slaying a dragon with his lance.[101] The symbolism is of victory but also evokes Englishness rather than the various faiths of the Indians through the choice of a Christian patron saint and the medieval armour he is wearing. An imperial hierarchy is visible on all four sides of the plinth on the reliefs representing the service of Cavalry units from Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, and India. This memorial

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[100] 'Imperial Camel Corps Memorial in London', New Zealand History: https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/imperial-camel-corps-memorial-london: accessed 3 June 2022.

[101] Alan Borg, *War Memorials*, p. 100; Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, p.62; Michael J. K. Walsh and Andrekos Varnava, *The Great War and the British Empire: Culture and Society* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), p. xix.

contains the only post-war visual representation of servicemen from the Indian subcontinent on a war memorial in the capital; this remained the case until 1997.[102] However, it would have been difficult not to include the contribution of Indian cavalry units who were a significant contributor to victory in multiple theatres.[103] The memorial, nevertheless, reduces the status of the Indians to the same as the dominions even though more Indians served in the war and so does not challenge the cultural representation of the tripartite military and racial hierarchy of empire. Like the Imperial Camel Corps Memorial, its unveiling was timed to coincide with the visit of dignitaries from the dominions who were in London to attend the Empire Exhibition of 1924 and so also served to instil the notion of imperial political unity.[104]

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[102] The Gurkha Memorial, designed by Philip Jackson, located off Whitehall, was unveiled in 1997 to mark the transfer of Gurkha Regiment HQ from Hong Kong to London. See: Philip Ward Jackson, *Public Sculpture of Historic Westminster: Volume 1* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), pp. 66-7. It is important to note that Nepal is not a member of the Commonwealth so this is not a 'Commonwealth memorial'.

[103] George Morton Jack, *The Indian Empire at War* (London: Little, Brown, 2018), pp. 347-352.

[104] 'Cavalry Memorial', *Daily Mirror*, 22 May 1924, p. 2.

3. 4. The Cavalry of Empire Memorial, London (photos by John Siblon)

It is important to state, however, that Indian servicemen were commemorated in metropolitan space during and after the war, albeit on the South Coast as opposed to the capital. This had been facilitated by a combination of officials from the India Office, the War Office, and notable Indian residents. From 1914, as more Indians arrived in Europe, original plans to ship their wounded to Egypt were changed and hospitals were established behind the lines on the Western Front and along the south coast of Britain, principally in Brighton in Sussex, and Brockenhurst in Hampshire.[105] After 1916, most Indians were redeployed to

[105] Jeffrey Greenhut, 'The Imperial Reserve: The Indian Corps on the Western Front, 1914-15', *The Journal of Commonwealth and Imperial History*, Volume XII, Number 1 (October 1983), pp. 54-73; David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860*-1940 (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press

Mesopotamia.[106] In the intervening years, many Indian servicemen died in British or French hospitals. For the first time in the history of British involvement in warfare, military and colonial officials needed to take account of religion in the funeral rites of their Asian troops on British soil so as not to foment political discontent among Indians in Britain, the Western Front, and the sub-continent.[107] Initially, Hindu soldiers had been buried against their custom at Boulogne which caused much consternation among Indians. The authorities belatedly recognised that it would be impolitic to continue ignoring Hindu funerary rites and began the practice of cremating bodies nearby the hospitals where Indians died.[108] Between 1914 and 1915, there were fifty-three cremations of Hindu, Sikh, and Gurkha soldiers at a specially built funeral *ghat* in Patcham, Sussex. After the bodies were cremated, the

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Ltd, 1994); Santanu Das, 'Indians at home, Mesopotamia and France, 1914-1918: towards an intimate history', pp. 70-89 in Santanu Das (ed.), Race, Empire and First World War Writing (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Santanu Das, *Indian Troops in Europe 1914-1918* (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 2015); Rozina Vizram, *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes: The story of Indians in Britain 1700-1947* (London; Pluto Press, 1986), pp. 113-143; Rozina Vizram, *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), pp. 169-195; David Omissi, 'Europe Through Indian Eyes: Indian Soldiers Encounter England and France, 1914-1918', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 122, No. 496 (April., 2007), pp. 371-396.

[106] Gregory Martin, 'The Influence of Racial Attitudes on British Policy Towards India during the First World War', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (January 1986), p. 94.

[107] Samuel Hyson and Alan Lester, 'British India on Trial: Brighton Military Hospitals and the politics of empire in World War I', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 38 (2012), pp. 18-34.

[108] George Morton Jack, 'The Indian Army on the Western Front, 1914-1915: A Portrait of Collaboration', *War in History*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (July 2006), p. 358.

ashes were scattered over the South Downs.[109] The idea of a permanent memorial on the spot where the cremations took place originated from Lieutenant Das Gupta of the Indian Medical Service in 1915. He approached the Mayor of Brighton, Sir John Otter, who agreed with the proposal. Otter was also Chairman of the Indian Memorials Committee, and consulted with Sir Swinton Jacob, famous for promoting the Indo-Saracenic style in Britain, over who should construct the memorial. Jacob recommended E. C. Henriques, an Indian architect, who designed a dome shaped Chattri which was unveiled in Patcham in 1921 so that Hindus could be cremated and memorialized there.[110] The Chattri Memorial was paid for by the Brighton Corporation and the India Office. The heritage historian, Rachel Hasted, reminds us that the funds supplied by the India Office for the construction of a memorial came directly from tax-payers in India and so conformed to a long-established practice that any financial commitment in regard to colonies should be self-funded.[111] In Brighton town centre, there is also a Memorial Gateway to Indians who died in the hospital there and this too was paid for by Indian subscribers, such as the Maharaja of Patalia, and erected with official backing from Sir Walter Lawrence, the King's Commissioner in charge of the welfare of Indian troops. Lawrence had supported

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[109] A description of one of the first cremations at Patcham can be read in: 'An Indian Funeral: Strange Rites on Sussex Downs', *The Times*, 16 October 1915, p. 11.

[110] Kevin Bacon and David Beevers, *The Royal Pavilion as an Indian Military Hospital 1914-1916,* Brighton & Hove City Council leaflet.

[111] Rachel Hasted, 'Remembrance and Forgetting: The Muslim Burial Ground, Horsell Common, Woking and other Great War Memorials to the Indian Army in England', paper given at a conference at University of Chester, 15 April 2014.

the establishment of the Chattri memorial for political reasons and with an eye to posterity. He wrote:

> I feel that it would be wise on political and historical grounds to spend a good deal of care and some money on preserving the memory of the Indians who have died in France and in England. ...I know from constant conversations with Indians of all classes that the worthy commemoration of the Indian dead in France and England would be greatly appreciated in India.[112]

3. 5. The annual pilgrimage to the Chattri Memorial in Patcham, June 2013 (photo by John Siblon)[113]

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[112] W. Lawrence to Major J. L. Storr, War Office, 16 December 1915, British Library, IOR/L/MIL/7/19548;

[113] The Chattri has been restored and is now the site of an annual pilgrimage which resonates with a multicultural message about British society and its history.

Twenty-five Muslim soldiers who died in hospitals in Brighton and Brockenhurst were initially buried in the Muslim plot at Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey. Their burial had been paid for by the Maulvi Sadr-ud-Din of the Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking at his own expense. He was angry at War Office inaction over the treatment of the bodies of Muslim soldiers in ways he considered inappropriate, such as burial in a Christian cemetery at Netley.[114] He protested strongly to the War Office at the lack of attention paid to the funerary rites and, eventually, in 1915, the War Office agreed to requisition a burial plot specifically for Muslim soldiers at Horsell Common, near to the Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking, Surrey where the bodies could be buried according to Muslim custom.[115] The new site, like the Chattri, had been created for political reasons. The War Office was responding to German propaganda, aimed at Muslim soldiers, which exhorted them to desert and join the Germans and their allies in the Ottoman Empire. They claimed that Muslim soldiers fighting for Britain were not being buried in a respectful way.[116] The Muslim Burial ground in Woking was opened in 1917. It was designed by the India Office surveyor, Thomas Herbert Winny, in the approved Indo-Saracenic style. The Burial Ground serves as a rare example of the British military paying for a site in Britain where colonial soldiers were commemorated albeit for political reasons arising from the

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[114] Mosque at Woking, 1915. BL, IOR, MSS EUR F 143/80.

[115] Ibid.

[116] A. A. Baig to Austen Chamberlain, 10 January 1916, BL, IOR, L/MIL/7/17232; Rozina Vizram, *Asians in Britain*, p. 182.

wartime fear of mutiny and desertion. In 1921, the IWGC took over the maintenance of the site.

3. 6. The restored Muslim Burial Ground at Horsell Common in 2014 (photo by John Siblon)

There are also two further instances of memorials in Britain to Indians that have no official connection. An obelisk for Indian servicemen who died in Barton-on-Sea hospital was paid for by the hospital staff and erected in 1917. There is also an individual headstone in a church cemetery in Brockenhurst. Sukha Kalloo was a 'Sweeper' (dealing with sanitation) who worked in the Lady Hardinge Hospital during the war.[117] Sukha died in 1915. As a Dalit, he was considered at the bottom of a religious and military hierarchy. His lowly status meant that he was refused

[117] This is not his real name. 'Kalloo' roughly translates as 'Blackie'. See Shrabani Basu, *For King and Country: Indian Soldiers on The Western Front* (London: Bloomsbury Paperbacks, 2016; first published 2016), pp. 160-166.

cremation at the Chattri in Patcham and burial in Woking because of the belief that he would 'pollute' the dead. The solution was to arrange for him to be buried in St Nicholas Churchyard in Brockenhurst in a grave paid for by locals. His headstone, also paid for by parishioners, reads: 'By creed he was not "Christian" but his earthly life was sacrificed in the interests of others.'[118]

The commemoration of Indian servicemen in Britain was a matter of political necessity. During the war, such considerations served as counterpropaganda to those who claimed that the British did not care about their Indian troops in life or death. The military hospitals for Indians on the south coast and the memorial sites at Patcham and Woking told a different story to rumours about the treatment of their bodies that was passed on through letters and word of mouth back to India. The local initiatives had official sanction and played well with an ostensibly anti-imperial USA whom the British hoped would join the war on the allied side. Rudyard Kipling's series of letters, where he created fictional Indian servicemen writing home to India praising their treatment and assuring their kinfolk that they would be buried according to their custom, was first published in the USA and was useful propaganda justifying the continuation of the British Empire in India.[119] It is important to note, despite Kipling's writings, that none of the memorials to the Indians in Britain were created by the IWGC, of which he was a founding member. It

[118] Big Ideas Company, *The Unremembered: World War One's Army of Workers: The Indian Story* (2017), p. 10.

[119] Rudyard Kipling, *The Eyes of Asia* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1918).

was only many years later that the Commission was charged with maintaining the Chattri, the Muslim Burial Ground, and Sukha Kalloo's grave.

Before I discuss the work of the IWGC in the next chapter, it is important to return to the treatment of African and Caribbeans in post war commemorative culture in the metropole. I have discussed what I believe to be the existence of a tripartite memorial hierarchy in conception and form in the capital: but what of Black colonial troops? Were they considered for representation on war memorials in the metropole? The answer appears to be not at all. There was an opportunity to represent Egyptians on the Imperial Camel Corps Memorial. Frank Reid, attached to the 3rd Battalion ICC, recounted how there were 'Gyppo camel attendants attached to each battalion'[120] Yet their presence did not appear anywhere on the figurative sculptures or in the wording on the plinth. The ICC could not have operated without a large network of supply and support by conscripted Egyptians during its existence. Hardly anything has been written about the 238,000 men of the Egyptian Labour Corps, who built the infrastructure to supply military units operating across the Sinai Desert into Palestine and Syria; even less has been written on those who serviced and cared for the camels in the Camel Transport Corps and Veterinary Service.[121] Military records reveal that 530 Egyptians worked specifically for the

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[120] Frank Reid, *The Fighting Cameliers,* p. 164. 'Gyppo' is an offensive term for Egyptians.

[121] Kyle Anderson has recently published a study of the service of the Egyptian Labour Corps outside of the Western Front. See: Kyle J. Anderson, *The Egyptian Labour Corps: Race, Space, and Place in The First World War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021).

ICC.[122] These men served at the Corps' base camp at Abbassia, in Egypt, or accompanied the Cameliers into Palestine such as the 140 Egyptians of the mobile veterinary section.[123]

The omission of Egyptian war service appears to be a deliberate choice of those involved in the production of the statue and is consistent with military and political cultural practice regarding Black colonial troops. Egyptians who were often referred to as 'black', 'coloured' or 'Sambo' were considered at the bottom of an imagined racial hierarchy and dehumanised accordingly by white servicemen.[124] This imagining of white (martial) superiority may explain why Egyptians are missing from the Camel Corps Memorial. It has been difficult to find references to the numbers of Egyptian men who died whilst serving the corps in battle or by succumbing to disease or otherwise. Record-keeping of the deaths of Egyptian labourers was not a priority for the British and suggests that they were not considered worthy of commemoration as colonial subjects or even as humans. As labourers, they were already considered inferior in status to those who served in combat, and as dark-skinned colonial subjects, they served as figures to be mocked

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[122] 'Total Egyptians enrolled in British Army 3. 1917 – 6. 1918', Wingate to Balfour, 15. 9. 1918, TNA (UK), FO 141/797/2 No. 2689/142.

[123] Frank Reid, *The Fighting Cameliers: The Exploits Of The Imperial Camel Corps In The Desert & Palestine Campaign Of The First World War* (East Yorkshire: Leonaur Ltd, 2005; originally published: Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934), p. 29.

[124] Kyle Anderson, *The Egyptian Labour Corps*, p. 107.

in military histories and unworthy of consideration for commemoration in the same way as whites and, to a lesser degree, Indians.[125]

Conclusion

At the end of the war, there was an opportunity to include or represent African and Caribbean servicemen in the commemorative landscape of the 'imperial capital'. Indeed, space had been reserved for Black colonial military representation in ceremonial plans from previous imperial and royal processions. However, after the First World War, only British, dominion, and Indian service personnel were commemorated. The inclusion of Indians was a change from the pre-war practice of portraying wars as 'white men's wars' in the commemorative landscape. It was now impossible to deny the scale of the Indian war contribution or the presence of Indian servicemen in the metropole, many of whom had died there. Asians from Britain's most populous colony needed to be incorporated culturally but represented as below white British and dominion servicemen in a racial and military hierarchy. The men making these sensitive cultural distinctions were governmental officials such as Milner and Curzon, who believed in the imperial project and the need for 'white unity' in the face of perceived post-war threats from nationalist movements in India,

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[125] See Nick Caddick, Linda Cooper, Lauren Godier-McBard and Matt Fossey, 'Hierarchies of wounding: Media framings of 'combat' and 'non-combat' injury', *Media, War & Conflict* (2020), pp. 1-19 for media framing of combat injuries as a 'heroic', and which eclipses and frames all other forms of military activity as 'non-heroic'.

the Caribbean, Africa, and Egypt. Following on from the physical exclusion of African and Caribbean servicemen in military processions, Black colonial troops were also not invited to remembrance rituals in the capital or commemorated on any of the capital's memorials. These practices meant that a racialized 'custom' of exclusion was established in the metropole against Black colonial servicemen which had the power to shape the memory of the war as British-led, with support from the 'white dominions', and faithful Indians. Black colonial war service had been selectively forgotten.

Chapter Four - Fabian Ware, the establishment of the Imperial War Graves Commission, and the imperial hierarchy of metropolitan memorials

In this chapter, I will investigate the memorial policies and practice of the quasi-governmental IWGC in the metropole regarding black colonial servicemen. My reason for this is to provide an assessment of representation in memorials in British 'space' before comparing it with their practice in the African and Caribbean colonies of the British Empire (Chapters Five and Six). Historians Michele Barrett and Roger Sims have argued that the Commission did not extend the egalitarian principle of commemoration to colonial soldiers outside of Europe.[1] I contend that IWGC practice was consistent across the metropole and the colonies, but the variation was more overt in the colonies where segregation and a visible racial hierarchy was part of the framework of power relations. As such, I will adopt a transnational approach which befits the study of a transnational organisation and their policies. In this chapter, I posit that the principal figures behind the foundation of the IWGC, such as Fabian Ware and Rudyard Kipling, were social imperialists whose commitment to the project of a 'Greater Britain' never wavered. Through their work of organising the burial of the war dead, the creation of vast war cemeteries, and the construction of war memorials, they believed that closer imperial cooperation could be achieved. In sites if memory under their control a visible and

[1] Michele Barrett, 'Subalterns at War: First World War Colonial Forces and the Politics of the Imperial War Graves Commission', *Interventions* Vol. 9, 3 (2007), pp. 451-474; Roger Sims, 'To The Memory of Brave Men: The Imperial War Graves Commission And India's Missing Soldiers Of The First World War', MA Thesis (University of Florida, 2018).

tangible imperial hierarchy acceptable to the military and governmental elites of Britain, the dominions, India, and the colonies would be displayed. This racialized vision of a white-led empire, of necessity, needed to marginalize or exclude the Black colonial dimension. I maintain that the Commission, though a new organization with huge influence, did not challenge cultural 'customs' of excluding or marginalizing Black colonial servicemen in the memorial landscape. To support my contention, I will use case studies of the IWGC Naval Memorials in Chatham, Portsmouth, and Plymouth; the 'Million Dead of Empire' memorials in Westminster Abbey and the former Western Front; and the Mercantile Marine Memorials at Tower Hill, Bombay, and Hong Kong; all of which were promoted as examples of egalitarian imperial representation by Fabian Ware in his 1937 history of the Commission.[2]

Fabian Ware, the IWGC, and the idea of a 'Greater Britain'

Whilst there have been many publications on the IWGC, it is only recently that historians have turned their gaze towards its founder, Sir Fabian Ware, and his rationale for the establishment of an organization that was so influential in shaping the way the British cared for their war dead and fostered the memory of those who

[2] Fabian Ware, *The Immortal Heritage. An Account of the Work and Policy of The Imperial War Graves Commission During Twenty Years 1917-1937* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1937), pp. 33-35.

died as a result of war.[3] In his introduction to Philip Longworth's *The Unending Vigil*, the official history of the CWGC, Edmund Blunden, a former soldier and poet, says little about Ware beyond that he is the 'hero' of the story.[4] Longworth, also, only fleetingly refers to Ware's formative years before the First World War. He describes Ware's pre-war career thus:

> He [Ware] had become an administrator in South Africa under Milner, who powerfully influenced his ideas of imperial co-operation, an outstanding editor of *The Morning Post*, and latterly, and least happily, an adviser to the Rio Tinto Company… he had offered his services to the Red Cross straightaway upon the outbreak of the war.[5]

George Kingsley Ward, a Canadian military historian, and Major T. A. Edwin Gibson, who worked for the CWGC after he retired from the army, wrote a part-history, part-guidebook of the Commission for visitors to war cemeteries in 1989.

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[3] A. J. A. Morris, 'Sir Fabian Arthur Goulstone Ware', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (2008).

[4] Edmund Blunden in: Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil: A history of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission 1917-1967* (London: Constable & Company Ltd, 1967), p. xxi.

[5] Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, p. 1

Their summary of Ware's pre-war career was even shorter than Longworth's.[6] In 2007 and 2010, Julie Summers, the author and historian, wrote two books on the history of the CWGC. She was similarly terse in her description of Ware's pre-war experience.[7] Andrew Prescott Keating, in his 2011 PhD thesis on the Commission's work outside of Europe, is the first historian to explore the connections between Fabian Ware's politics and his work at the IWGC. He concludes his study of British, dominion, and Indian war memorials and cemeteries by asserting that the Commission 'attempted to create a common imperial culture' which was 'predicated upon the care of the dead'.[8] David Crane, extends the enquiry into Fabian Ware's imperial politics in his 2013 biography, *Empires of the Dead*.[9] Crane goes further than any other historian in proclaiming Ware's support for an imperial project, describing him as an 'imperial zealot' who was influenced by Lord Milner's 'race patriotism'.[10] In the biography, Crane explores Milner's vision of a 'white empire spanning the

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[6] G. Kingsley Ward and Major T. A. Edwin Gibson, *Courage Remembered: The story behind the construction and maintenance of the Commonwealth's Military Cemeteries and Memorials of the Wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945* (London: HMSO, 1989).

[7] Julie Summers, *Remembered: The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, (London: Merrell, 2007), p. 13; Julie Summers, *British and Commonwealth War Cemeteries*, (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2010), p. 15.

[8] Andrew Prescott Keating, 'The Empire of the Dead: British Burial Abroad and the Formation of National Identity', PhD thesis (Berkeley: University of California, 2011), pp. 103-104.

[9] David Crane, *Empires of the Dead: How One Man's Vision Led To The Creation Of WWI'S War Graves*, (London, William Collins, 2013).

[10] David Crane, *Empires of the Dead*, pp. 20-24.

globe,' proclaiming Ware as an acolyte of Milner. However, the reader learns more about Milner than Ware.[11] Crane does reveal that Ware was limited in his 'cultural sympathies' but explains he was 'operating in cultural assumptions of the time'.[12] In adopting this approach, Crane chooses not to explore the racial dimensions of Ware's thinking which were not just embedded in society but were integral to the practices of the Commission. Crane portrays Ware as egalitarian when consulting the India Office and the dominions over the forms of commemoration. I agree with Keating's assessment that historians, thus far, have 'mostly overlook[ed] his [Ware's] politics or consider that he became apolitical when he began to confront the practical problems of mass burial and commemoration.'[13] However, I maintain that when discussing Ware's political views on the British Empire, it is vital to consider his beliefs regarding racial hierarchy, which was the lynchpin of British rule in the colonies at that time. There is, I argue, continuity in his thought and practice before, during, and after the First World War.[14]

In 1901, Ware, who had contributed some articles to the *Morning Post* newspaper, was employed by Lord Alfred Milner, initially as Assistant-Director of Education in the Transvaal, South Africa, beginning an association with him that

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[11] Ibid., p. 27.

[12] Ibid., pp. 86-7.

[13] Andrew Prescott Keating, 'The Empire of the Dead, p. 105.

[14] The present day CWGC also has little to say on Ware as an individual before 1914: https://www.cwgc.org/who-we-are/our-history/ accessed 11 August 2022.

would last until Milner's death in 1925. He also met many times with members of 'Milner's Kindergarten' (See Chapter Two).[15] Whilst serving in Milner's administration, Ware was tasked to improve the education of white Afrikaner children with the wider purpose of bringing the two 'white races' in South Africa together. Under his tenure, educational provision for white Afrikaner children improved, but 'coloured' children were sent to schools where only manual skills were taught, and 'native' children were forced to rely on missionaries for their education.[16] As such, Ware played a conscious role in entrenching white supremacy in the colony, maintaining a racial hierarchy, and paving the way for the achievement of dominion status for the Union of South Africa in 1910, which was seen as an important step in the realisation of a white-led imperial federation in the future.

In 1905, on his return to Britain, following Milner, Ware was appointed editor of the 'High Tory and ultra-imperialist' *Morning Post* where he was able to use his position to influence debates about social reform at home and imperialism abroad such as encouraging white emigration to South Africa and Australia.[17] As a

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[15] Saul Dubow, 'Colonial Nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the Rise of "South Africanism", 1902-10', *History Workshop Journal*, No. 43 (Spring, 1997), pp. 53-85.

[16] William Basil Worsfold, *The Reconstruction Of The New Colonies Under Lord Milner, Volume II* (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Press, 1913), pp, 79-90.

[17] 'Land For British Settlers', *Morning Post*, 16 June 1906, p. 5; 'Empire Building', *Morning Post*, 20 May 1908, p. 2.

Conservative supporter, he was part of the 'die-hard' faction, within the party, opposed to the policies of the leader of the Conservative Party, Arthur Balfour. He, resigned as editor in 1911 amid the political fallout over the Parliament Act of 1911.[18] In 1912, Lord Milner, who was Chairman of the Board of the Rio Tinto Zinc Mining Company, appointed Ware as a Special Commissioner for the company.[19] In the same year, Fabian Ware wrote a book entitled, The *Worker And His Country*, consistent with his views as a social imperialist.[20] In the book, he posited that unless measures were taken in Britain to address the concerns of the working-class they might look to trade union power as the way to radically transform society. Ware warned that political strife at home could lead to the situation where 'if Great Britain were paralysed at home her enemies would undoubtedly seize the opportunity of acquiring possession of the oversea Dominions of the Crown'.[21] Ware proposed deepening patriotism as way to bind all classes to the idea of a democratic nation which was interdependent with the maintenance of an empire:

> Great Britain is without a rival, and the reward of empire is now at last being reaped in the assistance of the daughter nations; and assistance which is not only to be given in the confirmation and defence of imperial interests, but also

[18] 'Meeting of "Die-Hards"', *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 21 July 1911, p. 4.

[19] A. J. A. Morris, 'Sir Fabian Arthur Goulstone Ware', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (2008).

[20] Fabian Ware, *The Worker And His Country* (London: Edward Arnold, 1912).

[21] Fabian Ware, *The Worker And His Country*, p. 15.

in the reconstruction of national unity on the democratic basis which has hitherto eluded mankind.[22]

In 1912, Ware also co-wrote a play with Norman MacOwan, titled *The Chalk Line*. In it, Ware expressed his fears of foreign threats to Britain and workers turning to trade unions to resolve their problems.[23] When war broke out in 1914, Ware asked Milner to help him obtain work with the Red Cross as he was too old to serve in the army.[24] He was offered a position in a mobile ambulance unit ferrying wounded soldiers from the front to hospitals. By 1915, his additional work, identifying the locations and graves of dead servicemen, led to official recognition and the creation of a Graves Registration Commission which became part of the British Army. In 1916, discussions began at government level regarding the form of the post-war care of graves through the Prince of Wales's Committee. Ware was well-placed to make the key decisions regarding the development of a National Committee for the Care of Soldiers Graves. As a committed imperialist, he believed that any organising authority should also include the dominions and India in its decision-making and provision for war graves. At the 1917 Imperial Conference, he proposed an imperial commission to formulate policy regarding the graves of servicemen from across the

[22] Ibid., p. 276.

[23] 'The Queen's: The Chalk Line', *The Stage*, 7 March 1912, p. 20.

[24] Andrew Prescott Keating, 'The Empire of the Dead', p. 103.

empire.[25] Ware contacted the High Commissioners of the dominions separately from the Colonial Office to arrange a meeting before the conference so that they could coordinate an agreed position. He wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Walter Long, to explain that 'as time went on and the war became so essentially imperial' there was a need for a permanent, imperial, organising body to care for the graves; justifying the need for an Imperial War Graves Commission in opposition to a merely national body.[26] In 1917, Ware's preparation paid off and it was agreed to establish an autonomous, permanent body, operating through a Royal Charter, to care for the war graves of all imperial servicemen.[27] The Prince of Wales was President of the new organisation and Fabian Ware its Vice-President. Funding would be facilitated by an endowment fund where Britain, the dominions, India, and the colonies would contribute financially, based proportionately on the numbers of their war dead who required graves. How the Commission operated was explained in a pamphlet designed for mass circulation, *Graves of the Fallen*, written by Rudyard Kipling, another of Lord Milner's 'fellow travellers', and a staunch believer in 'Greater

[25] 'Fabian Ware, Imperial Commission: Number One', 3 June 1916, CWGC WQ 8 Part 1.

[26] 'Fabian Ware to Walter Long', Ibid, 22 March 1917.

[27] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 82.

Britain', who was on the founding committee of the IWGC and their Literary Advisor.[28]

Ware firmly believed that the work of the IWGC would 'strengthen the bonds of union between all classes and races in Our Dominions and to promote a feeling of Common citizenship and of loyalty and devotion to Us and to the Empire'.[29] The creation of such an imperial coordinating body was a significant moment in the development of policy regarding war graves and commemoration. The attendees of the first meeting in November 1917 provide a sense of who would make the important decisions regarding graves and memorials. Walter Long, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, would represent all the colonies, Lieutenant-General H. V. Cox, represented the Secretary of State for India, Sir Alfred Mond represented the Ministry of Works, the High Commissioners of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Newfoundland were present, as well as Ware, Rudyard Kipling, and representatives of the armed services[30]. At the Imperial conference of 1917, no figures for war dead in Africa were provided and, apart from a request by the India Office that 'cremation grounds' be provided for Hindus across all theatres, the focus was maintained on the war graves of British, dominion, and Indian servicemen who

[28] Imperial War Graves Commission, *Graves of the Fallen*: *This Descriptive Account of the Work of the IWGC was written by Mr. Rudyard Kipling at the Commissions' request* (London, HMSO, 1919), p. 2; 'Dominion contributions to funds of IWGC', CWGC FH 148.

[29] Imperial Commission No. 2, 24 March 1917, CWGC WQ Part 2.

[30] Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, p. 29.

were buried on the Western Front.[31] The policies agreed at the conference set the precedent for burials in cemeteries and for representation on memorials across Britain, France, Belgium, and Gallipoli. Any memorials created after the conclusion of the war would need to take account of the imperial tripartite hierarchy and the funding arrangements.

IWGC and the principle of equality

In 1918, as arguments raged about what should happen to the bodies lying in makeshift cemeteries on the Western Front and other theatres and whether corpses should be repatriated to Britain, the IWGC issued an extraordinary statement. The Commission proclaimed egalitarianism to be the guiding principle in the care of graves and the commemoration of the dead. This announcement was made partly to placate relatives of the dead who understandably wished, at the very least, to be able to visit the graves of their loved ones where they existed. The IWGC promised there would be 'no distinction … between officers and men lying in the same cemeteries or in the form or nature of the memorials.' Furthermore, those who died should be considered as:

[31] 'Imperial Commission No. 2', 24 March 1917 & 13 April 1917, CWGC WQ Part 2.

members of one family, and children of one mother who owes to all an equal tribute of gratitude and affection, and that, in death, all from General to Private, of whatever race or creed, should receive equal honour.[32]

Whilst it was now declared standard practice to commemorate all who died in the war, it was unclear whether any form of hierarchy would be visible in cemeteries or on memorials. For Ware, as a member of both the political and military establishment, the ranking of members in social groups based on power, influence, or dominance was both the natural order of things and a mechanism for social cohesion.[33] He believed it was the role of those at the top of the power structure to hold society together and a social hierarchy of race, rank, gender, and creed was how this would be realised. Ware reconciled the Commission's egalitarian principles with the continuation of hierarchy through a variety of means. One way was the careful use of language when describing the work of the Commission in the burial and commemoration of the dead. Tropes such as 'honour', 'memory', and 'sacrifice' were used in their publications to promote the idea that the IWGC commemorated all men and women from across the empire 'who had thrown a girdle of honour around

[32] 'Statement from the IWGC', January 1918, cited in Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, p. 33.

[33] Jessica Koski, Hongling Xie, and Ingrid R. Olson, 'Understanding Social Hierarchies: The Neural and Psychological Foundations of Status Perception', *Soc Neurosci*, 10: 5 (2015), pp. 529; In 1916, Ware was made a Lieutenant-Colonel then a temporary rank of Brigadier-General and, at the end of the war, he was awarded the honorary rank of Major-General.

the world.'[34] Another way, was to denote the visibility of equality in war cemeteries, stating that 'all creeds, all colours, all kinds and types of men' were buried together or their names listed in places which could be imagined as analogous to the British Empire.[35] In these places, the visiting public were enjoined to regard the disposition of the graves of the men arranged as 'like a battalion on parade' and as a 'silent League of British Nations'.[36] Ware did not necessarily have a problem with different ethnicities such as Indian combatants and non-combatants, being commemorated in war cemeteries in the former Western Front, as their inclusion visibly demonstrated that the colonies had supported the Allies in the war as a just cause and that the Commission was operating on purported egalitarian principles.[37] At the same time, however, officials drew public attention to the racial and religious differences of the men buried or named in the cemeteries. For example, in 1924, Ware explained the arrangement in some war cemeteries which both contained the bodies of the 'dead are of our own blood and race' and 'the races which are united under the same

[34] Fabian Ware, 'Building and Decoration of the War Cemeteries', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol. 72, No. 3725 (11 April 1924), pp. 344-355.

[35] Ibid., p. 354.

[36] Ibid., p. 353.

[37] Samiksha Sehrawat, 'Health and Medicine (India'), International Encyclopaedia of the First World War: https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/health_and_medicine_india: (2017) accessed 11 April 2023

king'.[38] He was at pains to explain that the race and creed of those who were not British, or dominion, had been taken into consideration by the Commission:

> Their religion and their racial characteristics are sacred and living things, and present generations will judge our work, and more particularly that of the architects who have designed the War Cemeteries, by the extent to which we have recognised this.[39]

In his 1924 article on war cemeteries, Ware's references to colonial servicemen of different faiths and ethnicities drew upon the recommendations outlined in the Kenyon Report of 1918, which was based on Kenyon's visits to France and Belgium, and were most likely referring to Indians who had served in Europe.[40] In this way, visitors to war cemeteries (in Europe) who gazed upon the graves of colonial servicemen might perceive the cemeteries as 'imperial' spaces comprised of subjects from across a benevolent empire and which honoured all of them. If the public, imagined this then the cemeteries had served one of their functions. But such

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[38] Ibid., p. 344.

[39] Ibid., p. 344.

[40] Sir Frederic Kenyon, *War Graves: How The Cemeteries Abroad Will Be Designed* (London: HMSO, 1918).

representation in the metropole did not mean that hierarchies disappeared in these places.

IWGC memorials to those buried at sea

An example of how beliefs in a race and rank hierarchy intersected with the commemoration of the war dead in metropolitan space can be found in the construction of memorials to those who died in service with the Royal Navy and the Mercantile Marine, with visual cues on the memorials representing hierarchies. During the war, the Royal Navy disallowed those not considered of 'pure European descent' from the *Navy List* (see Chapter One). Indeed, the Regulations for the Entry of Naval Cadet Officers of the Royal Navy explicitly excluded men who were not considered white.[41] The colour bar is evidence of the operation of a military race and rank hierarchy in the navy which aimed to prevent Black African and Caribbean men from achieving the rank of officer and ensured that the naval defence of Caribbean and African colonies was the province of a white military imperial establishment. This 'Navalism' was one of the principal methods of white imperial dominance over colonial peoples in civic society and the military before the war.[42]

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[41] Cliff Pereira, *Black Liberators: The Role of African and Arab sailors in the Royal Navy within the Indian Ocean 1841-1941* (UNESCO website: accessed 4 April 2016).

[42] 'Navalism' stressed white leadership of the British Empire and so favoured the use of white dominion crew over African before the First World War. As war broke out and white crews enlisted

The racial hierarchical principle in the navy appears to have also applied when it came to the cultural commemoration of Africans and Caribbeans - who were only permitted to serve in the lesser ranks of the Royal Navy - after the First World War.

Sailors who died in service were 'buried at sea' or were declared 'missing' so naval memorials, like the army Memorials to the Missing, needed to be designed and constructed so that relatives of the dead could have a place to mourn comparable with the proposed war cemeteries for those who died on land. To ensure consensus on commemoration policy, representatives of the IWGC, the War Office, the Admiralty, the Colonial Office, the India Office, and the dominions were consulted. One of the achievements of the IWGC was that it was able to maintain hegemony in co-ordinating commemoration policy with governments across the British Empire and the three branches of the armed services. The Commission attained this partly through the promotion of egalitarian principles of commemoration enshrined in their charter.[43] The other way to ensure cooperation was to include the dominions and the India Office in decision-making from the outset. Ware was determined that, to make the Commission representative and successful, it had to be an imperial organisation and not subject to Allied or

in the army the Navy was forced to look towards the use of black crews once more. See: John C. Mitcham, 'Navalism and Greater Britain' in Duncan Redford (ed.), *Maritime History and Identity* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), pp. 271-293.

[43] http://www.cwgc.org/about-us/our-organisation.aspx accessed 20 August 2016.

international pressures.[44] These were the preconditions for the authority of the new organization.

Having persuaded the British, dominion, and colonial governments to follow the lead of the Commission, it was also important to ensure that commemoration practice was uniform across the three branches of the armed services. This was a sensitive issue because the Royal Navy was intending to erect its own National Sea Memorial and Naval Obelisk in Hyde Park.[45] The Commission argued successfully that uniformity of commemoration across the armed services was desirable to avoid confusion and unnecessary upset to relatives of deceased soldiers and sailors.[46] In 1920, discussions began between the Commission and the Admiralty over the design and construction of naval war memorials. At the first meeting, representatives of the IWGC persuaded navy officials to agree to the erection of memorials in the naval 'manning ports' of Chatham, Portsmouth, and Plymouth inscribed with the names of sailors 'lost' at sea. The second item for discussion was to clarify policy regarding sailors from the dominions, as well as Chinese, Indian 'Lascars' and African 'Seedie Boys' and whether they would be commemorated on the proposed memorials.[47]

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[44] Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, p. 24.

[45] Lord Arthur Browne to Admiralty, 'Naval Memorials UK General File', 23 June 1920, CWGC F845/1.

[46] Ibid., 23 June 1920, CWGC F845/1.

[47] 'Memorial to those lost at sea during the war 1914-1918', Naval Memorials General File, 22 April 1921, CWGC WG 1087 Part 1.

Dominion representatives attended the meeting and were fully consulted on decisions regarding whether they wished their sailors to be commemorated in Britain or 'at home'. The colonies who had provided sailors were represented by the Colonial Office who did not consult the colonies when making decisions.

In 1921, each dominion which had a naval force, along with the Royal Indian Marine, were asked by the Commission whether they wished the names of their dead to be commemorated on the proposed naval memorials alongside British sailors.[48] The Royal Indian Marine requested the names of their war dead to be on one of the three memorials.[49] Of the dominions, only the Australian Navy and the South African Naval Reserve consented to commemorating their dead on the British coastal memorials. Seventy-four Australian sailors and one South African sailor have their names inscribed on the Plymouth War Memorial which was close to their training base at Devonport.[50] The commission used the order of precedence in the *Navy List* as the template for the arrangement of names meaning that a rank hierarchy would be visible on the memorials. This was a compromise between the Commission and the Admiralty as the only way to ensure the equality of commemoration principle and indicate the imperial contribution was through nominalism but with names in order of rank as on a ship and the names of men from

[48] Naval Memorials UK General File, 14 July 1921, CWGC F845/1.

[49] Naval Memorials General File, 30 November 1921, CWGC WG 1087 Part 1.

[50] http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead.aspx?cpage=5 accessed 2 July 2017.

the dominions distinguished from British crew. This arrangement was not at variance with Commission principles. Sir Frederic Kenyon, in his influential recommendations of 1918 to the IWGC, expressed a desire that in cemeteries:

> The rows of headstones in their ordered ranks carry on the military idea, giving the appearance as of a battalion on parade, and suggesting the spirit of discipline and order which is the soul of an army.[51]

On Memorials to the Missing, this disposition is harder to portray unless a visible hierarchy familiar to service personnel and civilians alike was inscribed. On the navy memorials, the names of those 'lost' at sea were classified first by year, beginning in 1914, then by rank and rating; and, finally, the names were arranged alphabetically in the following order of precedence: Royal Navy; Royal Naval Air Service; Royal Marines; Royal Naval Reserve; Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve; Mercantile Marine Reserve; then a gender hierarchy with the Women's Royal Navy Service followed by Nursing Sisters and Civilians at the bottom of the order of precedence.[52] Under this system, the names of dominion sailors were after British sailors in the naval hierarchy but before the Mercantile Marine Reserve. Missing completely from the memorials and the visible hierarchy were Asian, African, and

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[51] Sir Frederic Kenyon, *War Graves*, p. 8.

[52] F R Durham, Director of Works, to Fabian Ware, Naval Memorials UK General File, 14 July 1921, CWGC F845/1.

Caribbean sailors. The representatives at the meetings had decided that colonial sailors needed differential treatment and that their names should be located elsewhere but, first, their status in the commemorative hierarchy needed to be agreed by Commission and military officials.

The segregation and transformation of Asian sailors and seamen

Since the colonies, apart from India, did not have their own navies, they were not considered for inclusion on the naval memorials, even though many colonial subjects served in the Royal Navy and thousands of colonial seamen served on merchant vessels in the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic Oceans. In April 1921, it was decided that all colonial sailors and seamen would be commemorated in some form thus ensuring that the egalitarian principle was not breached. But in July, the Commission suggested that sailors, classified as 'natives', 'coolies' or 'men of colour' in their correspondence, should be commemorated in separate locations away from the British naval coastal memorials even though they were considered as 'British' during the war and died on British ships alongside British crew. The rationale given for the decision was that place of enlistment should determine inclusion on naval memorials. Under this disposition, British and dominion sailors who embarked at one of the three manning ports of Chatham, Portsmouth, and Plymouth would be commemorated there even though the dominion sailors would have initially enlisted in Australia or South Africa. Chinese merchant seamen who enlisted in Hong Kong

would be commemorated in the colony, the Royal Indian Marine, and 'Lascars' who enlisted in India, would be commemorated in Bombay, and 'Seedie Boys', enlisted in Aden, would be commemorated there.[53] No explanation was provided for this location-based rationale in IWGC correspondence nor did it explain what would happen to colonial subjects who enlisted in Britain or those not from those territories suggesting that memorial representation was racially codified.

One of the intended consequences of the decision to commemorate by port of enlistment was that African, Caribbean, and Asian sailors were to be commemorated away from British shores. Negotiations between the Admiralty and the IWGC in London in 1921, resulted in British officers of the Royal Indian Marine agreeing to reverse their initial decision to be included on one of the coastal memorials in Britain. Instead, the names of British officers and Indian sailors 'lost' at sea would be inscribed on a memorial in Bombay Cathedral.[54] Once the IWGC gave control of commemoration within India to the high command of the Indian Marine, the decisions become more racialized by using religiosity as the criteria for decision-making. The initial suggestion that British officers and Indian seamen might be commemorated together in India was rejected on the grounds that it would be insensitive to have Muslim seamen commemorated in a Protestant Cathedral.

[53] F R Durham to F Ware, Naval Memorials UK General File, 14 July 1921, CWGC F845/1.

[54] Adjutant General in India to IWGC, 'Naval Memorials: Native Ratings', 20 February 1922, CWGC WG 1087/11.

Instead of an alternative site for officers and other ranks to be commemorated together, it was decided that white officers would be commemorated in Bombay Cathedral and native ranks elsewhere in the city at a Sailor's Home.[55] The race and religious dimension in the negotiations over the joint commemoration of white British and Indian native sailors was due to the need to conform to pre-existing racial hierarchies maintained by the British Raj in a time of nationalist agitation for self-rule. The officer class of the Royal Indian Marine could not allow the carefully constructed order of precedence, which existed to maintain white supremacy in British-controlled India, to be subverted. They, therefore, needed to devise a mechanism which would express their superiority. They achieved this by recodifying the status of Indian sailors who, they proposed, should be considered in the same class as the Mercantile Marine Reserve. This was a departure from the British order of precedence where sailors were considered higher status than men serving in the Mercantile Marine. Accordingly, in India at least, the historic distinction between the services was eradicated and Indians in both branches were transformed into the category of 'Asiatic', which had been in common usage for 'Lascars' and Chinese seamen, and conferred lesser status in the maritime race and rank hierarchy.[56] The departure from the order of precedence and the transformation of Indian sailors into 'seamen' in their cultural afterlife demonstrate

[55] https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/find-cemeteries-memorials/cemetery-details/2111732/bombay-st-thomas-cathedral-memorial-mumbai accessed 15 August 2022.

[56] Director, Royal Indian Marine, 'Naval Memorials: Native Ratings', 21 September 1922, CWGC WG 1087/11.

the unstable nature of conceptual hierarchies which could easily be manipulated or replaced if they were perceived to weaken the power structure – in this case – white British rule over the peoples of India and the reliance of the Royal Navy on colonial sailors. The transformation was also symptomatic of British rule in India, where classification of the indigenous population into racial categories was a tool for the maintenance of white racial superiority in the Raj.[57] The change of status for the sailors meant that, In India, there was an even wider gulf between subject and ruler in the commemorative landscape and, in Britain, that no one would know of the contribution of Indian sailors to victory in the war.[58]

The segregation and transformation of African sailors

It was not just Indian sailors who found their status changed during the process of commemoration. The fate of the names of deceased African seamen was also discussed at this time. In November 1922, Major Henry Chettle, the Director of Records at the IWGC, was provided with a 'Native Ratings' list from the Board of Trade that calculated the total deaths of native seamen as 2,255. He estimated that 490 were Chinese while the remaining 1,765 were Indian or West African. Chettle claimed that he could not distinguish between the names of Indians, East African

[57] Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 89.

[58] See: https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/role-royal-indian-marine-ww-i accessed 13 May 2023.

‘Seedie Boys’ or West Africans and declared that the Board of Trade could not tell the difference either. There does not appear to be a concerted effort to establish the names by the Commission and, as a result, the proposed Aden memorial for ‘Seedie Boys’ was abandoned. Instead, a proposal was made to commemorate the 490 Chinese seamen in Hong Kong, and the remaining 1,765 seamen, including African, Arab, and Asian seamen, in one location in Bombay. This would mean that all of these men were now considered ‘Asiatics’. It was Chettle who suggested to the Management Committee of the IWGC that west Africans be ‘allowed to slip in’ to the ‘joint memorial’ in Bombay.[59] He was fully aware that the nominal concentration of all native ranks in one location would mean that the names of Africans would be included, against the Commission’s own rationale of place of embarkation, on the Bombay memorial alongside Indian seamen in a place thousands of miles from where they enlisted.[60] Given the lack of explanation as to why the IWGC were advocating the location-based rationale for sailor and seamen in the correspondence, it is illuminating to study the language used in their communications, especially the words chosen by Chettle and the Director of Works, Colonel Frank R. Durham. In a 1923 memorandum titled ‘Naval Memorial to the Indian Coolies, etc’, Durham notes that the naval memorials are proceeding as planned so the Commission ought to start ‘the other lot’ (that is, joint native memorials) as soon as possible. Chettle and Durham also made an agreement in principle that only numbers of dead, not names,

[59] H. F. Chettle to F. R. Durham, ‘Naval Memorials: Native Ratings’, 7 November 1922, CWGC WG 1087/11.

[60] Sir Frederic Kenyon, *War Graves: How The Cemeteries Abroad Will Be Designed*, p. 15.

of Chinese, Indian, and African seamen should be on the memorials, due, they claimed, to the 'difficulty in verifying names'.[61] This was a variation in the principles and the practice of the IWGC, compared to that of British and dominion sailors who, where lists of names existed, had their names included on memorials. Black colonial servicemen were subjected to a different standard and inferior treatment by the Commission.

In September 1923, the inclusion of west African sailors and seamen on the Bombay memorial was considered again at a meeting between the Admiralty and the IWGC. It was agreed that, as the number of west Africans in naval service was 'very few', the location of their memorialisation was not an issue – breaching the rationale that sailors should be commemorated where they enlisted. The central figures in the Commission were also aware that their decisions regarding the commemoration of colonial seamen would establish precedence for future policy decisions. Lord Arthur Browne, The Principal Assistant Secretary of the Commission, wrote to Durham noting that 'nothing can be done towards commemorating the Native Ratings of the Royal Navy until the method of commemorating the Merchant Marine is settled', indicating that there needed to be

[61] F. R. Durham to H. F. Chettle, 'Naval Memorials: Native Ratings', 21 August 1923, CWGC WG 1087/11.

continuity of practice in the representation of colonial sailors and seamen.[62] The Commission discussed the proposal with the Admiralty that all colonial sailors and seamen, apart from the Chinese, were to be commemorated on a memorial in Bombay, which, at this point, was intended to be a numerical memorial without inscribed names. The proposal to dispense with the names of African and Asian seamen was a deliberate act of erasure as the Commission possessed lists of names of native crew, and the ships they served on.[63] Such deliberate erasure is an example of what Aleida Assmann terms 'repressive' and 'selective forgetting' where 'those whose names were erased from the annals or chiselled off from monuments are doomed to die a second death'.[64] The IWGC were exercising their power to frame the memory of the war and needed the Admiralty to agree with them. The Commission's actions, in this instance, helped create a visual memory of the war in Britain as one achieved through the 'sacrifice' of white Britons and dominion servicemen, but without the help of black colonials. The official explanation in the *Unending Vigil* for inclusion on naval memorials – the sailor's last port of

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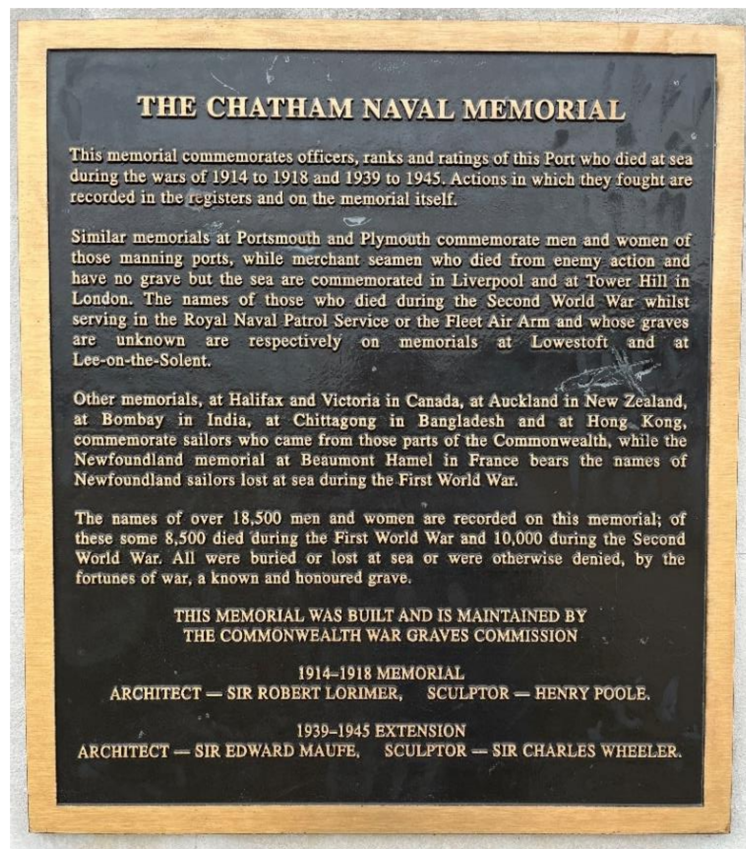
[62] Lord Arthur Browne to F. R. Durham, 'Naval Memorials: Native Ratings', 13 September 1923, CWGC WG 1087/11.

[63] 'Naval Memorials: Native Ratings', 10 July 1922, CWGC WG 1087/11. This file has a list of names including men from Sierra Leone lost or buried at sea and the names of ships on which they served.

[64] Aleida Assmann, 'Forms of Forgetting', Public lecture at Castrum Peregrini, Amsterdam, 1 October 2014.

embarkation – does not disclose the variation in practice or machinations behind the decisions to separate black and white crew and change their status to 'Asiatic'.[65]



4. 1. Information panel on the Chatham Naval Memorial which promotes the falsehood that all sailors on the Bombay Memorial 'came from those parts' (Photo by John Siblon).

The decision to separately commemorate African, Asian, and Caribbean sailors on memorials away from Britain was not an oversight but an objective by the IWGC and could have been opposed by the Navy. However, by 1923, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty responded favourably to the Commission's

[65] Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, p. 94.

suggestion that 'Native Ratings' be excluded from the Naval Memorials proposed for Chatham, Portsmouth, and Plymouth. They concurred with the proposal that 'all men of colour serving under any form of Naval engagement, including those in the Merchant Marine Reserve should be commemorated separately with other natives who died whilst serving in His Majesty's Forces.'[66] This agreement suggests that both the Commission and the Royal Navy decided to exclude Black colonial sailors from British memorials based on their racialized status not 'place of embarkation'. There is no record of the Navy resisting Commission proposals which suggests they were easily persuaded to have a British and dominion-only memorials in the metropole due to their own racially exclusive practices which included a desire to return to the 'navalism' of the pre-war period. The decision to exclude colonial sailors on the coastal naval memorials meant that Britishness and whiteness were inscribed onto the memorials and the names invested with status in the imperial hierarchy.

On the coastal memorials, the common denominator of those named was their British and dominion identity yet many of those whose names were inscribed were Black men from the colonies like the Jamaican, George Austin, of HMS *Cressy*

[66] Secretary of Admiralty to Secretary IWGC., 'Naval Memorials: Native Ratings', 20 February 1923, CWGC WG 1087/11.

who joined the Royal Navy before the war and was married to a British woman.[67] He is listed on the Chatham Memorial along with other Caribbean sailors such as William Edmund Smith from Bermuda, and Barbadians, Robert Henry Hinds Walcott, and Edward Kirton Browne.[68] There is no discussion of the commemoration of these Caribbean sailors in the IWGC archives, so I can only deduce that, as their 'country of service' was the United Kingdom, this was enough for them to be considered as 'British' for the records. During wartime, 'British' was a contingent identity allowing subjects of empire to enlist in the armed services but on the understanding that the temporary identity would be relinquished if politic to do so. As nationality is a cultural construct, the handful of Caribbean sailors were allowed to be considered as 'British' for memorialization purposes.[69] Their names and place of birth are recorded on the Roll of Honour available on each site for those who wished to see it and provides contestation to the aims of the Commission. However, when it came to a large group of Black colonial sailors serving together on a ship, the IWGC would take drastic steps to avoid their inclusion.

[67] https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/3048371/george-austin/ accessed 15 August 2022.

[68] https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/3050112/william-edmund-smith/; https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/3048134/robert-henry-hinds-walcott/; https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/3052268/edward-kirton-browne/ accessed 15 August 2022.

[69] Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity And Citizenship In Britain 1939-45* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 11. Today, the sailors would be called 'Black British'.

The transformation of Caribbean sailors: the case of HMS *Good Hope*

4. 2. A rank hierarchy on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial (Photo by John Siblon)

Some of the first names on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial are from HMS *Good Hope* which was sunk along with HMS *Monmouth* at the Battle of Coronel in November 1914 with the loss of 916 crew. The Muster Roll of HMS *Good Hope* shows that twenty-six stokers on the ship were from St. Lucia, Barbados, and Antigua who had been enlisted when the ship, part of Admiral Craddock's North America and West Indies Squadron, stopped in St. Lucia on the way to intercept German cruisers

in the South Atlantic.[70] Crew lists based on the ethnicity of the deceased sailors had been established by colonial governments as early as 1914. They contained details of the men, and addresses of next of kin, which were sent to the Admiralty so that payments and war pensions could be paid out in the event of death.[71] It appears that after the IWGC made the agreement with the Royal Navy that all native seamen and sailors, not covered by the Hong Kong memorial, were to be commemorated in Bombay, these crew lists were used by the Commission to help them separate black sailors and seamen from white ones. This meant that the names of the white British stokers from HMS *Good Hope* are on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial but not the names of the Caribbean stokers who died alongside them. Instead, these men were commemorated as 'Asiatic' with the Indians and Africans on the memorial in Bombay.[72] In the absence of any record explaining why such a large group of Caribbean stokers, who enlisted in Caribbean ports, were named on a memorial in Bombay, I posit that this was a deliberate decision to ensure that Black colonial sailors were not a noticeable feature on a 'whites-only' memorial. In this instance,

[70] 'Muster Roll of HMS Good Hope: sunk 1 November 1914', TNA (UK), ADM 116/1354.

[71] 'Man omitted from list of those lost on Good Hope', 14 June 1915, TNA (UK), CO 321/283/50; 'Dependents of natives lost on Good Hope', 17 August 1916, TNA (UK), CO 321/290/15; 'Natives of St. Lucia lost on Good Hope', 1 July 1916, TNA (UK), CO 321/302/25; 'Dependents of natives from WI lost on Good Hope', 3 April 1916, TNA (UK), CO 321/289/36.

[72] The twenty-six men are now listed as 'British' on the CWGC web page for the Bombay First World War Memorial: http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/2111731/BOMBAY%201914-1918%20MEMORIAL,%20MUMBAI accessed 16 August 2022 with no explanation as to why their names have been inscribed there. Previously, they were listed as 'Indian' on the CWGC database.

'port of embarkation' was used as an excuse to commemorate them away from Britain. If they had been on the coastal memorials, this would have allowed Caribbean sailors – and the colonies they represented - to stake a claim as combatants in the memory of the naval contribution in the war along with the British and dominion war effort in the metropole. It was one thing to include a few Black British sailors on the memorials but not twenty-six colonials who fought in a famous battle.[73] For example, HMS *Monmouth* was sunk along with the *Good Hope* at the Battle of Coronel. One of the men who died on the *Monmouth* was a Barbadian stoker named Hugh Beresford Goodridge.[74] His name is inscribed on the Plymouth Naval Memorial enshrining the memorial as both a site of inclusion and exclusion.

The location-based rationale was used to commemorate 'native' seamen away from the British Coastal Memorials but to achieve this, their identity had to be transformed from 'Caribbean stokers' to 'Indian' and then to 'Indian seamen'.[75]

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[73] Peter D. Fraser, 'Used, abused and forgotten? The First World War's Caribbean heroes' (2018): https://talkinghumanities.blogs.sas.ac.uk/2018/11/02/used-abused-and-forgotten-the-first-world-wars-caribbean-heroes/ accessed 12 May 2023. In this blog, Fraser asks why Caribbeans are commemorated n Mumbai and implicitly suggests their combat service is being deliberately hidden.

[74] https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/3044930/hugh-beresford-goodridge/ accessed 18 August 2022.

[75] The Battle of Coronel is commemorated every year in Chile. Fiona Clouder, the former British Ambassador to Chile, who attended the annual memorial notes that in the Roll of Honour for those lost in the battle, the Caribbean stokers are listed as 'Indian': Fiona Clouder, 'The Battle of Coronel:

Roger Hoefling, a military commentator, has suggested that the Admiralty and the Colonial Office wrote 'Indian' instead of 'West Indian' in error which, he claims, explains why their names are on the memorial in Bombay.[76] This claim can be refuted. The twenty-six stokers were first discussed at official level in 1914, and their names and service maintain an existence in Colonial Office, Admiralty, and Treasury documents throughout the war years. As late as 1918, in a rare act of remembering by Gilbert Grindle of the Colonial Office, the memory of 'coloured British West Indians… of negro descent' in Admiral Craddock's Squadron was invoked in correspondence regarding the employment of Caribbean seamen in Britain.[77] Therefore, such a prominent error was highly unlikely. It is more plausible that it was not until the IWGC were handed their names that they become 'Indians' and 'seamen' under their 'Asiatic' principle. The memorial location of the Caribbean stokers was deliberate, not accidental, when the Commission's determination to use Bombay as the preferred destination for colonial sailors and seamen is considered.

Lives Lost and Lives Remembered: a commemoration in Chile', talk given at the 'The First World War at Sea' conference at National Maritime Museum, 8 November 2018. The stokers are also listed as 'Indian' on Naval-History.net: https://www.naval-history.net/WW1Battle-Battle_of_Coronel_1914.htm accessed 15 August 2022.

[76] Correspondence with Roger Hoefling, All Party Parliamentary War Heritage Group, 16 January 2019.

[77] 'Minutes concerning action suggested with a view to finding employment for distressed British West Indian seamen in the United Kingdom', 19 February 1918, TNA (UK), CO 318/347/59.

The agreement between the IWGC and the Admiralty enabled the coastal memorials to be completed. On 15 October 1924, the Portsmouth Naval Memorial was unveiled. It was estimated that the crowd in attendance exceeded the 10,000 tickets allocated to the event. Representatives of the armed services from Britain, Australia, Canada, and Newfoundland were present at the unveiling, including fifty men from the Royal Australian Navy. After the ceremonial, relatives of the deceased sailors laid hundreds of tributes at the base of the memorial.[78] As such, this memorial, and those at Plymouth and Chatham, also unveiled in 1924, functioned both as places for grieving relatives to mourn but also as enduring symbols of imperial unity between Britain and their 'white dominions'. In 1927, Walter Summers made a movie called *The Battles of the Coronel and Falkland Islands.*[79] The film was one of four produced by British Instructional Films which reconstructed key battles of the war and were extremely popular with the public.[80] In one of the key sequences in the film, as the *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* do battle, the stokers in the *Good Hope* are shown working hard to keep the ship afloat. This was an opportunity to include the Caribbean stokers in the cultural memory of the war, but their actions were not represented in the film and, like the coastal memorials in Britain, only added to the notion that the naval battles of the war were fought by

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[78] '1914-1918 Portsmouth Naval War Memorial Unveiling', 15 October 1924, CWGC ADD/1/1/96, 'Unveiling of Portsmouth's Naval War Memorial, *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 October 1924, p. 9.

[79] Walter Summers, *The Battles of the Coronel and Falkland Islands* (British Instructional Films, 1927).

[80] Mark L. Connolly, 'Putting the Falkland Islands on the Silent Screen: The Battles of the Coronel and Falkland Islands', *The Falklands Islands Journal* (2014), pp. 22-33.

white British crew alone. There were relatively few Black sailors serving in the Royal Navy but there were thousands of Black colonial seamen who served in the Mercantile Marine in all theatres. Their commemoration would provide the Commission with a conundrum which the 'Asiatic' principle could only partly resolve.

Mercantile Marine Memorials in the metropole and 'East of Suez'[81]

As I have discussed in Chapter Two, when hostilities ended, African, Arab, Caribbean, and Asian merchant seamen in Britain speedily found themselves transformed from British subjects who had contributed to the war effort to being scapegoated for 'taking' jobs from British seamen. The tensions erupted and culminated in 'race riots' which occurred in port towns throughout 1919.[82] The shipping employers, the maritime trade unions, the local police forces, and the Colonial and Home Offices, who organised the deportation of the perceived 'troublemakers', were all complicit in this denigration of the war service of black seafarers. The Home Office's Aliens Department was directly responsible for the Aliens Orders of 1920 and 1925 which changed the legal status of colonial seamen from 'British' into 'Aliens' and thus deprived the men, not only of their British

[81] Before 1928, the Merchant Navy was referred to as the Mercantile Marine.

[82] Jacqueline Jenkinson, *Black 1919: Riots, Racism and Resistance in Imperial Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009).

citizenship and regular employment, but also to any direct connection to conceptualised 'Britishness' or whiteness, and any connection to the memory of the war.[83] In 1921, amid this highly charged atmosphere, the IWGC had met to discuss the commemoration of Mercantile Marine missing or buried at sea. The meetings were held concurrently with those discussing the coastal naval memorials to ensure continuity of principle.[84]

The first question, invariably, was how to commemorate the 'native ratings' and 'native sailors': terms synonymous with 'men of colour'.[85] Under the 1920 Aliens Order, colonial seamen had been deported or been stripped of their citizenship. The recategorization of black merchant seamen from British Subjects to 'Aliens' by the Home Office may have influenced Commission officials to conceive of using the 'Asiatic' principle as they sought to construct a social frame for who to include and

[83] For more on the 1925 Act see Laura Tabili, 'The Construction of Racial Difference in Twentieth-Century Britain: The Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order, 1925', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Jan., 1994), pp. 54-98.

[84]'Mercantile Marine Graves – General File, WG 998; 'Mercantile Marine: Memorials to Missing: Part I', 3 January 1922, CWGC WG 998/2, Part 1; In 1924, an Empire Memorial Hostel was opened in East London, a symbolic location for colonial seamen, paid for by contributions from across the British Empire.

[85] Ray Costello, *Black Salt: Seafarers of African Descent on British Ships* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), p. 151.

exclude on the proposed memorial to the Mercantile Marine.[86] As I described earlier in the chapter, the IWGC had requested that the Board of Trade provide all the names of merchant seaman for inscription on proposed memorials. Figures of deaths amongst the Mercantile Marine serving on British ships were estimated at 15,168.[87] The Board of Trade had devised a separate classification for 'Asiatic' in their Roll of Honour.[88] The majority of those categorized in this way were Muslim seamen from the Indian subcontinent but the list included colonial subjects from across the empire.[89] The estimate of casualties given was 2,255 native ratings with Chinese seamen accounting for 490 of these. The Commission claimed they were unable to distinguish the names of the seamen on the 'Asiatic' list and this was their justification for combining the names of all native seamen - 'Sidi', 'Lascar', Kru, Somali, Goan, Ceylonese, and Zanzibari – and inscribing their names on one memorial in Bombay. The relocation of the 2,255 colonial names away from Britain allowed the IWGC to dedicate the proposed mercantile memorial to the remaining 12, 913 seamen in London. It was described as the 'British Seaman's Memorial' in initial discussions in 1922.[90]

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[86] Aleida Assmann, 'Transformations between History and Memory', *Social Research*, Vol. 75, No. 1, Collective Memory and Collective Identity (Spring 2008), p. 51.

[87] 'Mercantile Marine: Memorials to Missing: Part I', 7 November 1922, CWGC WG 998/2, Part 1.

[88] 'Deaths (Code 32): Merchant Navy Memorial - Unveiling by H. M. The Queen', 1928, TNA (UK), MT 9/1847A. This is a document written about the Board of Trade's relationship with the IWGC.

[89] 'Naval Memorials – Native Ratings', CWGC WG 1087 /11.

[90] 'Mercantile Marine – Memorials to Part 1', 7 November 1922, CWGC WG 998/2 Part 1.

IWGC officials presented the same rationale for separating off colonial merchant seamen as they had with the sailors. They explained they were being commemorated close to where they embarked although for merchant seamen this could be any one of 150 different locations. Roger Hoefling has taken this explanation further and suggested that the Commission relocated the names of men from the colonies to Bombay to allow relatives of colonial seamen to visit a 'local' memorial rather than one in London.[91] This might have been the case for relatives of those serving in the Royal Indian Marine whose base was at Bombay but not for the west Africans, Sidis, Caribbeans, and many others. A reading of the IWGC records suggests that once the Commission and the Royal Navy had decided on the nominal segregation of sailors' names and a change to their status, then the same methodology would also be used with the merchant seamen. The Board of Trade were responsible for the Mercantile Marine and, though a government body, did not hold as much influence as the War and Colonial Offices. The Board expressed a desire to see all merchant seamen commemorated together, but they were not able to convince Commission and naval officials who were determined to separate different 'races' of sailors and seamen.[92] This was because, in the case of the Royal Navy and the Mercantile Marine, racial difference and hierarchy was structured into the two

[91] Correspondence with Roger Hoefling, All Party Parliamentary War Heritage Group, 16 January 2019.

[92] Meeting between Henry Chettle and J. B. Harrold of the Board of Trade, 'Mercantile Marine Graves', 20 October 1921, CWGC WG 998.

services. Whilst there was no 'official' colour bar in the Mercantile Marine, the service was codified by race. Laura Tabili, in *We Ask For British Justice*, her study of racial difference in the shipping industries, explains that British, dominion, and European seamen, two-thirds of the workforce, received higher pay and better conditions than the African, Arab, African, and Caribbean one-third who received lower wages, worse conditions, and were racially discriminated against by official bodies including trade unions, but were needed by the shipping companies who encouraged a divided workforce.[93]

It is not surprising, therefore, that in their discussions over a seamen's memorial, the committee members, including representatives of organized labour, racialized black colonial seamen in a manner corresponding to their perceived lower status, not just in the maritime industry, but also in society. In 1921, in the initial stages of discussions, Frederick Sillar, a Commission Clerk, had written to Henry Chettle on behalf of Lord Arthur Browne to suggest a principle that could be applied as precedent when the Commission considered the commemoration of colonial sailors and seamen. Browne proposed that when the IWGC came across:

[93] Laura Tabili, *"We Ask for British Justice": Workers And Racial Difference In Late Imperial Britain* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 42.

> Lascars, Chinese, Africans, etc … it is possible that the commission might be disposed to treat these on similar lines to Native African followers. This would probably result in a considerable reduction in the sum named by the Treasury.[94]

What Browne meant was that anyone who was African, Asian, Arab, and Caribbean should not be commemorated in an equivalent way with white seamen. In east Africa, as I shall discuss in Chapter Five, the Commission systematically erased African soldiers and Carriers from the memory of the war. Here, Browne was suggesting the Commission's African policy should also be applied in the metropole and is an example of how colonial policy influence the metropole as much as the other way round. The belief by leading figures on the memorial committee that the lives of Black colonial seamen were not equal in status with others and therefore not worth commemorating or commemorated differently was consistent with pre-war beliefs which framed Black colonial subjects as less than human.[95] Although, not all of the names of colonial seamen were erased from memory, Browne's suggestion is indicative of the thinking of key individuals within the Commission, not just in the

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[94] F. C. Sillar to Henry Chettle, 'Mercantile Marine Graves – General File', 2 June 1921, CWGC WG 998.

[95] Nancy Leys Stepan, Race, gender, science and citizenship in Catherine Hall (ed.), *Cultures of empire: colonizers in Britain and the empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 66.

colonies, where race was a more pronounced feature of colonial society, but also in the metropole, revealing a desire to achieve a continuity of policy across all former theatres.

Memorials 'East of Suez' at Hong Kong and Bombay

The result of the Committee's decision was that Asian, west African, Caribbean, and Arab seamen were to be commemorated under the equality principle but classified together as 'Asiatic' and represented in an inegalitarian way. The first of two Asian memorials to 'Asiatic' seamen was unveiled in the Hong Kong Botanical Gardens in 1928 in the form of a paifang. There were no names inscribed on this Mercantile Marine memorial even though the Commission had been provided with the names of Chinese seamen by the Board of Trade. Gregory James, who has researched Chinese mariners in the First World War, has also provided evidence that there were many more Chinese deaths during the war which were not recorded officially and so remain unremembered.[96] It wasn't until 2006 that the

[96] Gregory James, 'The Chinese Mariners of the First World War', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch*, Vol. 60 (2020), pp. 200-210.

names of the Chinese seamen were finally inscribed onto a new memorial in the Stanley Military cemetery in Hong Kong.[97]

4. 3. The original First World Memorial to Chinese seamen in Hong Kong (Photo: warinasia.com).

The second memorial 'East of Suez' was constructed in Bombay, the base for the Royal Indian Marine, and its unveiling was planned to coincide with the official inauguration of the War Memorial in New Delhi. In January 1931, work began on the Indian Sailors' Home, which would house the panels of names of the Indian sailors

[97] https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/find-cemeteries-memorials/cemetery-details/2057900/hong-kong-memorial/ accessed 20 August 2022.

of the Royal Indian Marine, as well as Indian, African, and Caribbean sailors and seamen from the Board of Trade List.[98] The Sailors' Home in Bombay would serve as the official memorial for Indian sailors and seamen and the Delhi memorial for Indian soldiers. The opening of the smaller Bombay memorial was overshadowed by the official pomp of the unveiling in New Delhi of Edwin Lutyens' and Herbert Baker's Viceroy's House, several new government buildings, and the all-India War Memorial in February 1931.[99] In the same year, the IWGC published a booklet explaining the rationale for the naval memorials in Britain and Asia. In the booklet, the Commission explained that:

> The three memorials of the Royal Navy at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham and the Memorial of the Merchant Navy at Tower Hill record the names of those *European* [my emphasis] sailors who met their death in combatant service, or at the hands of the enemy, and whose graves are not known.'[100]

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[98] https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/find-cemeteries-memorials/cemetery-details/2111731/bombay-1914-1918-memorial-mumbai/ accessed 21 August 2022. The Commission's web entry makes no mention of West Africans or Caribbeans and underlines that the naval memorials are for Europeans.

[99] David A. Johnson, 'A British Empire for the twentieth century: the inauguration of New Delhi, 1931', *Urban History*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (December 2008), pp. 462-484.

[100] IWGC, *The Bombay Memorials India: Commemorating the Indian Sailors of the Royal Navy, The Royal Indian Marine and the Merchant Navy who fell in the Great War and have no grave than the sea* (London: 1931). In the age of empires, 'European' was code for 'white'.

Having characterized the British coastal memorials as for 'European' – meaning white sailors - they then explained their logic for the Bombay Memorial:

> There remain, however, the sailors of Asiatic or African birth who took the same risks and met the same fate, and for these men two other Memorials at two great Eastern ports have been erected.[101]

They continue with the agreed line that 'port of embarkation' explains commemoration:

> The sailors whose names appear in this Register are not classified by race, but by the services to which they belonged. Some belonged to the Royal Navy of the UK, or to its Merchant Navy; some belonged to a distinctly Indian Service. The former have indeed their separate Memorial, nearer to the homes of most of them than the other monuments of their Services are.[102]

[101] IWGC, The Bombay Memorials, 1931.

[102] Ibid.

At the very least, the colonial sailors and seamen had been commemorated under the equality principle. A site had been provided where the public could reflect on the service of those who served in the war. There is no explanation, however, of why sailors and seamen of 'African birth' were located at Bombay or why Caribbean names are listed there. The siting of the names at a little-known Seamen's Home in Bombay appears to be calculated to keep the issue of colonial sailors and seamen away from public view whilst, on the other hand, the whiteness of the metropolitan memorials was publicly proclaimed.[103]

The Tower Hill Memorial

It appears then, that the IWGC wanted to construct a 'British' Mercantile Marine Memorial in the capital like the naval coastal memorials and using 'place of enlistment' as an excuse for excluding African and Asian seamen. The Commission believed that London was the ideal location for such a memorial as relatives of the deceased were more likely to visit a memorial in London than elsewhere.[104] The proposed site at Trinity Square, near Tower Hill, was seen as close to the Port of

[103] There is a privately funded 'Lascar War Memorial' in Kolkata, paid for by the mercantile and shipping companies of Bengal and Assam. It is dedicated to 896 'Lascars' of that region who died in the war. There are no names of 'Lascars' on the memorial.

[104] 'Mercantile Marine: Memorials to Missing: Part I', 13 December 1922, CWGC WG 998/2 Part 1.

London where many seamen had embarked and so held symbolic value.[105] However, an examination of the Roll of Honour of the memorial in Trinity House, London and of the physical memorial itself reveals that, despite the transfer of some Asian, Caribbean and African names to Bombay and Hong Kong, there are hundreds of Caribbean, African, and Asian names inscribed on the Tower Hill memorial: a direct challenge to the whiteness of the memorial. How was this possible when it was described as a 'British' or 'European' memorial in the Commission's own publications? The inclusion of the names of Asian, Caribbean, and west African seamen can be explained by their designation as 'British' on the remaining Board of Trade lists given to the IWGC.[106] Since the nineteenth century, Caribbean seamen were designated as 'British' to distinguish their conditions of service from Asian 'Lascar' seamen who were denied this status. Black seamen were defined in the 1823 Merchant Seaman Act 'as much British seamen as a white man would be'.[107] An example of a west African 'British' seaman on the Board of Trade casualty list, whose name is inscribed on the Tower Hill Memorial, is George Acquah (4. 4). He was from Sierra Leone and died on 28 March 1915. If the name of Acquah's ship, the S.S *Falaba*, is cross-referenced with the register of the Elder Dempster shipping fleet, which sailed between Liverpool and Sierra Leone, it shows that the *Falaba* was torpedoed and sunk in 1915 at St. Anne's Head, off the coast of Pembrokeshire, with the loss of

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[105] 'Memorials to Missing: Merchant Marine', 15 May 1925, CWGC WG 998/2/2 Part 1.

[106] http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/90002/TOWER%20HILL%20MEMORIAL accessed 21 April 2016.

[107] Bob Hepple, *Race, Jobs and the Law* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 63.

102 lives.[108] George Acquah died along with 54 other crew members. Fourteen of those who died, were from Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Gold Coast, Trinidad, and Jamaica. Eight colonial crew were commemorated at Tower Hill; one at Bombay, and five were not commemorated at all.[109] I believe George Acquah was commemorated in London for several reasons. Firstly, because he was not on the 'Asiatic' list, secondly, because his country of service was the United Kingdom, and, thirdly, because, although he was born in Sierra Leone, the *Falaba* sailed from Liverpool, which meant he may have embarked there.

4. 4. A panel on the Tower Hill Memorial with George Acquah's name (photo by John Siblon)

Whilst there are thousands of names of British Mercantile Marine on the memorial there are also seamen from over a hundred different countries and colonial territories. Indeed, there are over 700 names of west African, Asian, and

[108] SS *Falaba* casualties: https://www.wrecksite.eu/peopleView.aspx?Qxx0GtV/55v1mc0I7g7tAA== : accessed 21 April 2016.

[109] See also David Tattersfield, The Sinking of the RMS *Falaba*, 28 March 1915: https://www.westernfrontassociation.com/world-war-i-articles/the-sinking-of-the-rms-falaba-28-march-1915/ accessed 21 August 2022.

Caribbean seamen on the memorial. These men were listed as 'British' on the Board of Trade list. It may be that officials in the IWGC knew that there were Black seamen on the list but chose not to act on their contingent status like the Black sailors at Portsmouth and Plymouth or it may be because many of these seamen died in Atlantic waters, which was a theatre considered closer to 'home' than other oceanic theatres. The records are silent on this contestation. As part of the Centenary commemorations, some historians have tried to present the memorial as a site conveying the British identity of Bangladeshis or west Africans who have a long-standing presence in the area.[110] However, the Commission seriously considered not commemorating colonial seamen at all before deciding that their names would be listed in either Hong Kong or Bombay. The Tower Hill Memorial was a challenge in their attempt to exclude the representation of Asian, African, and Caribbean names on metropolitan memorials. The Commission's solution to this quandary was to classify the memorial as 'European' in its literature and then hoped the public would accept this explanation by not looking too critically at the names on the memorial; most of whom held 'British'-sounding names like John Myers from Nigeria or Joe

[110] See Stephen Bourne, *Black Poppies: Britain's Black Community and The Great War* (Stroud: The History Press, 2014), pp. 126-133 for the black presence in London's docklands; For Asian seamen on the memorial see: Ansar Ahmed Ullah: http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/research/2013/03/south-asian-seamen-in-the-two-world-wars/; For African seamen see: Jeffrey Green: http://www.jeffreygreen.co.uk/065-the-sinking-of-the-falaba-march-1915 both accessed 22 August 2022.

Tucker from Sierra Leone.[111] Most of those classified as 'Indian' on the memorial appear to be Anglo-Indians with the majority of Asian names inscribed, as discussed earlier, elsewhere in Bombay. The reality was that Commission was not always able to succeed in its attempts to construct binaries and boundaries. Catherine Hall has written in *Civilising Subjects*, her study of Jamaican and British society, of 'the impossibility of fixing lines, keeping people in separate places, stopping slippage'.[112]

There was a further effort to represent the memorial as 'European' at its unveiling on 12 December 1928. Dignitaries, representatives from the armed services, and royalty mingled with representatives of various trade unions. Dominion representatives from South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Newfoundland were invited to the ceremony but not representatives of India, or the African and Caribbean colonies.[113] The IWGC's decision not to invite representatives from the Black African and Caribbean colonies and India would have been justified by the memorialisation of Muslim 'Lascars' and some east and west Africans away

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[111] The body of a Nigerian seaman on the SS *Falaba*, John Myers, was washed ashore at Milford Haven and, although buried in a cemetery there, he still does not have a headstone. See: Simon Hancock: remembering-john-myers accessed 22 August 2022.

[112] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), p. 17.

[113] 'Merchant Seaman's Memorial: Unveiling By The Queen'', *The Times*, 13 December 1928, p. 11.

from British shores in Bombay.[114] However, there was a direct challenge to the Commission's representation of the memorial on the day of the unveiling ceremony. A photograph from the Getty Archive, dated 12 December 1928, shows a group of 'Lascar' seamen at the commemoration honouring Asian seamen and contesting the memory of the war at sea as a 'white war', and the memorial as 'British' and 'European' only. They mostly likely wanted the world's press to acknowledge the Asian contribution to the war which was not represented on the memorial (4. 5 and 4.6). I have not been able to find any record of the men in newspapers or the archive. They may have been members of the Indian Seamen's Union established in 1925 which agitated among the Asian seamen at Limehouse for improved conditions of service. Nevertheless, the photo is a potent reminder that memorials may have been designed with specific purposes in mind such as nation or empire building but, often, only achieve ambiguity.[115]

[114] For information from the CWGC on Asians and East Africans buried in Mumbai see: http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/2111731/BOMBAY%201914-1918%20MEMORIAL,%20MUMBAI: accessed 21 April 2016.

[115] Indra Sengupta (ed.), Memory, *History, and Colonialism: Engaging with Pierre Nora in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts, Bulletin: Supplement No. 1* (London: German Historical Institute, 2009), p. viii.

4. 5. Official unveiling of the Tower Hill Memorial 12 December 1928 (courtesy of the CWGC)

4. 6. Uninvited 'Lascars' at the opening of the Tower Hill Memorial in 1928 (Getty Images)[116]

116 The date of the photos in the Getty Archive is the date of the unveiling.

The Imperial War Graves Commission & Westminster Abbey 1926

Whilst there is a photograph of Asian seaman at Tower Hill in 1928, it has been difficult to trace how African or Caribbean ex-servicemen felt about metropolitan memorials and commemoration practice. However, in the CWGC archive, there is an exchange of letters between a Black colonial veteran and the IWGC from 1932. For many Black ex-servicemen, some residing in or visiting the metropole, and others in the colonies, the proliferation of war memorials did not feel like sites of mourning or gratitude for their service as there were no visible cues that the memorials were meant to include them and, if the British Empire was referenced, it usually denoted the tripartite symbolism of Britain, the dominions, and India.

An example of this is a Commission memorial tablet representing British Empire war service inside Westminster Abbey. 'The Million War Dead of the British Empire', still hangs in what is now called St. George's Chapel (previously, the Chapel of the Holy Cross): a place of prayer for relatives of those who died in the war, and has its origins in post-war imperial politics and the growing political status of the dominions.[117] In 1922, the Australian Secretary of Defence, Thomas Trumble, wrote to the IWGC proposing that a series of memorial tablets, similar to those

[117] http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/war-dead-1914-1918 accessed 22 August 2022.

dedicated to the dominion forces hanging in Amiens Cathedral and other cathedrals across France and Belgium, be clustered around the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. He suggested this cultural proximity 'to bring the whole of the Empire together around the grave of the Unknown Warrior who represents them all'.[118] Trumble hoped that a display in the Abbey of 'the combined symbols of all of the dominions would convey a sense of unity of the British peoples in the great struggle and sacrifice of war, as it has never been conveyed before.'[119] Neither the Dean of Westminster Abbey or the IWGC were prepared to see a national symbol transformed into an imperial one, despite their firm bonds with the dominions. They proclaimed that the Union Jack was sufficient to cover dominion service.[120] The Commission did, however, wish to accommodate the desire for greater imperial unity by designing a memorial tablet similar to the thirty hanging in cathedrals throughout France and Belgium, to be placed in Westminster Abbey.[121] On the new tablet, the following words, written by Rudyard Kipling, were inscribed:

> 'To the Glory of God And to the memory of One Million Dead of the British Empire who fell in the Great War 1914-1918. They Died in Every Quarter of

[118] 'Tablets in Cathedrals UK: Westminster Abbey', 11 February 1922, CWGC WG 1734/2/1/ Pt1.

[119] Ibid., 11 February 1922; John Darwin, 'A Third British Empire? The Dominion Idea in Imperial Politics' in Judith Brown and Wm Roger Louis (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 64-87.

[120] 'Tablets in Cathedrals UK: Westminster Abbey', 5 October 1923, CWGC WG 1734/2/1/ Pt1.

[121] Ibid., 9 January 1926.

the Earth and on all its Seas and their Graves are made sure to them by their Kin.'[122]

The tablets were designed in a hierarchical style with the British coats of arms surrounded by the coats of arms of India, Canada, Australia, Newfoundland, New Zealand, and South Africa. The IWGC did note in their correspondence that they regretted not having the Allies also represented on the tablet but had made their decision on who to include based on 'all the nations represented at Versailles' which meant Britain, the dominions, and India but not the colonies.[123]

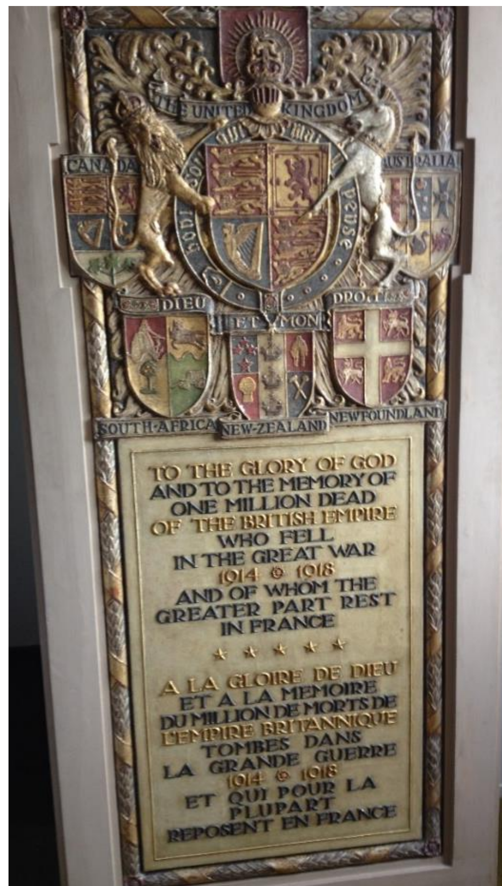
The cost of thirty memorial tablets was £3,600, which was shared between Britain, the dominions, India, and the British West Indies.[124] Despite paying a contribution towards the cost of the tablets, the Caribbean colonies were not represented on them. This omission, given that the absence of the Allies was bemoaned, appears to be deliberate, and represented a continuation of an official policy of not representing Black colonial troops in cultural commemoration in metropolitan space. The tablet in Westminster Abbey was unveiled on 19 October

[122] http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/war-dead-1914-1918 accessed 22 August 2022.

[123] 'Tablets in Cathedrals UK: Westminster Abbey', 3 June 1926, CWGC WG 1734/2/1/ Pt1

[124] 'Tablets in Cathedrals in France and Belgium', 24 January 1923, CWGC WG 1734 /1/Part 1.

1926 in time for the Imperial Conference of that year. Representatives of the dominions and India were invited but not the colonies.[125]



4. 7. A replica of the 'Million War Dead' Tablet (photo by John Siblon, courtesy of the CWGC)

The exclusion of the colonies on the tablet led to an exchange of letters in 1932 between the Commission, the West India Committee (WIC), and a Black ex-Sergeant

[125] 'The Million Dead: Westminster Abbey Tablet: Unveiling By Prince of Wales', The *Times*, 20 October 1926, p. 11.

from the BWIR, T. A. Daley.[126] The correspondence casts some light on official attitudes of the time regarding this site and the representation of the British colonies. Daley could have been visiting Britain to attend a memorial service for black ex-servicemen held at Westminster Abbey and the Cenotaph on 6 November 1932, which was organised by Beresford Gale, an African-American, who had established a 'Negro-friendly' lodge of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks in London.[127] At the Elks' memorial service in Westminster Abbey, a Black medal-wearing veteran implied that the Unknown Warrior - 'whose colour no one knows' - could be Black.[128]

[126] I believe this to be Tatham (Jathan) Daley, service number 4481, who was a Sergeant in the 4th Battalion, BWIR, during the First World War according to the medal roll, TNA (UK) WO 372/5/152496.

[127] 'Negro Giants In Abbey', *Daily Herald*, 7 November 1932, p. 9. This article is replete with racial stereotypes. The Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks was an African-American organisation aimed at helping Black men and women improve their status and was separate to the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks which refused to accept African Americans.

[128] Ibid.

4. 8. Screenshot from the *Daily Herald* on the Elks' procession to Westminster Abbey.

Daley wrote of his disappointment at not seeing the colonies or the Caribbean represented on IWGC memorial tablets in Westminster Abbey and Notre Dame Cathedral. He wrote letters of complaint to the War Office and the West India Committee positing that 'the omission of any mention of the 15,000 sons of the British West Indies … who volunteered their services from the very outbreak of war and who were represented in every theatre of the war' was intentional and suggested, as recompense, that the Caribbean colonies could be inscribed retrospectively on the tablet.[129]

[129] 'Omission of British West Indies from Tablets in Cathedrals: complaint by Mr T Daley', 7 September 1932, CWGC WG 1734/3/1.

Daley's complaint was taken seriously by the Commission and debated at the highest levels. Henry Chettle corresponded with Sir Algernon Aspinall, the long-standing, British-born, Secretary of the WIC. The two men acknowledged that the Caribbean governments were contributors to the IWGC but hoped that Daley would be unaware of this.[130] The Commission agreed to respond to Daley, explaining that there was 'no room' to put the colonies on the tablet; that Britain had a 'special relationship' with the dominions and India; that all colonies of the Empire were represented on the tablet by the British coat of arms in the centre of the tablet; that dead Caribbean servicemen had individual headstones in cemeteries and their names were inscribed on Memorials to the Missing; and that decisions regarding commemoration of the service of the British West Indies was the responsibility of the Secretary of State for the Colonies who had attended the Imperial conference when the decision to commission the tablets had been made. Daley was not satisfied by the response and replied to Fabian Ware, the Chairman of the IWGC, contending that,

> The fact as I see it is simply this: on a war memorial, supposedly a tribute to all those of the British Empire who fell in the war, only the dominions are mentioned. No mention, whatever is made of the loyal colonies, as if they do not constitute part of the British Empire. No stranger to the fact can be expected to see in these memorials that the British West Indies and the other

[130] 'Omission of British West Indies from Tablets in Cathedrals: complaint by Mr T Daley', 8 October 1932, CWGC WG 1734/3/1.

> colonies played any part in the war: nor could future generations reading the plaques be expected to draw any other conclusion that in the Great War of 1914-1918, the British West Indies and the overseas colonies of the Mother Country were conspicuous by their absence.[131]

Daley's observations reveal a strong appreciation of how state-sponsored collective memory works. He obviously knew who was behind the production of the memorial and recognised the critical role played by the IWGC in the representation on the tablet. The historian, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, has expounded that in the production of history there are four crucial moments where 'silences' can be deliberately inserted: the moment of fact creation; fact assembly; fact retrieval, and retrospective significance.[132] In his correspondence, Daley aimed to intervene in the production process of history by writing to the IWGC and military authorities in the hope they might remedy the absence of black men in the collective memory of the war by retrospectively including them. Fabian Ware, wrote to Sir Algernon Aspinall assuring him that the Caribbean and African colonies were 'very much in our minds when this tablet was designed, but … for practical reasons it was impossible to use more than the arms of those actually composing the Commission', meaning the

[131] 'Omission of British West Indies from Tablets in Cathedrals: complaint by Mr T Daley', 22 October 1932 September 1932, CWGC WG 1734/3/1; Much of this section is in John Siblon, '"Race", rank, and the politics of inter-war commemoration of African and Caribbean servicemen in Britain' in Hakim Adi (ed.), *Black British History: New Perspectives* (London: Zed Books, 2019), pp. 52-71.

[132] p. 26.

dominions and India, and 'corresponded to the composition of the Imperial Conference.'[133] Ware also referred to earlier correspondence, from 1923, where Lord Arthur Browne had acknowledged that the 'British West Indies' had paid for thirty of the memorial tablets but did not suggest any further action in this respect.[134]

The last piece of correspondence in the archive is a reply from Aspinall to Ware who apologized, not to Daley, but to the Chairman of the IWGC on behalf of the WIC that the Commission had been troubled by Daley. Aspinall does not display any sympathy for Daley's sentiments and, as such, represented the desires of the British in the Caribbean to retain the social status quo of white rule in the islands. Aspinall defends the Commission's position that the wording on the tablet was 'irreproachable' and that it would have been 'impossible' to fit 'seven coats of arms from seven different Caribbean islands.' He also wrote 'the British West Indies have their war memorials … and the grave of the Unknown Warrior and the Cenotaph honour all the fallen of the British Empire.'[135] Here, Aspinall corroborated the idea that the Unknown Warrior could have been a serviceman from the British Empire to uphold the notion that metropolitan war memorials represented all subjects of empire. This was not what Daley had witnessed. To his mind, the memorial tablet

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[133] 'Omission of British West Indies from Tablets in Cathedrals: complaint by Mr T Daley', 25 October 1932 September 1932, CWGC WG 1734/3/1.

[134] 'Amiens Cathedral – list of tablets', 30 January 1923, CWGC WG 1734/1/2.

[135] 'Omission of British West Indies from Tablets in Cathedrals: complaint by Mr T Daley', 5 November 1932 September 1932, CWGC WG 1734/3/1.

was a material representation of whiteness which did not match up to commemoration practice in the parishes of the Caribbean or his expectations of war commemoration in the metropolis. During the war, the Abbey had been heralded as the 'shrine of Empire' with many services dedicated to those from the Empire who had been killed in the fighting giving the impression of equality of acknowledgement.[136] Now the war was over, a new imperial memorial hierarchy was established with white Britons, the highest in an imagined hierarchy. The colonies, however, were considered lower down in this construct and were not visible in the memorial landscape of the metropole. Nevertheless, a few feet from the tablet, a challenge to the tripartite hierarchy exists; but not on display to the public.

As part of my research on the "Million War Dead" memorial, I visited Westminster Abbey and asked one of the marshals for assistance in finding the tablet. He was unsure where it was, but he allowed me to view a private office within the Deanery. Inside was a triptych propped up against a wall (4.9). This was a different memorial to the one I was searching for. It commemorates the armed services of the First World War. More importantly, each wing provided figures for the enlistment and war dead of all the British Empire, including Africa and the Caribbean. I was informed by staff at the Westminster Abbey Library that the triptych is known as 'The British Fighting Forces Memorial' and was a gift to the

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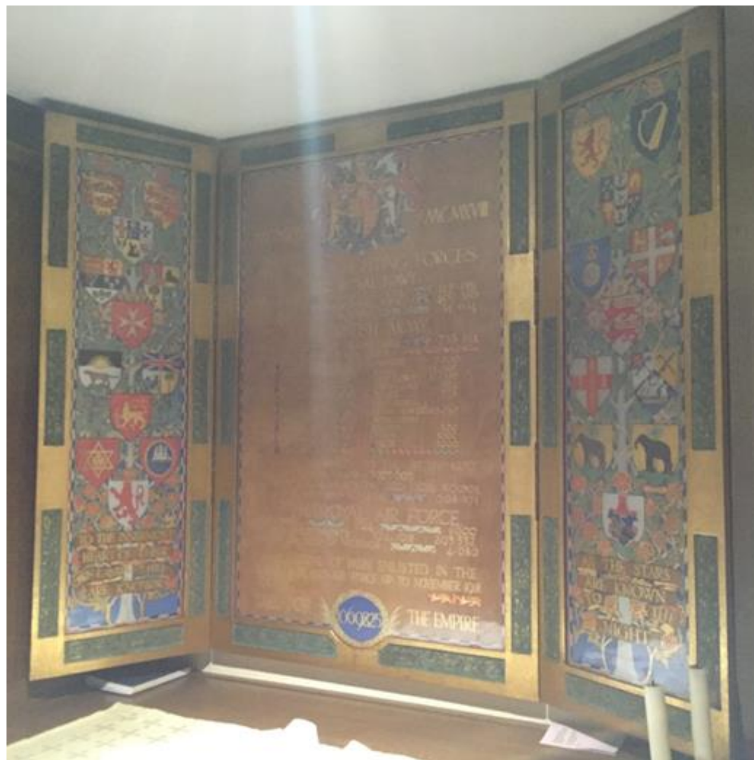
[136] Rev. Maurice H. Fitzgerald, *A Memoir of Herbert Edward Ryle* (London, Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1928), p. 300.

Abbey.[137] It is undated, and no records exist in the archives of Westminster Abbey to explain how it ended up in the Deanery. The memorial was not mentioned at the time on their website nor is it accessible to the public.[138] I believe this triptych to be the 'Roll of Honour of the Three Services' which was commissioned by the War Office for the Wembley Exhibitions of 1924-25 to demonstrate how the military forces of the British Empire contributed to victory in the First World War.



4. 10. The British Fighting Forces Memorial in Westminster Abbey (photo by John Siblon)[139]

[137] Correspondence with the Assistant Keeper of Muniments, Westminster Abbey, 20 March 2015.

[138] An image of the triptych is ow shown on their website: https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abb-1914-1918: accessed 1 August 2023.

[139] This is how the triptych is referred to by the Keeper of Muniments at Westminster Abbey.

Correspondence on this 'Roll of Honour' exists, however, in the archives of the Imperial War Museum. As previously discussed, there was a strong desire for imperial unity in the immediate post-war period and the Wembley spectacle was conceived to serve that purpose. Employees of the newly established Imperial War Museum had seen the triptych displayed prominently at the Exhibition and wrote to the War Office asking if it could be bequeathed to the Museum after the Exhibition had closed. Sir Bertram Cubitt of the War Office wrote to the Curator of the Imperial War Museum, Major Charles Ffoulkes, explaining that they had already promised Westminster Abbey the triptych but that it was possible that the Museum could borrow it for a short period before it was permanently sent to the Abbey.[140] In the period between, the War Office and the Imperial War Museum tried to agree the correct statistics for enlistment and war dead to ensure accuracy on the 'Roll of Honour'. They both agreed that the original source for their figures, *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire during the Great War 1914-1920*, was now out of date.[141]

When Westminster Abbey eventually received the triptych, they were informed that some of the statistics needed amending. The last of the

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[140] Sir Bertram Cubitt to Major C Foulkes, 'Roll of Honour of the Three Service on loan to Imperial War Museum from War Office (Wembley Room), 19 June 1925, IWM EN/1/ROL/9.

[141] *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire during the Great War 1914-1920* (London, HMSO, 1922).

correspondence shows that the Abbey agreed to alter the figures on the triptych.[142] In the absence of evidence from either archive, I suggest that the Abbey did not change the statistics on the memorial and, rather than face the prospect of displaying incorrect information to the public or updating the memorial at some financial cost, they withdrew the memorial from public view and there it has remained unseen for almost one hundred years. In my research within the metropole, this was the only memorial with any acknowledgement of the whole imperial contribution commissioned for public display, albeit designed as a temporary structure. If it had been permanently displayed to the public, it would have depicted service in the First World War as an all-encompassing multi-ethnic imperial effort rather than just that of white British, dominion, and Indian troops. Whether deliberate or not, official complicity in rendering invisible the Black colonial contribution in the social memory of the war is epitomized by the non-display of the triptych. The triptych is reminder that representations of the past are always contested. Within a few feet of each other and the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, albeit one not visible, the three memorials offer competing narratives of the imperial war effort and the service of Black colonial servicemen.

[142] William Foxley Norris, Dean of Westminster, 'Roll of Honour of the Three Service on loan to Imperial War Museum from War Office (Wembley Room), 22 May 1929, IWM EN/1/ROL/9.

Conclusion

The IWGC was more than just an organisation that exhumed bodies, buried them in cemeteries, created memorials for those whose bodies could not be found, and cared for them in perpetuity. The Commission's founder and Vice Chairman, Fabian Ware, was influential in creating a transnational body which he hoped would, through its vast presence across the globe, encourage imperial unity through cultural representation and commemoration, and he surrounded himself with men with similar views who he hoped would enable his vision. During and after the war, Indians came to be part of cultural commemoration, due to their significant contribution to victory, their presence in the metropolis as combatants, and for political reasons within India. Therefore, the imperial hierarchy needed to be reformulated to reflect their contribution and would now be represented culturally as a tripartite hierarchy with British servicemen at the top, followed by the dominion forces, and then the Indians. However, officials, both military and political, baulked at the idea of including Black colonial servicemen on memorials in the metropolis. The names of Caribbean, African, and Asian naval personnel and seamen were inscribed on memorials outside of Britain where, due to the existence of casualty lists, they were fortunate to even have their names listed. Africans and Caribbeans were reclassified as 'Asiatic' to ensure make this possible and demonstrated that military, colonial, and Commission officials had racialized these men and their place in a conceptual hierarchy. In the metropole, the Mercantile Marine Memorial was officially designated as a 'European' memorial, despite exhibiting a large multi-

ethnic presence; another example of names being recategorized to conform to IWGC commemoration practice. An opportunity to include the coats of arms of the colonies in Westminster Abbey was spurned to display the tripartite hierarchy instead. Contemporary commentators see only administrative errors or accept the Commission's explanations that colonial servicemen were commemorated where they enlisted. Few historians have challenged official explanations. The CWGC archives reveal that race thinking underpinned their approach to commemoration even it is couched in the language of culture or religiosity. *Lieux de Memoire* such as Tower Hill, Chatham, Portsmouth, Plymouth, and in Westminster Abbey, are war memorials constructed by the Commission as places to mourn the dead and honour their service, but they also portray a hierarchical imperial narrative of the war: one which excluded the colonies. They are also sites of contestation where master narratives meet competing narratives. In these places, the social memories of the Indian seamen and Caribbean ex-servicemen came up against the politically motivated collective memory of a war where victory was achieved by white service personnel with Indian help. In the next chapter, I will investigate how the Commission approached the commemoration of Black colonial servicemen in war cemeteries in metropolitan and colonial spaces.

Chapter Five - Commemoration of Caribbeans and Africans within IWGC cemeteries in metropolitan and colonial space

In this chapter, I will continue my transnational investigation of *lieux de memoires* in spaces and places across the Empire but with a focus on war cemeteries which have the power to invoke strong emotions not just of mourning but of identity too. In the immediate aftermath of the war, commemoration of the living privileged a tripartite hierarchy of British, dominion and Indian service personnel with black colonial soldiers 'outside' of this grouping and not invited to post-war annual remembrance events. Their exclusion can only be considered an attempt to diminish their war service to maintain the pre-war imperial status quo. I have also investigated metropolitan memorials to those who died in the war, which proliferated the post war landscape, and found that, though many were designed to symbolize imperial unity, they were codified and mostly represented white 'Europeans' and very rarely Indians. The Black colonial contribution remained markedly absent. An exception to this pattern was the Mercantile Marine Memorial in London, where the IWGC attempted to portray it as a 'European' memorial by removing Asian (mostly Muslim) names from the casualty lists and transplanting them to Bombay. Despite this, west African and Caribbean names were inscribed but depicted as 'British' and 'European' in Commission literature; terms associated with white men and women and used, I contend, to obscure the Black colonial presence rather than proclaim it. The consequence of these official and semi-official interventions in the process of remembering war deaths was to privilege the

memory of white servicemen, especially British service personnel, and to adumbrate the service of Indian soldiers and labourers. The presence of African and Caribbean graves and headstones, visible in military cemeteries in Britain and the former Western Front, would appear to be at odds with my central contention that Black servicemen were represented differently and unequally in all former theatres.

In this chapter, I will explain IWGC policy on colonial war graves. Where Black soldiers were involved, the Commission adopted a commemoration practice which was aligned with British military policy during the war. That is, in the metropole, Black colonial servicemen from the BWIR and SANLC were commemorated, but their race, rank, and religion was displayed in a manner which suggests codification. However, in theatres such as Mesopotamia, and Africa, where Black African troops such as the WAFF and the KAR were engaged in combat operations, this precluded them from commemoration on equal terms with British or dominion forces to maintain the fiction of a 'white man's war' and to preserve white prestige. In this chapter, I will concentrate my investigation on the disposition of the bodies of the BWIR, the SANLC, and 'Coloured' men in cemeteries in the metropole through case studies in Seaford in Sussex, Hollybrook in Southampton; in France: Longuenesse St Omer, Mazargues near Marseilles, and Arques-la-Battaille near Dieppe. In the latter part of the chapter, I will explore how the BWIR were commemorated in the colonies.

The Black colonial presence in metropolitan cemeteries

There are traces in the British memorial landscape of a Caribbean military presence in the First World War. It is important, however, to note the differentiation between Black and white Caribbeans and their representation. During the war, 125 white Bermudans volunteered for the whites-only Bermuda Volunteer Rifle Corps (BVRC) and, due to their lighter skin colour, were allowed by military officials to serve in combat on the Western Front with the Lincolnshire Regiment. Their war service and collective memory contrasts with 234 Black Bermudans who were not allowed to serve in the BVRC. They served in a separate contingent, the Bermuda Contingent of Royal Garrison Artillery (BCRGA).[143] They were also stationed on the Western Front but due to their darker skin-colour they were designated as non-combatant and they were tasked with supplying shells for the artillery. The men of the BVRC who died have a memorial in Britain at Grimsby - St James, which was erected in 1923. It is on a wall above a memorial to the Lincolnshire Regiment, and, as such, exhibits imperial connections of white peoples across the British empire. The white Bermudans attended weekly services at the Minster, affirming not just their loyalty to Britain but also their Christianity and were therefore accorded a place in

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[143] Clara F. E. Hollis Hallett and Edward Cecil Harris, 'Bermuda Contingents and those who served overseas in the Great War, 1914-1918, *Bermuda Journal of Archaeology and Maritime History*, Vol. 16, (2005) pp. 7-72.

the local memory of the war on an equal basis to the local regiment.[144] There is no mention on the memorial to the men of the BCRGA. In part, this is due to their shipment straight to the combat zones of the Western Front, but their deployment separate to the BVRC was codified by race and class. The historian, Nancy Wood, has maintained that memorial sites which paradoxically allow forgetting as well as remembering, are *lieu d'oubli* – an 'organising of forgetting' – in opposition to Pierre Nora's notion of 'sites of memory' as *lieux de memoire*.[145] It can be argued, that the Grimsby Memorial simultaneously served as both a place of forgetting and remembrance for Bermudan servicemen.[146]

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[144] Jennifer M. Ingham, *Defence Not Defiance: A History of the Bermuda Volunteer Rifle Corps* (Bermuda, Island Press Limited, 1992), p. 55.

[145] Nancy Wood, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), p. 10; Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire', in Genevieve Fabre and Robert O' Meally (eds.), History and Memory in African American Culture (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 298.

[146] On their return to Bermuda, the dead of each contingent were memorialized separately. The BVRC memorial is in Hamilton and the BCRGA have their memorial in St. George. The Cenotaph in Hamilton is dedicated as the national war memorial.

5. 1. The BVRC Memorial in Grimsby Minster (photo by John Siblon).

Embodied commemoration of Caribbean servicemen

As I have explored in Chapter One, white Caribbean volunteers travelled to Britain or America to enlist into British regiments and could serve in any theatre. If they were killed in action, they were buried close to where they fell under the insignia of the regiments in which they served.[147] Black volunteers from the Caribbean who wanted to fight could only serve in the BWIR, and only as non-combatants in Europe. In all theatres, 1,256 men of the regiment died in service,

[147] See Caribbean Roll of Honour: https://caribbeanrollofhonour-ww1-ww2.yolasite.com/army-ww1.php accessed 21 May 2023.

some in combat such as during the Palestinian campaign, but most succumbed to a variety of diseases such as pneumonia, chest, and lung infections brought about by the squalid conditions of their accommodation or in accidents.[148] In Seaford Cemetery in Sussex, close to where the BWIR had their training camp, nineteen Caribbean servicemen are buried in plots in consecrated ground each with a headstone. They are buried alongside 234 British and imperial servicemen from the First World War, mostly from Ireland and Canada, who were also based at Seaford Camp at various times. An agreement was made with the local council to bury the men in the local church graveyard in 1922.[149] This is a clear instance of Black colonial servicemen receiving a grave and headstone in a church cemetery under the equality principle. It would have been difficult to treat the BWIR men differently as they were well known in the area. The local newspaper, the *Eastbourne Chronicle*, had regularly reported on the regiment's activities after their arrival and expressed regret that there was no chance to bid them an official farewell after they were posted to Egypt.[150]

[148] West Indian Contingent Committee, 'Report of the Committee for six months ended June 30th, 1919', TNA (UK), CO 318/351.

[149] '10919 Seaford Cemetery CWGC UKC 10038, Part 1'.

[150] 'Departure of the British Regiment', *Eastbourne Chronicle*, 29 January 1916, p. 3.

5. 2. Members of WIASP plant a tree in memory of the BWIR men at Seaford Cemetery in 2012 (photo by John Siblon)[151]

Like the men from Bermuda, much was made of the regiment's attendance at local church services. In December 1915, the Bishop of Lewes had confirmed fifty-three BWIR men. In the report of the service, the *Eastbourne Chronicle* described how the soldiers were 'able to find a welcome in the Mother Church and to accept the privileges which it confers upon its members throughout the world.'[152] Their confirmation as Christians bestowed upon them some status and permitted the men

[151] Since 1994, members of the West Indian Association of Service Personnel (WIASP) in London travel to Seaford on Armistice Day to honour the memory of nineteen BWIR men who are buried in the cemetery.

[152] 'Confirmation at Seaford – 53 West Indian Soldiers Presented', *Eastbourne Chronicle*, 4 December 1915, p. 6.

a presence in the memorial landscape in the metropole. In 1925, the IWGC met to agree the status of colonial soldiers and labourers for interment purposes. Correspondence between Lord Arthur Browne, and Henry Chettle reveal the desire for continuity of commemoration policy across the British Empire. Their starting point references their treatment of Black African soldiers, carriers, porters, and followers in east Africa, which I shall discuss in Chapter Six, and exemplifies that Commission policy was shaped as much by political needs in the colonies as much as from the equality principle decided in London.

The IWGC upheld the constructed racial distinction between the Caribbean and African populations. They declared ‘West Indian Natives i.e., negroes in West Indian Regiments’ such as the BWIR and the WIR as ‘Christians and Church of England’. This denomination meant that Caribbean men could be buried in local and military cemeteries such as at Seaford amongst British and dominion servicemen in Commission plots or inscribed by name on Memorials to the Missing due to their religion in any former theatre of war.[153] The decision to allow Caribbeans headstones in Britain was based on the Commission’s equality principle. There was also the fact that the BWIR and the BCRGA were designated Christian, and non-combatants so their presence in cemeteries would not disrupt exiting hierarchies or the view that the war was fought by white men with support from loyal colonies.

[153] ‘Memorials to the Missing East Africa, Part 2’, 2 October 1925, CWGC WG 219/12 Part 2.

However, despite official pronouncements of equality of creed, men like Sukha Kalloo, who was buried by members of the local parish (See Chapter Three), and African or Arab service personnel who were not Christian could find themselves, banished to the farthest part of a cemetery due to their religion. There is evidence of this practice in Whitby (Larpool) Cemetery, North Yorkshire, where two (presumably Muslim) Arab merchant seamen, A. Hamid and M. Said, are buried. Their ship the SS *Hercules* was sunk in 1917, and their bodies were washed ashore. The two men are buried in a single plot with a headstone without a cross or religious symbolism in unconsecrated ground. They are so far from the other graves (see photo) that one can only conclude, that, despite their burial, their plot was positioned in such a way as to accentuate the supposed racial and cultural differences between the Arab seamen and the other military personnel buried in the cemetery (5. 3.).[154]

[154] Anthony Firth, 'The World's War on the East Coast' http://www.fjordr.com/fjordr-blog.html 19 July 2017: accessed: 2 January 2018.

5. 3. Two Arab seamen buried in one plot in Whitby (Larpool) Cemetery distant from other graves (photo by John Siblon)

Metropolitan commemoration of the South African Native Labour Corps

As discussed in Chapter One, Black South Africans in the SANLC, like the BWIR and BCRGA, were only permitted to serve on the former Western Front as non-combatants and under the strict supervision of white officers from the new dominion. Many of the Corps are buried in plots with headstones in Britain, France, and Belgium. Their presence in these cemeteries is because the SANLC was also

covered by Chettle's ruling. The Commission decreed that 'South African Natives' were to be 'commemorated individually in France and at Dar-es-Salaam, and other places where identified graves exist among British graves, but numerically elsewhere.'[155] The decision reveals a variation in the equality principle. Commemoration of the SANLC with headstones was only to occur in Europe and the 'showcase' cemetery in Dar-es-Salaam but, elsewhere, regardless of whether a name or body was present, the Corps would be represented by a number only. This policy was not applied to white British or dominion soldiers. In reference to the 'Cape Coloured' servicemen from South Africa, such as the CC and the CAHTC, Chettle mandated that 'coloured or half-caste South Africans' were to be 'commemorated everywhere as if they were British' and 'should be treated as if they were European Christians'.[156] The IWGC directive, therefore, reflected the racial politics of the Union of South Africa, where whites were the dominant group, followed by Indians, 'coloureds', and, lastly, 'natives'. In this instance, the Commission had decided to award a contingent 'white' status to 'coloured' servicemen, presumably because there was white ancestry in their heritage meaning that they could have plots in any cemetery. This decision to codify the commemoration of Black and 'coloured' Africans can only have been made with the agreement of the South African government who had an interest for domestic political reasons in characterizing the war as a 'white man's war'. The racialized

[155] 'Memorials to the Missing East Africa, Part 2', 2 October 1925, CWGC WG 219/12 Part 2.

[156] 'Memorials to the Missing East Africa, Part 2', 2 October 1925, CWGC WG 219/12 Part 2.

status of colonial servicemen needed, therefore, to be replicated culturally in war memorials and military cemeteries.

An example of the racial codification of the SANLC in metropolitan cemetery plots occurred in Milton Road Cemetery in Portsmouth. The bodies of African men from the Union had been washed ashore after the sinking of the SS *Mendi* troopship in the Channel on 21 February 1917. In 1920, eight of the Corps were buried four to a grave in two plots in Milton Road. When I visited in February 2017, there were two to a grave in four plots.[157] There was plenty of space around their headstones meaning that lack of cemetery space was not a consideration when the original decision was made to inter the men. Directly opposite the SANLC headstones in the cemetery, was that of a white South African officer from the Postal Corps, Lieutenant Mactavish, who also drowned on the SS *Mendi.* He occupied his own plot with an individual headstone.[158] The original disposition was to commemorate but also differentiate white and Black South Africans, with the SANLC plots arranged to ensure they stood out visibly from the others despite an abundance of space around the graves.

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[157] https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/361695/jonah,-/ Accessed: 17 February 2017.

[158] https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/361615/mactavish,-/ Accessed: 17 February 2017.

5. 4. Eight SANLC men two to a grave in Milton Road Cemetery, Portsmouth in 2017. Their graves are the ones with wreathes propped against them for the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the SS *Mendi* (photo by John Siblon).[159]

The policy of interring Black South Africans two or more to a grave can also be seen in the military section of Littlehampton Cemetery, Sussex. The bodies of thirteen white British servicemen from the First World War have their own individual plots with headstones, but three Black South African servicemen are buried in just one plot sharing a headstone with plenty of space around them (5.

[159] When I visited again in 2019, each SANLC man had their own plot and headstone. I believe the change is for political reasons. The South African Navy regularly visit Portsmouth and SS *Mendi* commemorations are held in the cemetery. Having one plot each, therefore, reflects the changing politics of South Africa just as Black African names have been added to Delville Wood in recent years.

4.).[160] In the Netherlands, there are four SANLC buried in one grave in Noordwijk General Cemetery (5.5).[161]

5. 5. SANLC men buried three and four to a grave in Littlehampton and Noordwijk Cemetery (photo by John Siblon).

Whilst it is true that multiple burials occur in Commission cemeteries throughout Britain and Europe, the frequency of these for a single Corps of a different colour, in different theatres, cannot be merely coincidence. It appears to be a marker of racial status signifying difference between Black South Africans and other white servicemen. On more than one occasion the Commission has explained

[160] http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/44826/LITTLEHAMPTON%20CEMETERY Accessed: 2 June 2018

[161] http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/54237/NOORDWIJK%20GENERAL%20CEMETERY Accessed: 2 June 2018

such differential treatment as acts of representation which take account of the 'culture' of men from the colonies. This claim can only be investigated if contemporary policies towards colonial subjects are considered.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, in correspondence between officials in the Union of South Africa and the War Office, it was declared that the Trustees of Maitland Road Cemetery in Cape Town 'frequently place two natives in the same grave plot'.[162] One can infer that the Union and British government wanted to ensure a transnationally co-ordinated policy over cemetery arrangements for the SANLC and used funerary arrangements in South Africa to guide them. However, from 1910 the dominion was a strictly segregated society, and this extended to the treatment of Black and white bodies. After the creation of the dominion, racially segregated cemeteries began to appear in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Pretoria.[163] Garrey Dennie, in his cultural study of the treatment of bodies in South Africa after death, describes how the Johannesburg municipal authorities treated the bodies of white and Black paupers very differently. White bodies were privileged and interred ceremoniously with dignity whereas Black indigents were routinely disposed of at reduced cost to the authorities in mass graves in a distressing and undignified manner, so much so that Black Africans set up their own burial societies to ensure

[162] '1/1/7/E/71 Union of South Africa General File', 26 November 1918, CWGC WG 1692/Pt 1.

[163] Garrey Dennie, 'The Standard of Dying: Race, Indigence, and the Disposal of the Dead Body in Johannesburg, 1886–1960', *African Studies*, Vol, 68: 3, p. 314.

that the bodies of relatives were not debased.[164] The placement of African bodies in segregated, 'non-European' plots , usually on the fringes of the cemetery away from white British and Afrikaner ones, was not representative of the cultures of indigenous Africans but an 'invented tradition' designed to illustrate racial power relations in the Union. Whilst there has always been some element of separation between religious faiths in cemeteries, in South Africa from the early twentieth-century, segregation was by race. The appearance in the metropole of multiple burials of SANLC, therefore, was not a recognition of the culture of the men but the way the Union government wanted the men to be seen by visitors: separate from white South Africans and visibly differentiated to display a lower status. This example of dominion policy in operation in England is also an example of how 'Europe was made by its imperial projects, as much as colonial encounters were shaped by conflicts within Europe itself.'[165]

Race and Rank on Memorials to the Missing in Britain

Within IWGC cemeteries, Memorials to the Missing replicated the military order of precedence set by the Army List just as the naval memorials in Britain reflected the Navy list (see Chapter Three: Part Two). In these military orders, British

[164]Garrey Dennie, Ibid., pp. 310-330.

[165] Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (London: University of California Press, 1997), p. 1.

men and women are always first and their names arranged alphabetically according to which service they belong. They are followed by the dominions, India, and lastly, colonies and protectorates connoting a racial as well as gender and rank ordering. The classification on Memorials to the Missing was discussed by the IWGC in 1923. They highlighted the 'difficulty of ordering overseas units' and so resolved to place separate panels to those of British units displaying the names of 'overseas' forces on memorials in a numbered sequence which invariably codified colonial units in a race and rank order. The IWGC believed that by doing this 'no question need arise as to their position in relation to British units' and so the following order was established for non-British formations: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa (white), Newfoundland, Rhodesia, WAFF, WAR, KAR, Bermuda Militia Artillery (East Africa), WIR (white), WIR (Coloured), BWIR (White), BWIR (Coloured), South Africa (Coloured).[166]

This classification conforms to the equality principle of commemoration of all but is not free of 'distinction'. Indeed the arrangement of names by rank and race is comparable with the beliefs of 'Social Darwinists' who believed in an 'evolutionary strata of racial tiers', which, inevitably, placed white Anglo-Saxons at the top black and Black Africans at the bottom of a racial hierarchy.[167] To help the public read the

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[166] 'Memorial to the Missing: Code Numbers', 11 July 1923, CWGC WG 219/6.

[167] Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1845: Nature as Model and Nature as Threat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 191-240.

memorials, racialized words such as 'Native' and 'Cape Auxiliary' were used, which served as both a recognition of war service but also a position in a racial taxonomy. Raymond Williams has written of the use of 'native' as a 'key word': a word whose meaning has shifted over time depending on its usage in a specific historical context. In the colonial context, 'native' meant 'non-European' which denoted inferior status to whites.[168] The arrangement also places combatant above non-combatant status which explains why the Black African units are notionally above the Caribbeans ones and demonstrates that, in the military hierarchy, combat is considered as carrying far more weight and status in cultural representations.

An example of a Memorial to the Missing which also functions as a racial signifier is within Hollybrook Cemetery in Southampton. The memorial was unveiled on 10 December 1930 and is inscribed with 1,900 names of army and air force personnel from across the British Empire who died at sea in warships, transport or hospital ships. A visible hierarchy operates within the memorial through a military, imperial, and racial order of precedence. In the design of the memorial, the Commission intended for visitors to read the names from left to right in order of status, but the ships were also organised in an order of precedence beginning with a warship, followed by transport, hospital, and airships. The names of the highest British ranks, including Field Marshal Kitchener, are first on the memorial. After the British names, the memorial continues with names of

[168] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society* (London: Fontana, 1976), pp. 215-6.

servicemen from the dominions: Canada, Australia, white Rhodesia, and South Africa. The names for men from the Union of South Africa are arranged with whites first, then the 'coloured' CC and CAHT, then Black 'natives' from the SANLC. The lower status of both the 'coloured' and 'native' South Africans at Hollybrook was not only due to their skin colour but also due to their designation as Labour Corps, who were at the lower end of the military hierarchy.[169] They were assigned to the Labour Corps, however, because of their skin colour demonstrating the significance of race over rank in the taxonomy of this memorial. The names of Indian servicemen follow white South Africans. This was because India was not yet a dominion and so occupied a transitional space between dominion and colony. The last names in the memorial hierarchy, after the black South Africans, due to their colonial status, were the names of fifty-eight men of the BWIR.[170] Despite their Christian religion, as inhabitants of a colony, as non-combatants, and as Black servicemen not permitted officer status, they were considered at the bottom of the hierarchy with race co-determining their memorial position alongside their military status as labourers.

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[169] For a brief description of the CAHT see Timothy C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 172-3.

[170] http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/142019/HOLLYBROOK%20MEMORIAL,%20SOUTHAMPTON accessed: 17 February 2017.

5. 6. An intersectional order of precedence is displayed at Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton (photo by John Siblon)

Men from the SS *Mendi*

The Hollybrook Memorial is mostly known today as the location where the names of 615 men of the SANLC, who died when the SS *Mendi* transport ship sank after a collision with a mail ship in thick fog in the Channel in February 1917, are commemorated. The former Prime Minster, David Cameron, included a reference to the sinking to encourage the idea of a more inclusive national remembrance of the First World War in the one hundredth anniversary commemorations.[171] In 2014, the CWGC produced a short film about the sinking of the SS *Mendi* to be used as an

[171] Transcript of David Cameron's speech of 11 October 2012 at the Imperial War Museum on the government website: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/speech-at-imperial-war-museum-on-first-world-war-centenary-plans accessed: 1 November 2012.

educational resource.[172] The prominent position given to the names from the *Mendi* in the centre of the memorial has meant that in recent times, in Britain and South Africa, the memorial has become a *lieu de memoire* where the multicultural aspect to the war has been highlighted. However, at the time of its unveiling, the local newspapers in Britain mostly wrote of it as the place where Lord Kitchener was commemorated.[173] In South Africa, it is only since the 1940s the memory of the sinking of the SS *Mendi* became one of the rallying points for Black political consciousness in South Africa.[174]

The names on the screen wall occupy the middle section of the Hollybrook Memorial and suggests an instance of non-racial or hierarchical commemoration of Africans on metropolitan soil. The position of the names of the men from the SS *Mendi* can be explained because they were on a troop ship and, though their ship had lesser status than a battleship, it was classified as before hospital ships and

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[172] 'Let Us Die Like Brothers', The *History Channel* and the CWGC (2014).

[173] 'War Memorial Unveiled: Victims of Mines and Torpedoes', *Lancashire Evening Post*, 10 December 1930, p. 3; 'Sir William Robertson Unveils Hollybrook Memorial: Solemn Ceremonial', *Hampshire Advertiser*, 13 December 1930, p. 15; 'The Hollybrook Memorial: To the Heroes of The Sea', *Hampshire Advertiser*, 14 November 1931, p. 6.

[174] Albert Grundlingh, *Fighting Their Own War – South African Blacks and the First World War* (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1987) p. 140; See also: Albert Grundlingh, 'Mutating Memories and the Making of a Myth: Remembering the SS Mendi Disaster, 1917-2007', *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 63: 1, pp. 20-37.

airships in the naval order of precedence. Starting from the left side – number one is the most significant panel – and the men from the BWIR on the right side, are last on panel ninety-eight. At the time, the IWGC were mindful of the consequences of allowing the SANLC names to have such central prominence. A Commission official wrote 'Does the classification of the SS *Mendi* give the SANLC precedence to which they are not entitled?'[175] In the act of commemorating and verifying the names of the 'coloured' and 'native' troops, officials explained that the first names of each 'full-blooded native' was not their real name but a 'nickname used by Europeans' and the last name, their tribal grouping or district.[176] Such arbitrary naming of servicemen was not common practice among British or dominion troops but appears to be reserved for Black Africans and explains why some men have been given such names as 'Breakfast Jobela', 'Capetown Mahapula' or, simply, 'Billy'. The inscription of these names on memorials is another example of the racial codification of men from the colonial armies and suggests that the reasons for such memorial inscriptions was more about satisfying the South African government for political purposes rather than providing an intimate space for grieving for 'emotional communities' of mourners.[177]

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[175] 'Memorials to the Missing UK: Hollybrook Memorial', 13 February 1928, CWGC 219/27/1.

[176] 'Memorials to the Missing UK: Hollybrook Memorial', 26 October 1928, CWGC 219/27/1.

[177] Bruce Scates and Rebecca Wheatley, 'War Memorials' in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume III: Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 530.

Non-commemoration of West Africans in the metropole

There is another aspect to the Hollybrook Memorial that is deserving of consideration; that is, the lack of other Black African names apart from those from South Africa. In correspondence between Henry Chettle and the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1925, the Commission asked the Colonial Office to consider the inclusion of the names of thirteen Black African soldiers from the Nigerian Regiment and nine soldiers from Sierra Leone on the proposed memorial in Hollybrook. There is no indication of where the men served apart from the fact that they were buried at sea. Chettle asked if the Colonial Secretary, Leo Amery, would object. The Colonial Office left the decision in the hands of the IWGC.[178] I have not been able to trace any further correspondence on these twenty-two African soldiers. Their names are not recorded on either the Hollybrook Memorial or the Mombasa Memorial for those who died off the east coast of Africa. The omission of their names on any memorials appears to be an instance of deliberate erasure of Black African combatant war service.

Also missing from the histories which describe the SS *Mendi* tragedy, and its commemoration is the fact that there were at least twenty-five west African crew on

[178] H. F. Chettle to Under-Secretary of the Colonies, Memorials to the Missing UK: Hollybrook Memorial, 19 December 1925, CWGC WG 219/27/1.

the ship.[179] Their names are not in the CWGC database or on the Hollybrook memorial. Their omission might be explained by the fact that the collision was deemed as 'maritime peril' rather than enemy action, and so the 'civilian' crew were not considered as 'war dead'. The west African crew have not received the same attention from historians as the South African dead, suggesting a further classification in the hierarchy of remembrance.[180] If the commemoration of the SANLC from the SS *Mendi* on Hollybrook Memorial and those in cemeteries like Milton Road or Littlehampton are analysed together, a picture emerges regarding commemoration in the metropole of those from Africa: white South African officers and non-commissioned officers have the most privileged commemoration, 'coloured' and 'native' South Africans are below them in the hierarchy, as demonstrated by the multiple burials, but seamen and soldiers from other parts of Africa have not been commemorated, as if they did not exist at all, despite the SS *Mendi* being named after the west African *Mende* people. The Hollybrook Memorial displayed hierarchy in a visible order of precedence which privileged the rank, gender, and race of white servicemen and women over Black colonial servicemen.[181] The cultural absence and invisibility of Africans who were combatants demonstrated

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[179] J Gribble and G Scott, *We Die Like Brothers: the sinking of the SS Mendi* (Swindon Historic England, 2017), pp. 83-84.

[180] Antony Firth, 'The World's War On The East Coast': http://www.fjordr.com/fjordr-blog.html accessed: 2 January 2018.

[181] Memorials to the Missing UK: Hollybrook Memorial, 2 July 1926, CWGC WG 219/27.

the role that culture played in maintaining mythology and white hegemony in the post-war period.

Black colonial servicemen in cemeteries on the former Western Front

The war cemeteries on the former Western Front in France and Belgium are the most visited and contain, arguably, the most spectacular forms of permanent commemoration.[182] I wish to maintain that, in this former theatre of war, it is possible to observe a memorial policy which privileges white servicemen and women over all others, reflecting imperial power relations in the metropole and colonies. I will contend that, while the IWGC maintained a consistent policy in the metropole of commemorating colonial servicemen under the equality principle, they still found ways to accentuate differences in Commission war cemeteries. I will investigate a sample of cemeteries on the former Western Front as case studies to support my argument.

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[182] David W. Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada, 1919-1939* (London: Berg, 1998).

Disposition of bodies in IWGC in Mazargues War Cemetery[183]

5. 7. Mazargues Cemetery with the graves of white British and dominion servicemen either side of the water feature (photo by John Siblon)

Mazargues, in Southern France, is one of the most multiethnic war cemeteries on the former Western Front. Of the 1,487 bodies from the First World War interred there, 1,210 are Indian, Caribbean, Chinese, Fijian, and Egyptian and the remainder are those of white service personnel from Britain, Australia, Canada, South Africa,

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[183] http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/35801/MAZARGUES%20WAR%20CEMETERY,%20MARSEILLES Accessed: 1 August 2012.

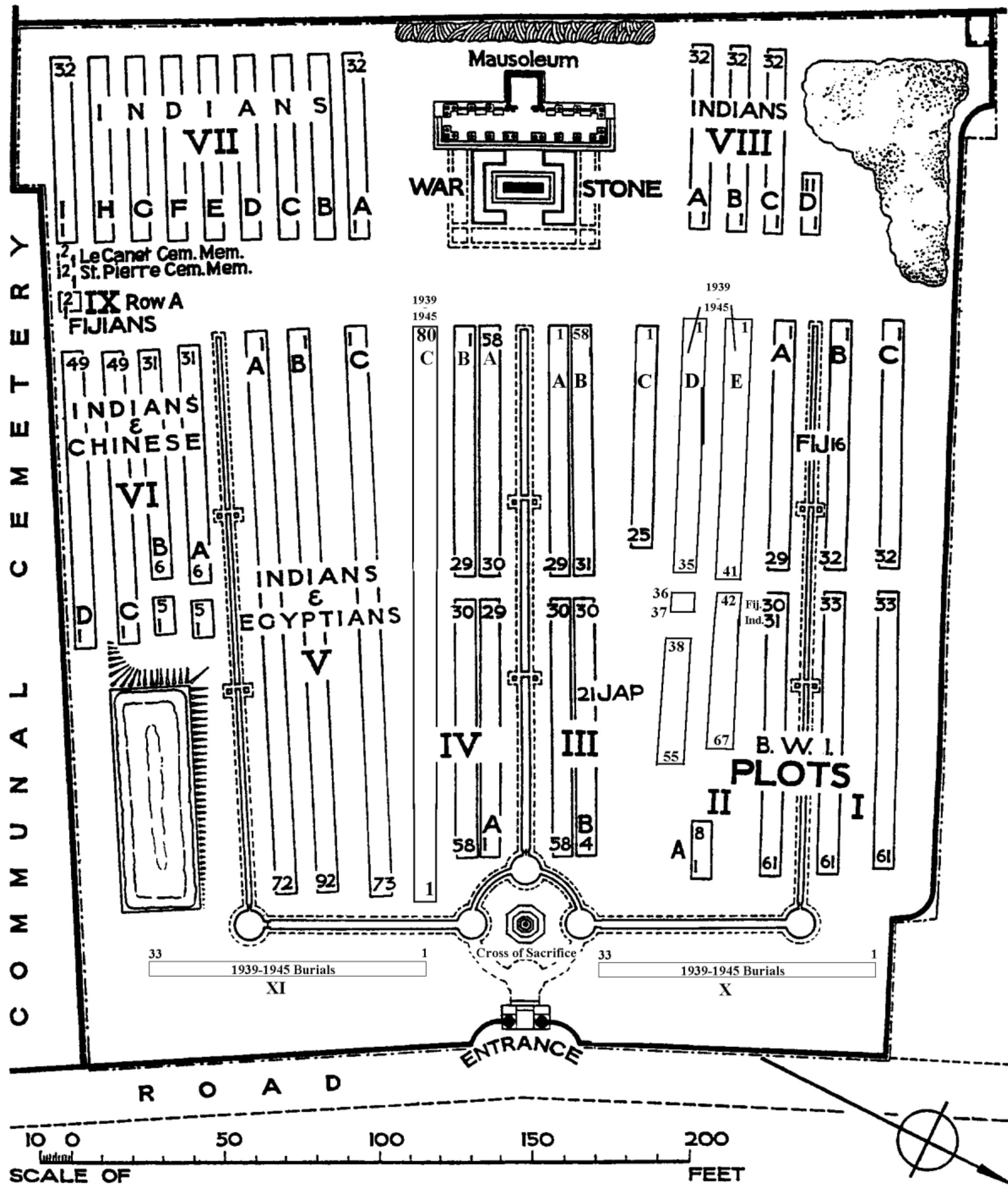
and New Zealand. White British and dominion are in the minority as the cemetery was located near to the hospitals and base camps of colonial troops such as the BWIR and from India. The commemoration of so many nationalities within one cemetery by the Commission could provide a counterargument to the myth of the 'white man's war'.[184] The most numerous bodies in the cemetery are 993 Indians who died in Marseilles, followed by 228 British servicemen, 188 BWIR, and various other nationalities.

One might expect that the bodies of the Indian servicemen who constitute two-thirds of the graves, would occupy a prominent position within the cemetery given their numbers. The Indians, however, were consigned to the outer plots along with the Caribbean, Chinese, Egyptian, and Fijian servicemen, signifying codified spaces within the cemetery for colonial and non-combatant servicemen. It appears to be Commission policy to have allocated the outer fringes to those who had served as non-combatants or Labour Corps. The majority of those in the Indian graves are labourers, followers, and drivers, but there are also soldiers and non-commissioned offers too. The central position in the cemetery, Sections III and IV (5. 8.), between the Cross of Sacrifice and the Stone of Remembrance, and either side of the water feature in the middle of the cemetery, is dedicated space for white British and dominion servicemen, many of whom were non-combatants in the Army Service

[184] See Dominiek Dendooven & Piet Chielens (eds.), *World War 1: Five Continents in Flanders* (Brugge: Lannoo, 2008) for the diversity of troops who served on the Western Front.

Corps. They fall under the shadow of the Cross of Sacrifice and therefore become emblematic of 'Christian sacrifice'.[185] This might suggest that these bodies were clustered together homogenously as white bodies, and in a privileged position, within the cemetery due to their faith. If this were true, then it would explain why the Indian bodies were strategically placed away from the Cross and would be indicative of a cultural sensitivity by the Commission. However, the Cross could have been erected anywhere in the cemetery. The men from the BWIR were also designated as Christian, as discussed previously, and so could have also been included in the central space. However, their graves are positioned away from British and dominion ones in plots I and II even though they were a regiment, not a corps, and under War Office control and therefore part of the British Army. A visitor to the cemetery who understood such nuances might therefore note their placement in the 'non-combatant' plots. Most visitors were unlikely to note any difference among the large number of headstones and would probably be impressed by the imperial reach of the British Empire.

[185] Bruce Scates and Rebecca Wheatley, 'War Memorials' in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, p. 535.



MAZARGUES WAR CEMETERY

5. 8. Plan of Mazargues cemetery. White service personnel occupy the central positions, rows III and IV (courtesy of CWGC website).

Nevertheless, I contend that the topography of the cemetery displays a race and rank hierarchy in the disposition of bodies and the IWGC helped visitors navigate the layout by providing cemetery plans which could be accessed, along with the rolls of honour, within each cemetery. Michel Foucault, writing about the designs of prison spaces as power structures, described a plan as a 'diagram of power'.[186] Georgie Wemyss, who has written on the operation of an 'invisible' white power structure within the former British Empire, describes ranking arrangements as 'hierarchies of belonging', where those at the top of the hierarchy have the power to grant or withhold tolerance to those below them and so maintain white hegemony.[187] It is revealing that the Commission-produced cemetery plan of Mazargues does not reveal where white British and dominion bodies can be found within the cemetery but, instead, highlights the location of the Indian, Chinese, Egyptian, Fijian, and Caribbean graves. In this way, the cemetery plan is not simply a case of 'othering' but also indicative of how 'whiteness' operates as the 'norm' in particular societies. In his sociological study of whiteness, Steve Garner notes the act of racializing 'others' is a framing of power relations primarily aimed at constituting a white identity, which is also hegemonic. The racializing of others, therefore, is meant to draw attention away from those doing the framing – white people – who aim to make their presence 'unmarked' to the extent that 'whiteness sustains itself by

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[186] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin, 1991; first published by Allen Lane in 1977), p. 171.

[187] Georgie Wemyss, *The Invisible Empire: White Discourse, Tolerance and Belonging* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), p. 123.

appearing not to be there'.[188] It is unlikely that the IWGC produced the map to aid Asian or Caribbean visitors to these specific locations within the cemetery, especially as the plans were only available to view within the cemetery.[189] It was more feasible that they assumed visitors would be white, would share in the same 'hierarchical gaze' as the cemetery planners, and be impressed at the reach of the British Empire. The IWGC have also taken into consideration, in the arrangement of bodies, the racially segregated policies of South Africa. The one plot for a member of the SANLC is located away from the central section where graves of white South African servicemen can be found. The arrangement of bodies at Mazargues was an example of how the contributions of Black people were commemorated and visible, yet arranged in a way that marginalized their service in the metropole.

Longuenesse - St Omer Cemetery[190]

The Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, designed by Sir Herbert Baker, is almost twice the size of Mazargues and contains a similar diversity of

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[188] Steve Garner, *Whiteness: An introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 35.

[189] Scans of cemetery plans can be viewed by visitors to the CWGC website.

[190] http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/2100/LONGUENESSE%20(ST.%20OMER)%20SOUVENIR%20CEMETERY Accessed: 9 September 2016.

bodies from across the British Empire. During the War, St Omer, in France, was the headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force until 1916 and several hospitals were built in the town to treat, often separately, men from Britain, the dominions, India, and the colonies. The cemetery contains the bodies of men who died in the hospitals or in air raids. Leaving aside the Second World war graves, and those of the French and Germans, 2,500 of the graves are those of white British servicemen and 500 graves belong to servicemen from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India, South Africa, the Caribbean, and China. The bodies of white personnel are in the majority in this cemetery.

The graves at St Omer cemetery are arranged in a military order of precedence. Like Mazargues, white British and dominion soldiers were allocated the central section of the cemetery between the Cross of Sacrifice and the Stone of Remembrance in plots 1-5. The men in this homogenized white space were also members of combatant units revealing a further codification between those who had 'fought' and did the killing and non-combatants. The racial disposition of bodies within the topography of the cemetery is visible as those commemorated as Labour Corps due to their 'race' – native South Africans, Caribbeans, and Chinese – are bunched into the far corner of the cemetery along with the bodies of German soldiers. Two white women who worked for the Commission are also found in this corner, demonstrating that gender also intersected with that of race and rank. There are some revealing arrangements which differ from Mazargues. Firstly, there is a grave of a white Irish-Canadian member of the Labour Corps, Daniel Clarke,

amongst those of BWIR and SANLC servicemen in the far corner of the cemetery in plot 6. Clarke's interment amongst the African, Asian, and Caribbean plot might suggest that the sole hierarchy in operation in the cemetery was a rank hierarchy representing combatant over non-combatants.[191] This contention is strengthened by the inclusion of an Anglo-Indian pioneer, Sijil Abdul-Ali, among the white servicemen in the central section. Maori Pioneers are also interred in the central section. Timothy Winegard has argued that Maori were racially classified as 'close to Europeans' and considered a 'martial race'.[192] The grave of a member of the Cape Coloured Labour Regiment can also be found in the central section. His inclusion among combatants was due to his lighter-coloured skin and Lord Arthur Browne's edict that 'Coloured South Africans are not reckoned as Natives. They are half castes and should be treated as European Christians and commemorated precisely as British soldiers.' which explains why the graves of men from the Corps can be found in multiple former theatres.[193]

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[191] For the difference between the Army Service Corps and the Labour Corps see John Starling & Ivor Lee, *No Labour No Battle: Military Labour During the First Word War* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2009), pp. 78-79.

[192] Timothy C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War,* pp. 38-40; See also: James Bennett, 'Maori as honorary members of the white tribe', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 29:3 (2001), pp. 33-54.

[193] Lord Arthur Browne, 'Memorials to the Missing East Africa, Part 2', 2 October 1925, CWGC WG 219/12 Part 2.

The privileging of combatants in the cemetery is disrupted, however, by the interment of five Indian soldiers in plot 6 along with the Asians (including 'Indo-Chinese'), black South Africans, Caribbeans, and the one white Canadian labourer. A white British officer in the Indian Army is buried in the central section. The Commission appear to have attempted to create a 'British' and dominion combatant section within the cemetery, which also conformed to the notion of a 'white man's war'. To achieve this, those not considered part of this 'imagined community' were consigned to the fringes of the cemetery. The negotiation of race, rank, and gender within the cemetery was imperfect but, if the intended representation of white hegemony was achieved, then the disposition would have served its purpose. Once again, the only descriptions provided for the reader in the cemetery plan were those of the BWIR, the SANLC, Indians, Chinese, and Germans.[194] In the case of the Germans, Daniel Clarke, and the two women, their 'otherness' in this cemetery space underlines the fact that identity and whiteness are elastic concepts that can be deconstructed and reconstructed to suit a contemporary narrative and that hierarchies are intersectional.[195]

[194] This is also the case at Etaples Cemetery, where, despite it containing the largest number of British and dominion interments, the plan only shows where the handful of BWIR, SANLC, CAHT, Chinese Labour Corps, Indian, and German plots can be located.

[195] Steve Garner, *Whiteness*, p. 64.

Arques-La-Bataille British Cemetery[196]

Arques-La-Battaille, close to Dieppe, was the base for the SANLC and where many of the Corps died in the No. 1 Native Labour General Hospital in the town.[197] Black South Africans make up 270 of the 377 plots and the rest are 'Cape Coloured', Caribbean, Indian, and Chinese, who, as imperial forces, are recorded in official statistics as British. I have chosen to discuss this cemetery as there is not a single white body within it. It is to all intents and purposes a racially segregated colonial cemetery behind the lines of the former Western Front containing the bodies of men from several army and naval units from the dominions and colonies.

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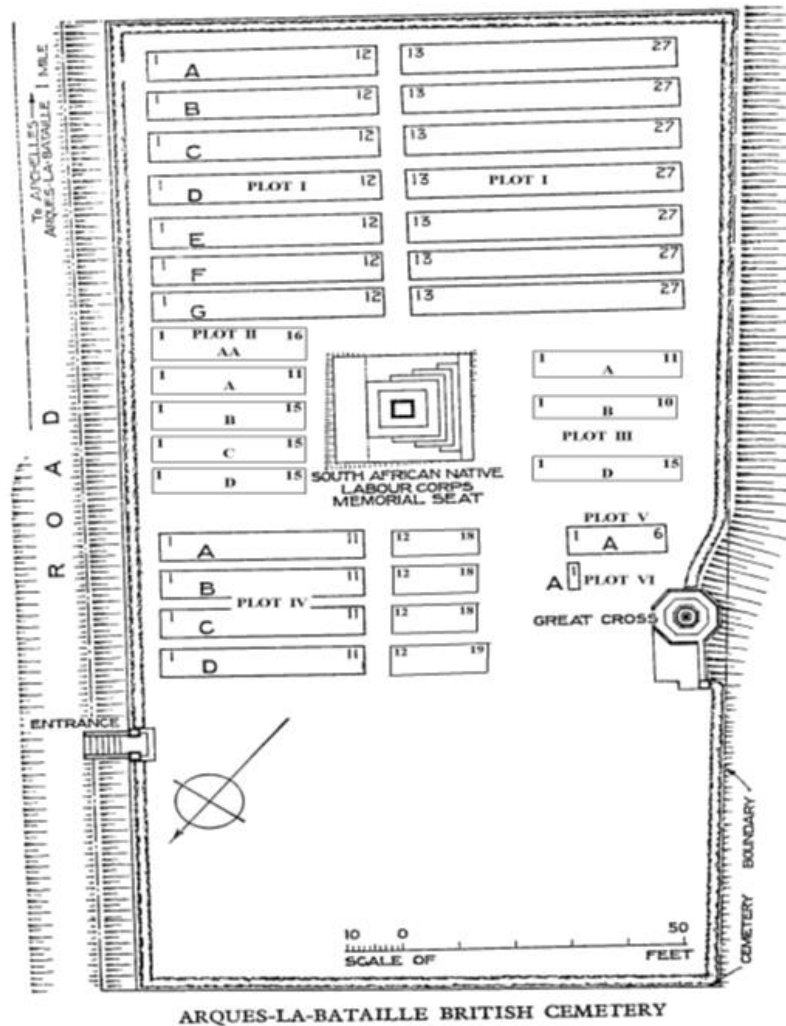
[196] http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/23401/ARQUES-LA-BATAILLE%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY Accessed: 31 August 2017.

[197] The description of the hospital on the CWGC website no longer describes it as a Native Hospital but a General Hospital.



5. 9. Cemetery plan of Arques-La-Bataille British Cemetery (courtesy of CWGC)

In 1916, an employee of the IWGC, Captain Hamilton, communicated with the Mayors of Arques-La-Battaille, Grandes Ventes, Blargies, and St. Etienne-au-Mont on the need for 'Kaffir labour' to have cemetery space in their districts due to the deaths of Black South Africans at the nearby hospitals. The French Mayor of Arques-La-Bataille was consulted on whether having Black and 'coloured' men buried in the locality was an issue. In his reply, the Mayor stated that he believed

that there was plenty of room for an extension to the local cemetery and that the colour of the men buried among the local populace was not an issue.[198] Hamilton appears to have asked the same question about the colour of the labourers to all the mayors. He then reported his conversations to the British Director of Graves Registration who, despite the favourable replies, thought a special cemetery might be more appropriate and an extension to a local cemetery was agreed upon. The cemetery, though, was not just for the SANLC and CAHT; there are also Chinese, Caribbeans, Indians, and a merchant seaman called Joseph Hassan, of no fixed address, in the plots. His foreign-sounding surname appears to be enough for him to be included in this space. In the memos between IWGC officials, it is only the Christianity and 'race' of the men which is discussed, and this appears to be the basis of the decision for a separate cemetery. One can only conclude that race was the largest determinant in the creation of this special space as the inclusion of bodies of multifaith Chinese Labour Corps, the Christian BWIR and SANLC and Muslim Indian soldiers and seamen suggests that creed or rank played a lesser role. Unlike Mazargues and St Omer, the cemetery plan only reveals that there is a memorial seat to the SANLC. It was deemed unnecessary to 'other' the bodies of those who had already been placed there due to their racial designations.

[198] Captain Hamilton to War Office, 'Acquisition of Land – France – DGRE files', 16.11.1916, CWGC WG 549/1.

The SANLC 'Memorial Seat'

Arques la Battaille is also an important *Lieu de Memoire* as there is a memorial to the men of the SANLC within the cemetery. On the memorial are inscribed the words:

> To the memory of those Natives of the South African Labour Corps who crossed the seas in response to the call of their great Chief, King George V, and laid down their lives in France, for the British Empire, during the Great War 1914-1918, this Memorial is erected by their comrades.

5. 10. The SANLC 'memorial seat' at Arques-La-Bataille (photo by John Siblon)

In the minutes of Commission Meeting Number 24, held in June 1920, the Chairman, Fabian Ware, reported to the South African Charge d'Affaires, Sir Reginald Blankenberg, that, in 1918, men from the SANLC had collected three thousand francs for the erection of a memorial and handed over the money to the IWGC before their departure back to South Africa. The Commission, whilst agreeing to erect a memorial, did not want to set a precedent for memorials paid for private subscription so had deliberately delayed their decision until the meeting. The IWGC had decided that Arques-La-Bataille would be a suitable cemetery for the memorial.[199] It is implied in the wording of Ware's explanation that the previous High Commissioner, William Schreiner, had initially objected to a memorial but the Basutos in the Corps had told him that 'they were not under you' but the imperial government which was true as Basutoland was a crown colony. This attempt to memorialize the service of the men of the SANLC has not featured in histories of South Africans in the First World War in the way that Delville Wood or the Hollybrook Memorial have.[200] The collection of money for graves for the dead is entirely in keeping with Black South African funerary traditions of not allowing

[199] 'Commission Meeting No. 24', June 1920, CWGC WG 1092.

[200] B. P. Willan, 'The South African Native Labour Contingent, 1916-1918', *The Journal of African History*, vol. 19, No.1, World war and Africa (1978), p. 62; Bill Nasson, 'Delville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 119, No. 480 (Feb., 2004), p. 73. The taxi driver who took me to Arques-La-Bataille said he was born in the town and had not heard or seen this cemetery before.

African bodies to be debased or uncommemorated.[201] The men did not trust the Union government to uphold the memory of the SANLC in a satisfactory way and so appealed to the British IWGC to assist them in their wishes and, despite, their initial reluctance, eventually the Commission agreed. The memorial was designed by a junior architect of the Commission, working under Sir Herbert Baker, Arthur J. S. Hutton. A reading of the Commission minutes, suggests that the decision to concentrate colonial servicemen in one cemetery on account of their 'race' helped the IWGC to find a location to erect the 'memorial seat' in Arques-La-Bataille and therefore it a racially-codified memorial designed as much to maintain good relations with the government of the Union of South Africa and the Crown Colony of Basuto as to commemorate the service of the men under the equality principle.

Caribbean commemoration in the colonies.

In this section, I will investigate the post -war representation of Caribbean servicemen in Britain's former colonies. I have previously discussed how the IWGC authorized the interment of Black South African and Caribbean men in British and European cemeteries or for their names to be inscribed on Memorials to the Missing. The Commission included certain colonial soldiers in the memorial landscape, partly to acknowledge their war service and honour their memory, but also as part of the

[201] Garrey Dennie, 'The Standard of Dying', pp. 310-330.

cultural representation of the British Empire as a Christian Empire with an extensive reach across the world. Even though Army and colonial officials had acceded to the principle of 'equal' commemoration, any threat posed to the masculinities of white British and dominion servicemen or the notion of a 'white man's war' was mitigated by the designation of Caribbean and 'native' South Africans as non-combatants. Was war service represented differently in the Caribbean islands. As the region was not a theatre of war, the focus will not be on the IWGC but on colonial officials who had the power to frame the memory of the war. I also ask whether there was any contestation of their actions. I will compare two islands. Firstly, Jamaica, because most men in the Caribbean regiments were from there, and, secondly, Trinidad and Tobago, because the military contingents emanating from the islands were segregated.

The Caribbean islands, although British dependencies, were not a homogenous socially, politically, or culturally. As the largest British-controlled island, Jamaica has been studied extensively by historians due to its history of slavery and resistance and, as the BWIR and the WIR have been referred to many times in this thesis, it is appropriate that I should investigate the commemoration of the Jamaica contingent of both regiments. The colony was governed by a Legislative Council, which was headed by a British Governor. Outside of this body, local authorities ran counties and parishes. There were three counties: Middlesex, Surrey, and Cornwall, and, within them, fourteen parishes. The impetus for commemoration

of the dead of the war, like Britain and other places, came from below.[202] In public forums, newspaper columns, schools, and local Parish Committees, individuals engaged in discussion over the desirability of war memorials, fund-raising, and what form the memorials would take.[203] The first suggestions, in Kingston, Montego Bay, and Chapelton, were for the building or restoration of clock towers so that the war memorials would have a civic function beyond remembrance.[204] The campaign with the highest profile was organised by Canon R. J. Ripley of Kingston Parish, who established a Memorial Tower Committee to raise funds for a memorial clock at Kingston Parish Church.[205] So successful was the Canon's campaign that, in June 1919, Councillor H. A. L. Simpson, Kingston's representative on the Legislative Council, chastised the Mayor for not initiating a 'national memorial' rather than supporting Ripley's scheme, which he believed had been proposed on 'sectarian grounds'.[206] The councillor's entreaties went unanswered until March 1920 when, suddenly, the Colonial Secretary announced in a session of the Legislature that £3,500 would be put aside for war memorials and a committee was to be established to oversee their construction.[207] In addition, memorial tablets were proposed for

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[202] Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2005, p. 50.

[203] 'Church Clock Tower For Kingston', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 21 November 1917, p. 6; 'Function at Jamaica College', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 16 July 1918, p. 3.

[204] 'The Men from Clarendon who died in the Great War', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 16 May 1919, p. 20.

[205] 'Memorial for Brave Boys', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 31 May 1919, p. 6.

[206] 'Proposals for a National Memorial to Our Fallen in The Great War' *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 10 June 1919, p. 6.

[207] 'Present Session of Legislature', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 18 March 1920, p. 3.

every cathedral in the colony with the hope that they would be installed in time for the anticipated visit of Edward, Prince of Wales, in September 1920.[208] The Caribbean historian Glenford Howe, believed the war memorials were designed to 'further impress British ideals on the physical landscape'.[209]

The memorial tablets were the idea of the British Governor, Sir Leslie Probyn. The visit of the prince may have been on his mind when he suggested, in June 1920, that the words of a telegram sent to him by the then Colonial Secretary, Walter Long, at the announcement of the Armistice could be memorialized in the form of bronze tablets, which would then be supplied to every parish. Long had written:

> Now that the war has been brought to a victorious conclusion, I desire on behalf of His Majesty's Government to express to the people of Jamaica and her dependencies, the Military Command's high appreciation of the military effort they have made, their cheerful acceptance of compulsory service in the common cause and the unfailing support in the great struggle in spite of the difficulties in which visitations of Nature have involved them at home. I recall

[208] 'Memorial Tablets', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 18 May 1920, p. 3.

[209] Glenford Howe, *Race, War, and Nationalism* (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), p. 199.

with pride and gratitude the share of the men of Jamaica in our final victory in Palestine.[210]

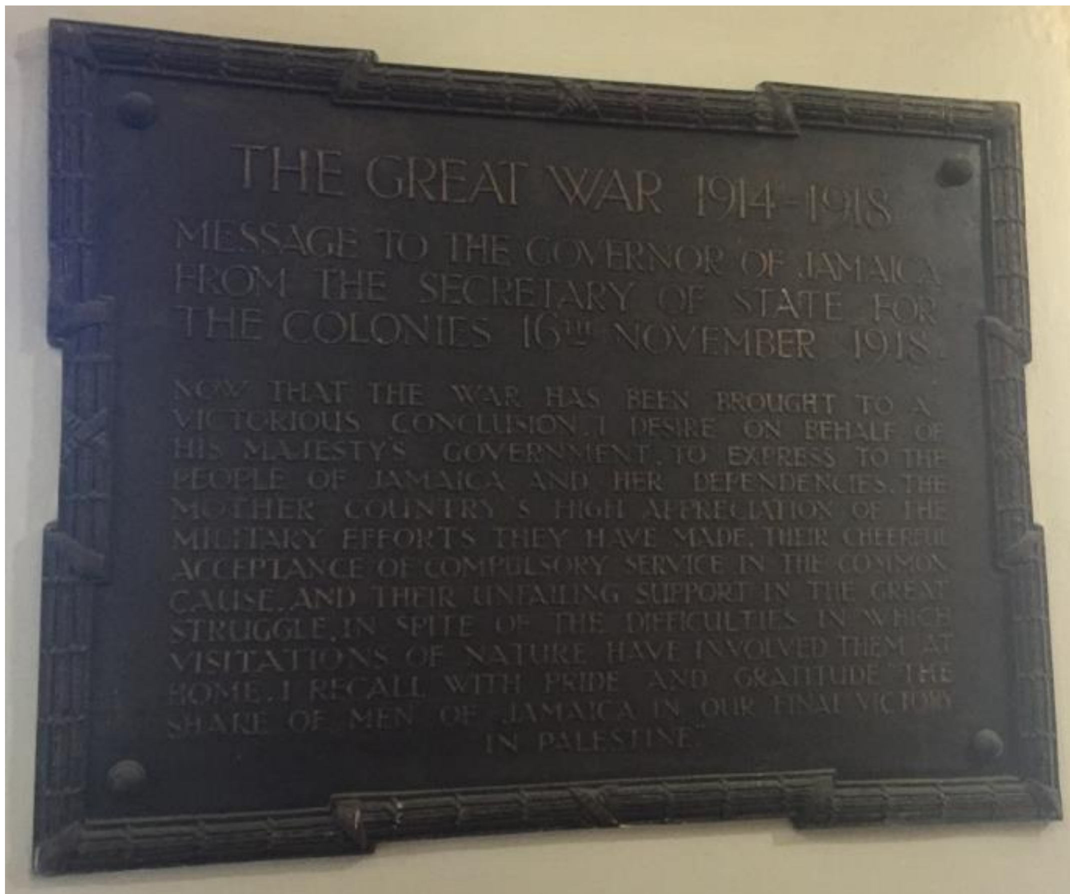
Although veterans and their families desired and expected a local war memorial, they were unhappy at the wording of the tablets and vigorous debate ensued between parish representatives and the colonial government. Councillor Fred R. Evans, the representative for Westmoreland Parish and a member of the Recruiting Committee, rebuked the Governor for the fact that the tablets implied that BWIR men were conscripts when they were 'all volunteers'.[211] He was referring to the fact that, although the Jamaica Assembly had passed a Conscription Act in 1917, it hadn't been introduced. He was also incensed that a memorial tablet had been nailed to the 'dirty walls' of the local courthouse without anyone's knowledge, calling this act a 'vile outrage' and an 'indecent observance' of tradition. In response, Evans felt compelled to return his certificate of thanks for his work on both the Recruiting and Repatriation Committees.[212] The *Jamaica Daily Gleaner* published the Governor's response on the same page. Probyn declared that the tablets were not

[210] Walter Long to Governor Sir Leslie Probyn, 16 November 1918, Jamaica National Archives (hereafter JNA), 1B/5/9/34. In the end, the Prince of Wales's visit was abandoned due to an outbreak of chickenpox on the island: 'Public Matters Discussed, *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 21 August 1920, p. 3.

[211] 'The War Memorial Tablet Erected at Savanna-la-Mar: Mr. F. R. Evans objects to the methods followed: correspondence on the subject', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 8 October 1921, p. 12.

[212] Ibid. Evans wrote his letter to the *Jamaica Daily Gleaner* on 28 September 1921.

produced for the Jamaica Contingent of the BWIR but for the public and should be viewed as 'indestructible records' of thanks from the British Government and King to the people of Jamaica. The war crosses that were planned for each county would the official memorials. He also revealed that the tablets would now be erected in parish courthouses due to local objections to placing them in churches.[213]



5. 11. A war memorial tablet with Walter Long's message on the wall of the Institute of Jamaica (photo by John Siblon).

[213] Ibid. Probyn replied in the *Jamaica Daily Gleaner* on 1 October 1921.

In October and November 1921, unveiling ceremonies for the memorial tablets took place in every parish. On each occasion, a local dignitary, usually the Custos, made a speech objecting to the wording on the tablet.[214] Nevertheless, there was no direct opposition from the representatives. The Custos of St. Ann, noted the 'misunderstanding' over the representation of BWIR service as through conscription rather than voluntary but explained to those assembled that 'we are bound to accept this explanation as coming from the representative of the sovereign'.[215] In Spanish Town, the Custos reiterated the fact that all BWIR men were volunteers but, using language emanating from race science and imperial power relations, designated the population as 'children' when he asserted that the tablets represented a 'permanent perpetuation of the Mother Country's gratitude to Jamaica, one of her many children'.[216] At the unveiling in Port Maria, the Chairman of the Parochial Board, H. P. Wolcott was uncomfortable with the wording of the table but declared 'England with all thy faults. I love thee still, my country'.[217] The ceremony concluded with the singing of 'Rule Britannia'. These affirmations of loyalty to Britain, King, and Empire support Anne Spry Rush's contention that middle-class Jamaicans constructed their identities as 'Britons', and though their notions were often challenged by

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[214] 'The Unveiling of a War Memorial Tablet' [Spanish Town], *Jamaica Daily Gleaner,* 26 October 1921, p. 6; 'Unveiling of St. Mary's War Memorial', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 28 October 1921, p. 10; 'War Heroes of St. Elizabeth', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 15 October 1921, p. 10.

[215] 'Unveiling of War Memorial', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 24 October 1921, p. 9.

[216] 'The Unveiling of a War Memorial Tablet', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 26 October 1921, p. 6.

[217] 'Unveiling of St. Mary's War Memorial', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 28 October 1921, p. 10.

discrimination and racism against them, still believed in the imperial project as the best hope for their progress and so, despite some resentment, the memorial tablets became a feature in each parish.[218]

An exception to professed Jamaican loyalty came from ex-officers of the now disbanded BWIR. In a letter to the *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, Lieutenant Chas H. Delgado of the 3rd Battalion, challenged the Governor's explanation by asking who the words 'cheerfully accepted compulsory service' were meant for, if not the BWIR? His letter precedes Sergeant Daley's critique of the IWGC for omitting the contribution of Caribbean servicemen in Westminster Abbey (see Chapter Three). Delgado wrote:

> Mr editor, is it right and proper to place this tablet for posterity and strangers to see? Will they not be led to understand from it, that everyone who went from Jamaica did so under compulsion? Will they not say: 'fancy not a man to go voluntarily but all had to be compelled?' Will it not reflect from the present generation, will it not cast a slur on our honoured dead?[219]

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[218] Anne Spry Rush, *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 117-8.

[219] 'Island's Memorial war Tablets: objection to wording by a former Lieutenant in the BWIR', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 4 November 1921, p. 6.

He also made clear that it was the slur to the masculinities of the returning soldiers, hurting their pride and dishonouring their dead:

> The troops who left Jamaica acquitted themselves like men: wherever they were ordered they went. Whatever they were given to do, they did, chiefly carrying ammunition to the guns.[220]

At the same time, another ex-officer of the BWIR, Major F. L. Roper, wrote to the Legislative Council asking for the word 'compulsory' to be removed from the tablets. Members of the council decided that they would not change the words from the Secretary of the State for the Colonies and so put their loyalty to Empire above the requests of the ex-servicemen.[221] Although, dissatisfaction continued at unveilings, only ex-servicemen from the BWIR continued to oppose the siting of the memorial tablets at courthouses and other public buildings. As late as 1928, they prevented a tablet being erected at the courthouse on St. Ann. The Colonial Secretary was forced to explain to the Governor:

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[220] Ibid, p. 6.

[221] 'Council Minutes', 8 November 1921, JNA 1B / 5/3/33.

> I am directed to inform you that in view of the exception which has been by officers and other ranks of the BWIR to this tablet being regarded as a war memorial, its erection in the square in front of the parish church at Half Way Tree [Kingston] appears to be undesirable.[222]

In this battle over the collective memory of the war, the colonial government had stood firm over their representation of the service of the BWIR and WIR and refused to make amendments, and the ex-soldiers were unable to change what they believed was a distorted memory of their service as volunteers, not conscripts.

The Jamaica War Cross

The Memorial tablets were not the only representation of war service. The colonial government had declared that three memorial crosses would be erected in each county and that these would be the official war memorials. However, in May 1922, the Colonial Secretary proposed to the Legislative Council that they needed to reduce the expenditure on war memorials from £3,500 to £900. He explained that the costs of the Kingston War Cross had exceeded its budget so the best solution would be to abandon the idea of three crosses and to have 'one very good memorial' in

[222] 'St. Andrew War Memorial', 24 August 1928, JNA 2/6/336.

Kingston.[223] The Jamaica War Cross was unveiled on Armistice Day, 1922. It is a cross twenty-nine feet high made of stone quarried locally from Knockalva and marble from Serge Island, Jamaica. On the panel is inscribed the words 'To the Men of Jamaica who fell in the Great War, 1914-1918'.

Unlike the Cenotaph in London, whose designer, Sir Edwin Lutyens, had eschewed traditional religious forms for a more abstract memorial, the War Cross in Kingston was starkly religious in design and symbolism with a large Christian cross as the key component of the structure. The design both created space for private mourning and imposed Christianity in this space. Historians have debated memorial forms as functional versus facilitating bereavement. In this sense, the memorial was a synthesis of the two schools of thought.[224] The religiosity of the War Cross conferred multiple meanings. It symbolised the Protestant religion of the colonial elite and the form of the memorial can be read as part of the process of homogenizing Black Caribbean servicemen as Christian. The cross can also be said to represent not just Christianity but a connection to Britishness through the imperial civilising mission.[225] The inclusion of the words, 'Their Name Liveth For Evermore',

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[223] 'War Memorials', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 17 May 1922 p. 6.

[224] Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 1-27.

[225] Jenny Macleod, 'Britishness and Commemoration: National Memorials to the First World War in Britain and Ireland', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 48, No.4 (October 2013), pp. 647-665.

taken from Ecclesiasticus in the Old Testament and chosen by Rudyard Kipling, connected the War Cross to metropolitan war cemeteries where Sir Reginald Blomfield had insisted on 'Crosses of Sacrifice' alongside Sir Edwin Lutyens' Memorial Stones with the quote from Ecclesiastes inscribed upon it. The British architects, J. G. Young and A. L. Martyn, had combined both cross and stone in their design of the Jamaica War Cross.[226] The memorial thus conformed more to the British imperial ideals of the IWGC and the colonial government rather than reflecting the desires of the veterans of the Jamaica Contingent. I have not been able to find any reference to the thoughts of ex-servicemen on the form of the Kingston memorial.

[226] Sir Frederic Kenyon, *War Graves: How The Cemeteries Abroad Will Be Designed* (London: HMSO, 1918), p. 11.

5. 12. Jamaica War Memorial Cross, Kingston (photo by John Siblon)

Although we do not know what BWIR or WIR veterans thought of the memorial, the unveiling of the Memorial Cross happened at a time when many ex-

servicemen were turning away from Christianity.[227] In 1918, Sergeant Roland Green of the BWIR articulated what many in the regiment were thinking:

> Already many earnest and honest young men are asking what is the use of religion and of the church… This is very much in evidence among my own people from the West Indies – their faith in Christianity is shrinking not so much because they find anything wrong with the simple teachings of Christ but because they do not see them put into practice by those who taught and are teaching them to us.

And in a direct reference to the treatment of Caribbean servicemen in Taranto and Green's encounters with white troops in Europe he wrote:

> There is hardly a Christian precept which has not been violated in the treatment meted out to us; our relations with the other troops are just as strained as those between white and black in the USA with the difference that, over there, wrongs can be addressed while with us there is no redress, for we have no rights or privileges. This is not a dream but a reality.

[227] Dominiek Dendooven, *The British West Indies Regiment: Race And Colour on the Western Front* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2023), pp. 71; 82; Barry Renfrew, *Britain's Black Regiments: Fighting For Empire And Equality* (Cheltenham, The History Press, 2020), p. 197.

Green, then addressed the subject of their perception as an inferior race despite their Christian denomination and the impact this had among the soldiers:

> We are treated neither as Christians nor Black Colonials but as West Indian 'Niggers', without anybody to be interested in or look after us. Instead of being drawn closer to the church and the Empire we are driven away from it. And I am one of those who suffered a great deal by it for once upon a time I lent my aid to furthering the interest of the Empire among my own kin. Today all that I thought and believed has been shattered. Hitherto the church has been the link between this Empire and my people but the chain has been burst and both ends are drifting further and further apart.[228]

The unveiling of the war cross in Kingston made it easier to organise annual Armistice services that reproduced the ceremonies initiated at the London Cenotaph in 1920. In this way, the Colonial Office's hopes that Armistice ceremonies would be homogenized across the empire came one step closer.[229] The *Jamaica Daily Gleaner* described the event as an 'exciting military pageant'.[230] Similar to the services in Britain and the dominions, the Union Jack was lowered, a two-minute silence observed, the 'last post' sounded [by the WIR], hymns and the national anthem

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228 'Sergeant Roland Green, BWIR: Egypt', 27 July 1918, TNA (UK), CO 318/347/51686.

229 'Observation of Armistice Day 11 November 1921', 7 October 1921, TNA (UK), CAB 27/142.

230 'Island's War Memorial Unveiled & Dedicated: Imposing Ceremony', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 13 November 1922, pp. 3 – 6.

sung, and, finally, scouts and military units marched past the memorial. The only difference were localized imperial elements such as the singing of 'Recessional', written by Rudyard Kipling for Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897, to underline Jamaica's loyalty to the British Empire.[231] Acting Governor, Colonel Herbert Bryan, took the opportunity to describe the memorial as a tribute to those who 'fell that the Empire might stand'.[232] The only controversy on the day was the accusation by mixed-heritage members of Kingston City Council that they had not been invited to the ceremony. The Governor had told them there was not enough space and the only invitations issued were to the Mayor, the Town Clerk, the Vice-Chairman, and their wives who were all lighter skinned.[233]

Some parishes did raise enough funds to erect their own war memorials. In his book, *Jamaica's Part in the Great War*, Frank Cundall, who had been appointed the Secretary of Jamaica's War Memorial Committee by the Governor, included a chapter on various war memorial obelisks and cenotaphs, with the names of deceased ex-servicemen on them, that had been erected in Montego Bay, Morant Bay, St. Ann's Bay, and Wolmer's School in Kingston.[234] There was no reference to the contestations and public disagreement. The Memorial Clock Tower for Kingston

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[231] Ibid., p. 3.

[232] Ibid., p. 6.

[233] Kingston Corporation Minutes, 8 November 1922, JNA 2/6/39.

[234] Frank Cundall, *Jamaica's Part in the Great War*, (London: West India Committee, 1925), pp. 82-89.

Parish Church was finally unveiled in 1931, fourteen years after fund-raising had begun. The news report of the event describes how the Bishop of Jamaica unveiled the clock tower memorial, but the Governor unveiled a war memorial tablet which was affixed to the tower.[235] Even at this late stage, the colonial government were determined to maintain their representation of Jamaican war service. Richard Smith has posited that war memory in Jamaica wasn't the sole preserve of the colonial authorities. From the outset, the memory of the war was contested: the colonial government wished to glorify imperial military achievements and embody loyalty; relatives wished to mourn their dead; political movements sought to appropriate 'martial rhetoric and symbolism' to gain tangible rewards for wartime service.[236] Colonial administrations had to balance the political need to remind the metropolitan government of their loyal support during the war but without disrupting the racial and political status quo on the islands.

The Trinidad War Memorial

In Trinidad and Tobago, 276 upper-class, white, and lighter-skinned men had volunteered in a separate contingent, The Trinidad Merchants' and Planters'

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[235] 'Dedication of the Memorial Clock Tower and Unveiling of Tablet', *Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 16 March, 1931, p. 3.

[236] Richard Smith, '"Heaven grant you the strength to fight the battle for your race": Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and the First World War in Jamaican memory' in Santana Das (ed.), *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 266.

Contingent (TMPC), who were dispersed among British Army units on arrival in Britain.[237] At the same time, 1,479 of their darker-skinned compatriots could only volunteer to serve in the BWIR, who were designated as non-combatant and were to remain a colonial unit within the British Army.[238] Unlike in Jamaica, the Mayor of Port of Spain, Dr. Enrique Prada, and the British Governor, Sir John Chancellor, held a public meeting as early as August 1916, to propose a war memorial in the capital.[239] After a motion by the Mayor to erect a war memorial and establish a committee to oversee its construction was passed in the City Council, the only point left to discuss was the location of the war memorial and its form.[240] What makes the proposed memorial noteworthy is the cross section of the population involved in its construction. The Mayor had invited representatives from the municipalities, the Chamber of Commerce, Agricultural Society, Road Boards, other public bodies in Trinidad, and also the general public to help bring the project into fruition.[241]

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[237] C. B. Franklin, *Trinidad and Tobago Yearbook, 1919* (Trinidad: Franklin's Electric Printery, 1919); Captain H. Dow, *Record of Service of Members of the Trinidad Merchants' and Planters' Contingent 1915 to 1918* (Trinidad, 1925).

[238] C. L. Joseph, 'The British West Indies Regiment', *Journal of Caribbean History*, 2, May 1971, pp. 94-124.

[239] http://caribbeanrollofhonour-ww1-ww2.yolasite.com/the-cenotaph-trinidad.php accessed 13 April 2018.

[240] 'Memorial of Great War to Be Erected', *Mirror* (Trinidad and Tobago), 1 September 1916, p. 4.

[241] 'War Memorial for Trinidad', *The Barbados Agricultural Reporter*, 20 September 1916, p. 4.

Formal discussion of the form, cost, and location of the island's war memorial began on 27 January 1919, at a public meeting. For the next three years, discussions continued regarding a suitable site before it was decided to locate the memorial at 'Little Savannah' in Port of Spain. The key individuals in the Committee were the Mayor, a white former officer in the BWIR, Captain Arthur Cipriani, who was also a member of the newly founded Trinidad Workingmen's Association, and members of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Council. Cipriani was an empire loyalist. When war broke out, he had approached the Governor to suggest raising a Contingent from Trinidad. As Secretary of the Breeders Association, he believed he could use his position to help recruit volunteers.[242] His proposal was declined, and he had to look on as the TMPC raised a contingent and made their way to Europe. Once the BWIR was established, Cipriani enlisted as an officer in the regiment where he found himself defending soldiers who had mutinied at Taranto and lobbying to have their convictions overturned when the contingent returned to the islands.[243] The final decision on the location of the memorial lay with these groups, suggesting that there was at least some negotiation between the colonial government, ex-servicemen, and the labour movement without the influence of the church, albeit at an elite level.[244] Although the Prince of Wales had not toured Jamaica, he did visit Trinidad and

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[242] C. L. R. James, *The Life of Captain Cipriani; An Account Of British Government in the West Indies* (Nelson: Lancashire: Coulton & Co. Ltd, 1932), p. 22.

[243] Ibid., pp. 35-8.

[244] https://nationalarchivestt.wordpress.com/2015/11/06/victory-through-sacrifice-trinidads-war-memorial/ accessed 13 April 2018.

Tobago in 1920, and duly encouraged the islanders to remain part of the British Empire after the upheaval of 1919.[245] Captain Cipriani presented the future King with an inlaid casket on behalf of the men of the BWIR which the King acknowledged in a letter of thanks.[246] Cipriani may have supported the idea of a West Indian Federation, but within the British Empire, in the same way as the dominions had self-government and for which India was campaigning. This spirit of compromise might explain the decision to leave the design of the memorial in the hands of the Governor. When Chancellor visited Britain he engaged the services of a British sculptor, Louis Frederick Roslyn, renowned for his war memorial designs across Britain. He represented Trinidadian war service figuratively in the familiar British motif of victory and sacrifice.[247]

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[245] C. B. Franklin, *Trinidad and Tobago Yearbook, 1920* (Trinidad: Franklin's Electric Printery, 1921), p. xx.

[246] Ibid., p. xli.

[247] http://caribbeanrollofhonour-ww1-ww2.yolasite.com/the-cenotaph-trinidad.php accessed 13 April 2018.

5. 13. Trinidad War Memorial, Port of Spain (photo from Wikipedia commons)

The memorial, in the form of a column, was unveiled on 28 June 1924.[248] The coat-of-arms of the colony was included and surrounded by the flags of the British Empire, symbolizing that any 'sacrifice' was towards an imperial aim. Two female figures sitting on ships are at both sides of the memorial: one a nurse, the other a mother, sister or spouse. They are included to represent the contribution of women from the colony, both as nurses treating the wounded, and as the principal mourners of the dead. The ships represent those Trinidadians who served in the Mercantile Marine and the Royal Navy. However, the central feature of the memorial, is a

[248] *Port of Spain Gazette*, 28 June 1924, p. 14.

sculpture of two male soldiers representing 'Courage'. The standing figure, armed with a rifle, stands tall and strong, guarding a wounded comrade at his feet.[249] The armed soldier appears to represent the TMPC, as they were assigned combat roles and would be the only servicemen from the islands able to carry weapons. As the wounded soldier is not holding a weapon, the figure likely represents the BWIR who were assigned a non-combat role on the Western Front and a minimal combat role in Mesopotamia. To the public, the sculpture of the standing soldier resembles a 'Tommy' of European appearance, and the wounded soldier appears of black Caribbean heritage, due to the curly hair on the figure, which is prominent in the sculpture. In this way, the statue is similar in design to a First World War memorial in Dundee, Natal, which racially codifies a white south African soldier standing guard and protecting an Indian serviceman. This figurative statue was unveiled in 1923 in the Union of South Africa. During the war, in line with the government's racial policies, only white South Africans could engage in combat and Indians served as non-combatants. 'Native' Africans are completely missing, falsely implying that they did not serve in the war. Colonial statuary contained intersectional symbolism which valorised combatants over non-combatants and conveyed the racialized political status quo in these territories by assigning a higher status to white soldiers like the TMPC or the Union Defence Force. In this way, they knowingly promoted the notion of a 'white man's war', supported by loyal black non-combatants. The women are represented on the wings but in a less prominent position than the men.

[249] http://caribbeanrollofhonour-ww1-ww2.yolasite.com/the-cenotaph-trinidad.php accessed 13 April 2018.

5. 14. War memorial in Dundee, Natal (photo Dundee Heritage Trail)[250]

There are differences between the Jamaican and Trinidadian national memorials. The Jamaica War Cross in Kingston and the memorial tablets are colonial impositions which homogenized and characterized the Jamaica Contingent as loyal Christian subjects of empire. Many Jamaican ex-servicemen contested the representation but were informed that the memorials were non-negotiable. In Trinidad, there was at least some negotiation with the organisations of the ex-servicemen at an elite level. Despite the consultation, the sculpture ended up representing an intersectional colonial race, rank, and gender hierarchy. In both

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[250] 'Dundee Cenotaph to mark centenary if its unveiling', *Northern Natal News:* https://northernnatalnews.co.za/391616/dundee-cenotaph-to-mark-centenary-of-its-unveiling/ Accessed: 19 August 2023.

cases, in the years immediately after their unveiling, the memorials predominantly served the political needs of the colonial governments by portraying their subjects in a manner which expressed unconditional ideologized loyalty.

Conclusion

Aleida Assmann has underscored the importance of *Lieux de Memoire* in forming notions of 'history'. She posits that the concept takes many shapes 'Colonial as well as postcolonial, individual as well as collective, historical as well as contemporary.'[251] In this chapter, I wanted to centre my study on the creation of *Lieux de Memoire*, as much mental constructs as physical ones across the empire, designed to serve more than one purpose. In the case of war cemeteries, which were vast new spaces designed to hold thousands of dead bodies from the war, laid out in an arrangement designed to make it easy for visitors to find the graves of loved ones, it was important for the IWGC to establish a rationale and criteria in the disposition of bodies. They appeared to have followed a race, rank, and gender hierarchy as the operating principle in cemeteries within metropolitan space. Black colonial servicemen from South Africa, the Caribbean, Egypt, Fiji, and China had only been allowed to serve in the metropole as labourers and so their cultural commemoration

[251] Aleida Assmann, 'How History Takes Place' in Indra Sengupta(ed.), Memory, *History, and Colonialism: Engaging with Pierre Nora in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts, Bulletin: Supplement No. 1* (London: German Historical Institute, 2009), pp. 151-165.

closely followed their designation as non-combatants; but they were non-combatants due to their racial codification. On the surface, it appears that all those in cemeteries are treated the same under the equality principle, with headstones or names on Memorials to the Missing, but the closer one regards classification and disposition, it becomes clear that there was a nuanced policy based on race and rank differentiation at work in IWGC cemeteries and other cemeteries. In Jamaica, ex-servicemen from the BWIR took note of the nuanced commemoration and unsuccessfully contested it. Their representation was as loyal Christian subjects of empire. In Trinidad, there was an element of negotiation between service personnel and their government, but the result was a figurative representation of a race and gender hierarchy. In this way, the colonial governments were aligned with commemoration in the metropole and the IWGC.

Chapter Six - Commemoration of soldiers and carriers in East and West Africa

In this chapter, I will investigate commemoration and representation of Black colonial servicemen in east and west Africa but with greater emphasis on the eastern part of the continent and with a specific focus on the colony of Kenya. The choice of this colony was made because this former British territorial possession was not only the most important and influential of Britain's remaining African colonies, attracting large numbers of white settlers, but it was also contiguous with German East Africa where, during the war, fighting was at its the most intense and protracted. The greatest number of participants from different parts of the British Empire served in this theatre and so it is the best location for a comparative analysis of the treatment of war dead. Throughout my thesis, I have argued that, in Britain and Europe, military, colonial, and IWGC officials either deliberately excluded black colonial troops from the memorial landscape or culturally nuanced their perceived difference from British, dominion, and India combatants. In Britain's African colonies, representatives of these same bodies were asked to commemorate indigenous combatants and non-combatants. I will posit that state-sponsored representations of Black colonial war service in east and west Africa were different from other theatres and reflect white officials' fears of military-trained and politically conscious Black ex-servicemen, who had previously been considered as 'reliable aliens', and due to

white supremacist views.[1] Such anxieties and prejudice shaped their attitudes towards cultural commemoration and explains the coordinated effort to denigrate the status of Africans who fought and died in large numbers for the British during the four-year campaign across Africa and even obliterate the memory of their war service in the succeeding years.

Grave marking of Africans and 'Europeans' during the war

What explains the huge variation in death estimates in the colonial period and the almost complete absence of graves, headstones, and memorials for African soldiers, carriers, and porters across the whole of the former theatre of war in Africa? Were black colonial servicemen deliberately 'forgotten' by the authorities? Michele Barrett has contended that, outside of Europe, the IWGC deliberately treated the African war dead in inferior ways compared to white British and dominion forces. This resulted in a memorial absence for thousands of African servicemen.[2] Some

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[1] Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, '"Damnosa Hereditas": ethnic ranking and the martial races imperative in Africa', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 3:4 (1980), pp. 397-8.

[2] Michele Barrett, 'Subalterns At War: First World War Colonial Forces and the Politics of the Imperial War Graves Commission', *Interventions* Vol. 9, 3 (2007), pp. 451-474; '"White Graves" and Natives: The Imperial War Graces Commission in East and West Africa, 1918-1939' in Nicholas J. Saunders and Paul Cornish (eds.) *Bodies in Conflict: Corporiality. Materiality and Transformation* (Routledge, 2014), pp. 80-90; 'Dehumanization and the War in East Africa', *Journal of War & Culture Studies*, 10: 3 (2017), pp. 238-252.

independent historians, and, more recently, the CWGC have sought to provide explanations for the contrasting treatment of the war dead. Anne Samson, of the Great War in Africa Association (GWAA), has posited that inadequate recording of the deaths of African volunteers and conscripts by the military, in the 'heat of the battle', explains the non-commemoration of Africans after the war.[3] The CWGC, in its 'non-commemoration report' - written in response to the findings of a Channel 4 documentary, *The Unremembered,* which claimed that the Commission deliberately collapsed the graves of east African carriers - asserted that the graves of 'Indians and Africans… were never marked at all by the military authorities of any fighting force, leaving no physical trace of potentially hundreds of thousands of men.'[4]

How true is the assertion that the armed forces serving in east Africa did not keep accurate records of burials? The 1914 edition of 'Regulations for the WAFF' instructs the officer commanding that they must inform the colonial government, the regiment, the District Commissioner, and the Magistrate, by telegram or other means, of the death of a British officer or non-commissioned officer.[5] No such

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[3] Anne Samson, 'Correcting Misconceptions': https://thesamsonsedhistorian.wordpress.com/2017/11/13/correcting-misconceptions-cwgc/ Accessed 13 November 2017.

[4] Commonwealth War Graves Commission, *Report of the Special Committee to Review Historical Inequalities in Commemoration* (April 2021), p. 21; Channel 4, *The Unremembered: Britain's Forgotten War Heroes* (televised on 10 November 2019).

[5] 'Regulations for the WAFF', November 1914, TNA (UK), WO 42/4977, p. 39.

instructions can be found for African NCOs, or other ranks in the guidance. However, as the war progressed, due to the large numbers of bodies which lay on battlefields in Europe, Mesopotamia, and Africa, but also for reasons of military morale and public perception, new guidance was issued. It was the job of the military, in the first instance, to identify and bury bodies and then register locations of burial spots and mass graves.[6] After battles, officers were expected to complete Army form 'SS456 Burial of Soldiers' which required them to submit the names, initials, battalion, regiment, date of death, and map location of the bodies and then to send the form to the Director General of Graves Registration and Enquiries (DGGRE) in London. The locations were then passed on to Graves Registration Units (GRUs) of the Army which operated in all theatres.[7] From 1921, the IWGC assumed all responsibility from the Military for tracing these bodies in preparation for exhumation, transportation, and re-interment in military cemeteries. Record-keeping took place in all theatres. The war diaries of General E. Northey, the Commander of British forces in Nyasaland, contained precise numbers of 'European' and African

[6] Peter Hodgkinson, 'Battle clearance and burial', University of Birmingham, online *Journal of First World War Studies*, Vol. 3: 1 (September, 2007).

[7] Neil Hanson, *The Unknown Soldier: The Story Of The Missing Of The Great War* (London: Corgi, 2005), p. 124.

dead.[8] The National Archives holds copies of documentation of grave locations of several west African soldiers which had been sent to the DGGRE.[9]

There is also evidence that the guidance was strictly adhered to after major battles in east Africa. Captain Walter Downes of the WAFF used his war diaries to write a memoir of his service there with the Nigerian Regiment from 1916-1918.[10] Downes's account was later incorporated into the official history of the WAFF.[11] His widely-read memoir has many references to actions where bodies of Black and white servicemen were recovered, and their positions located.[12] Downes recorded that in an action at Ngembwe, German East Africa, on 24 January 1917, Captain George Barclay was killed. Gun Carrier, Awudu Katsena, picked up Barclay's rifle and opened fire, creating enough time to recover Barclay's body.[13] In the *History of the*

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[8] 'East Africa HQ Norforce: Nyasaland and North-East Rhodesia Frontier Force', January – November 1918, TNA (UK), WO 95/5330/ 2.

[9] WAFF 1919, Volume 4, War Office (APL-DEC) Individuals, 7 April – 10 May 1919, TNA (UK), CO 448/49.

[10] Walter D. Downes, *With The Nigerians In German East Africa* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1919); I have used the reprint published as *The Nigerian Regiment In East Africa: On Campaign During The Great War* (Yorkshire: Leonaur Ltd, 2008).

[11] Colonel A. Haywood and Brigadier F. A. S. Clarke, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden Ltd, 1964).

[12] Multiple book reviews attest the importance of the memoir when it was published in 1919. See: 'With The Nigerians in East Africa', Liddell Hart Military Archives, Downes Vol 1, 3, 3B – 13/4.

[13] Walter. D. Downes, *With the Nigerians*, p. 71.

Royal African Frontier Force, Haywood and Clarke wrote that the bodies of a British officer and NCO were found with those of eight African other ranks killed at Kibata on 3 February 1917. All the bodies were brought back to camp and buried.[14] In the official Nigerian Brigade War Diary, it is recorded that after the Battle of Bweho Chini, in September 1917, the bodies of two officers, Captain Higgins and Lieutenant Stevenson, were buried along with sixteen Germans, and eighty seven African askaris.[15] Downes writes of the same engagement that all the bodies of the African imperial forces were buried in the same place and he sketched a map (6. 1.) noting the location of the makeshift cemetery.[16]

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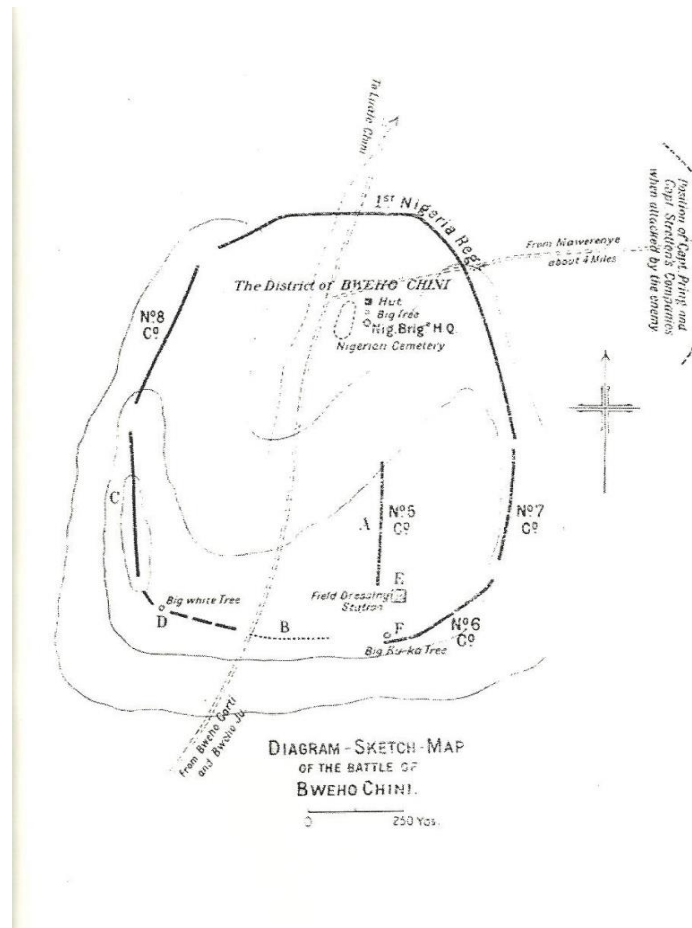
[14] Colonel A. Haywood and Brigadier F. A. S. Clarke, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force*, p. 203.

[15] Ibid, p. 217.

[16] Walter. D. Downes, *With The Nigerians*, p. 162.



6. 1. Captain Downes's map showing the location of the Nigerian cemetery at Bweho Chini.

In November 1917, after fighting at Mahiwa, Downes noted that all the bodies of the Nigerian dead were recovered and brought back to the British camp and buried. He drew a map of the location of the Nigerian cemetery and wrote 'I sincerely hope that the spot in which they are buried will someday be marked in lasting memory of the Nigerian Brigade'.[17] Melvin E. Page, an American historian,

[17] Ibid, p. 221.

interviewed over two hundred Malawian First World War veterans in the 1970s.[18] The interviews reveal a racialized dimension to the job of burying the dead of both sides. Mbaisa Mbaisa, who served with the KAR, detailed how after a battle 'we went to bury the corpses, sorting the Africans on one side and Europeans on the other' and, after writing down the names of the dead, the 'Africans were buried in one big common grave.'[19] Amos Isaac, recalled that 'when someone died in battle, they dug trenches and buried them … they gathered together all the dead bodies and buried them in the trenches.'[20] Iwani Makwinja, a follower, explained that 'Even Europeans were never buried in very good graves' but supported the fact that there were segregated burials 'the only difference being that the trenches dug for European corpses were on a different section … the number of whoever was buried was recorded.'[21] When it comes to the provision of the names of African casualties, however, Downes's memoir is of limited assistance. Whilst the Appendix includes a Roll of Honour with the names of thirty-seven white British officers and NCOs of the Nigerian Overseas Contingent, there isn't an equivalent Roll of Honour with the names of deceased African servicemen. Instead, they are represented numerically in

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[18] Melvin E. Page, 'The War of Thangata: Nyasaland and The East African Campaign, 1914-1918', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 19, No.1, (1978), pp. 87-100.

[19] Melvin E. Page, *Chiwaya War Voices: Malawian Oral Histories of the Great War in Africa*: *Volume 1* (Rickmansworth: TSL Publications, 2021), p. 88.

[20] Melvin E. Page, *Chiwaya War Voices: Malawian Oral Histories of the Great War in Africa*: *Volume 2* (Rickmansworth: TSL Publications, 2021). P. 584.

[21] *Chiwaya War Voices: Volume 1*, p. 167.

the book.[22] Despite the nominal omission in the book, the names and location of the 633 men of the Nigerian Regiment buried in East Africa burial were known. This adherence to procedure should have equated to over six hundred graves and headstones in east Africa for the Nigerian soldiers, but this was not the case. Before I posit the reason for the absence of WAFF and KAR soldiers in cemeteries, I need to investigate what happened to the graves of thousands of carriers, porters, and followers.

In 1919, Captain Oscar F. Watkins, the Officer in charge of the Military Labour Bureau, published a report, on the recruitment and treatment of carriers in east Africa, which came to be known as 'The Watkins Report'. In his audit, he described how the initial recording and deployment of carriers was not systematic, and only improved once the Carrier Corps had evolved into the East African Transport Corps, and then finally the Military Labour Bureau, established in 1916.[23] Thereafter, military and colonial authorities were able to carry out a co-ordinated effort across the African colonies to ensure a regular supply of porters, carriers, and followers to support their offensives. All the men were registered by fingerprinting and other forms of documentation which was issued for pay and pension purposes. Watkins claims that 'nearly half a million men' were on the Bureau's registers and estimated

[22] Walter D. Downes, *With The Nigerians*, p. 310.

[23] G. W. T. Hodges, 'African Manpower Statistics for the British Forces in East Africa, 1914-1918', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 19, No. 1, World War I and Africa (1978), p. 102.

carrier deaths at 'ten per cent', meaning that around 40-50,000 carriers had lost their lives serving the British.[24] The bureau supplied weekly lists to local districts with the names of dead carriers but, it is claimed, that these lists have not been found.[25] David Killingray and James Matthews, in their study of west African carriers, explain that men received new identity numbers when they transferred from west to east Africa but the nominal roll with their new identity numbers and names disappeared 'somewhere between there and West Africa or England', making it harder to trace their deaths.[26] The careless and insensitive administrative treatment of the bodies of African non-combatants followed on from the inconsistent burial practice after battles. Mpanangombe, a village Headman who supervised carriers, wrote 'we never buried them. We just continued with our journey at night while the

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[24] 'Report by Lieutenant- Colonel O. F. Watkins, Director of Military Labour to the B. E. A. Expeditionary Force on the period from August 4th 1914 to September 12th 1919', TNA (UK), CO 533/216; see also his biography written by his daughter on how Watkins established a better system to register carriers: Elizabeth Watkins, *Oscar from Africa: The Biography of Oscar Ferris Watkins, 1877-1943* (London: The Radcliffe Press, 1995), p. 96.

[25] Michele Barrett, *Sent Missing in Africa: Briefing paper for The Unremembered: How Britain's colonial forces of the First World War were treated by the War Graves Commission* (2020), p. 19.

[26] David Killingray and James Matthews, 'Beasts of Burden: British West African Carriers in the First World War', *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Vol.13, No. 1/2 (1979), p. 21. In 2023, the CWGC admitted that they had discovered at least 7,000 names of men from Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi and Uganda from the archives of former colonies: https://www.cwgc.org/our-work/news/endangered-archive-digitisation-project-records-kenyan-files-for-future-generations/ accessed 24 September 2023

lions roared. We never dug a grave for those who died.[27] A former carrier, Konsala Mwakisahi, recalled that 'some of the dead were left in fields; some were buried.'[28] The claim that the graves of African troops such as the KAR and WAFF were 'not marked at all' cannot be substantiated as soldiers, following regulations, buried their dead and recorded their names and locations, albeit in segregated graves or pits after battles. In the case of carriers, oral accounts suggest that some were buried, and some were not, and the Military Labour Bureau regularly issued lists of missing carriers after a battle. Due to the inexplicable absence of official documents proving that GRUs, the DGGRE or the IWGC had the names of the carriers or knew where their burial location the claim of non-marking cannot wholly be refuted.

Nevertheless, these administrative absences, deliberate or otherwise, do have an impact on the cultural and social memory of the war. In his study of the operation of memory in Ulster, Guy Beiner asserts that historians have focused too much on study of remembrance at the expense of forgetting; he appeals for more analysis of both psychological processes.[29] Paul Connerton, in his study of social memory, identifies how museums, galleries, and academies are the 'storerooms of collective

[27] *Chiwaya War Voices: Malawian Oral Histories of the Great War in Africa*: *Volume 2*, p. 594.

[28] Ibid., p. 730.

[29] Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 17.

memory'.[30] His analogy can also be applied to military archives and, in particular, how the absence of GRU records sent to the DGGRE played a role in shaping the narrative of a 'white man's war' in Africa. The Haitian anthropologist, Michel Rolph-Trouillot, proposes that 'history begins with bodies' and then explores how any lack of 'materiality' in the past create 'silences' which serve those with vested interests in maintaining power relations. Trouillot contends that these silences 'enter the process of historical production' at crucial junctures including 'the moment of fact assembly'.[31] In this instance, it was the GRUs and later the IWGC who were responsible for framing the narrative of the war as they were tasked with the exhumation, interment, and commemoration of bodies. In administrative terms, what appears to have happened in east and west Africa are examples of both selective memory and what Assmann calls 'passive' forgetting. She argues that agents in state bodies play a role in selecting what constitutes cultural memory in archives and other institutions and achieve this by 'losing, hiding, dispersing, neglecting… abandoning'.[32] Whilst there is no clear evidence that military or colonial officials deliberately lost or misplaced records of carriers, the persistence of this happening, and, in many cases, the complete absence of records suggests that some

[30] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; first published 1989), p. 62.

[31] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing The Past: Power And The Production Of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), pp. 26-29.

[32] Aleida Assmann, 'Canon and Archive', in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), p. 98.

officials wanted large aspects of African war service deliberately 'forgotten'. The military and the IWGC needed to explain the absence of 'native' bodies when 'European' ones had been successfully located and concentrated in cemeteries. They adopted a defensive strategy which consisted of blaming Africans for possessing a culture that did not allow for burial of the dead as well as devising a methodology to explain the exclusion of African soldiers and carriers from having their own graves and headstones in IWGC cemeteries across the continent.

'African' burial practices

On 26 October 1918, Commission officials met to discuss policy regarding native graves in East Africa, presumably in response to a circular disseminated by the Colonial Secretary, Walter Long, where he asked for lists of the names of casualties and the location of their graves in the African theatre.[33] At this point it was clear that Africans had been buried in mass graves, designated plots in cemeteries, or discrete cemeteries by the GRU. The army were the first to respond to Long's request. Brigadier-General Charles P. Fendall, who commanded the GRU in east Africa, began his report by claiming he and his men were unaware of the equality principles of the IWGC and believed it was too late to act on them now.[34] Fendall

[33] Walter Long, Circular Despatch, 21 October 1918, TNA (UK), CO 864/4.

[34] Brig-Gen C. P. Fendall for GO CIC EAEF to Secretary IWGC, 'Equality of Treatment', East Africa General File, 26 October 1918, CWGC WG 122 Part 1.

continued that 'a question arises' over the marking of large numbers of graves of Indians and Africans. He cited the battles at Narungombe and Mahiwa to claim that it was impossible to tell 'whether these graves contained the remains of either Mohamedans, Hindus, or African' and, significantly, that African 'tribes of all classes are included some of which have primitive principles and do not bury their dead, their custom being to place the corpse in the bush to be devoured by hyenas.'[35]

Some ethnic groups across the continent, especially in east Africa, did follow burial customs that differed considerably from Christian burial practice. The Reverend R. T. Worthington, a Methodist missionary, writing in 1916 of his observations of the Meru people in Kenya, wrote 'should a man die in the village it is the task of the near akin to carry the body out into the bush. It is not the custom to bury the dead but to leave them for hyenas to devour'.[36] R Mugu Gatheru, a Kikuyu and critic of British colonial rule, wrote in his autobiography that it was the custom not to bury dead bodies, 'They were taken from a village into a deep bush or forest where wild dogs and hyenas would eat them'.[37] Such practices did not mean that ethnic groups such as the Meru, Kikuyu, Maasai or Nandi did not have regard for dead bodies or revere them. The death rituals had hygienic and symbolic

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Rev. R. T. Worthington, '"At the Back of Beyond": Meru: its Social Life' in Rev. J. E. Swallow (ed.), *The Missionary Echo of the United Methodist Church,* Vol. XXIII, (London: Henry Hooks, 1916), p. 20.

[37] R Mugu Gatheru, *Child of Two Worlds* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 53.

significance. By disposing of the body soon after death, and away from the home, it was believed that the bereaved were being cleansed and protected from bodily pollution caused by death. These codes were known as *thahu*. Though the physical body was gone, the deceased became a spirit or *ngoma* who lived on for generations before it was forgotten.[38] It was important, therefore, that bodies were disposed of in the traditional custom of each group or the spirit would demand reburial or a transfer back to their home compound.[39] In this way, the spirit joins the community of the 'living dead'.

Even among East African ethnic groupings such as the Kikuyu, there was a variation in death rituals based on status and gender hierarchy. Males with the greatest rank could be buried, wrapped in animal skins, along with their ornaments.[40] This was called *ahomori* and was usually reserved for important older

[38] For the Nandi see G. S. Snell, *Nandi Customary Law* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1954), p. 74; for the Maasai see Nigel Barley, *Dancing On The Grave: Encounters With Death* (London: John Murray, 1995), pp. 134-136.

[39] John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1991; first published 1975), p. 126.

[40] Stanley Kiama Gathigira, *Mikarire ya Gikuyu – The Ways of Staying of the Gikuyu People* (Nairobi, 1986; first published: Karatina: Scholar's Publication, 1933).

men and their wives.[41] It is necessary to explain that a relatively small number of ethnic groups observed these customs. Many who served in the British military in east and west Africa had been converted to Christianity. Major-General Sir Edward Northey sought the help of missionaries to obtain African Christians for his expeditionary force. After the war, he thanked the missionary societies as 'most of my carrier-transport work was done by missionaries.'[42] Elisabeth Knox, in her book on the work of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in German East Africa, wrote that the army 'preferred mission people to pagans' and demanded men 'who were wearing Christian dress.'[43] West African troops and carriers, who served in Togoland, the Cameroons, and east Africa such as Yoruba, Igbo, Ogboni, Egun, and Oro, were predominantly Christian. According to their customs, only those with infectious diseases were not buried.[44] The Hausa of Northern Nigeria, who were the recruits of choice for the WAFF, were largely Muslims and buried their dead according to Islamic practice.

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[41] Yvan Droz, 'Transformations of Death among the Kikuyu of Kenya: From Hyenas to Tombs' in Michael Jindra and Joel Noret, *Funerals in Africa: Explorations of a Social Phenomenon* (New York: Bergahn Books, 2011).

[42] Major-General Sir Edward Northey, 'The East African Campaign', *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. 18, No. 70 (January 19I9), p. 87

[43] Elisabeth Knox, *Signal on the Mountain: The Gospel in Africa's Uplands before the First World War* (Swindon: Acorn Press, 1991), pp. 205-6.

[44] J Olumide Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas: Being an account of the religious beliefs and practices of the Yoruba peoples of Southern Nigeria, especially in relation to the religion of ancient Egypt* (Lagos: CMS Bookshop, 1948), p. 234.

Brigadier-General Fendall was making a huge cultural assumption or not telling the truth when he stated in his report to the IWGC that 'the sentimental and sacred feeling for one's dead relatives does not appear to appeal to the native mind to the same degree as it does to the European.'[45] Relatives held mourning rituals for deceased African servicemen, whether a body was present or not; this was not a preserve of Europeans. In the Luo ethnic group of Kenya, members of the community would join the family in circling a dead soldier's house and shake spears to battle evil spirits in the soldier's memory lest they invite curses from the spirit of the deceased man. In the absence of a body, the fruit of a yago tree was placed in a grave and buried ceremoniously to facilitate the mourning process.[46] The dead were also remembered through funeral feasts called *Sadaka* which represented the sharing of a meal between the living and the dead. Amos Isaac remembers that 'They would at times slaughter a goat… Drums and *Nyau* dance took place too. In a way [it was] crying for those who had died, so we could leave them on their own.'[47]

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[45] Equality of Treatment', East Africa General File, 26 October 1918, CWGC WG 122, Part 1.

[46] Meshack Owino, Bereavement and Mourning (Africa), online International Encyclopaedia of the First World War: https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/bereavement_and_mourning_africa: accessed 21 July 2018; See also John Siblon, 'Black & Asian soldiers and the "White Man's "': https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/war-military/commonwealth-war-graves/ 26 April 2021.

[47] *Chiwaya War Voices, Volume 2* p. 585.

Such levels of ignorance contrived or otherwise by military and Commission officials of African cultural traditions were in direct contrast to the care and effort taken with white British and dominion servicemen. The 'Christian' BWIR, WIR, and SANLC had been accommodated, albeit for propaganda and political reasons. The strident belief that Africans were not capable of mournful emotions, common to humanity, demonstrate how the mentalities of some officials in the British Empire were steeped in the beliefs of pseudo-scientific and cultural racism which classified Black Africans as existing at a less advanced stage in the scale of evolution than white people.[48]

Methodology of Omission

Having propagated an untruth regarding the recording of the dead and a cultural myth to explain the lack of African bodies in military cemeteries, officials now added economic and social reasons for exclusion. Brigadier-General Fendall suggested that as 'East African natives are mostly illiterate' so the provision of headstones 'would constitute an unnecessary expenditure' and 'not be appreciated'.[49] This ignored the fact that during the war, many Africans had converted to Christianity and, after the war, many had begun to accept the authority

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[48] John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 149.

[49] Brigadier-General C. P. Fendall, 'Equality of Treatment: East Africa General File', 26 October 1918, CWGC WG 122 Part 1.

of the colonial government regarding Christian burial practice. In 1920, the Kenya Assembly passed an ordinance which compelled the indigenous population to bury their dead in cemeteries in enclosed spaces.[50] The ordinance was constituted for hygienic not religious reasons but undoubtedly helped establish the hegemony of Christian burial practice. Yet, in the same year, Major Geoffrey Evans, formerly of the east African GRU and now working for the IWGC, was trying to persuade the Commission's Director of Works, that the erection of headstones in the Christian tradition for Africans 'constituted a waste of public money'.[51]

Beyond proclaiming the cultural inferiority of the African soldiers and non-combatants, the IWGC prioritized the reburial of white British and dominion forces. By 1920, Major Evans's team had located ninety-five per cent of 'Europeans' and concentrated them in graves in cemeteries. An estimated 2,000 Indian troops had also been located, cremated, or buried. In his report, Evans proclaimed that 'most of the Natives who have died are of a semi-savage nature, and do not attach any sentiment to marking the graves of their dead – some tribes do not even bury their dead'. He continued by proposing that 'the more intelligent natives', meaning those who converted to Christianity or Islam, might have a headstone.[52] It was in his report that Evans enlarged on Fendall's proposed form of memorialisation for

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[50] Native Authority Ordinance 1920, Leg. 14/21, Vol. 1, Kenya National Archives: hereafter, KNA.

[51] Major Geoffrey W. Evans, letter to Director of Works: East Africa General File, 31 January 1920, CWGC WG 122 Part 1.

[52] Ibid., 31 January 1920.

African servicemen. He suggested centrally located monuments in public spaces which would depict the 'Indian soldier, the African askari and porter with an inscription to their memory be erected in each of the principal towns, such as Mombasa, Nairobi, Kampala or Entebbe, Dar es Salaam, and Tabora'.[53] The Director of Records, Henry Chettle, and the Principal Assistant Secretary of the IWGC, Lord Arthur Browne accepted Evans's recommendations and did not question the segregated symbolism of the memorials. In 1920, The Commission began discussions with Sir Herbert Read of the Colonial Office with the intention of persuading him to approve of the proposal to erect 'central memorials' instead of individual headstones in cemeteries for Africans. Read agreed with the Commission's explanation for not providing graves to colonial servicemen, maintaining that 'the bulk of the tribes from which the porters were drawn were incapable of understanding or appreciating any such [memorials]'.[54] Browne then wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Milner, for approval, emphasising the Commission's key argument for not erecting headstones: that 'tribes from which the ordinary native carrier is drawn are hardly in such a state of civilization as to appreciate or understand such a memorial'.[55] Within a fortnight, the Colonial Secretary had responded to the IWGC on commemoration in Africa with the proviso that the IWGC pay the costs of the

[53] Major Geoffrey W. Evans, GRU Summary of Remarks for Director of Works, 31 January 1920, CWGC, WG 122 Part 1

[54] Lord Arthur Browne to Fabian Ware, East Africa General File, 16 March 1920, CWGC WG 122 Part 1.

[55] Lord Arthur Browne to Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Ibid., 24 March 1920.

‘central memorials’.[56] The following year, when the question of whether to include African seamen on a proposed memorial to the mercantile marine in London came up for discussion, F. C. Sillar, on behalf of Lord Arthur Browne, proposed that ‘the commission might be disposed to treat these on similar lines to Native African followers. This would probably result in a considerable reduction in the sum named by the Treasury.’[57] These discussions reveal that the IWGC wanted to formulate policy on ‘native’ commemoration that could be applied across all theatres, even if that meant complete non-commemoration, and that the representatives of the state agencies in the colonies: the Colonial Office, the Armed forces, and the newly-formed IWGC were all in agreement with the policy.

War Cemeteries in Dar es Salaam

Now that permission had been granted at the highest level to only commemorate Africans on centrally located memorials in east and west Africa, a methodology was needed to erase the presence of African soldiers and carriers from cemeteries where their corpses had already been interred. The results of their efforts can still be seen today in two First World War cemeteries in Tanzania, formerly German East Africa, where most of the fighting occurred. In Dar es Salaam War

[56] Lord Milner to Secretary of the IWGC, Ibid., 6 April 1920.

[57] F. C. Sillar to Henry Chettle, ‘Mercantile Marine Graves – General File’, 21 June 1921, CWGC WG 998.

Cemetery and Upanga Road Cemetery, there is not a single headstone for an east or west African soldier or carrier although Dar es Salaam Cemetery does contain a screen wall which lists 274 names of African servicemen from the KAR, WAFF, Carrier Corps, and native east African auxiliaries who were concentrated from other cemeteries but not given a plot (5. 2.). The screen wall is separate to the Memorial to the Missing in the cemetery which lists the names of 1,528 British, South African, Rhodesian, Indian and Caribbean servicemen. In Upanga Road, eleven west and east Africa servicemen have their names on a screen wall alongside 113 SANLC men. In total, out of an estimated 100,000 east and west African servicemen only 285 have their names inscribed on memorials in the main cemeteries of the east African theatre. Aleida Assmann's use of Jacob Burckhardt's cultural theory of 'messages' and 'traces' is helpful here. She proposes that 'messages' such as text and monuments are 'addressed to posterity' and because they are produced by 'carriers of power and state institutions' are often 'tendentious and … misleading'.[58] The 'messages', in this case, are the 'European' graves and headstones in cemeteries which only tell part of the narrative of the war. The 'traces' are the occasional nominal reference to African soldiers on screen walls. Such 'traces' 'can tell a counter history to the one propagated by the rulers.'[59]

[58] Aleida Assmann, 'Canon and Archive', p. 98.

[59] Ibid., p. 99.

6. 2. One of the two screen walls with African names at Dar es Salaam Cemetery (photo John Siblon)

A retrospective explanation for the lack of African graves is provided on the website of the CWGC. They claim that when the cemetery in Dar es Salaam was created in 1968, it was not possible to re-inter the bodies from 'African Christian, Non-Christian, and Mohammedan' plots of the old Ocean Road Cemetery as they were 'not marked' and 'might cause offence by reburial'.[60] At Upanga Road, the explanation given is that African graves from the old Pugu Road Cemetery 'could not be maintained to a satisfactory standard'.[61] Both explanations suggest that the Commission employs linguistic devices to obscure the fact that the bodies of African

[60] CWGC website: Dar es Salaam War Cemetery: https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/91100/dar-es-salaam-war-cemetery/ :accessed 21 July 2018.

[61] CWGC website: Upanga Road Cemetery: https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/12101/DAR%20ES%20SALAAM%20(UPANGA%20ROAD)%20CEMETERY

servicemen were initially identified and buried in discrete plots in the old cemeteries according to their racial and religious designation.[62] There are seven more cemeteries in Tanzania which commemorate First World War casualties: Moshi, Dodoma, Iringa, Tanga, Morogoro, Selous and Zanzibar. Most of these cemeteries contain graves for British, Indian, South African, and Rhodesian servicemen. There are also plots for the non-combatant SANLC, Cape Corps, and BWIR who, as discussed in Chapter Four, were considered Christian, and thus permitted to have headstones in war cemeteries alongside Europeans. In the African colonies, their plots also symbolized their designation as 'reliable aliens'. However, as in Dar es Salaam, there is a not a single grave plot for a native east or west African combatant or non-combatant in these cemeteries. At Dodoma, the cemetery was originally named 'Dodoma Native Christian Cemetery'. An online search of the grave registration records reveal that there were previously plots with headstones for fourteen named servicemen from the KAR, WAFF, East African Medical Corps (EAMC), and East African Motor Transport Corps (EAMTC). The graves are no longer there. The form shows that headstones were made for each African serviceman with their own plot number which were later crossed out (6.3). The instruction is given 'No individual identification on any of the graves'.

[62] See 'Exhumation Policy', CWGC archives, WG 1294 Part 1.

REGISTER OF GRAVES OFFICERS, N.C.O'S & MEN WHO DIED ON ACTIVE SERVICE IN BRITISH & GERMAN EAST AFRICA.
DODOMA NATIVE CHRISTIAN SECTION NO. 87A - TANGANYIKA TERRITORY.
Latest available information as taken from E.A.Branch Records 25/8/23.

Information recorded from investigations by E.A.Branch, I.W.G.C., including particulars taken from inscriptions on former crosses.

Regtl. No.	Rank.	Name & Initials.	Unit.	Date of Death..	Cross Erect:	Grave No
803	Pte.	Yakobo Msubugu	A.N.M.C.	9.10.17	Headstone made. Buried in this plot	
511	Pte.	Kama Mayanga	-do-	4.10.17	"	2
10743	Pte.	Yokama Kiwanuka	2/4 K.A.R.	10.10.17	"	3
10727	Pte.	Brize, Musoke	-do-	11.10.17	"	4
	Cook	John	4/NIG.	17.12.17	"	5
2581	Pte.	Savlo	Buganda Trans. EAMTC.	24. 3.18	"	6
2821	Dvr.	Eribakaura	E.A.M.T.C.	29. 5.18	"	7
13149	Pte.	Bulasiyo	-do-	7. 7.18	"	8
534	Pte.	Simoni	A.N.Med.Cps.	14. 7.18	"	9
265	E/Dvr	Abrams, J.	S.A.F.A.	5. 1.17	"	10
17754	-do	Erasmus, J.	Trans.Cps.	19. 6.17	"	11
18674	Leader	Mack Morankana	-do-	21. 6.17	"	12
13180	Dvr.	Balaha E.B.	E.A.M.T.C.	25.11.18	"	13
323	E/Dvr	Mamama, C.	S.A.F.A.	27.10.16	"	14

No individual identifications on any of the graves.

Cemetery visited by Capt.Kerr on 20/11/22

Certifying this Nominal Roll to be complete & correct & that it has been checked against all available information to date.

REGISTRATION OFFICER. D.D.W.E.A.BRANCH.

6. 3. Graves Registration Record showing the names and grave numbers of African servicemen at Dodoma with headstones later removed (CWGC website)[63]

There is a further example in Morogoro Cemetery in Tanzania of the expunging of black graves. On the CWGC website, using the 'Find War Dead' search engine it is possible to find the original plot numbers and grave inscriptions for forty-nine African servicemen, mostly SANLC, but also from the WAFF and the BWIR.[64] An examination of the online Grave Registration Record reveals that their

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[63] CWGC website: Dodoma Cemetery: https://www.cwgc.org/find/find-war-dead/results/?cemetery=DODOMA%20CEMETERY accessed 23 July 2018.

[64] CWGC Website: Morogoro Cemetery: https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/12104/morogoro-cemetery/: accessed 24 July 2018.

graves no longer exist, even though they were already buried in a 'Native Christian' part of the cemetery and the Commission knew the names of the servicemen (6.4.). A note at the bottom of the form explains that Lord Browne had approved a commemorative inscription on a screen wall instead of graves with headstones or names on a Memorial to the Missing, even the though the bodies were not 'missing'. In this instance, the decision not to allow graves for Black and 'coloured' soldiers and non-combatants in Morogoro applied to the BWIR and the SANLC as well as the WAFF. This decision follows Chettle's ruling that burials of BWIR and SANLC men were permitted in Dar es Salaam War Cemetery but not elsewhere in Africa.[65]

[65] 'Memorials to the Missing East Africa, Part 2', 2 October 1925, CWGC WG 219/12 Part 2.

FINAL

TANGANYIKA

LETTER REF. 1666 OF 11/1 192_

REGISTER OF GRAVES OF OFFICERS, N.C.O'S & MEN WHO DIED ON ACTIVE SERVICE IN BRITISH & GERMAN EAST AFRICA.
CEMETERY MOROGORO (NATIVE CHRISTIAN) Map Ref. G.D.E. M.10d
Latest available information as taken from E.A.Branch Records 15/1/23.

EA/267

Regtl. No.	Rank.	Name & Initials.	Unit.	Date of Death.	Cross Erect:	Grave No	INSCRIPTIONS ON CROSSES & REMARKS.
7059	Pte.	Kafta Ogin	3/N.R.	6.4.17	Metal	46A	
4662	Pte.	~~Manie~~ Solomon Moagi	Al.Transport	5.4.17	"	45A	No. on cross 4662- No rank
2272	C/Folr:	Molifi Fredk	C/Follower	4.5.17	"	48A	Name on cross spelt "MOLIF"
12493	Servnt:	Cloete, A.	11/S.A.I.	3.12.16	"	9A	
12493	Pte.	Benjamin	Al.Transport	6.12.16	"	11A	No rank on cross
	Sgt.	Alexander	10/S.A.I.	14.12.16	"	16A	Name on tin cross spelt "ALEXANDRA" 19th S.A.I.
28	---	Peterson William	Supplies (SASC)	25.12.16	"	21A	
12483	---	Boyoi Swarto	Remounts	26.12.16	"	22A	
189	---	Charlie Behrens	Al.Transport	3.1.17	"	27A	
3054	Dvr.	Flame July	Al.Transport	6. 1.17	"	28A	
0637	---	Aaron	Al.Transport	7. 1.17	"	29A	
UEF.13158	---	Charlie Pataladi	Al.Transport	9. 1.17	"	30A	No. on cross 13158 only
UEF. 2948	---	Jim	Remounts	14. 1.17	"	32A	No. on cross 2948 only
UEF.13271	---	Thomson	Remounts	15. 1.17	"	33A	No. on cross 13271 only
UEF. 104	C/Folr:	Alex. Matroos	Cape Follower	18. 1.17	"	34A	No. on cross 104 only
UEF. 6722	C/Folr:	Johannes Putuma	Cape Follower	20. 1.17	"	35A	No. on cross 6722 only
2160	C/Folr:	Bevington Gamana	Cape Follower	24. 1.17	"	36A	
11030	C/Folr:	Jan. Chuba.	Cape Follower	8. 2.17	"	37A	
	Officers Boy	George	Cape Follower	12. 3.17	"	39A	
16756	Pte.	Harry	African Trans:	22. 3.17	"	42A	
17699	Folr:	Jacob Zulu	Cape Follower	27. 3.17	"	44A	
13368	C/Boy	George	Al. Transport	9. 4.17	"	47A	No unit on cross
N/Christian Boy		UNKNOWN	------	13. 1.17	"	31A	Non-Christian boy buried here in error (Note in G.R.U.Records).
484	Pte.	Songster, Samuel	1/B.W.I.R.	12.11.16	"	1A	
---	Servant	Arrie	5/S.A.H.	20.11.16	"	2A	
3161	Groom	Isaac Magohoa	Base Vet.Hosp:	20.11.16	"	3A	Cross reads S.A.Native Groom
11549	Dvr.	Jan Wesner	SASC Trans:	22.11.16	"	4A	Cross reads S.A.Native Driver
13674	Dvr.	Kametjeni or Captain	Al. Transport	23.11.16	"	5A	
12923	Dvr.	Jim Mbandheni	Al.Transport	28.11.16	"	6A	Name on cross spelt "MBANDHENAI"
8540	Pte.	[illegible]sele Efum (Mashala)	G.C.Regiment	29.11.16	"	7A	ETURN on cross
8182	S.A.Nat:	Lucas Da Vee	Follower	3.12.16	"	8A	
2492	Pte.	Christians, B.	Cape Corps	5.12.16	"	10A	Name on tin cross W.CHRISTIANS, name on cross spelt "CHRISTIAN & date 4/12/16
1440	Pte.	Owes, C.	Cape Corps	6.12.16	"	12A	Name on cross spelt OVIES
426	N/Dvr.	Van Wyk C.	S.A.F.A.	7.12.16	"	13A	Rank on cross Dvr. & Unit 4/Baty.SAFA
13634	N/Dvr.	Mgabo Bekefozulu-	Anl.Transport	9.12.16	"	14A	
6874	S.A.Nat:	Johannes Forbes	Follower	11.12.16	"	15A	Date on cross 14/12/16
3390	S.A.Nat:	Dan Ramatloodt	Follower	21.12.16	"	17A	
3718	S.A.Nat:	William Rooi	Follower	21.12.16	"	18A	
14638	S.A.Nat:	Motlakoane Piet	Follower	22.12.16	"	19A	
3012	S.A.Nat:	Mangindu Sikoto	Follower	23.12.16	"	20A	
2230	S.A.Nat:	Joseph Malelogha	Follower	26.12.16	"	23A	Name on cross spelt "MOLOGHA"
13324	S.A.Nat:	Dick Madienetsha	Follower	28.12.16	"	24A	
2005	S.A.Nat:	Elias Saleka	Follower	1. 1.17	"	25A	
12982	S.A.Nat:	Jim Schothalemayer	Follower	1. 1.17	"	26A	
7988	S.A.Nat:	Daniel Lifatoa	Follower	27. 2.17	"	38A	
2644	S.A.Nat:	~~Silanowe~~ Selangwe	Follower	17. 3.17	"	40A	Name on cross spelt "SELANOWE"
11534	S.A.Nat:	Frana Molife	Follower	18.3 .17	"	41A	
476	S.A.Nat:	Banga Suganga	Follower	25. 3.17	"	43A	
KSU 11528	S/Bearer	Ahlo	15/Stat:Hosp:	5. 1.18	"	49A	

Cemetery visited by Capt.Kerr on 22/10/22

NOTE:- The sequence of grave numbers of this register follows that of previously submitted looseleafs for convenience of checking.

PAS has approved the following inscription, for screen wall commemoration of the above:-
"In memory of these 49 African Soldiers and Followers who fell in the service of the British Empire in or near Morogoro during the Great War 1914-1918 and who are buried in this plot."

Auth: 3/N28/1/S.1
13/N28/908/W

ENTERED 17.12.25

6. 4. Grave registration record for forty-nine Africans and Caribbeans at Morogoro 'Native Christian' Cemetery whose graves were replaced with their names on a screen wall (CWGC website).

In Kenya, the two major First World War cemeteries are in Mombasa and Nairobi. Like Tanzania, there are no African troops or non-combatants with plots in either cemetery. Two African soldiers from the Gold Coast Regiment who died at sea have their names on a Memorial to the Missing within the Mombasa Cemetery. The main burial ground for First World War casualties in Kenya is Nairobi South Cemetery. Within the grounds, there is a Memorial to the Missing on which is inscribed the names of 1,234 British, South African, and Indian servicemen listed according to a race and rank hierarchy. In the cemetery, 157 white British, dominion, Cape Corps, and SANLC have graves but, again, no east or west Africans. This is also the case across Kenya in cemeteries in Voi, Kajiado, Kisumu, Maktau, Taveta, Nakuru, Gilgil, Muranga Mumias, Kisii Boma, Wajir, Mwele Ndogo, and Moshi. On a recent visit, Michele Barrett discovered 'traces' of an unmarked 'non-Christian' African burial plot outside Voi Cemetery but none within its walls.[66] In both Kenya and Tanzania, there are 340 African names on memorials, screen walls, or rolls of honour but not a single grave or headstone to Black combatants in the main war theatres. This is an extraordinary erasure of African war service given the expansion of the KAR and the WAFF during the war, the 'Africanization' of the war from 1917-18, and the recruitment and conscription of hundreds of thousands of carriers and porters. This suggests a coordinated methodology of omission at work.

[66] Michele Barrett, 'Dehumanization and the War in East Africa', p. 245.

'Sent missing'

Once the Colonial Office had approved the Commission's policy of not searching for African graves and collapsing those that existed within cemeteries, the need to persuade colonial governors to accept their uniform policy became easier. In December 1922, Major Cormack of the IWGC met with the Governor of Tanganyika, Sir Horace Byatt, and secured an agreement that the 'vast Carrier Corps Cemeteries at Dar es Salaam and elsewhere' should be 'allowed to revert to nature' as speedily as possible. The Governor added that he 'did not care to contemplate the statistics of the native African lives lost'.[67] In May 1923, Lord Browne met the Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Frederick Guggisberg, in London as he visited the Wembley Exhibition. According to the notes of the meeting, written by Browne, Guggisberg had given his assent for a central memorial as he believed that 'the average native of the Gold Coast would not understand or appreciate a headstone'.[68] Browne then elucidated the Commission's rationale, not in terms of practicality but in the language of the racialized civilising mission where the aim was to Christianize the colonial population:

[67] Record of meeting between Major J. N. Cormack and Sir Horace Byatt, 7 December 1922, East Africa: General File, CWGC WG 122 Part 2.

[68] Lord Arthur Browne, interview with Sir Frederick Guggisberg, West Africa: Gold Coast, 18 May 1923, CWGC WG 243/3.

> In perhaps two or three hundred years' time, when the native population had reached a higher stage of civilisation, they might then be glad to see that headstones had been erected on the native graves and that the native soldiers had received precisely the same treatment as their white comrades.[69]

At around the same time, Browne had communicated with Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor of Nigeria, explaining Commission policy in east Africa, which they wished applied in Nigeria and other west African colonies. There was, however, the fact that an estimated 292 west African soldiers and carriers already had marked graves and were therefore entitled to a headstone. Browne suggested that all native troops 'should be on a register but not all have graves', and, by way of justification, he proposed 'cost' as a consideration in exhumation. The inference was that Africans were not important as humans, they were a financial burden, and need not be reburied. Furthermore, he explained that if the colony decided 'not to erect headstones then an alternative would be to abandon the native graves and erect "central" memorials in suitable localities.'[70] After consulting with the military, Clifford gave his permission for four memorials across Nigeria: in Zaria, Lokoja, Ibadan, and Calabar. As part of the arrangement, the names of soldiers who previously had graves were now treated as 'missing' and listed on the memorials

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[69] Ibid, 18 May 1923.

[70] Lord Arthur Browne to Governor and Commissioner-in-Chief, Nigeria, 'West Africa: Nigeria 1920-30', 12 April 1923, CWGC WG 243/1 Part 1.

instead. When the Governor's permission was recorded, the Registrar of the Commission could not contain his relief. He wrote 'all this makes it easier to concentrate European graves', confirming that graves for white service personnel had always been the priority.[71] It is apparent that the Commission were seeking common ground both with the Colonial Office and the colonial Governors and felt they could establish this through promoting the shared belief of the lesser status of Africans in 'civilized' society. Such mentalities shaped the 'pragmatic' decisions of the Commission.

Jay Winter has written that 'language frames memory' and 'memory is always mediated by the medium in which it is expressed'.[72] Officials of the IWGC created the term 'sent missing' to instil the idea that all African bodies were 'missing' and so should be treated the same as in other theatres where those whose corpses could not be found had their names listed on a Memorial to the Missing instead.[73] The 'sent' part meant the names were supposed to be compiled on registers which would be available at the proposed 'central' memorials. By this device, the physical African corpse, whether it was buried or not, was reduced to a name on a register or a

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[71] Registrar to Director of Records, 'Graves in Nigeria', West Africa: Nigeria 1920-30', 29 June 1925, CWGC WG 243/1 Part 1

[72] Jay Winter, Foreword: Language and Memory in Peter Tame, Dominique Jeannerod, and Manuel Braganca (eds.), *Mnemosyne and Mars: Artistic and Cultural Representations of Twentieth-Century Europe at War* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. xiii.

[73] Registrar to Director of Records, 'West Africa: Gold Coast', 4 July 1927, CWGC WG 243/3.

numerical representation. Often in their memos, the Commission wrote that African graves were being allowed to 'revert to nature' meaning they were abandoning the bodies in the plots even though their names had been identified. Where they stated that it was 'unlikely that a Cemetery Register will be published', this meant they were completely expunging Africans from the record.

'Central Memorials'

The Commission decided that three 'central' memorials in east Africa would be sufficient commemoration for African soldiers and non-combatants. The cost, at £870, for the sculptural representations would be a fraction of the costs of erecting headstones and maintaining them in perpetuity.[74] The Director of Works, Colonel Frank Durham, explained that, in erecting the memorials for Africans, the Commission was not just honouring their war service but 'were also in honour of the prestige of the British Empire, in such a manner that the Native will appreciate.'[75] Durham's statement may have been couched in the language of commemoration but his inclusion of the word 'prestige' implies that he was referring to the importance of the notion of 'white prestige', which was an inherent element in the maintenance of

[74] Deputy Director of Works East Africa to Chief Secretary Dar es Salaam, East Africa: Maintenance, 23 March 1926, CWGC WG 122/17 Part 1.

[75] F R. Durham, Director of Works, Memorials to the Missing: East Africa, 14 January 1922, CWGC WG 219/12 Part 1.

British rule in the colonies, maintained through white supremacy. A medical officer posted to east Africa, Captain Robert Dolbey, related how this worked in an African colonial context. He wrote that the war was ruinous to the concept and that the Germans had breached the unwritten 'white man's law that no white man be degraded before a native'.[76] Brigadier-General Fendall, who was in command of the GRU in east Africa, described in his memoir how 'white prestige' worked in the colonial army. He noted that 'the askari looked up to them [white British] almost as superman… for no men had better upheld the prestige of the white man in Africa than the officers of the King's African Rifles.'[77] In this way, the sculptures served to commemorate Africans under the equality principle but also to uphold the status of the British Empire through a representation of 'white prestige' even though whites are not present figuratively. Durham added that the sculptural forms had been decided because a 'statue of an askari or porter would be intelligible to the East African native whereas any other form of memorial would not.'[78] For the IWGC, it was important that all who viewed the figurative sculptures would see Africans in the service of the British Empire. In the former German East Africa, the figure of the

[76] Captain Robert V. Dolbey, *Sketches Of The East Africa Campaign* (London: John Murray, 1918), pp. 49-50.

[77] Brigadier-General C. P. Fendall, *The East African Force 1915-1919* (London: H. F. & G. Witherby, 1921), p. 199.

[78] Lord Arthur Browne to Lt. Col. Frederick Kenyon, Memorials to the Missing: East Africa, 22 January 1922, CWGC WG 219/12 Part 1.

Askari is a reminder that African colonial troops under white British officers defeated those under German command.

6. 5. The 'central' memorial in Dar es Salaam (courtesy of the CWGC)

However, the model for the askari in the Dar es Salaam sculpture was not even African. An Australian, Eric Muspratt, claimed in his autobiography that he had posed for the figure of the askari for the sculptor, James Stevenson, in his London studio. Muspratt also claimed that he also posed for the figures of the

porters and soldiers on the bas-relief on the side of the pedestal.[79] It is not known whether Muspratt was also used for the Nairobi, Mombasa, and Lagos statues. Correspondence shows that Stevenson asked for watercolour drawings, clothing and equipment worn by the askaris, carriers, guides, and porters to be sent from East Africa.[80] On the base of each memorial are panels with inscriptions written by Rudyard Kipling in English, Swahili and Arabic which say:

> This is to the memory of the Arab and Native African troops who fought; to the carriers and Porters who were the hands and feet of the army; and to all other men who served and died for their king and country in East Africa in the Great War, 1914-1918. If you fight for your country, even if you die, your sons will remember your name.

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[79] Eric Muspratt, *Fire of Youth: a story of forty-five years wandering* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 1948), p. 76.

[80] J. A. Stevenson to Deputy Director of Works, J. N. Cormack,1 May 1922 CWGC WG 219/12.

6. 6. The Mombasa (left) and Nairobi (right) 'central memorials (courtesy of the CWGC)

Lord Browne had written in 1925 that where African soldiers and carriers did not have headstones in cemeteries, their name should appear on the register of the central memorials. Despite his declaration, there are no memorial rolls at any of the locations even though the memorials were supposed to be places to read the names and mourn the dead. Browne explained the absence of memorial rolls thus: 'If we were to include all the names of the latter class in the cemetery register, I think we should be unnecessarily drawing attention to the fact that we have neglected to commemorate by a headstone.' [81] The memo revealed that, in one way, the Commission was sensitive over the issue of commemoration of Africans in

[81] Lord Arthur Browne, 'West Africa: Gold Coast', 24 November 1925, CWGC WG 243/3.

cemeteries and how the public perceived them. In another way, its shows hard-headed calculation in ensuring the erasure of the service of Black colonial Africans.

In Lagos, Nigeria, a similar 'central' memorial commemorating the African war dead was erected in 1932. Two figures, a soldier and a carrier, were represented on a stone plinth. The inscription was in English, Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo. In contrast to east Africa, the names of the 4,500 west Africans who died were recorded and an estimated three hundred had been interred in graves.[82] The Commission had to be sensitive to this fact and they accommodated this by including panels with the names of 944 Carriers and men from the Inland Water Transport who had served in Mesopotamia on the Lagos Memorial.

[82] West Africa: general file, 14 November 1928, CWGC WG 243.

6. 7. The Lagos African Memorial now in Abuja (courtesy of the CWGC).

There were no names of soldiers from the WAFF on the memorial though. Their names were inscribed on memorials across west Africa which were paid for by public subscription. The Freetown Memorial in Sierra Leone contains 1106 African names, the Gambia Memorial in Banjul has 33 names, the Kumasi memorial has 767 names and in Nigeria, four regional memorials in Lokoja, Ibadan, Zaria, and Calabar have 1,440 names inscribed on them. The exception to the cemetery policy in west Africa was two soldiers who died in the Cameroon campaign and whose graves remain among other west Africans from the Second World War but separate from

Europeans in Limbe Botanical Gardens Burial Ground.[83] I have not been able to trace the reasons why these two headstones were permitted. What is clear is that the colonial government and the IWGC had collaborated to ensure that the existing graves of west Africans were obliterated. Lord Arthur Browne suggested that the 'missing' policy adopted across east Africa should also 'be adopted here [west Africa] and even in a more intensified manner as I believe a great portion of these countries are not "white man's country"'.[84] Browne's admission partly explains why so much effort had gone into ensuring that war cemeteries across east Africa were populated only by the bodies of British and dominion servicemen. Kenya had long been earmarked as a 'white man's country' and so state-sponsored bodies had an interest in culturally expressing this construct and one of the ways was to promote the myth of 'white sacrifice' in the new war cemeteries.[85] After the war, the colonial government issued a circular asking district officers to directly intervene in the preservation of the memory of white pioneers by looking after their graves:

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[83] CWGC website: Limbe: https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/2065536/limbe-botanical-gardens-burial-ground/ accessed: 24 July 2018.

[84] Permanent Assistant Secretary to Director of Works, 'West Africa – General File', 8 February 1922, CWGC WG 243.

[85] See C. J. Duder, 'Men of the Officer Class': The Participants in the 1919 Soldier Settlement Scheme in Kenya', *African Affairs*, Vol. 92, No. 366 (Jan., 1993), pp. 69-87. Duder contends that the colonial government encouraged post-war emigration to shore up white minority rule.

> Many of these graves are of men who were pioneers in the development of this colony and it behoves Government consider taking immediate action to preserve these memorials of the early days … Please issue a circular to all Administrative Officers requesting them to have lists prepared of all graves and memorials to Europeans buried in their districts…every effort should be made by reference to records and by local enquiries from oldest inhabitants, etc., to ascertain the identity of the persons buried… state of tomb or memorial should be fully described and suggestions should be made for its better preservation.[86]

Paul Connerton has written how 'races' look to blood lines to prove their membership of an ancient group and 'that membership must also be visibly displayed.'.[87] The rulers of the Kenya Colony were using cultural commemoration as an instrument to create a white identity based on 'sacrifice'. In South Africa, there are further exceptions of Black servicemen with graves and headstones. In Stellawood Cemetery, in Durban, there are fifty-five west Africans and one east African buried. In Maitland Cemetery in Cape Town, there are sixty-two graves of

[86] 'Roll of Dead Europeans - Official and War Graves', 20 September 1925, Kenya National Archives, PC/NZA/3/35/7.

[87] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, p. 86.

west Africans with headstones.[88] Both locations had large 'native hospitals' in the war and African soldiers and non-combatants who were wounded in east Africa were evacuated to these hospitals. Those who died were buried nearby. The reason for the survival of the graves can be explained by the fact that South Africa was a dominion and had its own burial policy. The Union of South Africa government was responsible for local military hospitals and their military was responsible for the war dead on its territory. They even had their own Iron Military Crosses instead of headstones before the IWGC eventually asserted its authority.[89]

In the intervening years before South Africa established its own IWGC agency, the military played a major role in both burial and maintenance of cemeteries. As regards the treatment of Africans, there were areas of cemeteries marked as 'Coloured Military' or 'Native Section' where the bodies were buried in line with the dominion's own race polices. As those from east and west Africa were serving in British imperial units, they were accorded funeral rights as Christians and may have been overlooked thereafter. There appears to be a reluctance to destroy the headstones, even when a Commission agency was established, this was possibly

[88] CWGC website: Durban Stellawood: https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/12406/durban-(stellawood)-cemetery/ ; Maitland Road, Cape Town: https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/12688/cape-town-(maitland)-cemetery/ Accessed 24 July 2018.

[89] Brigadier-General D. Martyn to War Office, 23 August 1918, Union of South Africa General File, CWGC WG 1692/Part 1.

because they were sensitive to the political situation in South Africa where the African nationalist movement was more advanced than in Britain's colonies. It could also be that the segregation of the 'native' graves from 'European' ones was accepted as a satisfactory arrangement.

Conclusion

In the African colonies, the colonial governments and the military created myths of white 'sacrifice' in a 'white man's war' to shore up their minority rule. There was also a need to create a constituent myth: that of the 'loyalty' of African and Caribbean non-combatant servicemen in support of the white 'European' and Indian troops. The colonial authorities used commemoration to remind their indigenous populations of their social and political status. In Africa, for visitors and residents to see uniform ranks of African combatant soldiers in cemeteries would have been counter to the myth even if they were designated as Christian. The agency of the IWGC proved invaluable in this respect. Whilst officers, NCOs, and other ranks had dutifully buried soldiers after battles, the military GRUs who followed them were systematic in their work only when it applied to white British, dominions troops, and Christian non-combatants. In this respect, they showed no desire to commemorate African soldiers or carriers from the outset. When the IWGC took over the remit of the GRU, they invested much time and effort into legitimizing their actions and devised a language and methodology to completely erase the service of

Black African colonial forces such as the KAR, the WAFF, and carriers and porters. In doing so, they demonstrated that the ideology of race science was still prevalent in the minds of military and colonial officials. Africans were portrayed as unintelligent, uncivilized, and whose burial practices proved they were 'savages'. Carriers were considered merely 'beasts of burden'.[90] The IWGC and other agents were successful in the sense that, apart from 120 Africans in three cemeteries across the whole continent, they managed to remove Black African soldiers and carriers completely from the memorial landscape. This practice was an example of an aggressive, state-sponsored 'active forgetting'.[91] The four 'central' memorials are usually invoked when the question of Africa's contribution is discussed but they were constructed to convey the minimum application of the equality principle. These memorials even provided coded messages for settlers and indigenous populations alike regarding the status of Africans in the military and colonial society. The Africans on the memorials are represented passively, apart from the Dar es Salaam sculpture, as ready to serve white officialdom, counter to their recruitment as 'martial races' who sustained the allied war effort from 1917 – 1918 after the 'Africanization' of the campaign against the Germans.

Across Africa and the Caribbean, representation and commemoration were a product of local conditions. In the Caribbean, veterans had virtually no influence over their representation. State officials succeeded in portraying their service as loyal

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[90] Captain Robert V. Dolbey, *Sketches Of The East Africa Campaign*, p. 120.

[91] Aleida Assmann, 'Canon and Archive', p. 99.

subjects of a Christian empire which bestowed benefits to them. In west Africa, where white settlers were thin on the ground, it was important to acknowledge the service of the WAFF for the local population. In east and southern Africa, there was a need to fortify the newly created dominion in South Africa and promote Britain's African colonies such as Kenya as a 'white man's country' and to encourage settlement. Social and cultural symbolism within new *lieux de memories* were used to sustain 'white prestige' and white supremacy.

Chapter Seven - Conclusion

I started my thesis with a question which occurred to me on a visit to the First World War section of Blantyre Cemetery in Malawi. What happened to the bodies of Black Malawian servicemen during and after the First World War? In my investigation, I have not been able to precisely locate where the 1,741 corpses lay but I have been able to discover that in wartime, if they had not volunteered, they were conscripted into one of the military battalions of the British colonial army and engaged in a violent conflict against the African auxiliaries of another colonial power on the African continent. The men were sent far from their homes, where they were employed either as soldiers, carriers or porters.[1] During the war, their bodies were property of the colonial state and, when they died, what happened to their bodies was also decided by the authorities. In the case of the men from Malawi most of their corpses were not recovered and interred in war cemeteries such as Blantyre or close to where they were killed at Karonga and elsewhere. They remained where they died and were not commemorated at all.

The graves I saw in the cemetery were of those who, it had been decided after the war, were worthy of commemoration: those with 'grievable lives'.[2] These were not Black Africans but white Afrikaners, white Germans, and 'Coloured' soldiers

[1] Melvin E. Page, 'The War of Thangata: Nyasaland and The East African Campaign, 1914-1918', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 19, No.1, (1978), pp. 87-100.

[2] Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London, Verso, 2004).

with white heritage. I concur that CWGC war cemeteries and memorials are sites of memory where mourning occurs but I contend that they are also places where racially codified 'messages' are produced for visitors to understand who held status in colonial society and who did not.[3] In Blantyre, and across the former Africa theatres of war, it was mostly white bodies, and those considered 'white', who were recovered and remembered. The exception was those considered Christian. The absence of all other participants means they were deliberately forgotten with few visual 'traces' in the memorial landscape to inform visitors of their presence.

In the historiography of the war – in military history and memory studies – the focus continues to be the former Western Front. Even studies of dominion, Indian or colonial forces tend to situate their research in Europe. The consequence of this Eurocentric approach is to obscure practices and memorial policies which apply across all the former theatres of war not just one part of it. I believe the transnational approach I have taken, investigating the memory of Black African and Caribbean service personnel in a single analytical framework, operating across the metropole and colonies, and not privileging one space over the other has been fruitful. I have been able to establish that what happened in the colonies was as important as what happened in the metropole and supports the contention of historians like Michelle Moyd who argue that Africa should not be considered as peripheral in studies of the

[3] Aleida Assmann, 'Canon and Archive', in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), pp. 97–107.

war and indeed can be centred.[4] Using archives of the CWGC, I was able to establish that many exclusionary practices originated in practices by the GRUs and IWGC officials on the ground in east Africa and these policies were used to inform decisions made in London where colonial service personnel needed to be considered for commemoration in Britain and Europe such as the coastal naval memorials and the Tower Hill memorial, and the disposition of colonial military units such as the BWIR, SANLC, and the Cape Corps across all theatres.

The importance of these findings is that it establishes that race science and hierarchy was a significant feature of thinking at this time and played a huge role in the perception of Black African and Caribbean service personnel. Before the war, in Britain, and especially the colonies, views persisted that Black peoples across the world were not as biologically or intellectually developed as white people. Scientific theories – such as the recapitulation theory - where Africans were claimed to still be in the infancy stage of evolution – were used to provide an underpinning for colonialism and the classification and treatment of Black colonial subjects as inferior in every way.[5] The British Army needed the manpower of the colonies and were able to draw upon willing volunteers in the Caribbean and conscripted men as soldiers

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[4] Michelle R. Moyd, 'Centring a Sideshow: local experiences of the First World War in Africa', *First World War Studies*, 7, 2 (2016), pp. 111-130.

[5] Stephen Jay Gould, The Mismeasure of Man (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1987; first published 1981), pp. 115-121.

and carriers in its African colonies. Their service was racially codified as government and military officials were anxious that that their presence in the metropole could potentially destabilize the carefully constructed differences between rulers and subjects. They would not be allowed to serve alongside and kill white men in Europe but could work as labour, which was viewed as non-threatening to the masculinities of soldiers or damaging to white prestige. The designation of Black colonial personnel as non-combatants in Europe also served to sustain two myths. The first was a martial myth that white British soldiers were the best and the second was that wars between European powers were 'white men's wars'.

When the war was over, Britain needed to culturally commemorate all those in the armed services. The first instinct of military and colonial officials was to exclude African and Caribbean men from victory parades and denigrate their war service. This was not a new policy by senior figures in the government and military but was surprising given the importance of the colonial armies to victory and the way that they had been used as propaganda during the war. Whenever colonial forces appeared in the metropole their war service was not foregrounded. The new tripartite military arrangement in the empire – of British, dominion, and Indian forces - meant that in Europe, at least, official commemoration included India for the first time. Some monuments, outside the capital, represented the war service of the Indian Army. However, this was not the case for Black colonial forces. The equality principle espoused by the newly created quasi-governmental IWGC should have meant that all military personnel across the entire British Empire should have been

commemorated in an egalitarian manner. However, the key individuals in the new organization were strong believers in the 'Greater Britain' project and followers of Lord Milner who maintained that Anglo-Saxons should dominate the world in a white-led federation.

Fabian Ware, the visionary behind the IWGC and an acolyte of Milner, shaped the organisation to match his own ideological beliefs. This meant that the vast new war cemeteries appearing in France, Belgium, and elsewhere gave prominence to white bodies, especially those from Britain and the white dominions. Historians have muted their criticism of the IWGC because of the equality principle - revolutionary for its time- the imposing architecture in war cemeteries, and the role the organization played in providing emotional comfort to grieving relatives. But a closer look at its operation transnationally reveals the close connection of the Commission had to the imperial project in the metropole and the colonies. The new sites of memory were places of mourning but also spaces of inclusion and exclusion for bodies and names. The headstones and memorials within the cemeteries were for remembrance, but also to signify a race rank, and gender hierarchy. The cemeteries were also places where absence was manufactured and for forgetting.[6]

In the Caribbean, a memory of war service was constructed which represented Caribbean service personnel as non-combatant loyal Christian subjects. In the African colonies, the IWGC developed a methodology of omission on a grand

[6] Stuart Hall, *Race: The Floating Signifier* (Massachusetts: Media Education Foundation, 1997), p. 2.

scale which aimed to remove the memory of African participation in the war. Academics who have engaged in discourse on forgetting, such as Aleida Assmann and Paul Connerton, have the most to say on this subject and have developed frameworks which contend that forgetting is not just a passive process but an active one too.[7] The main agents of forgetting in my thesis are those in official positions in state organisations such as the government or senior figures in the military. They had the power to frame individuals as worthy of remembrance. In the case studies presented, they actively accentuated white military contributions over Black colonial ones. The main reason was to maintain white supremacy across the British Empire at all costs using cultural commemoration to achieve this aim. Maintaining hierarchies of race, class, and gender was also politically important too. Visitors to Commission cemeteries and memorials after the war had very little visual cues beyond names and some headstones to link Black Africans and Caribbeans to the memory of the war and, as such, a long-term memory of colonial participation has not been stored. In the present day, there is a consequent 'retrieval failure' – an inability to draw upon memory that would centre the colonies or acknowledge them in studies of the First World War.[8] Black Africans were denied the opportunity to mourn their dead, and this reveals more than anything that Africans were still viewed as less than human at the very moment they had helped the British Empire win the 'Great War for Civilization'.

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[7] Aleida Assmann, 'Canon and Archive', pp. 97–107; Paul Connerton, *The Spirit of Mourning: History, Memory and the Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 33-46.

[8] Alan Baddeley, Michael C. Eysenck, Michael C. Anderson, *Memory* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2015).

In the present day, First World War cemeteries and memorials are still relevant spaces for mourning, remembrance, nation-building, and identity formation. In Britain and Europe, it is possible to read in these *lieux des memoire* a counter-narrative to my thesis which indicates, not absence and exclusion but, instead a multi-national, multi-ethnic imperial war effort which was the foundation of imperial cooperation which was sustained during the Second World War and until the present day in the form of the Commonwealth. Whilst colonial participation in the World Wars is a fact, such an interpretation needs to consider the central role of Fabian Ware, 'Milner's Kindergarten', and the 'Greater Britain' project which aimed to display and promote imperial hierarchy. In Britain's former colonies, post-independence populations do not emotionally invest in these spaces as much as Britain and its former dominions and so a collective memory of African war service is hard to sustain. This is because 'whiteness' and hierarchy were the aim in war cemeteries and, whilst successful in the colonial era, in postcolonial times, these objectives seem irrelevant to most.

When I began writing my investigation into whether Black African and Caribbean service personnel were commemorated differently or not at all, I hoped that one of the outcomes would be to assist visitors to war cemeteries or who gazed at memorials to 'read' the Black presence or its absence in these sites of memory. If I have succeeded in this aim, then my efforts would have been worthwhile.

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