



Constituent casework: war memorials

Standard Note: SN06879

Last updated: 6 May 2014

Author: Louisa Brooke-Holland

Section International Affairs and Defence section

The centenary of the First World War in 2014 will draw attention to the many memorials dedicated to the memory of those who lost their lives during that and subsequent wars. Members of Parliament may receive correspondence from constituents asking about the maintenance of memorials in their area or abroad. Constituents may also seek advice as to funding and building a new memorial. This note collates some useful resources for Members' staff on war memorials.

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties and is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. It should not be relied upon as being up to date; the law or policies may have changed since it was last updated; and it should not be relied upon as legal or professional advice or as a substitute for it. A suitably qualified professional should be consulted if specific advice or information is required.

This information is provided subject to [our general terms and conditions](#) which are available online or may be provided on request in hard copy. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing with Members and their staff, but not with the general public.

Contents

1 Overview 2

2 Remembrance and memorials 3

2.1 The Cenotaph 3

1.1 The Armed Forces Memorial 3

3 Funding, erecting and maintaining war memorials 4

3.1 New memorials 5

3.2 Maintenance of memorials: legislation 5

3.3 Sources of funds and grants 6

World War One centenary 6

1 Overview

There are estimated to be over 100,000 war memorials in the UK,¹ the majority being small affairs raised by local people for local people. The Imperial War Museum provides the following definition of a war memorial:

We consider a war memorial to be any tangible object which has been erected or dedicated to commemorate those killed as a result of war, conflict or peacekeeping; who served in war or conflict; or who died whilst engaged in military service.²

The long standing policy of successive Governments is that the cost of erecting memorials and associated projects is not usually met from public funds, but from private donations or public subscription. Therefore responsibility for the design of a memorial, its maintenance, protection and decision as to what it commemorates rests with the owner, or the organisation in which ownership is vested.

The Government does fund the Commonwealth War Graves commission which is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of graves for those killed in the world wars overseas.

Exceptions have been made, notably in recent years with the establishment of a new Armed Forces Memorial dedicated in 2007. This was created with the purpose of honouring all those who have died in service since 1948 and is located at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

¹ [War Memorials Trust](#)
² [“War Memorials Archive: FAQ”](#), *Imperial War Museum*, accessed 2 May 2014

The following organisations provide useful and detailed material about memorials and Remembrance:

- [War Memorials Trust](#)
- [Veterans UK](#)
- [The Royal British Legion](#)
- [Commonwealth War Graves Commission](#)
- [The Imperial War Museum](#)

The War Memorials Trust in particular has a wide range of leaflets covering [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about memorials which may be of assistance to constituents.

The Imperial War Museum provides a searchable database with information on locations of memorials and, in the future, lists of names commemorated on memorials: [War Memorials Archive](#). It also provides a useful [FAQ](#) section including clarification on its definition of a memorial and information on memorial care.

2 Remembrance and memorials

Detailed information about Remembrance is available on the Veterans UK website - [Veterans issues: Remembrance](#) and the [Royal British Legion](#).

The [Imperial War Museum](#) is working to compile a comprehensive record of all war memorials in the UK. The Museum has an online searchable database of memorials on its website.

Of note are the following two memorials:

2.1 The Cenotaph

The Cenotaph, situated on Whitehall in London, is the UK's primary national war memorial. It is the focus of Remembrance Day events, held on Remembrance Sunday, the closest Sunday to 11 November (Armistice Day) each year.

The Cenotaph began as a temporary structure erected for a parade marking the end of the First World War, but popular opinion called for a permanent structure. Unusually, the cost of its erection was met by funds voted by Parliament.

The Cenotaph commemorates those who lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars. It is inscribed "The Glorious Dead" and originally had the dates 1914 and 1919 on it. In 1980 the service of Remembrance extended this to include the commemoration of those killed in subsequent conflicts. It now includes the dates 1939 and 1945.

However the cenotaph does not commemorate Service personnel who have lost their lives in situations other than in conflict nor does it list the names of those who have died.

1.1 The Armed Forces Memorial

The Armed Forces Memorial is based at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. It honours those members of the Armed Forces (Regular and Reserve) who were killed on duty while performing functions attributable to the special circumstances and requirements of the Armed Forces (e.g. in training or an exercise), or as a result of terrorist action, and those who

died while deployed on designated operations, since the end of World War Two. Members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the Merchant Navy who died in conflict zones while in direct support of the Armed Forces are also included.

The need for an Armed Forces Memorial arose by a Government decision in 2000 that there was insufficient recognition of the members of the Armed Forces killed on duty since the Second World War. The Armed Forces Memorial Trust, an independent registered charity, was established to oversee the design and construction of the memorial. The Trustees of the Armed Forces Memorial Trust decide who to include on the Memorial.

The Memorial was completed in 2007. Funding came from public donations, sale of the Trafalgar coin and a lottery grant. In a departure from a longstanding policy on the funding of war memorials, the costs of constructing the memorial were also underwritten by the Ministry of Defence.

Over 16,000 individuals have been inscribed on its stone walls and there is space for additional 15,000 names. The start date is 1 January 1948, which follows on directly from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission which commemorates those who died up to 31 December 1947.

More information about the Armed Forces Memorial, including a full list of the operations undertaken by the Armed Forces, is available on [Armed Forces Memorial](#) section of the National Memorial Arboretum website. The Veterans UK website also contains information about the Memorial and has a searchable Roll of Honour on its website: [Veterans UK](#).

The memorial constructed at Camp Bastion in Afghanistan during operations to commemorate those killed on operations will be moved to the National Memorial Arboretum at the end of UK operations.

3 Funding, erecting and maintaining war memorials

The funding, erection and maintenance of war memorials is not usually met from public funds. Rather, it is met from private donations or public subscription.

This has been the policy of successive governments and was reaffirmed in October 2013:

It has been a long standing policy of successive Governments that the cost of erecting memorials and associated projects is not usually met from public funds, but from private donations or public subscription. Responsibility for the design, location, maintenance, protection and any decision about what a memorial commemorates rests with the owner, or the organisation in which ownership is vested.³

The Ministry of Defence provides the following explanation for why it cannot fund new war memorials:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) does not have responsibility for either the funding or maintenance of war memorials. The MOD receives many requests from individuals, ex-Servicemen's groups and charitable organisations seeking assistance with various projects. It would not be possible to be seen to support one project rather than another. The vast majority have worthy goals and can make an equally compelling case for

³ HC Deb 16 December 2013 c477W

support. It would be divisive and open to criticism from unsuccessful applicants, if the Government were to pick and choose which projects to support.⁴

The Ministry of Defence does however say that it will provide appropriate representation at any dedication ceremony for new memorials, once funding has been raised and the memorial erected.

The Government does fund the Commonwealth War Graves commission which is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of graves for those killed in the world wars overseas. It also partially funded the Armed Forces Memorial that was dedicated in 2007.

The War Memorials Trust is a charity working for the protection and conservation of war memorials in the UK. The Trust provides advice and information to anyone as well as running grant schemes for the repair and conservation of war memorials. The War Memorials Trust website contains a wealth of information about memorial conservation, preservation and maintenance including [helpsheets](#) and [FAQ](#) for example on how to add or change the name on a memorial, fundraising and ownership.

3.1 New memorials

As already mentioned, the Government, except on rare occasions, does not provide public funds for new memorials. The War Memorials Trust also focuses its attention on the conservation and repair of existing war memorials. It does however provide a guide for those contemplating erecting a new memorial - [New War Memorials](#) - and also useful guides on [Fundraising](#) and [Planning in England and Wales](#). Further guides can be found on its [website](#).

One of the most prominent national memorials in recent years has been the new memorial to [Bomber Command](#) in central London which was dedicated by HM Queen in June 2012. It received widespread media coverage and was funded entirely by public donations.

3.2 Maintenance of memorials: legislation

The Veterans UK website provides the following explanation of the responsibilities of local authorities and memorials:

A large number of war memorials which had been erected by private subscription were subsequently handed over to parish councils, urban councils and boroughs to maintain. In order to ensure that every form of local council had the ability to raise appropriate funds to preserve these war memorials, the War Memorials (Local Authorities' Powers) Act 1923 was passed. Under the terms of this Act, as amended by section 133 of the Local Government Act 1948, the Parish Councils Act 1957 and the Local Government Act 1972, responsibility for the overall control of war memorials was vested with local authorities, who were empowered to incur reasonable expenditure for the maintenance, repair and protection of war memorials within their control. The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982 also apply for war memorials in Scotland. Those powers also extend to the alteration of a memorial to enable the fallen of any subsequent war to that for which it was originally intended, to be commemorated.

Whilst the above Acts empowered local authorities to care for war memorials, they did not compel them to do so. Responsibility for the provisions of the War Memorials (Local Authorities' Powers) Act 1923 rests with the Home Office. Responsibility for the

⁴ ["Veterans issues – Remembrance"](#), *Veterans UK*, accessed 2 May 2014

maintenance, repair and protection of individual war memorials lies with the owner, or the body in which ownership is vested.⁵

The exact wording of these Acts is provided in a War Memorials Trust factsheet: [Parliamentary Acts related to war memorials](#).

The War Memorials Trust has also compiled a list of 'War Memorials Officers' within local authorities who are responsible for memorials (the Trust says they are rarely called this as memorials is just one part of their job, but the Trust uses the phrase to identify the person who deals with war memorials). A list is provided on the Trust's website: [Your Local War Memorials officer](#).

The Trust also has a guide on [establishing ownership](#) of a memorial.

3.3 Sources of funds and grants

The War Memorials Trust provides a guide to [Fundraising](#). In addition, the following list provide further information on sources of funding:

- The [Department for Culture, Media and Sport](#) provides a [Memorial Grant Scheme](#).
- The [War Memorials Trust](#) (which also provides a guide to [Fundraising](#))
- [English Heritage](#)
- The [Heritage Lottery Fund](#) provides grants and advice on further sources of funding

World War One centenary

The Prime Minister announced a £5 million fund to help conserve, repair and protect First World War memorials and burial sites across the UK and overseas where British and Commonwealth servicemen and women are buried.⁶ The government is using fines paid by banks who attempted to manipulate the LIBOR to provide this funding. More information about Government plans to commemorate the First World War is available on the Government's website: [First World War Centenary](#).

The Heritage Lottery Fund has fund to support projects which explore the heritage of the First World War, including memorials. The Heritage Lottery Fund has a dedicated section of its website to the [First World War](#) grants and also provides answers to some [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about grants for memorials.

⁵ "[Veterans issues – remembrance](#)", *Veterans UK website*, accessed 2 May 2014

⁶ "Millions of pounds to support restoration and repair of First World War memorials", *Prime Minister's Office*, 19 December 2013