

Press release: Foreign Secretary Lends Support to Military Charity Campaign to Honour Commonwealth Soldiers

To mark the centenary of the First World War, the Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt will lend his support to the forces charity There But Not There to honour the over three million Commonwealth soldiers, sailors, airmen and labour corp who served.

There But Not There will install three 6ft figures of First World War soldiers in the Foreign Office to represent the unique contribution of Commonwealth servicemen from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Australasia and Canada and shine a light on the little known stories of our Commonwealth heroes.

The campaign, which launched in February, is raising money for a range of military and mental health charities. To date, it has raised over £4 million.

Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt said:

It is fitting that in the centenary year of the First World War we honour the immense contribution of our Commonwealth soldiers. Their bravery was key to securing the Allied victory. These men fought thousands of miles from their homeland, for a country they had never been to, but for a purpose they believed in. This installation will honour their heroism, shine a light on their stories and remind us that in the darkest hour people of all backgrounds can come together for a common cause.

General the Lord Dannatt, Patron of There But Not There and former Chief of the General Staff said:

The First World War had such an impact on towns and villages across the United Kingdom that the contribution of servicemen and women from across the Commonwealth is too often overlooked. Their sacrifice was immeasurable, as was the effect that it had on their own communities.

The Tommies in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office stand in recognition of this service as we approach one hundred years since the guns fell silent.

We are humbled to see the figures appear all over the country as well as outside the FCO and would implore members of the public around the world to get even further behind the campaign by ordering their own 10" perspex Tommy to have at home, as the

profits from these will support veterans that continue to suffer from the hidden wounds of war.

[There But Not There FCO installation](#)

Over nine million servicemen died in the First World War, including nearly a million from the Commonwealth.

Millions of Commonwealth soldiers helped secure the Allied victory, including that of Ghanaian soldier Alhaji Grunshi, the first soldier in British service to fire a shot in the First World War.

One third of all indigenous peoples of Canada served in the Canadian forces during the war. Many distinguished themselves, including Francis Pegahmagabow an expert marksman and scout who was awarded the Military Medal three times.

Almost two million Indian servicemen served in the First World War, including Hardutt Singh Malik, the first Indian to fly with the British Royal Flying Corps. Malik initially failed to qualify for the Corps but went on to be the sole Indian aviator to emerge alive from the war.

These are just a few examples of the millions of Commonwealth soldiers who fought for the freedoms we enjoy today, and who were fundamental to sustaining the war effort.

The Foreign Secretary's support for There But Not There, comes as the Ministry of Defence announced that Britain's military will increase the number of Commonwealth recruits to 1,350 per year, introduced over several years. The importance of the Commonwealth to the military is underlined by the fact that Britain already employs some 4,500 Commonwealth citizens in the Armed Forces.

Further information

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