

Press release: UK government marks centenary of Marshal Foch's appointment as Supreme Allied Commander in the First World War

The descendants of Field Marshal Haig and Marshal Foch joined Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and dignitaries from the UK and France at a ceremony dedicated to Ferdinand Foch.

His appointment marked the first time the Allied forces fought under one strategic commander and was a significant factor in the successful coordinated defence against the German Spring Offensive and the gains made by the Allies in the summer of 1918.

Attendees laid wreaths to honour Marshal Foch at the statue honouring him in Lower Grosvenor Gardens, Victoria, London.

Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

The decision to coordinate military operations under Foch's leadership was crucial. It united the Allied forces who then fought as one to victory and peace in November 1918.

Foch said he had served England as if she were his own country. In our final year of First World War centenary commemorations, it is right that we mark the appointment of Marshal Foch so future generations remember the pivotal role he played in the outcome of the war.

On 26 March, 1918, Marshal Foch was appointed Supreme Allied Commander on the Western Front. This was in response to the start of the German Spring Offensive, which pushed the Allies back to their 1914 lines.

This event is the first in the Government's 2018 programme that will help people understand how the nature of the war changed during the summer of 1918 and led to the signing of the Armistice on 11 November. The appointment of Marshal Foch as Supreme Allied Commander and the strategic leadership he brought were instrumental to the Allies' success at the Battle of Amiens and the subsequent Hundred Days Offensive.