

VISIT OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN TO TOBRUK

WAR CEMETERY 1st MAY, 1954

- (a) Her Majesty will be received at the roadside in front of the entrance by the Vice-Chairman of the Imperial War Graves Commission, who will present Colonel E.A. Griffin, Chief Administrative Officer for the Commission's Eastern District; Major C.R. Cameron, Area Superintendent for Egypt, the eastern half of Libya, Israel and Jordan; and Mr. O.D. Holt, a Principal at the Commission's Headquarters in London.
- (b) The party will then pass through the Gate House, and inside the entrance Mr. J.H. Ross, the custodian of the Cemetery, will be presented.
- (c) The party will move up the central avenue to the Australian Memorial; then turn left to visit the Indian Section, and proceed along the northern boundary past the Czech Memorial. At the far end they will turn right and mount the steps to the Cross of Sacrifice on the terrace, where a fine view is obtained.
- (d) The party will return by way of the southern boundary to the Polish Memorial, turning right to the Stone of Remembrance at the centre, where a wreath will be placed by Her Majesty.
- (e) From the Stone of Remembrance the party will return along the central avenue to the entrance prior to departure.

Note: Colonel Griffin is an Australian and was appointed in 1947.

Major Cameron, a New Zealander, joined the Commission's staff in 1944.

Mr. Holt has been a member of the staff since 1935. He was Private Secretary to the late Sir Fabian Ware from 1935 to 1946.

TOBRUK WAR CEMETERY

Tobruk War Cemetery was started in January 1941, the month that the Allies first entered Tobruk, and contains burials from the siege of April-December 1941. The garrison besieged in the town was at first chiefly Australian, but was relieved by sea, by Polish and British troops, between August and October 1941.

The graves number 2,478: United Kingdom, 1123; Canadian, 3; Australian, 559; New Zealand, 38; South African, 166; Indian, 172; Colonial, 115; Allied, 194; unidentified, 108.

The cemetery lies on the right of the road from Sollum to Tobruk, just before the harbour comes into view; it is set well back from the main road and is approached through an avenue of young Australian eucalyptus trees. On the right of the entrance to the gatehouse hangs the original bell of H.M.S. Liverpool. The bell is a symbol of the ships that were sunk in Tobruk Harbour. Through the arch a vista can be gained of the central path leading successively to the Australian Memorial, which marks the site of a temporary monument built by the Royal Australian Engineers during the siege, to the Stone of Remembrance at the centre of the cemetery, and finally up a broad flight of steps to the Cross of Sacrifice set on a high podium at the east end of the cemetery.

The enclosure walls at both sides contain four arched seat shelters. There are also two semi-circular shrines with appropriate memorials to the men of the Polish and Czechoslovak Forces who fell in or near Tobruk.

The cemetery is built of light pink-coloured stone from Sollum. The Australian Memorial on the main central path takes the form of a monolith of El Alamein white stone set on a raised

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platform. At the top there is a bas-relief map of Australia, and near the foot the following words are engraved:

AUSTRALIA

THIS IS HALLOWED GROUND

FOR HERE LIE

THOSE WHO DIED

FOR THEIR COUNTRY

The central path and the main paths are bordered with young trees, mostly pine, cyprus, eucalyptus and acacia, and with shrubs of various species. Experiments have been made with several different kinds of grass to form a green covering. Oleanders, geraniums and other perennials are planted along the rows of headstones.

A regular supply of water is obtained from a borehole, 300 feet deep, which is covered by an underground pumphouse. Storage tanks, with a total capacity of 7,000 gallons, have been accommodated in the buildings.

The cemetery has been designed by Sir Hubert Worthington, A.R.A., the Principal Architect for the Commission's Eastern District.

Libya is part of the Imperial War Graves Commission's Eastern District, the headquarters of which are at Cairo.

MEMORANDUM ON LIBYA, ITS HISTORY AND SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

1. Modern Libya is a Federal State composed of three provinces, Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and the Fezzan. Cyrenaica, in which Tobruk stands, has for centuries enjoyed a geographical isolation which has enabled it to live a life of its own insulated against world currents. It is cut off from the Nile delta on the east by 700 kilometres of semi-desert and from Tripolitania in the west by 1000 kilometres of what is known as the Desert of the Sertica but is simply an extension of the Sahara. The population of Tripolitania is approximately 800,000 including 45,000 Italians. Cyrenaica has a population of only 300,000, but almost all of this population is Arab. The Fezzan, the largest of the three provinces in area, has a population of only approximately 50,000.

2. The part of Cyrenaica in which Tobruk stands is known as the Marmarica or the Batnan. It is an area of very low annual rainfall characterised by low hills rising from the coast and extending for several kilometres towards the south. Wells are only found in the coastal belt and vegetation is confined to low desert shrubs. The Marmarica is bordered on the west by the Jebel al Akhdar or the Green Mountain. This stretches from the outskirts of Derna to near Benghazi.

3. The inhabitants of Cyrenaica are by tradition mostly Bedouin, and their dress is quite distinctive, being a woollen cloth or jerd which is either white or brown and made of sheep's wool. It is attached to the left shoulder by a hook, draped over the lower part of the body, then its ends are gathered together and thrown over the left shoulder. The general effect is dignified and not unlike that of a Roman toga. The Bedouin wear a small red or white skull cap and frequently throw part of their jerd over it at the back.

4. The name Cyrenaica naturally recalls the city of Cyrene. It was in 641 B.C. that the first Greek colonists came to the site of this town. In classical times there arose five cities in Cyrenaica - Cyrene, Apollonia, Tauchira, Barce and Berenice (modern Benghazi). The ruins of Cyrene are still very extensive. Although nominally conquered in 643 A.D. by Amr Ibn Al As, the original Berber inhabitants of the country were not really disturbed until the invasion of the Beni Halal and Beni Sulcim tribes in 1050. The Beni Suleim settled in Cyrenaica and are the ancestors of the modern Bedouin of Cyrenaica.

5. Prior to 1843, the year when Sayed Mohamed Senussi, the grandfather of King Idris the First of Libya, first set up his headquarters in the Jebel (Green Mountain), the people of Cyrenaica may be said to have been cut off from the main streams of Islamic history. Little was known of them in the outside world and they knew little of what went on beyond their own tribal boundaries. Now a new influence was brought to bear on them which, within a few years, made them a force to be reckoned with in world politics. This change was essentially the result of the work of one man, Sayed Mohamed Ali el Senussi.

6. The Sayed had been born in Algeria in about 1787. In 1843 he set up the first of a series of Zawias or centres for preaching at El Beida in the Jebel Akhdar. The missionaries whom the Sayed sent out from the Zawia at El Beida preached a return to the strict religion of early Islam with emphasis on the Koranic injunction that quarrels between believers were hateful to God. The foundation of a Zawia at El Beida was rapidly followed by the setting up of many others in Cyrenaica and elsewhere. Within a few years, however, the Sayed transferred his headquarters to the inaccessible oasis of Jaghbub beyond the sphere of influence of foreign Governments and on the main pilgrimage route from North-West Africa through Egypt to Mecca.

7. The Turks had been the nominal rulers of the whole of Libya for some hundreds of years, but their influence hardly extended outside the towns. The Sayed was therefore able to set up an imperium in imperio. He died in 1860 and was succeeded by Sayed Al Mahdi, the father of King Idris. The Turks continued to rule the coastal towns, and the Senussi, to all intents and

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purposes, the interior of the country until 1911, when the Italians landed forces at the principal parts in the country with the intention of driving out the Turks. The Senussi sided with the Turks and were at war with the Italians until 1917 when Sayed Idris, the present King Idris, who had succeeded to the headship of the Senussi Order in that year, was able to conclude a modus vivendi with the Italians. Shortly afterwards the Italians recognised Sayed Idris as the Emir of the country's cases with his seat at Agedabia. The country continued under the divided control of Italy and the Senussis until the Fascists came to power in Italy and denounced the Agreement with the Senussis. A long guerilla war followed, and the resistance of the Bedouin was not finally eliminated until 1932 though the Emir Idris, who did not enjoy good health, was forced to take refuge in Egypt early in the struggle. In 1940 as soon as Italy entered the war against the Allies, and at the lowest ebb of our fortunes, the Emir Idris approached us with the offer, which was accepted, to form a Libyan Army to fight with the Allies. Throughout the fighting in Cyrenaica the Senussis gave all the assistance in their power to our forces. This was recognised by Mr. Eden who, shortly after the final Allied occupation of Libya in 1942, promised in the name of H.M. Government that the Senussi in Cyrenaica should never again pass under Italian domination. On December 24, 1951, after many expedients had been proposed for the Government of the three provinces of Libya, of which Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were under a temporary British Military Administration, Libya was finally granted independence and the Emir Idris became its first King.

8. Libya enjoys a Federal Constitution which gives wide powers to the Provinces. It has a Chamber of Deputies based on proportional representation and a Senate whose members are nominated by the King and in which there is equal representation for each of the three provinces. There is also a Legislative and Executive Council for each of the three provinces.

9. In August 1953 Libya signed a Treaty of Friendship and Alliance with Great Britain which, after the approval of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, was finally ratified in November. Under this Treaty and its Military and Financial Annexes, Great Britain pays Libya £3,750,000 annually and is granted the right to maintain military bases in the country for a period of twenty years. £2,750,000 of Britain's financial grant is paid into the Libyan Exchequer and the remaining £1,000,000 into the budget of the Libyan Development and Stabilisation Agency which, as the name implies, is principally concerned with the economic development of the country.

10. An unratified agreement exists between Libya and the United States of America permitting the latter country to keep air bases in Libyan territory. Negotiations for the final text of this agreement are still taking place. Libya benefits from a United States Point Four programme on which approximately 1,750,000 dollars are expended annually.

11. There is an interim arrangement between Libya and France allowing the latter country to keep a small number of French troops in the Fezzan. France has been making a contribution of £263,000 annually to the Libyan finances.

12. The United Nations Technical Assistance organization spends about one million dollars annually in Libya.

HM THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO TOBRUK

THE ARMY PARADE -- 1 MAY, 1954

HM The Queen will inspect and review 300 troops representing the 25th Armoured Brigade District during her visit to Tobruk on 1 May.

Her Majesty will arrive at the parade ground from the Tobruk War Cemetery at 1010 hours and will depart for the Libyan Palace at 1040 hours.

On parade will be a Guard of Honour of The Royal Scots Greys - the Queen is Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiment - numbering 100 officers and men, and two composite companies of 1st Battalion The Sherwood Foresters numbering 200 officers and men.

Also on parade will be the Regimental and Pipe Bands of The Royal Scots Greys and the Regimental Band of the Sherwood Foresters.

The Guidon Party of The Royal Scots Greys will be positioned inbetween the two Divisions of the Guard of Honour; the Colour Party of the Foresters will be in the centre of the two companies.

On her arrival the Queen will be met by the Commander-in-Chief Middle East Land Forces, General Sir Charles F. Keightley, and escorted to a dais in the centre of the parade ground.

After the Royal Salute she will inspect on foot the Guard of Honour and the Bands of the Greys and then enter a Land Rover to review the Foresters. Driving the Land Rover, ~~which has been specially modified by 3 Base Workshops, DIME, Benghazi, will be Technical Quartermaster Sergeant J. Mitchell, of 44 Falmouth Avenue, Howley, Harrington,~~ will be a the senior NCO of the Royal Tank Regiment in the District.

General Keightley, Brigadier A.W. Brown (Commander 25 Armoured Brigade District), Lt-Col. M.G. Boxwick (Commanding The Royal Scots Greys) and Lt-Col. R.H.S. Popham (Commanding 1st Battalion The Sherwood Foresters) will bid Her Majesty goodbye as she leaves the parade ground.

Troops lining the ground will include men of the Royal Engineers and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps - Her Majesty is also Colonel-in-Chief of these Corps - and The Royal Scots Greys. The route to the parade ground will be lined by representatives of the Services in the District.

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The Queen's Equerry will be/Viscount Althorp, The Royal Scots Greys.

Sgt. J.R. Dakers, RASC, of 42 Delamere Road, Hayes, Middlesex, will drive the Queen's car, a Humber Pullman.

Note for Press Representatives: Colonel J.M. White and Captain W. Holmes of Army Public Relations, MELF, will be available to assist the press.