





# Plumb Bob

(Western efforts in building and supporting the Iraqi State)



**Mohsin Shawkat**



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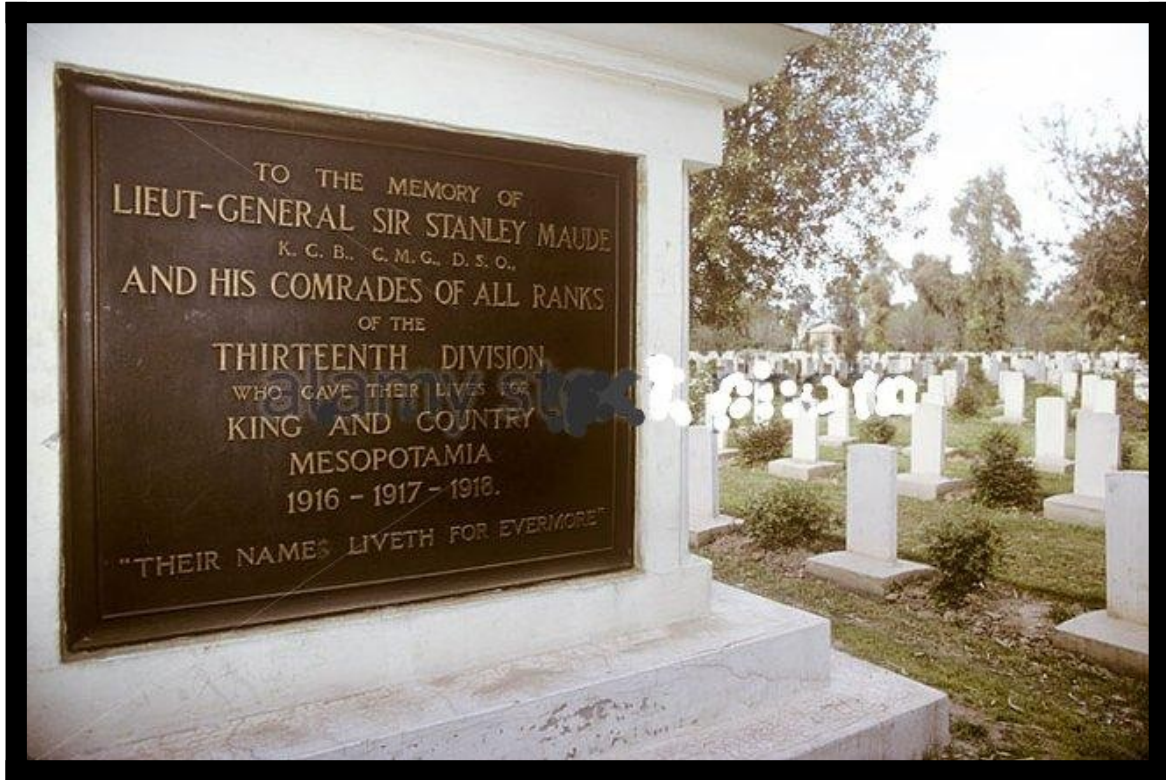


# Englishmen graves in Iraq

## The General's soul

My secondary school is located two hundred meters from the English cemetery in Baghdad - the northern gate (Bab al-Mu'adzam) - on the side of Rusafa. That was in the period (1974-1977). The cemetery was my garden and my sanctuary. Before the school day starts, I sit in it to review homework. The guard knows me, allows me to lie down among the graves and fall asleep on the green grass. I have memorized the names of many of the residents here. And preserved the phrase engraved on their graves: (THEIR NAMES LIVETH FOR EVERMORE). No one visits them or puts flowers on their graves. One day, I found myself leaning on the grave, whose picture you see below. I remembered a sentence of four words I had memorized: (We have come to you as liberators, not conquerors). This phrase is mentioned in the history book prescribed in Iraqi schools as a joke or to show the English (cunning). The end of the Ottoman presence in Baghdad, on March 11, 1917, will be called (the day of the fall of Baghdad), and the campaign of Mesopotamia (Mesopotamia Campaign 1914-1918), which ended 400 years of darkness, will be called (the occupation of Iraq). I fell asleep on this grave. I don't know exactly where this premonition came from: that something was wrong with the school education that we Iraqis used to feed on. The general's soul must have been hovering in that tomb. I felt him whisper in my ear his four words. He sent it to me from the realm of

eternity and immortality in which he lives. I was a young student who was ignorant of many things, but I vaguely felt that the tomb I fell asleep on was that of a great man. I had to go a long way to verify the credibility of these premonitions.



General Stanley Mud died of a cholera epidemic on November 18, 1917. A statue was erected for him in Baghdad in 1923 on the Karkh side, and it became a sign for the liberation of Iraq. A street, a hotel, a bridge, a hospital and a school were placed in his name in Baghdad, and there are three hospitals and three schools in his name in Kut, Amarah and Basra.





I had to live for many decades, in order to be able to look at the picture of the general above with another eye different from the eyes of the majority of Iraqis, which have been looking at him for almost a hundred years. I had to delve deep into Iraq's history for the past hundred years. To study it up to a square meter: dozens of books, thousands of pages, thousands

of documents, photos, films, and almost daily conversations for three years with friends I trust and whose intelligence I rely on.

Unfortunately, General Maude passed away before he saw that great edifice: the Iraqi state, in which he played a major role in its birth, along with other names of Britons and Iraqis. It is difficult to differentiate between them, but we have chosen some of them who represent the highest category of builders of the modern Iraqi state. It serves as the threshold to enter the rest of the long chain of leaders, engineers, doctors, architects, economists and financial experts, all technicians and administrators, army, police, security men and others.

For the sake of brevity, we decided to mention only the names of these leaders without listing their biographies. We hope that there will be a wider opportunity to give them their rights.

**\*\*\***

## The upper category of **Iraqi state builders**



**Percy Cox**



**Faisal I**



**Nori Al-Saeed**



**Arnold Wilson**



**Stanley Maude**



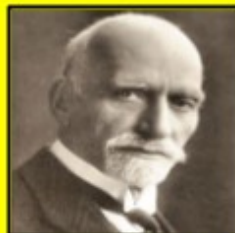
**Mohsin  
Al-Sadoun**



**William Marshall**



**Aylmer Haldane**



**Sassoon Eskell**



**Muzahim  
Al-Pachachi**



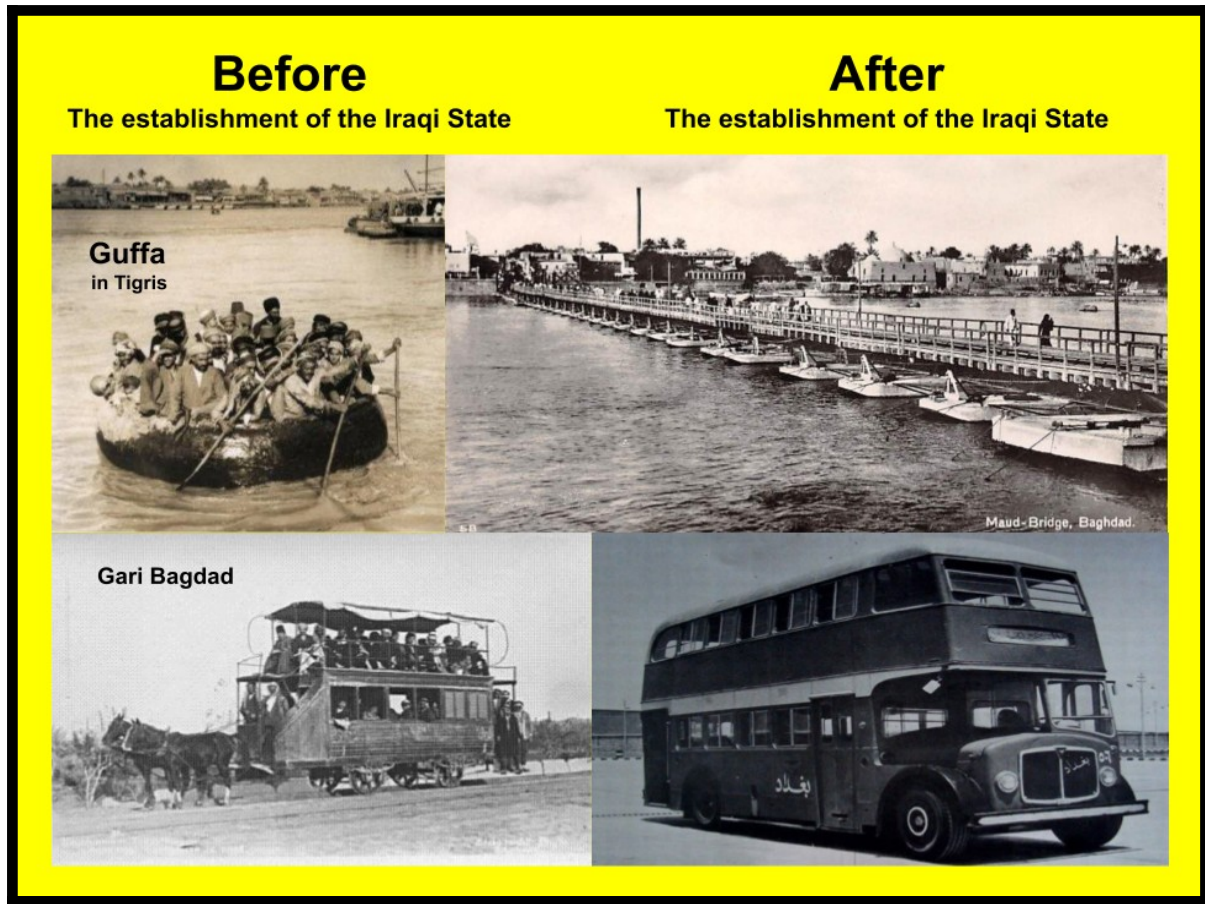
**Gertrude Bell**



**Thomas  
Lawrence**

After the establishment of the Iraqi state, the Quffa turned into a bridge, and the Baghdad transport carriage (Gari) turned into a double-decker bus.





This state, which I personally consider to be one of the greatest civilizational achievements in Mesopotamia, was the result of creative cooperation between elite Iraqis and the West. The impressive results achieved by the Iraqis within a short period of the Iraqi state's life are one of the biggest incentives that prompted me to write this book. Other than that, I am a former employee of the Iraqi state, and I served as an engineer in the Ministry of Industry. This book is, in part, a celebration of all those who contributed to building this country, both Iraqis and non-Iraqis.

The problem with many people is that they do not see things on their own, even if they are in front of their eyes. Someone must take their hand, or put marks or sharp, bright effects in order for them to feel that. Many Iraqis, for example, do not see the greatness of their state and the great achievements it has made in a relatively short period. Indeed, among them are those who have devoted themselves entirely to degrading the value of this state and calling for its destruction. In a separate book, we have diagnosed this model of Iraqis.

Our book aims, in large part, to restore the reputation of the Iraqi state, and patiently follows the foundations on which it was built, most important of which is the close connection with the West, especially in the scientific and technical field, and the adoption of digital data on the path to building state institutions in order to stand it on its feet and hand it over to its people to manage it. By themselves.

The Iraqi state has gone through three historical stages during the past hundred years:

- The first stage: the founding and construction stage from 1914 to 1958. (It is the subject of this book)
- The second stage: the stage of demolition, political liquidations, wars, the militarization of society, slogans, and anarchist culture 1958-2003 (which is the subject of another completed book)
- The third stage: The stage of rebuilding the Iraqi state after 2003, when the United States liberated the Iraqi state from the grip of Saddam and handed it over to the Iraqis with the ballot boxes. The United States pledged to protect this country and help its people transition to civil society. Until this moment, the United States continues to adhere to its commitment to the Iraqis and confirms it daily.

The sources for this book are many, and I do not have time to inventory them now, but I take the opportunity to thank the (Qatar Digital Library), which provided an opportunity for me to obtain important documents related to Iraq in that era.

**\*\*\***

## **The costs of liberating Iraq**

The poster below relates to the British campaign (Mesopotamia Campaign) that took place in the period 1914-1918, which resulted in the establishment of the Iraqi state.

To prepare the poster, we relied on three sources:

1. Patrick Crowley, Lieutenant Colonel in the British Army.
2. Professor Dr. Christoph Herzog: Bamberg University, Germany.
3. International Encyclopedia + Wikipedia.



## The costs of liberating Iraq

1914 - 1918  
(Mesopotamia Campaign)

### ● Losses of Britain and its allies



**Human casualties: 92.000**

(15.000 killed, 51.000 wounded, 13.000 captured and missing,  
13.000 victims of epidemics).

Source: Patrick Crowley, Lieutenant Colonel in the British Army.

**Material losses: £ 150 million**

Year 1914-1918

(Equivalent to 15 billion pounds in 2022).

Source: Professor Christoph Herzog,  
Bamberg University, Germany

### ● Losses of the Ottoman Empire



**Human losses: 325.000**

(13.000 killed, 22.000 wounded, 20.000 prisoners and missing,  
270.000 epidemics)

Source: International Encyclopedia + Wikipedia

**Material losses : Not available.**

\*\*\*

# British cemeteries in Iraq

(Most of the information is taken from the CWGC website).

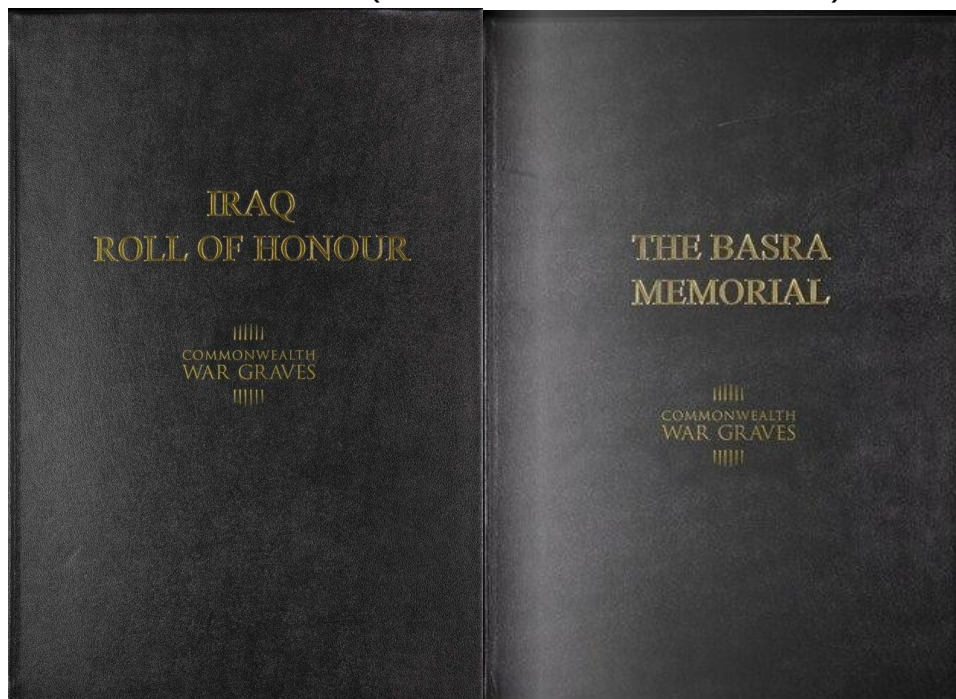
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).

Two volumes covering British cemeteries in Iraq:

Volume I

## **(IRAQ: ROLL OF HONOUR):**

It covers 18 sites, through which the names of 11,000 Commonwealth soldiers who participated in the Mesopotamia Campaign, between 1914-1921, which led to the establishment of the Iraqi state, are commemorated. In addition, this volume commemorates the names of 2,500 Commonwealth soldiers who fell in World War II between 1939-1947 and are buried in Iraq. This volume commemorates the 600 names of the Commonwealth dead who died on occasions outside the two world wars, as well as the 700 names buried in Commonwealth cemeteries who are from other countries (outside the Commonwealth).



Volume II:

## **(THE BASRA MEMORIAL):**

Because of the huge number in this memorial cemetery (40,000 names), who went missing in World War I, a volume has been allocated to them.





## **Basra War Memorial**

**Victims of Mesopotamia Campaign and establishing the Iraqi state,  
1914-1921**

**Number of names: 40 000**

**Location: Iraq- Basra - Zubair**

The two volumes are a complete encyclopedia of all available information about these cemeteries.

Brief: The CWGC commemorates more than 54,000 war victims from the Commonwealth of World Wars I and II, who are buried or memorialized at 19 sites in Iraq.

This means that the land of Iraq carries with it a memory:

# 54000

victims of 50 nationalities, mostly

**\*\*\***



## British cemeteries in Iraq

### **1- Bagdad Cemetery - Northern Gate (Bab Al-Mu'azzam)**

This cemetery was established in April 1917, and has expanded since the end of World War I, after the transfer of remains to it from other areas in Baghdad and northern Iraq, and the Anatolian cemeteries that contain the prisoners of the Commonwealth. Currently, the cemetery contains 4,160 Commonwealth victims of the First World War, identified by name. As for the number of unknown victims, it amounts to 2729.



This cemetery contains the tomb of the immortal General Sir Stanley Maude, commander of the Mesopotamia campaign, who entered Baghdad on March 11, 1917 and died there on November 18, 1917, as a result of a cholera epidemic. As for the remains of the victims of World War II from the Commonwealth countries, it is 296, most of whom died due to disease or accidental accidents. There are remains brought from separate graves.

**\*\*\***

**2- Getrude Bell's Grave (1868-1926)**

( Baghdad- East Gate )

We dealt with Gertrude Bell in detail in a separate book .



**\*\*\***

### **3- Elwiyya cemetery - Baghdad**

This cemetery was established after the British army entered Baghdad, at first it contained the remains of British and Indian soldiers, but then the British were transferred to the Bab al-Mu'azzam cemetery - Baghdad. Now in the cemetery there are the remains of 451 Indian soldiers, all of them unidentified, except for one.

**\*\*\***

### **4- Al-Rashid Camp Cemetery - Baghdad**

The cemetery was established alongside the (Huneidi) Air Base (now Al Rashid Camp). Previously it was the base of the British Royal Air Force. The cemetery contains the remains of 299 people who died outside the two world wars.

**\*\*\***

### **5- Khanaqin Cemetery**

This cemetery was established in 1942 to bury the victims of the Commonwealth and their allies in World War II, and it was intended for individuals who died outside the battle (as a result of illness or accidents). In Baghdad Cemetery - Northern Gate (Bab al-Mu'azzam) there is a memorial pavilion of Khanaqin Cemetery, to commemorate the 104 Commonwealth victims, 437 Polish soldiers, and 3 Arabs. Most of the Poles died as a result of illness, as they were originally prisoners of the Russians, and for a reason I do not know, they left Russia to join the Commonwealth forces after they traveled a great distance until they reached the small city Khanaqin. They died of exhaustion and were buried in the Khanaqin cemetery, which was later closed due to the difficulty of access and maintenance, and a wing was placed in the Baghdad cemetery, as we mentioned.

**\*\*\***

### **6- Basra Memorial**

This is Iraq's largest memorial to the victims of the two world wars from the Commonwealth of Nations. The memorial is currently located in the Zubair area, on the highway road between Basra and Nasiriyah. It was



originally standing on the banks of the river Shatt al-Arab in the dockyard (Al-Dakir).



In the late 1990s, it was moved, by decision of Saddam Hussein's regime, to the desert, 32 km from its original location, in an area where quarries abound. After many years of lack of regular maintenance, the

memorial is showing signs of ageing. However, what is required here is not just reform, as 30,000 names have been erased from it.



The challenge facing CWGC in Iraq is huge, said the committee representative:

(It is the equivalent of building a new monument in the middle of the desert, the size of Belgium's Tyne Cot, in a country where safe access cannot always be guaranteed. This monument is just one of 19 sites in the country for which we are responsible. Most of them have been damaged or degraded by conflict (yet 2003. The war is no stranger to Iraq.)

The committee had to stop its activities in Iraq on several occasions. In 1990 it officially withdrew from Iraq. It was simply because it is an unsafe country. In the absence of CWGC, many sites have deteriorated. Soils in Iraq generally contain high levels of salt and, without protective action, seep into tombstones, making them so fragile they could be crumbled by hand. Until 1997, the Basra memorial was located on the main dock for shipbuilding (Al-Masfin), which the people of Basra call (Al-Dakir), which is a translation of (Dockyard), very close to the Corniche Street and the statue of Al-Sayyab. By a presidential decree, the memorial was moved. The Iraqi authorities carried out the process of dismantling and rebuilding the memorial, and bore all costs of engineering work and transportation.

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### **Basra Memorial from the beach to the desert**

Mr. Qahtan Obaid, Director of the Antiquities Department in Basra (2020), says:

(The defunct regime (Saddam's regime) moved the monument from its original place in the shipyard (Al-Dakir) to the desert (Al-Shuaiba) under the pretext that the ships of the Commonwealth countries stand to salute it.)

The presidential decision to move the Basra Monument to the desert is an incorrect decision in our opinion, as it gave an unfriendly image of the Iraqi state during the time of President Saddam Hussein. These soldiers fell on the land of Iraq, and the monument is a witness to this event, a shrine for their families, and certainly a way to strengthen the relationship with the Commonwealth countries, and it is unreasonable to view it as a symbol of (colonialism) and (invasion) or a violation of the (sovereignty) of the Iraqi state, which These soldiers contributed with their blood to lay the foundation for this state, whether with their knowledge or not. The Iraqi state is the product of a world war in which most of the nations of the Earth participated. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was supposed to do the opposite, that is, take care of the memorial and provide the best atmosphere for its visitors, whether official or popular delegations. As for the issue of violating Iraqi sovereignty, it is a weak argument that does not stand up to the facts of reality. No country in the Commonwealth is thinking about violating Iraqi sovereignty. Iraq.

We would like to point out that the designer of Basra Memorial is the British architect: **Edward Prioleau Warren** (1856-1937).



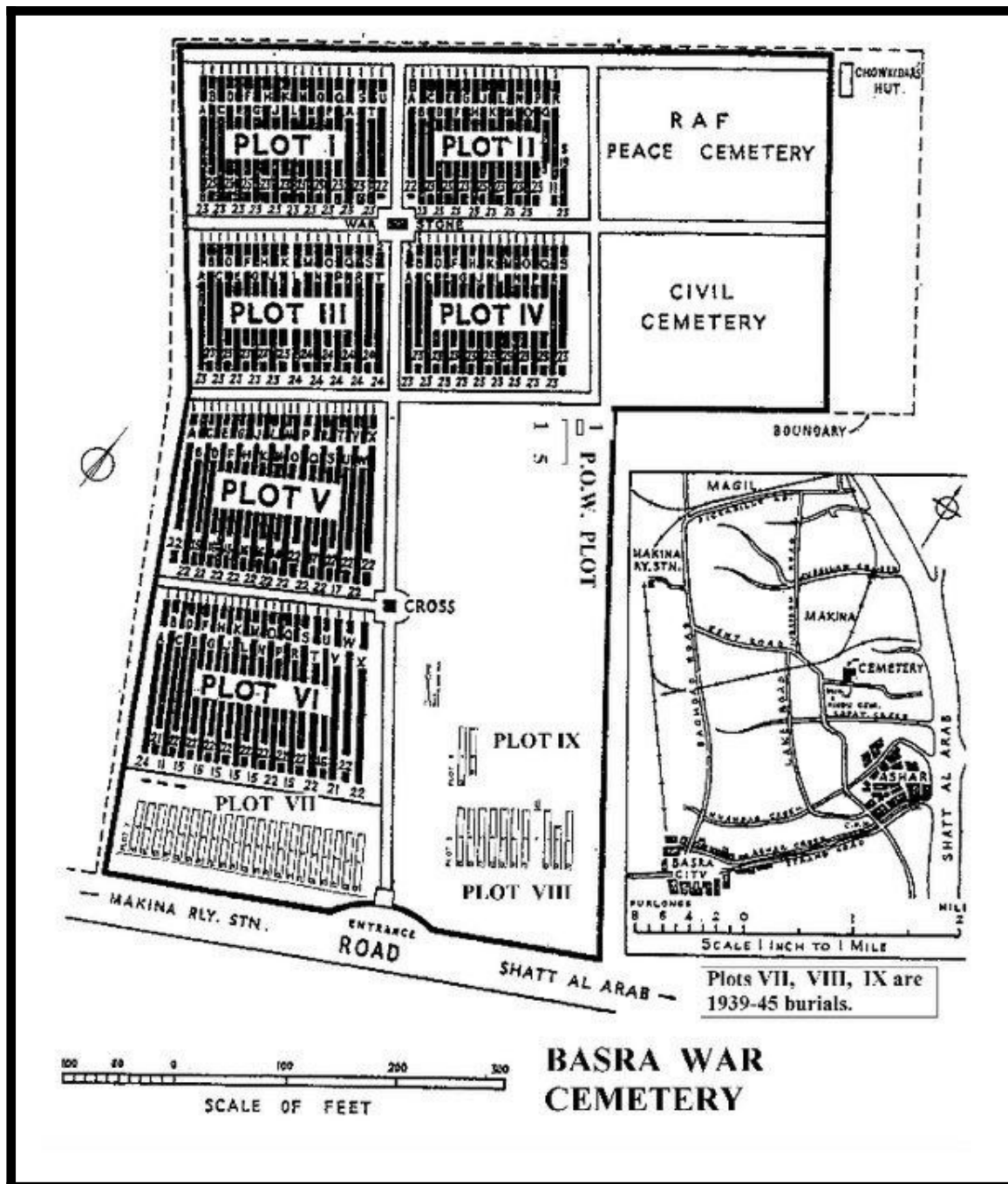
Warren designed many buildings of scientific colleges such as Cambridge, Trinity, Clifton, and Oxford; churches in Brighton, Keversham, Oxford, Southampton, Newark, and London, and a number

of palaces, bridges, hotels, and memorials. Sorry for the quick passage of this great architect who was associated with Iraq. During World War I, Warren was credited with serving in the Serbian army, and during that period he designed the war cemetery in Basra - Hakimiyya today. As for the Basra Memorial, work on it ended in 1929, and it was implemented by the Directorate of Public Works (a British military institution that turned into a civilian one). The Basra war Memorial was inaugurated by the British ambassador in Baghdad, Clayton.

### **7- The main cemetery of Basra-Makina (Al-Hakimiyyah).**

During World War I, Basra was occupied by the Indian 6th Division (Poona) in November 1914, and from that date the city became a base for the Expeditionary Force in Mesopotamia. The old Makina (Masus) cemetery was used from December 1914 to October 1916, then expansion began with the addition of a second site of corresponding land in August 1917. These two sites formed the basis of the war cemetery in Basra. The site was greatly expanded after the war as more than 1,000 remains were brought from the following sites: Ahvaz (Iran), Hakimiyya, Maqal, Mohammerah, Nasiriyah, Qurna, Shuaiba, and Tanumah.





The cemetery now contains 2,560 graves of World War I victims, 76 of which are unidentified and 10 non-Commonwealth victims (mostly Russian refugees). In 1935 it was decided to remove all the tombstones because the salty soil had damaged them. Instead, all victims of the Commonwealth are commemorated on a memorial wall built in the same year. The cemetery also contains a closed memorial (Tanuma Chinese Cemetery), commemorating the 227 (unidentified) Singaporean Chinese victims attached to the Inland Water Transport, during World War I. A plaque was added to the memorial wall in Basra when it became clear



that their graves (the Chinese Tanumah cemetery) could no longer be preserved. After the end of World War II, more graves were moved from parts of Iraq and Iran. There are 364 remains from this war, in addition to 36 of other nationalities, mostly Poles, and 109 victims who died naturally.

**\*\*\***

### **8- The Indian Cemetery - Basra -Makina (Al-Hakimiyyah).**

Casualties of the Indian forces were buried in this cemetery during the First World War, but their numbers and names are not recorded; Therefore, the graves in this cemetery are distinguished by two memorials of a general nature, one commemorating the soldiers of the Hindu and Sikh religions, and the other commemorating the Indian Muslim soldiers. Also buried in the cemetery are 75 Turkish prisoners of war, whose memory is commemorated in a memorial among the 278 Turkish soldiers buried in Basra and elsewhere. It must be noted that the Shuaiba camp ( south Basra) contains a cemetery belonging to the Indian army, which was supposed to be permanent. In 1944, graves from Abadan, Al-Ahwaz, Muhammarah, Kermanshah and Andimishk were transferred to it. Later it turned out that Al-Shuaiba was not fit to be permanent because of the climate and soil, which caused damage to the tombstones, so it was closed in 1958 and its contents transferred to the Indian cemetery in Basra. The Indian forces cemetery in Basra now contains the remains of 292 fallen soldiers of World War II, 12 of which are unidentified. There are also 25 graves of victims of accidents outside the war, 10 of which are unidentified. Within the frame of the cemetery is the Indian (Crematorium) memorial.

**\*\*\***

### **9- The Indian Crematorium Basra-Makina (Al-Hakimiyyah).**

It is a Basra cremation memorial, which commemorates the 1,032 soldiers of the Indian Army who died in Iraq and Iran during World War II. Their remains were cremated according to their faith.

**\*\*\***

### **10- The Chinese Tanumah Cemetery-Basra**

This cemetery contains the remains of 227 Chinese from Singapore (without names), who were working in the Inland Water Transport in Iraq, and were victims during the First World War. This cemetery, which is located in the Al-Tanuma area (the left bank of the Shatt Al-Arab), was closed due to the difficulty of maintenance, and a new wall was added to the Basra Memorial Cemetery to commemorate them.

\*\*\*

### **11- RAF Cemetery - Basra-Makina (Al-Hakimiyyah)**

British Royal Air Force (RAF). Al-Makina area is currently called Al-Hakimiyyah. In this cemetery are the remains of 71 Commonwealth nations who died outside the two world wars.

\*\*\*

### **12- Civil Cemetery - Basra -Makina (Al-Hakimiyyah)**

The cemetery is located in the Al-Hakimiyyah area in the center of Basra. It contains the remains of 266 civilians (identified and unidentified), including two sailors, who died during the second war.

\*\*\*

## **A comprehensive poster for the cemeteries of Basra**



\*\*\*

### 13- Kut Cemetery Cemetery

area: 2000 square meters.

Number of graves: 420.

This cemetery was established by the 6th Indian Division in October 1915, and then expanded when remains were brought from other sites after the armistice. The cemetery currently contains 420 graves of

victims of World War I. British Military Attaché Adam McCray visited the British cemetery in Kut to inspect its restoration work after 60 years of neglect. In the picture is the British military attaché (with hat) in the cemetery.







\*\*\*

#### **14- Al-Amarah Cemetery-1**

(right bank of the Tigris)

Two Iraqi satellite channels Dijla and Al Janoubia met with Mr. (Abu Ali), who told them that he inherited the care of the English cemetery in the city of Amarah in the year (1983) from his father and ancestors.

He gave this information: The cemetery contains the remains of 4843 of 56 nationalities, most notably the English, the Scots and the Indians,

including Ugandans, Nigerians, Finns and even Egyptians. Its area is 13.5 dunums, and its location is on the Tigris River, adjacent to the Mandaean (Iraqi religious minority) Temple. In 1937, the cemetery contained ordinary graves with tombstones, but the British authorities removed the tombstones and replaced them with a long wall containing full information for all the victims. The information of Mr. (Abu Ali) does not exactly match the following information (CWGC): This cemetery contains the remains of 4,621 victims of World War I, of whom 925 are unidentified. In 1933, due to the salinity of the soil, all the tombstones were removed, and a long wall was erected containing the names, military units, ranks, etc. of the victims. There is a piece of the wall reserved for the unknown, and there are seven people in the cemetery who died outside the war.



\*\*\*

## 15- Al-Amarah Cemetery - 2

(left bank of the Tigris)

This cemetery contains the remains of 5,000 victims of the Indian army, who fell in World War II after November 1918. There is no information about them, except for 9 victims.

\*\*\*

## **16- Mosul Cemetery**

This cemetery contains the remains of 191 victims of World War I, of which only six are identified. All of the people here are from the Indian forces. There is one stele commemorating an English victim, who was buried in the French Dominican Church of Mosul. During World War II, Mosul was reoccupied in June 1941 until the end of the war. There was a need to expand the area of the cemetery to accommodate new numbers of dead as a result of diseases or other accidents. It was also decided to convert the Mosul cemetery into a fixed one, and transfer the remains of the civilian cemetery in Mosul, the British military cemetery in Kirkuk, and the Muslim cemetery in Kirkuk, due to the difficulty of maintenance. The cemetery contains 145 victims of the second war, two graves of two victims who died outside the war, and 13 employees of the British Consulate in Mosul.

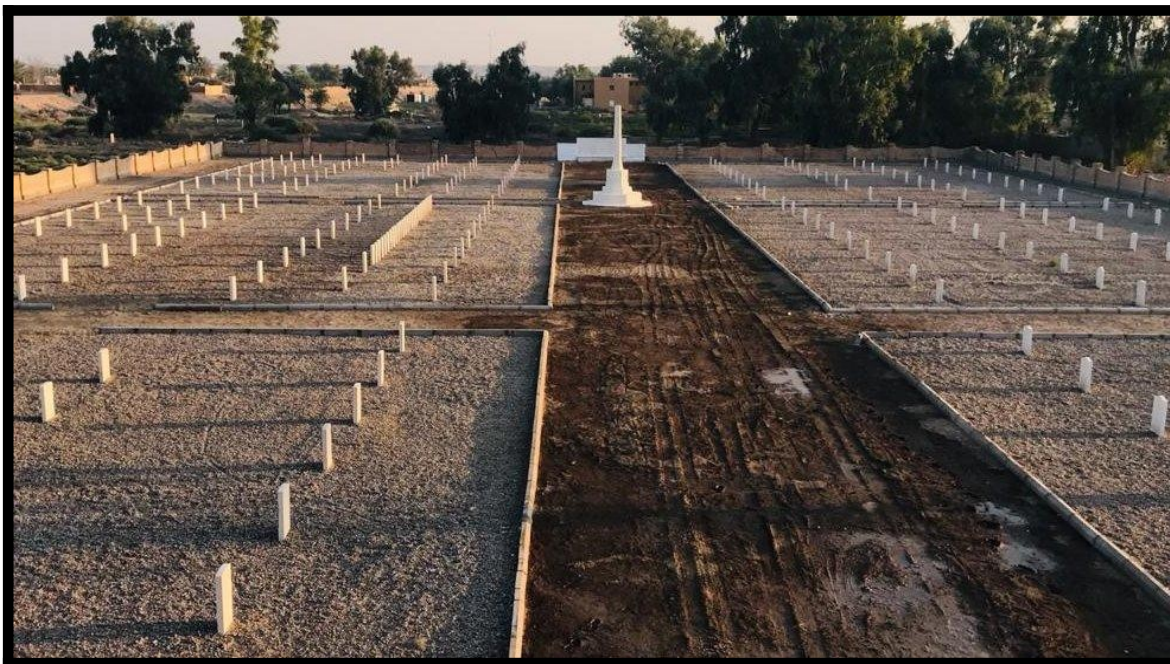
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## **17- Habbaniyah Cemetery Habbaniyah**

area (80 km northwest of Baghdad)

is the British air base in peacetime, according to the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930. Before World War II, it was used to bury members of the British Royal Air Force (RAF), but then it turned into a burial ground for the victims of the May 1941 coup, which prompted The British administration to quell it and restore legitimacy to the Iraqi state. The number of British casualties due to the Mays incident is 60, buried in the Habbaniyah cemetery.





Rehabilitation of Habbaniyah Cemetery, by CWGC after 2003

As for after World War II, a British Royal Air Force plane crash occurred (in Jordan) in 1957, killing 24, and they were buried in the Habbaniyah cemetery. In the cemetery are the remains of 162 Commonwealth nations who fell in World War II. There are the remains of 10 Poles and one Norwegian, and there are the remains of 117 dead outside the World War. The cemetery also contains the remains of all employees at the base who died due to illness or accidental accidents. in the graveyard.

\*\*\*

### **18- Habbaniyah Memorial Cemetery**

The memorial cemetery (located within the Habbaniyah cemetery) to commemorate the 106 names of the Levy forces (soldiers and pilots), who served in Iraq, fell and were buried in remote graves that are difficult to maintain.

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### **19- Four English civilians were killed in Iraq.**

Three of them in one day: June 13, 1941, and the fourth on January 18, 1943. Their names are known, and there is no information about their burial places.

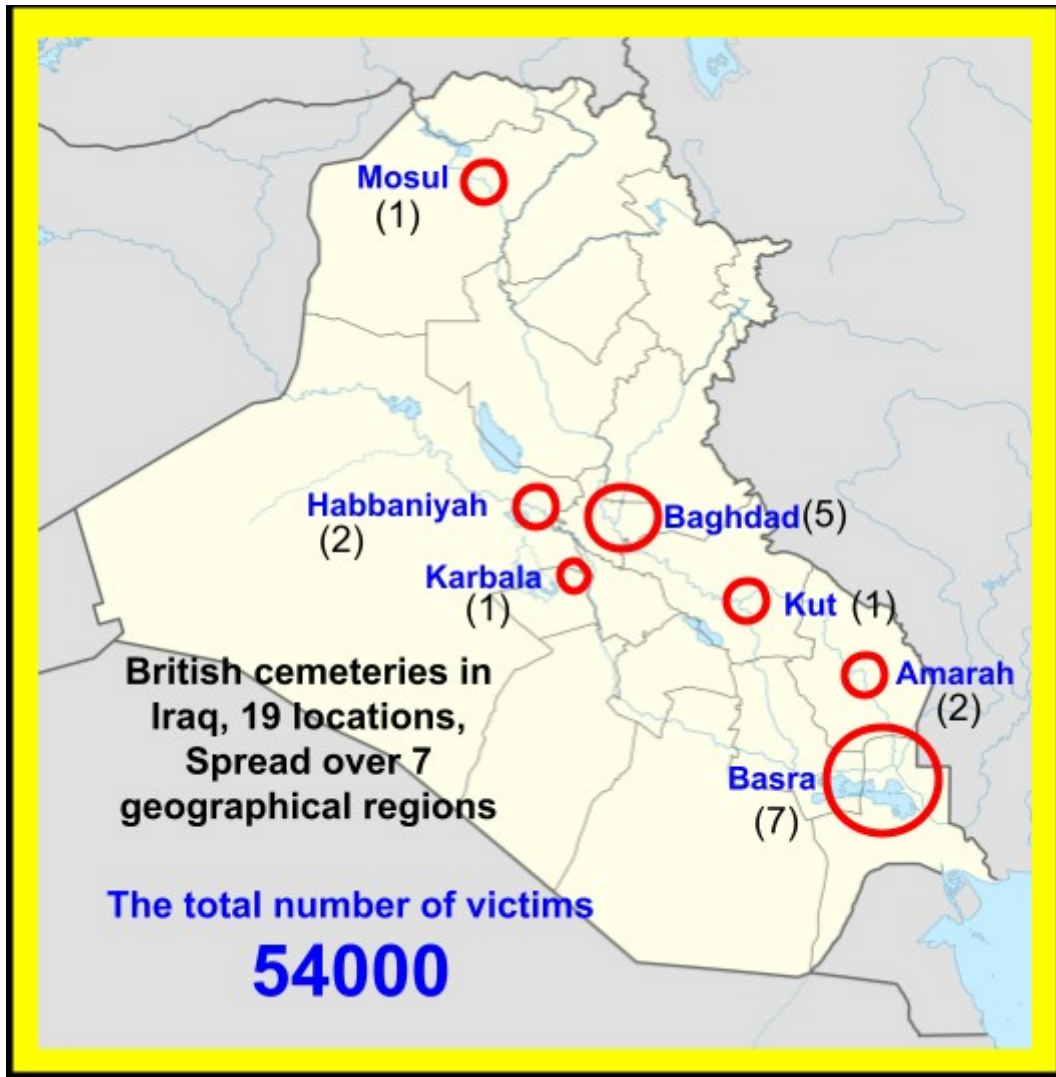
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### **20- Grave of an Indian officer in Karbala**

In this city there is a grave of an Indian officer who was killed in Kermanshah in 1943 during World War II.

\*\*\*

## Cemetery locations in Iraq



Baghdad: 5 locations

Basra: 7 locations

Amarah: 2 locations

Kut: 1 location

Mosul: 1 locations

Habbaniya: 2 locations

Karbala: 1 location

.....



Total: 19 locations

## Total number of victims: 54,000

\*\*\*

### A sight unworthy of the dead

Neglect of the graves of the English in Iraq raises a big question mark? During a hundred years in Iraq, I did not hear about a visit (official or popular) to the graves of the English scattered throughout Iraq. This scene is linked to the culture prevailing there over the past 100 years, which we examined in a separate book. This culture has not been subjected to any rational review. Iraqi culture still views these dead as “invaders” or “enemies,” although evidence confirms something else. Look at the picture below where the children are playing. Raymond Young is a young man who came with the American mission (the Arab mission) that opened the first schools in Basra.





This phenomenon raises regret, because it has a negative impact on Iraq's relationship with the countries to which these victims belong. Whatever the reasons that led to their death or the explanations and positions towards them, the grave is a place for a person who is no longer alive. Direct information indicates that most of these victims were killed in the Mesopotamia Campaign 1914-1918, which resulted in the birth of the Iraqi state, and they are not (Colonists) as evidenced by the fact that not a single Englishman lives in Iraq (except the ambassador) and there is not a single square meter in the name of Britain in Iraq. On the other hand, 300,000 living Iraqis live in Britain, while the dead among them are buried in decent British cemeteries, and no one plays football between their graves. Unfortunately, during the past hundred years, there has been no Iraqi effort or initiative at the official or popular level to care for the graves of the English. Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). A plan was prepared to rehabilitate 19 sites in Iraq.

\*\*\*

**note:**

In the next few pages, we will jump to the year 2003. It is a limited jump in which we will discuss the graves of the English who fell in Iraq in the process of removing Saddam's regime, and we will also discuss the American victims in that war. It is a temporary diversion, after which we will return to continue laying the foundation stone for the Iraqi state in the last century.

This historical leap is not far from the focus of the book (Western efforts to build and support the Iraqi state), because it represents the rebuilding and protection of that state that was gradually destroyed starting in 1958.

**\*\*\***

# 2003-2009

## Moving The Wall

### From Basra to Birmingham



In 2006, the British Army's 37th Engineer Unit created a mural for British casualties who participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. These (179) are victims of the British contribution to liberating Iraq from Saddam's grip. They fell between 2003 and 2009. From sequence (1): Captain Philip Guy, to sequence (179): Private Ryan Wrathall. ).





In the picture above: The original memorial mural that was erected in Basra in 2006. The 179 brass plaques commemorate the British victims for the period 2003-2009. The Iraqi flag stands in the middle of the American and British flags, indicating the solidarity of the two superpowers with the Iraqi state.

Until 2009, the memorial wall was still standing opposite the headquarters of the Multinational Forces at Basra Airport. With the complete withdrawal of the British forces from Iraq and the handing over of their duties to the Iraqi forces, the number of victims will be 179. This is the total number of brass plaques that were placed in the wall and contain the names, dates, and units of the victims. However, the matter did not end naturally. In 2009, the wall was targeted by outlaw armed groups in Basra. The British authorities were forced to dismantle it, transport it completely to Britain, and re-erect it in the National Arboretum of Memorials (Arboretum) north of Birmingham.

It is not difficult to understand the real motives for targeting the above memorial wall by the unruly armed groups in Basra, whose ambitions have expanded to the point that they have taken control of the oil wells in Basra. The British Army, along with the coalition forces, stood by the Iraqi government to restore its control over Basra and the oil fields, which represent more than 60% of the country's wealth. In 2008, the Iraqi army launched a massive military operation (Salat al-Fursan) to retake Basra

and other southern cities. The British Army played a wonderful role in this operation, and no less than 50 soldiers fell in this battle.

After receiving a series of threats, followed by repeated bombings, the wall was moved from Basra to Britain. The new location of the wall is 5,000 km away from its original location, which is the National Memorial Arboretum near Birmingham.



In the National Arboretum of Memorials there is a plaque identifying this wall that reads:

(This memorial wall was rebuilt at the National Memorial Arboretum using bricks and panels from the original wall, built by members of the British contingent in Basra in 2006, which was dismantled and returned at the end of combat operations in 2009. The wall contains 179 memorial plaques to people who lost their lives in Iraq).

The picture below is the new location of the Basra Memorial Wall.



\*\*\*

## 2003-2020

### The American casualties for Iraqi freedom

The American entry into Iraq in 2003 is a large topic, requiring a book on its own, so we will go over it briefly here, addressing only to the behavior of the prevailing Iraqi culture regarding the American sacrifices of life during that war. The cost of removing Saddam was huge, including huge sums of money and American casualties on Iraqi soil.

The title that the American administration chose to remove Saddam is: **(Operation Iraqi Freedom)**, which is an accurate and correct title. Iraq was a prison in every sense of the word, and the prisoner is the majority of the Iraqi people, but the jailer is Saddam Hussein, who holds all the keys in his hand. On April 9, 2003, this prison was opened by the brave American army, and the prisoners were released.

Many in the world are ignorant or ignore the fact that no less than 80% of Iraqis support the removal of Saddam, and they had no other choice but American military intervention, after all their previous attempts had failed.

## **Iraq Liberation Act-1998**

It is the law enacted by the US Senate (Congress) in 1998, according to which Saddam's regime was removed and a democratic regime was established in Iraq 2003. On October 5, 1998, the US Congress voted on the law with 360 members :Yes, 38 members: No, and 36 abstentions. On October 30, 1998, US President Bill Clinton signed it.

As for the Iraqi vote on the law, it was no less than 80% of Iraqis, represented by the Iraqi opposition in exile, who were connected to the Iraqi components. An Iraqi political framework was formed inside Iraq (Erbil) in 1992, aiming to overthrow Saddam, and receiving support from the American administration.

The Iraq Liberation Act-1998, confirms a number of crimes of Saddam's regime: the Eight Year War, Anfal, Halabja, the invasion of Kuwait, prohibited weapons, the attempt to assassinate President Bush, a second attempt to invade Kuwait, the invasion of Erbil, obstructing the work of United Nations inspectors, and stopping the international monitoring program.

## **The cost of liberating Iraq**

The numbers below are based on a study by researcher Neta C. Crawford, Brown University.

Period 2003 - 2020.

- **US Army casualties: (4489).**
- **Financial cost: (2 trillion) dollars.**

To take a broader picture, we will add the victims contracting with the US Army (3,481) and the wounded (32,000). There are unforeseen costs for the families of the victims, the disabled, and the long-term care program, as the bill will later rise to (3) trillion dollars. This post is dedicated to America. As for the losses of the coalition forces, in addition to the losses of the Iraqis (military and civilian), we will postpone them to another occasion.

We will leave the money aside and focus on the number of American casualties in lives:

**4489**



The surprising thing is that there is no cemetery or memorial for the American army in Iraq. Indeed, there has not been a single day or minute of silence in the past twenty years. This paradox was one of the motivations for reviewing Iraqi culture over an entire century and searching for an explanation through it. I completed this review in an independent book, which I hope to publish later.



In order to see the magnitude of the paradox, we must see the opposite picture. My research led me to the American Cemetery in Margraten, Netherlands. It is a cemetery for American soldiers who fell in World War II to liberate the Netherlands and the rest of Europe from Nazi occupation. The cemetery is located in the village of Margraten in the Limburg province, southeast of the Netherlands, and contains 8,288 graves. The cemetery was established in 1944 on an area of 30 hectares. This piece of land was granted by the Dutch government to America as pure and absolute property. The picture below is of the cemetery that resembles the Garden of Eden.



This cemetery helps us draw a comparison between Iraqi and Dutch culture, or rather know how Iraqis are raised compared to the Dutch regarding a particular topic. The common element in this issue is the American army, which liberated both countries. In the Netherlands there was Hitler and Nazism, and in Iraq there was Saddam and the Baath Party. Margraten Cemetery is a message of reverence for the victims and gratitude from the Dutch people to the American people.





In the photo: President Bush, with Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands , PM Balkenenda, and The First Lady, Laura Bush, at the Margraten Cemetery - 2005.



Who is the force capable of writing off a major and decisive historical act like Operation Iraqi Freedom - 2003, and then turning it into something reprehensible, a mistake that should be overlooked or forgotten, or that America should correct or at least not repeat in another country?!

Who is the force capable of turning things upside down and turning the liberated soldier into an aggressor?!

Who is behind the absence of a cemetery, memorial shrine, or minute of silence? These and other questions are the focus of the independent study we referred to above.

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After this historical leap, we will return again to the last century to continue laying the foundation stone of the Iraqi state.

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# Corps of Royal Engineers

## 1914-1918

November 1914 can be considered the moment of direct contact between Iraq and Western civilization (Britain). We will see later that Britain sent its best men, women, and administrative formations, whether military or civilian. One of the objectives of this research is to investigate the records of these great men, and to know the contribution of each of them in this civilizational contact. Standing at the forefront of these British administrative formations: the **Corps of Royal Engineers**, which would undertake the laying of the first Western civilization pillars in the ancient country (Mesopotamia). Everything that these engineering units would do carries two faces at its beginning: military and civilian, but over the years it will be completely civilian, and it would be the nucleus of the infrastructure of modern Iraq, and therefore we will avoid those demagogic labels that distort this contact. There is no doubt that the British army, in order to achieve victory over the Ottoman army, had to extend railways, pave roads, put bridges, and establish hospitals for the wounded and for the large number of soldiers who flock to Iraq. However, when victory had been achieved, the British did not destroy these roads, dismantle them, sell them to the Iraqis, or transfer them to another country. Rather, they quickly and smoothly turned into property of the Iraqi state, which they built on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. This is what we will see clearly in this research. While we are conducting this survey, we must go through a lot of demagogic rhetoric that has passed a century ago and is still alive. We will not tolerate those who



distorted the contours of this petition under various pretexts. We will stop at organized obliterations. These (obliterations-طمسيات) are part of the objectives of this research.



After the entry of the British Army into Basra in November 1914, we shall find that the engineering effort for a period fell to an Indian unit, chiefly sappers, of the 6th Division, providing its services to the entire swarming

army. This unit has undertaken various engineering works outside its original work (laying and removing mines). With the passage of time it became clear that the size of the business needs a greater vision. In March 1915, engineering reinforcements were sent to Basra. These reinforcements will be the nucleus of the Works Directorate, which will grow and expand with the days, months and years. Reinforcements consisted of: Assistant Director of Works, with his deputy, and a company consisting of three officers, three British subordinates, 6 Indian supervisors, and 3 clerks. The list is empty of artisans. With this humble beginning, the Directorate of Works was born, and it continued to grow with the campaign until it reached its end in 1918 to 240 British officers and more than 19 thousand recruits. Added to them are several thousand Arab workers (the local population). In the beginning, the Directorate of Works carried out the following works: The engineering park, which serves as the main warehouse for supplying all the necessary materials for engineering works, and at the same time it is a headquarters for engineers. The park was responsible for: roads, buildings (including shelters, hospitals, rails, airports, and drainage works sanitation), river sidewalks, flood protection, irrigation, electrical and mechanical works (lights, fans, water supply, ice making, and the introduction of electric refrigerators). Later, agricultural mechanization was introduced throughout Iraq.

## **Works Directorate**

Major A.F. Cumberlege can be considered the first official of the Directorate of Works. In June 1915 he suffered an accident (we do not know if it was related to the war or not) that caused him a disability that led to his exemption from responsibility, so he was replaced in April 1916 by Brigadier General A.J.H.Swiney, who later handed over responsibility to Brigadier General E.R.B.Stokes-Roberts After his promotion to Director of Works, and a higher military rank. He is assisted by Colonel Edgar (D.K. Edgar). In the middle of 1917, the work of the Directorate expanded greatly, so that the number of senior officials in it reached 16, we mention the three colonels: E. C. Ogilvie, C. B. L. Greenstreet, and H. L. Pearson. Here we must mention with regret the death of Brigadier General Robert Stokes in Baghdad in November 1917 due to the stress resulting from the burden of work and responsibility. He was buried in the