



War Office
Whitehall
30th April 1919

My Dear First Lord

I read with pain your letter to General Fabian Ware about the condition of the British cemeteries in France. The difficulties with which we have had to cope have been enormous and we are by no means at the end of them. General Headquarters were not very helpful, but their difficulties also during the period of demobilisation were enormous.

I have now arranged that 1,500 cemetery workers shall start from this country within the next week or ten days. This will be enough to keep the cemeteries in order.

So far as the 160,000 isolated graves are concerned, the task is more difficult. I do not see how I can provide the 15,000 men necessary to collect those bodies into the regular cemeteries within a period of six months. I have, however, told the Adjutant General that he must immediately provide 5,000 men who will work continuously through the Summer and Autumn on this task.

Yours sincerely
Winston S. Churchill

The Right Hon. Walter H. Long,
MP.

OPC Note:-

Walter H. Long was at the time of writing First Lord of the Admiralty, he had previously sat as MP for Wiltshire North and after that constituency was abolished became the MP for Devizes. He died in West Ashton in 1924. General Ware was one of the Committee who set up the idea of the IWGC now the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.