

TELEPHONE:  
BOURNE END 594  
TELEGRAMS:  
COMGRAVES, WOOBURN GREEN



COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION,  
Wooburn House,  
Wooburn Green,  
High Wycombe, Bucks.

London Office:  
32 Grosvenor Gardens,  
London S.W.1

7th April, 1961.

Ref.:

Dear Mr. Preece,

I am writing to you about the grave of your son the late  
Leading Aircraftman John Colin Preece, Royal Air Force, in Palembang  
Dutch War Cemetery, in Sumatra, Indonesia.

Many of the Commonwealth war graves in that country are situated in  
Commonwealth plots in the same cemeteries as plots of Dutch war graves.


About three years ago the Government of Indonesia made it clear that  
they required the Netherlands authorities to reduce the number of sites in  
Indonesia containing Netherlands war graves by approximately one half of their  
existing number. This requirement by itself would unfortunately have necessitated  
the movement of a certain number of Commonwealth war graves. Subsequently,  
however, in the course of the negotiations which have taken place as a preliminary  
to the signature of a Commonwealth-Indonesian Agreement on war graves, the  
Government of Indonesia have informed the Commonwealth representatives in that  
country that they can only make available two sites for the re-burial of the  
Commonwealth war dead.

The reluctance of the Commission and the Commonwealth governments to  
agree to the disturbance of established war graves, except in circumstances of  
real and public interest, has been impressed upon the Indonesian Government. I  
regret, however, that the Commission have now been advised that it will only be  
possible to obtain complete security for the Commonwealth war graves if these  
are regrouped into two sites, in accordance with the views of the Indonesian  
Government.

It has accordingly been agreed with the Government of Indonesia that  
the Commonwealth war graves in Java and Sumatra and in the adjacent islands will  
be transferred to a new site made available by that Government at Djakarta, the  
capital of the Republic. By the terms of the Commonwealth-Indonesian War Graves  
Agreement, which is to be concluded shortly, perpetual security of tenure in  
respect of the land on which the cemetery at Djakarta will be situated is  
guaranteed to the Commission.

Arrangements for the construction and horticultural development of the  
new war cemetery at Djakarta will be the responsibility of the Commission's  
Anzac Agency. Once completed the cemetery will be maintained to the same  
standard as other war cemeteries in the Commission's care throughout the world.

Yours sincerely,

  
Director-General

W.F. Preece Esq.,  
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Harley,  
Shrewsbury,  
Shropshire.