

TCRC Case Study: El Alamein War Memorial, Egypt



Expert Installation & Project Management Transforms Historic WWII Landmark

El Alamein War Cemetery is the largest Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in Egypt. Unveiled in 1954 by Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, the cemetery contains more than 7,200 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War, of which more than 800 are unidentified.

It contains the graves of servicemen who died during all stages of the campaigns in the Western Desert and whose remains were brought into the cemetery from a wide area, but especially those who died in the Battle of El Alamein at the end of October 1942 and in the period immediately before. There are also some 100 war graves of other nationalities.

A Project of Immense Historical Value

At the entrance to the cemetery is the CWGC Alamein Memorial. It bears the names of almost 12,000 British and Commonwealth servicemen who have no known grave. The memorial takes the form of a cloister, some 80 metres long, and is entered through three arches which lead to a wide hall where the names are inscribed in stone. Broad stairs lead to a roof top terrace with stunning views across the desert and in the distance, the Mediterranean Sea.

Due to the historical and sentimental value of this site, with 000's of lost servicemen names inscribed in the stone on the underside of the memorial, it is imperative that the roof performs and protects the building from water ingress. The performance and aesthetics of the roof are particularly important due to the fact that it also acts as a large, paved viewing platform from which visitors can gain a unique perspective of the enormity and scale of battle and where the many lost servicemen lie.

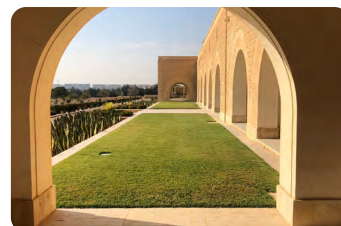
For this highly prestigious and historically important project, TCRC were selected to install a range of roofing and waterproofing products from leading manufacturers, including Garland, SIG Roofing and Aggregate Industries.

Project Name: El Alamein War Memorial

Location: Egypt

Client: Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Products: Garland SA Contact Primer
Garland Torch-Flex / S-A Vapour Control Layer
Garland Torch-Flex / S-A Underlay
Smooth Finish Slabs & Lead Chute Outlets



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Designing a Sympathetic Waterproofing Solution

In the initial stages of this project, TCRC attended site with the client in order to undertake an investigative survey and feasibility study. This enabled us to be able to establish the nature of the existing make up and create the most appropriate specification proposal. TCRC then worked closely with both the client and all manufacturers to create a sympathetic design and specification that would be suitable for this listed architectural building in such a unique location. This consisted of an inverted roof build-up, incorporating specially selected products which are rated to withstand desert temperatures.

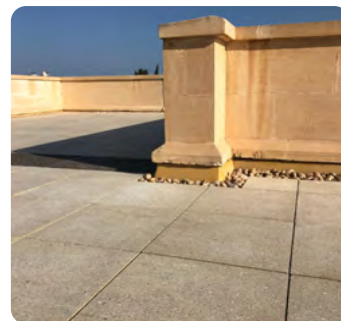
A particularly important requirement of this project was that the finish of the new waterproofing system matched the colour and appearance of the existing structure. TCRC therefore liaised closely with SIG Roofing in Bristol and Aggregate Industries in order to source a smooth ground roofing slab that would blend in perfectly as required.



A Unique Project with Unique Challenges

During the installation of this project there were a number of unusual challenges for the TCRC team to overcome. For example, 100% propane gas is not available in Egypt. Instead, only a mix of propane and butane is available which requires higher power regulators and, as a result, there was the challenge of sourcing these in the local markets of Alamein! Similarly, it was not easy to locate fuel and other specific tools that were required for the job, such as a specialist tile saw. The harsh weather conditions were extremely difficult to work in, with the Summer temperatures reaching as high as 50 degrees Celsius.

In terms of the installation itself, quality was of paramount importance at every step of the process. Initially, the existing tiles had to be carefully removed and then disposed of responsibly. The substrate was then primed before two layers of Garland APAO membrane were expertly installed. Imported paving slab pedestals were then placed on the roof followed by 300mm x 300mm Aggregate Industries Buff Smooth ground slabs. The existing cast iron drainage channels were also lifted and weathered, before being safely reinstated.



Project Summary

“This was a fantastic team effort by everyone involved, which ultimately led to the client being delighted at the high quality waterproofing solution that they received. TCRC’s work will enable this historically significant site to continue telling such an important story for many years to come.”



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