

## Success Story: Commonwealth War Graves Commission Ends the Headache of Tape Backup with Cloud-Based Data Recovery



### CWGC Profile

- Located in the U.K.
- Windows-based Servers
- Microsoft Hyper-V Virtualized Servers
- Microsoft Exchange and SQL Server



## Overview

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) cares for cemeteries and memorials for Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during both world wars. The organization maintains a vast amount of important digital records and archives that must be protected in the event of data loss caused by human error, system failure or natural disaster. CWGC chose Disaster Recovery Specialist Techgate plc which is powered by Asigra. CWGC was able to significantly reduce the complexity and management overhead of their backup environment while improving overall performance.

## Customer Overview

CWGC ensures that the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the two world wars will never be forgotten. The organization cares for cemeteries and memorials at 23,000 locations across 153 countries. CWGC values and aims, as laid out in 1917, are as relevant now as they were almost 100 years ago. The Commission is proud of the work it carries out to commemorate the war dead, from building and maintaining cemeteries and memorials to the preservation of records. The Commission continues to set the highest standards for its work, leveraging preeminent architects of their day, who have included Sir Edwin Lutyens, Sir Herbert Baker and Sir Reginald Blomfield.

Because of the important records maintained by the Commission, a highly reliable backup solution is necessary to ensure that the data is always accessible. The organization had been reliant on a tape backup solution by Symantec, but this was a highly distributed technology that required each backup environment to be managed independently around the world. Furthermore, because tapes were stored off-site and required significant manual processes to recall the data from this medium, a full business continuity plan invocation would take far too long - approximately 30 days. Additionally, because of the large amounts of data that needed to be backed up, it was taking longer to protect the information. As a consequence, the Commission was not able to meet its recovery time objectives for data from primary business applications.

## Business Situation

The CWGC maintains and manages more than 20TB of data with more than 4TB of historical casualty records. This data is located across disparate physical locations and continues to grow in size. The Commission's legacy tape backup solution was having difficulties keeping up with the growing volume of data which was causing issues with backing up the information within a finite backup window and recovering the data in a timely manner. Because the tape system's recovery times were 30 days to restore all non-critical data and at least 24 hours for critical data, it became a major risk for the day-to-day operations of CWGC. They needed to improve their recovery times significantly in order to ensure business continuity for the long term.

"Because of the importance of the records we keep, data availability is very important to the mission of CWGC," said Will Webster, Head of IT for CWGC. "The Symantec tape backup solution we had in place was no longer able to support this mission and therefore needed to be replaced. During our review process for alternatives, we determined that key criteria should not only include backup and recovery performance but also management simplicity for the sake of operational efficiency."

## Environment

- More than 20 TB of data being backed up
- Distributed IT environment with deployment at 6 locations around Europe
- Windows-based Servers
- Microsoft Hyper-V enabled servers
- Business applications that include Microsoft Exchange and SQL Server.

## Asigra Cloud-Based Data Recovery Delivers

- Single integrated solution for all data protection requirements
- Backup Lifecycle Management (BLM) archiving service to align the value of information with the cost of protecting it
- Efficient use of existing storage and network resources
- Hands-free management with the elimination of software agents and backup tapes
- Performance within desired backup and recovery time objectives.

## Key benefits of Asigra Cloud Backup for Commonwealth War Graves include:

- Elimination of the complexity and time caused by tape backup
- Improvement of recovery speed and reliability
- Reallocation of IT staff for more strategically important operations
- Greater uptime assurance
- Lower overall costs.

In addition to recovery performance challenges, CWGC was also dealing with the complexities of managing a vast number of backup tapes. Sending these tapes off-site and retrieving them for recoveries was becoming extremely time intensive as data volumes increased. As a result, the Commission sought to change from tape backup to a Cloud based managed backup and recovery service using disaster recovery specialists Techgate. Techgate provides the Asigra Cloud Backup™ service from its highly secure, Tier 3, UK-based data centres, utilizing cutting-edge IBM server and storage infrastructure.

“Because of the importance of the records we keep, data availability is very important to the mission of CWGC,” said Will Webster, Head of IT for CWGC. “The Symantec tape backup solution we had in place was no longer able to support this mission and therefore needed to be replaced. During our review process for alternatives, we determined that key criteria should not only include backup and recovery performance but also management simplicity for the sake of operational efficiency.”

-Will Webster, Head of IT for CWGC.

## Solution

CWGC removed its tape backup systems and deployed the Asigra Cloud-based recovery solution to six of its locations throughout Europe, backing up 80 servers over those locations. Each of these environments included Windows-based servers as well as Microsoft Hyper-V virtualized servers with multiple databases (including SQL and Exchange) in place across these systems.

“We were facing a number of challenges with tape backup that were straining our financial, IT and human resources and saw a real opportunity with Asigra Cloud Backup and Techgate,” continued Webster. “From the outset, the solution directly addressed our concerns. It allowed us to centrally manage our backup and recovery processes and eliminate manual tape

management tasks. Asigra’s Backup Lifecycle Management (BLM) feature allowed us to minimise our data growth issues by prioritizing data to improve recovery performance.”



“We were facing a number of challenges with tape backup that were straining our financial, IT and human resources and saw a real opportunity with Asigra Cloud Backup and Techgate. At the outset, the solution directly addressed our concerns. It allowed us to centrally manage our backup and recovery processes and eliminate manual tape management tasks. The product’s Backup Lifecycle Management (BLM) feature allowed us to minimize our data growth issues by prioritizing data to improve recovery performance.”

-Will Webster, Head of IT for CWGC

## Results

Prior to implementing Techgate's Asigra solution, non-specialist staff at each location were assigned to deal with the management of backup tapes which took between 15-20 minutes per day. The new solution changed all of that by moving CWGC from a back up infrastructure reliant on legacy technology to a modern cloud-based solution. The Commission liked Asigra's agentless architecture which eliminated the need to install software on backup targets, which had historically reduced performance and resulted in compatibility issues. With Asigra, backup operations are automated and users have greater confidence in knowing that their data is, in the event of a disaster, always quickly and easily accessible.

"In conjunction with Asigra, we have shown CWGC a clear and modern alternative to tape backup. With initial deployments of the backup service in place, Asigra has proven effective at simplifying backup and recovery processes for the organization. We look forward to supporting additional disaster recovery requirements for the Commission as they benefit from the operational improvements enabled by cloud backup. As with most of our customers, UK data domicile, compliance and security, were key system requirements. "

Chris McDonnell, Solutions Delivery Manager, Cloud Services, Techgate plc.

"In conjunction with Asigra, we have shown CWGC a clear and modern alternative to tape backup. With initial deployments of the backup service in place, Asigra has proven effective at simplifying backup and recovery processes for the organization. We look forward to supporting additional disaster recovery requirements for the Commission as they benefit from the operational improvements enabled by Cloud Backup. As with most of our customers, U.K. data domicile, compliance and security, were key requirements. "

-Chris McDonnell, Solutions Delivery Manager, Cloud Services, Techgate plc.

## About Asigra

Trusted since 1986, Asigra provides organizations around the world the ability to recover their data now from anywhere through a global network of partners who deliver cloud backup and recovery services as public, private and/or hybrid deployments. As the industry's first enterprise agentless cloud-based recovery software to provide data backup and recovery of servers, virtual machines, endpoint devices, databases and applications, SaaS and IaaS based applications, Asigra lowers the total cost of ownership, reduces recovery time objectives, eliminates silos of backup data by providing a single consolidated repository, and provides 100% recovery assurance. Asigra's revolutionary patented Recovery License Model provides organizations with a cost effective data recovery business model unlike any other offered in the storage market. Asigra has been recognized as a Gartner Cool Vendor and has been included in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Backup and Recovery Software since 2010.

More information on Asigra can be found at [www.recoveryiseverything.com](http://www.recoveryiseverything.com)

