

# OUR WAR GRAVES YOUR HISTORY

## NEWARK-UPON-TRENT CEMETERY



Newark Cemetery was constructed in 1856 both as a final resting place for the dead and as a park for the people of the town. The granite war memorial at the entrance to the park commemorates hundreds of Newark's residents who died in the First World War and later conflicts.

The CWGC cares for the graves of 49 servicemen of the First World War scattered throughout the cemetery. When the Second World War broke out, the cemetery set aside space for RAF burials, and this became the large war graves plot we maintain here today. It holds all but ten of some 90 Commonwealth and almost 400 Polish graves dating from the Second World War.

### Key CWGC features to look out for:

A memorial cross honouring fallen Polish airmen was erected in 1941 and unveiled by Władysław Raczkiewicz, President of the Polish government-in-exile from 1939-1947, and General Władysław Sikorski, wartime Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Polish Forces. This cross replaces the Cross of Sacrifice in the main CWGC plot.



### Points of interest...

Commemorations: **530**  
First World War: **49**  
Second World War: **481**

Casualties from the following nations;

Australia  
Canada  
Ireland  
New Zealand  
Poland  
UK

### Things to look out for...

55 year old Colour Serjeant  
**Thomas Wakefield**

Air Cadet **Keith Rollason**  
**Couzin-Wood** of the Air  
Training Corps

Flying Officer **Kazimierz**  
**Zygmunt Wieliczko** who was  
awarded the George Medal in  
1941

Warrant Officer **Stanislaw**  
**Mierniczek** who was awarded  
both the Distinguished Flying  
Cross and the Distinguished  
Flying Medal for his gallantry

# Discovering CWGC graves at Newark-upon-Trent Cemetery



There is limited parking available inside the entrance to Newark Cemetery. Once you have parked, make your way down the main path into the cemetery. In the distance, you will see the CWGC Cross of Sacrifice. Make your way towards this. You will no doubt notice CWGC headstones scattered throughout this section of the cemetery. These are mainly from the First World War.

## 1 Point 1

Once you pass the chapel, on the right-hand side there are a number of scattered CWGC headstones, amongst them is the grave of **Colour Sergeant Thomas Wakefield**, of the Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regt). He was 55 years old when he died while serving at the regimental depot. His headstone is interesting as the personal inscription near the base also records the death of his son, Leonard, who was killed in France in 1917 and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

## 2 Point 2

Continue along until you reach the **Cross of Sacrifice** on the central path. The Cross of Sacrifice was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield, one of the commission's leading architects, and was intended to represent the faith of the majority. Any CWGC site with more than 40 burials will have a Cross of Sacrifice, of differing sizes, depending on the number of burials.



*Cross of Sacrifice*

3

Point 3

Continue along the path until you reach the main CWGC plot. You will pass the Air Bridge Memorial. Before entering you will see the **Polish Memorial Cross**. This memorial cross, honouring fallen Polish airmen was erected in 1941 and unveiled by Władysław Racziewicz, President of the Polish government-in-exile from 1939-1947, and General Władysław Sikorski, wartime Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Polish Forces. Both men were later buried here: General Sikorski in 1943, and in 1947 President Racziewicz. Although General Sikorski's remains were returned to Poland with full military honours in September 1993, this is still the final resting place of President Racziewicz.

On entering the main plot, you will note that the CWGC headstones are heavily outnumbered by those of the design used for Polish Forces. However, in the first couple of rows you will find a standard CWGC headstone over the grave of **Cadet Keith Rollason Couzin-Wood**. Keith was from Leigh-On-Sea in Essex. On the morning of 29 July 1942, Keith and fellow Air Cadet Geoffrey Hughes were taken up on an air experience flight in a Hampden bomber from 408 Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force. The aircraft was on an air-test from RAF Balderton prior to a raid that night. Unfortunately, the aircraft stalled and crashed into a field two miles south-east of the airfield, catching fire on impact. Both Keith and Geoffrey died in the incident, alongside the crew. Both Keith and Geoffrey were aged just 16 at the time of their deaths. Keith's personal inscription reads: "Fearless – gay – to God's arms he flew; his first venture in the boundless blue".



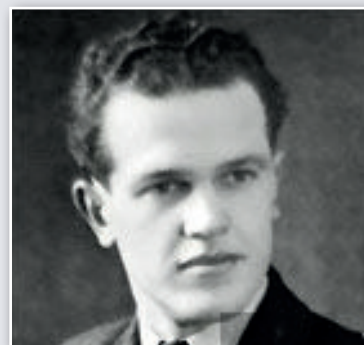
*Cadet Keith Rollason Couzin-Wood*



*Kazimierz Zygmunt Wieliczko GM*

In row O, is the grave of Porucznik (Flying Officer) **Kazimierz Zygmunt Wieliczko GM** who was born in Parafianów in Poland in 1915. Alongside Leading Aircraftman Sydney Walter John Green, he received George Medal for actions on the night of 29 September 1941, when a Wellington bomber crashed at RAF Bitteswell in Leicestershire and immediately burst into flames. Kazimierz ignored the heat, as well as the exploding ammunition and oxygen bottles and assisted in freeing the trapped gunner; this feat was completed by smashing the rear turret with his bare hands. Consequently, he saved the rear gunner's life and suffered burns in the process. Wieliczko died in Norfolk in 1942, aged 27, when his aircraft crash landed after being badly damaged during a raid over Essen.

Nearby in the same row, is Starszy Sierzant (Warrant Officer) **Mieczysław Edmund Popek** who was born in October 1916 in Siedlce, Poland. In addition to serving with the famous Polish 303 Squadron, he saw service with 307 Squadron from September 1940 flying Boulton Paul Defiants. This Squadron was based at RAF Kirton-in-Lindsey in Lincolnshire and was the only Polish night fighter Squadron in RAF service. A flying ace, Mieczyslaw had five 'kills' to his name. On 14 January 1944, he crashed into an aircraft taking off while taxiing at Tollerton Airfield in Nottinghamshire and was killed aged 27.



*Mieczyslaw Edmund Popek*