

# COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

## RESEARCHING A NEW ZEALANDER WHO DIED IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR - GUIDANCE SHEET



This bitesize guide is designed to help you research a New Zealander, or someone serving with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force who died in the First World War. Firstly, you will need to decide who you will research... this might be a relative, or you could choose a name from a local war memorial, or you might select a name from a Commonwealth War Graves (CWGC) headstone in one of our cemeteries, or within a parish churchyard local to you.

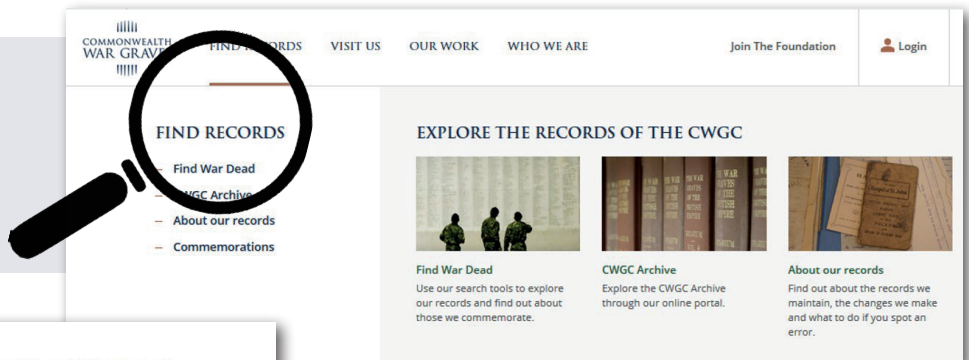
The first stage of your research starts with the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** Casualty Database. At CWGC, we keep a record of the place of burial or commemoration of all the men and women of the Britain and Commonwealth who died in the First and Second World Wars.

### STEP 1: Visit our website at [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)



**Need help..?**  
Watch the 'How to search' video tutorials

Using the dropdown  
**FIND RECORDS**  
menu, select  
'Find War Dead'



**FIND WAR DEAD**  
EXPLORE THE RECORDS OF THE 1.7 MILLION COMMONWEALTH MEN AND WOMEN THAT WE COMMEMORATE

**Last name**  
Enter the last name of the casualty

☐ Match this search term exactly

**First name**  
Enter a first name

☐ Match this search term exactly

**or**

**Initials**  
Enter initials

☐ Match this search term exactly

**Service Number**  
Service numbers can contain numbers, letters and symbols

☐ Match this search term exactly

**Served with (country)**  
Served With

**War**  
Select War  
☐ First World War ☐ Second World War

**Regiment**  
Find records that relate to a particular regiment

☐ Match this search term exactly

**Served in (army etc.)**  
Served In

☐ Match this search term exactly

Fill in the name of the individual you are researching

Select  
**First World War box**



**Research tip**  
Records use different combinations of full names, name and initial, and initials only – you may have to try several of these to find your the person you are looking for

If you already have some more details about the person you are looking for such as their age, service number, date of death, or any medals they received, you can add these into the **ADDITIONAL FIELDS** section.

### ADDITIONAL FIELDS

Select additional options to add them to your search criteria

Country (commemorated in)
Cemetery or Memorial
Unit
Rank
Secondary Regiment
Age at death
Date of Death

Honours & awards
Additional Information

If you know where the person you are looking for died, for example, you can put this into the Additional Information box.

You will then get a list of the results...

SHOW 10 OF 53 WAR DEAD

[Download all results](#)
Sort by: Relevance

Refine Results

Name, Rank & Service No.	Unit, Regiment, Country of Service	Date of Death	Commemorated at
<b>RICHARD THORNTON CORSBIE</b> Sergeant Service Number: 33312	"B" Coy, 4th Bn, 3rd New Zealand Rifle Brigade New Zealand	Died 08 October 1918 42 years old	ANNEUX BRITISH CEMETERY IV. B. 19. France
<b>CHARLES ARNOLD SPRIGGS</b> Second Lieutenant Service Number: 25169	1st Bn, 3rd New Zealand Rifle Brigade New Zealand	Died 08 October 1918 28 years old	NAVES COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION IV. E. 15. France
<b>JAMES WHITEFORD SWAN</b> Private Service Number: 1011674	1st Bn, Wellington Regiment, N.Z.E.F. New Zealand	Died 16 September 1916	CATERPILLAR VALLEY (NEW ZEALAND) MEMORIAL France
<b>FREDERICK ARTHUR GASKELL</b> Sergeant Service Number: 38525	4th Bn, 3rd New Zealand Rifle Brigade New Zealand	Died 28 August 1918 27 years old	BAGNEUX BRITISH CEMETERY, GEZAINCOURT VI. E. 29. France
<b>JOHN SILLIFANT</b> Lance Corporal Service Number: 40724	4th Bn, 3rd New Zealand Rifle Brigade New Zealand	Died 09 September 1918	HERMIES HILL BRITISH CEMETERY IV. E. 16. France

**Be aware,**  
CWGC records don't always include details about where an individual was from, or exactly where they died. Our records are centred around where a person is buried or commemorated.

If you have not found who you are looking for, you can refine the results

If you think you have found the person you are looking for, select 'More details' and you will get an at-a-glance record

### Did you know...?

Wherever possible, the relatives of a casualty were offered the opportunity to have a small, personal inscription listed on their headstone.

If known, the Additional Info can include next of kin details and address

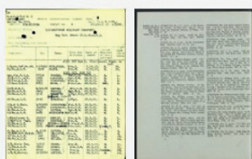
**PRIVATE JAMES WHITEFORD SWAN**  
Service Number: 1011674  
**Regiment & Unit/Ship**  
Wellington Regiment, N.Z.E.F.  
1st Bn.  
**Date of Death**  
Died 16 September 1916  
**Buried or commemorated at**  
CATERPILLAR VALLEY (NEW ZEALAND) MEMORIAL  
France

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

Country of Service: New Zealand  
Awards: Distinguished Conduct Medal, Mentioned in Despatches  
Additional Info: Son of Mr. and Mrs. James Swan, of 6, Blacks Rd., North East Valley, Dunedin.

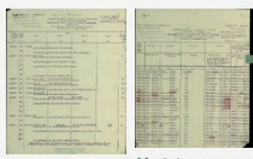
### FROM THE CWGC ARCHIVES

#### GRAVE REGISTRATION (2)



Click to zoom in Click to zoom in

#### HEADSTONE (2)



Click to zoom in Click to zoom in

Lower down the page you will find a link to our **CWGC Archives** and any additional information which is held about this individual. You can find several different types of official CWGC reports here. Find out more about these on page 3.

### What are **Headstone Reports**?

These provide details of what is inscribed on an individual's headstone. The main purpose of these reports was to help manage the enormous programme of headstone production and engraving embarked by CWGC during the world wars.

### What are **Grave Registration Reports (GRRs)**?

These forms detail the graves we are responsible for within a particular burial site. Each grave is listed by Plot, Row and Grave number. These reports often provide basic details of the individual such as their name, service number, rank, regiment, unit and date of their death, when known to us.

### What are **Concentration Reports**?

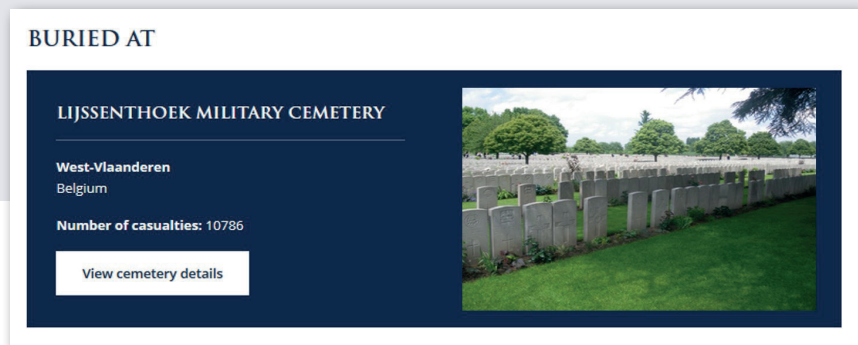
These record details of individuals who were originally buried in smaller or isolated cemeteries, but who, at a later date, were exhumed and reburied in 'concentrated' war cemeteries. This enabled CWGC to fully commemorate and look after otherwise unmaintainable graves.

Further down on your search page you can find more details about the cemetery where the person you are looking for is buried, or the memorial upon which they are commemorated.



#### Did you know...?

The CWGC maintains more than 200 memorials across the globe. These record nearly 700,000 names of those who have no known grave, were buried at sea or cremated



## Step 2: Exploring additional resources to find out more about the individual



You need to check if there are any the Enquiry Files held by the **CWGC Archives** <http://archive.cwgc.org>. These contain correspondence between the family of those killed and the Commission. Only a small number of these files still survive.

Enquiry Files cover a range of subjects, including:

- Attempts to locate a missing individual
- Requests for the remains of a casualty to be returned to the country they came from, known as the 'repatriation of remains'
- The addition of a personal inscription to a CWGC headstone
- Requests for a photograph of a grave
- Issues about the maintenance or upkeep of a grave
- The exhumation and reburial of a casualty
- The return of wooden crosses to families



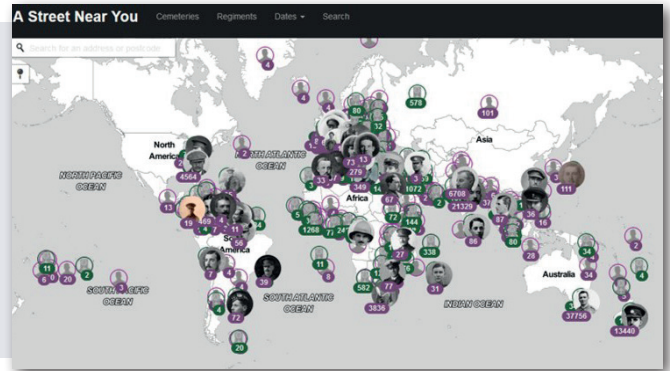
#### Did you know...?

The Imperial War Graves Commission was founded in 1917. Before that, an army unit, Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries (DGRE) began the work of recording details of those who had died

## Step 3: Searching for additional information online

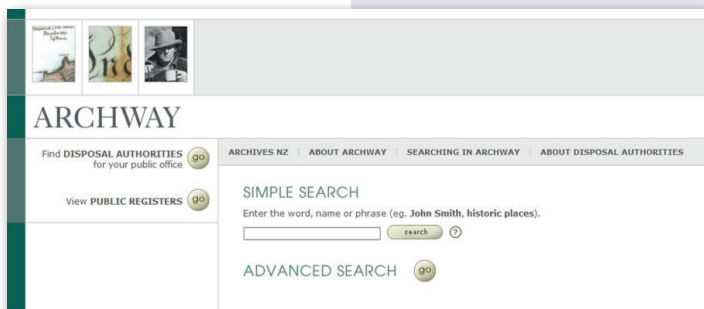
**A Street Near You** uses maps to locate where those who died in the First World War originally came from and where they are now commemorated. You can search by lots of different terms so see what you can discover. It also provides links to other archives.

<https://astreetnearyou.org>



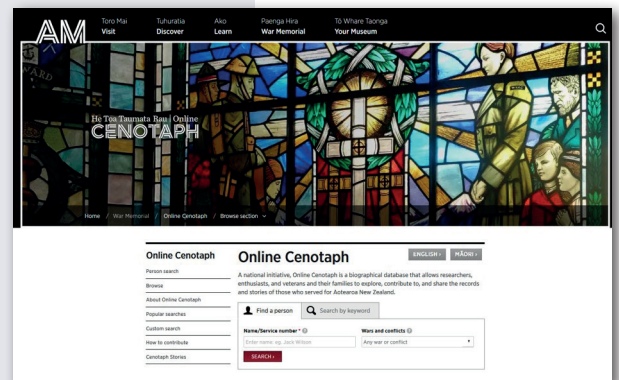
**Archives New Zealand** hold the personnel files for those who served in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) in the First World War. They are the most useful resource and should be your first port of call for researching First World War soldiers.

<http://www.archway.archives.govt.nz/>



The **Auckland War Memorial Museum** hosts a database of war dead, which includes photographs of some of the men. It also includes an image of the soldier's entry in the official The Great War, 1914-1918: New Zealand Expeditionary Force Roll of Honour, published in 1924.

<https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph>



The **28th Maori Battalion** website contains a roll of the 2,700 Maori and Pacific Islanders who served with the NZEF during the First World War. Search by name or service number.

<https://28maoribattalion.org.nz/>



## Step 4: Share their story on For Evermore

**For Evermore: Stories of the Fallen** is our new online resource to collect and share the stories of the men and women CWGC commemorates. If your research reveals more about the person than CWGC already knows, please add your person's story to our growing digital stories archive where it will live for evermore.

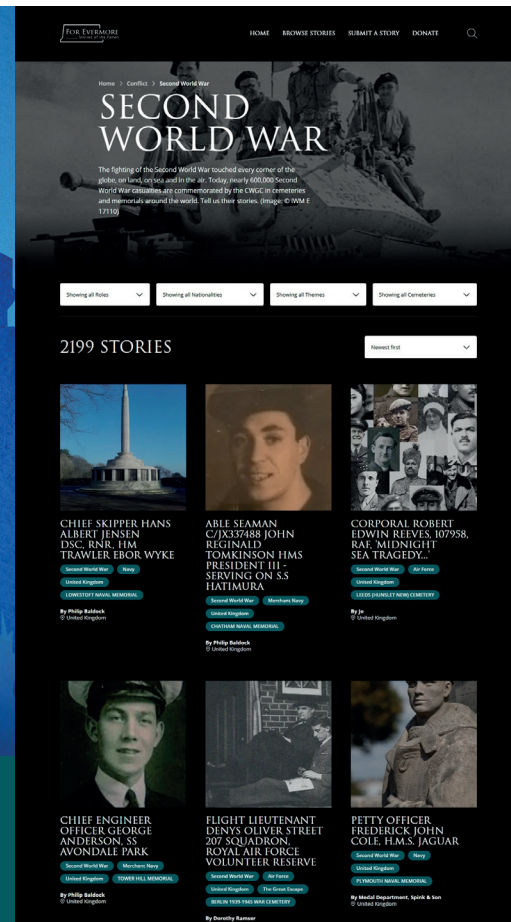
Has someone already shared something about the person you're researching?

Maybe another person from their battalion, ship, squadron, cemetery or memorial has a story?

Need inspiration before writing up your own story to share?

Visit <https://www.cwgc.org/stories/>

# EVERY STORY FOR EVERMORE



The screenshot shows the 'For Evermore' website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: HOME, BROWSE STORIES, SUBMIT A STORY, and DONATE. Below this, a large banner for 'SECOND WORLD WAR' features a historical photo of soldiers and text: 'The fighting of the Second World War touched every corner of the globe, on land, on sea and in the air. Today, nearly 800,000 Second World War Servicemen are commemorated by our CWGC in cemeteries and memorials around the world. Tell us these stories. (Image: © IWM F 12119)'. Below the banner are four filter buttons: 'Showing all Roles', 'Showing all Nationalities', 'Showing all Themes', and 'Showing all Cemeteries'. The main content area is titled '2199 STORIES' and displays a grid of story cards. Each card includes a photo, a name, a rank/role, and a 'Read Story' button. Examples of stories shown include: Chief Skipper Hans Albert Jensen, Able Seaman C/X337488 John Reginald Tomkinson, Corporal Robert Edwin Reeves, Chief Engineer Officer George Anderson, Flight Lieutenant Denys Oliver Street, and Petty Officer Frederick John Cole. Each card also has a 'Read Story' button and a 'Read Story' button.