

1. Why are there war graves and memorials in Crete?

In May 1941, the Commonwealth force in Crete was organised to defend three airfields at Iraklion, Rethymnon and Maleme, and Suda Bay and the port of Chania. The Germans launched their attack on 20 May with airborne troops. The airfield at Maleme was quickly captured and used for landing German reinforcements. On 23 May, the remainder of the Maleme position had to be given up and its defenders fell back to Chania. On 26 May, the Allied line west of Chania was broken. Suda Bay became indefensible and the troops from these two positions, with the remainder of the Maleme garrison, withdrew across the island to Sfakion, where many of them were evacuated by sea on the nights of the 28 - 31 May. Orders for the Rethymnon garrison to fight its way southward for evacuation did not arrive, and it was overwhelmed on 31 May.

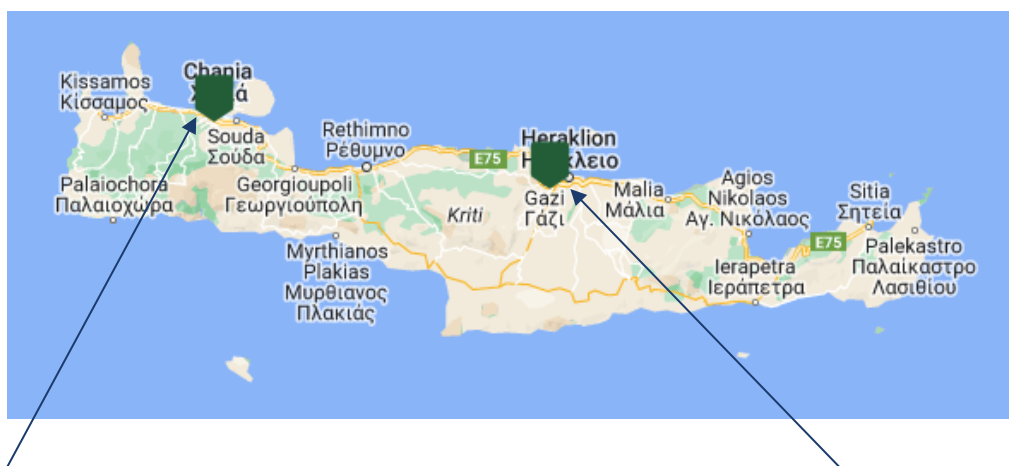
Of the total Commonwealth land force of 32,000 men, 18,000 were evacuated, 12,000 were taken prisoner and 2,000 were killed. The site of Suda Bay War Cemetery was chosen after the war and graves were moved there by 21st and 22nd Australian War Graves Units from the four burial grounds that had been established by the German occupying forces at Chania, Iraklion, Rethymnon and Galata, and from isolated sites and civilian cemeteries.

2. Where are the war graves and memorials on the island?

There are war graves at two locations on the island of Crete. Study the map below to see where they are.

3. Discover where these people came from

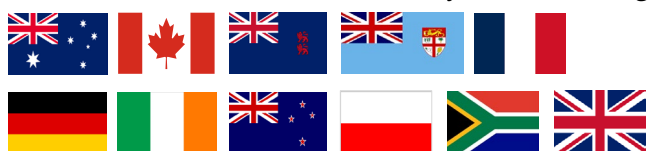
Use the flags to discover where some of those who are buried and remembered here came from to serve



Suda Bay War Cemetery

1,564 war graves

From: Australia, Canada, Cyprus, Fiji, France, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Poland, South Africa, United Kingdom



Heraklion Cemetery

The British Military plot contains the graves of 200 British sailors and soldiers who died protecting Crete between 1897 and 1909. They are commemorated by name on a central memorial. There are no First or Second War graves in this site. The plot is maintained by the CWGC on behalf of the British Government.

4. Discover more about the service of those buried at Suda Bay War Cemetery

4.1 Each headstone in the cemetery tells a different story.

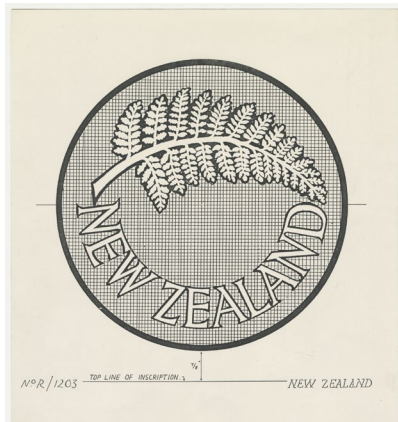
As you explore the cemetery see what you can learn from the headstones. See if you can discover the following;

1. Who is the **youngest** person you can find?
2. Who is the **oldest** person you can find?
3. How many **different countries** did they come from, based on the information you can discover on the headstones?

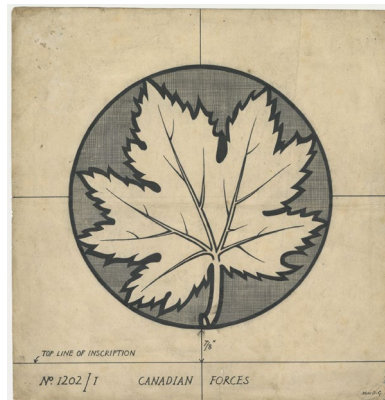
4.3 As you explore the cemetery, look at the different badges on the headstones. These will give you a clue as to the role the person had and maybe where they came from. As you find each badge, **write down the name of the person** who served with that unit in the box next to the badge.



4.2 There is just one headstone with this badge on. Can you find it in Plot XI? What did they do?



More than 200,000 New Zealand troops, including native Māori's left New Zealand for service overseas in the world wars. More than 30,000 died.



More than 1.6 million Canadian troops fought across the globe in the world wars. More than 110,000 died in service.



More than a million Australian troops fought across the globe in the world wars. More than 103,000 died.



The Merchant Marine was the largest in the world. It recruited people from all over the globe to serve on the ships. Can you find one in **Plot 9**?



South African units served in North Africa, the Middle East and in Europe during the Second World War. Can you find one in **Plot 13**?



Many Polish soldiers and airmen served with the Allied Forces during the Second World War. Only one Pole is buried here in Plot E.

Discover more at cwgc.org/stories