

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

RESEARCHING SOMEONE WHO DIED IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR SERVING WITH THE ROYAL AIR FORCE



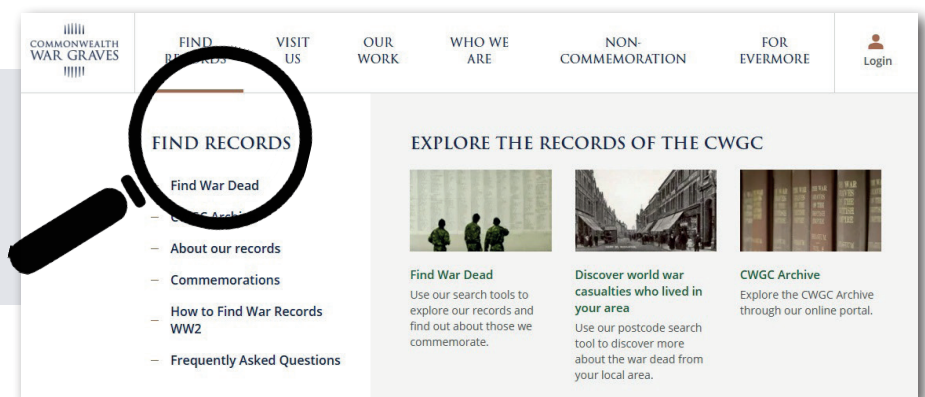
This bitesize guide is designed to help you research a person who died in the Second World War while serving with the Royal Air Force (including Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, RAF Regiment, Women's Auxiliary Air Force, etc.) Firstly, you will need to decide who you will research... this might be a relative, or you could choose a name from a local war memorial, or you might select a name from a Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) memorial or headstone, in a CWGC cemetery or maybe in a churchyard near 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 servicemen 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


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

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



FIND WAR DEAD WITH OUR WAR GRAVES SEARCH TOOL

Find war dead records of the 1.7 million Commonwealth men and women that we commemorate

Last name Enter the last name of the casualty <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Match this search term exactly	First name Enter a first name <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Match this search term exactly	Initials Enter initials <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Match this search term exactly
Service Number Service numbers can contain numbers, letters and symbols <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Match this search term exactly	Regiment Find records that relate to a particular regiment <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Match this search term exactly	
Served with (country) Served With <input type="text"/>	Served in (army etc.) Served In <input type="text"/>	
War Select War <input type="checkbox"/> First World War <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Second World War		

Fill in the name of
the individual you are
researching

Select
Second 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 the person you are
looking for

If you have some more details about the person, such as their date of death, service number, or any medals they received, you can search using these in 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

A ship name, squadron number or battalion number can be put into the 'unit' field

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

SHOW 50 OF 50 WAR DEAD

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

Refine Results

Results per page: 100

Name, Rank & Service No.	Unit, Regiment, Country of Service	Date of Death	Commemorated at	
JOHN WILLIAM McDONALD Flying Officer Service Number: 158760	178 Sqn. Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve United Kingdom	Died 22 August 1944 21 years old	BELGRADE WAR CEMETERY Coll. grave 7. D. 1-7. Serbia	<div>More details</div> <div>Save to My list</div>
JOHN EDWARD McDONALD Flight Lieutenant Service Number: 61039	206 Sqn. Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve United Kingdom	Died 08 April 1945 23 years old	RUNNYMEDE MEMORIAL Panel 265. United Kingdom	<div>More details</div> <div>Save to My list</div>
WILLIAM LYALL McDONALD Flight Sergeant Service Number: 1820830	358 Sqn. Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve United Kingdom	Died 25 May 1945 20 years old	CHITTAGONG WAR CEMETERY, CHATTOGRAM 3. D. 12. Bangladesh	<div>More details</div> <div>Save to My list</div>
GEORGE McDONALD Sergeant Service Number: 798529	160 Sqn. Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve United Kingdom	Died 24 August 1943	SINGAPORE MEMORIAL Column 425. Singapore	<div>More details</div> <div>Save to My list</div>
IVOR JOSEPH McDONALD Flight Sergeant Service Number: 818092	40 Sqn. Royal Air Force (Auxiliary Air Force) United Kingdom	Died 15 October 1941 20 years old	DURNBACH WAR CEMETERY Joint grave 1. G. 12-13. Germany	<div>More details</div> <div>Save to My list</div>

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 your person, select 'More details' to see their commemoration record

Did you know...?

Wherever possible, relatives of the dead were offered the opportunity to have a short personal inscription on the CWGC marker

Additional Info can sometimes provide next of kin names and post-war address

If the person has a CWGC headstone, you will find any personal inscription listed here

SERGEANT
WILLIAM THOMAS
MCDONALD
Service Number: 1553032
Regiment & Unit/Ship
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve
50 Sqn.
Date of Death
Died 25 October 1942
Age 27 years old
Buried or commemorated at
BROOKWOOD MILITARY CEMETERY
23. A. 16.
United Kingdom
Country of Service
United Kingdom
Additional Info
Son of Robert D. McDonald and Hannah Dodman McDonald, of Punta Arenas, Chile.
Personal Inscription
MOTHER, I'VE WEIGHED THE RISKS WHICH I PREFER TO LIVING IN A WORLD DOMINATED BY NAZIS. BILL.

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

We are in the process of adding an image of this casualty's point of commemoration

FROM THE CWGC ARCHIVES

GRAVE REGISTRATION (2)



[Click to view](#)



[Click to view](#)

CONCENTRATION (1)



[Click to view](#)

HEADSTONE (1)



[Click to view](#)

Scroll down the page to a link to our **CWGC Archives** and any additional information which is held about this person. You can find several different types of official documentation 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.

Did you know...?

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

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 the person's commemoration 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

BURIED OR COMMEMORATED AT

BAYEUX WAR CEMETERY

Calvados
France

Number of casualties: 4654

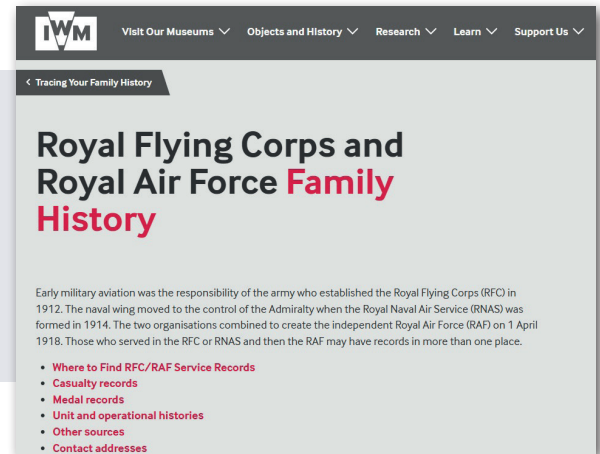
[View cemetery details](#)



Step 2: Searching for additional information online

The **Imperial War Museum** has created 'Tracing Your Ancestry: Royal Flying Corps and Royal Air Force', a very useful guide to help you develop your research further. It outlines other resources that are available, and how best to use them.

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/research/tracing-your-family-history/tracing-your-royal-flying-corps-and-royal-air>



The **RAF Commands website** includes information on all members of the RAF and Commonwealth air forces who died in the Second World War. You can search by lots of different terms so see what you can discover.

<http://www.rafcommands.com/database/wardead/>

Step 3: 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

