

# COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

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



This bitesize guide is designed to help you research a woman 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.

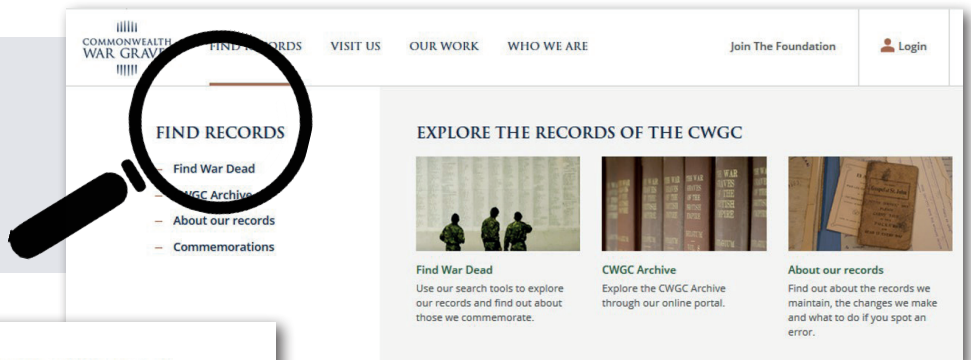
The first stage of your research starts with the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** Casualty Database. At CWGC, we keep a record of the place of burial or commemoration of all British and Commonwealth soldiers who died in the First and Second World Wars.

### 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 person 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 the person you are looking for

If you already have some more details about the person 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

Search
Clear

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

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

YOUR SEARCH RESULTS

Regiment: voluntary aid detachment

EXACT MATCHES CLOSE MATCHES ALL MATCHES

Only results that match exactly with all of the words you have entered into the search boxes. This is the same as inserting "AND" between the words.

SHOW 10 OF 191 WAR DEAD

Results per page: 10

Name, Rank & Service No.	Unit, Regiment, Country of Service	Date of Death	Commemorated at
M. SILVIA STEPHENSON Worker	Voluntary Aid Detachment United Kingdom	Died 09 November 1915	CAIRO WAR MEMORIAL CEMETERY D. 185. Egypt
EVELYN GLADYS BROWN Nurse	Royal Herbert Hospital, Voluntary Aid Detachment United Kingdom	Died 04 May 1916 28 years old	BROOKWOOD 1914-1918 MEMORIAL Panel 11, United Kingdom
WINIFRED STANLEY COATES Nurse	Voluntary Aid Detachment United Kingdom	Died 08 February 1916 26 years old	SHERIFF HUTTON (ST. HELEN AND HOLY CROSS) CHURCHYARD South East Part PM of Churchyard United Kingdom
AMY CURTIS Nurse	1st Western General Hospital Voluntary Aid Detachment United Kingdom	Died 06 November 1918 30 years old	UNITED KINGDOM BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE United Kingdom



**Be aware,**  
CWGC records don't always include details about where a person 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

If an individual has a CWGC headstone, you will find any personal inscription engraved upon it listed here.

MEMBER  
DAISY KATHLEEN MARY COLES

**Regiment & Unit/Ship**  
Voluntary Aid Detachment  
58th General Hospital

**Date of Death**  
Died 30 September 1917  
Age 24 years old

**Buried or commemorated at**  
LONGUEESSE (ST. OMER) SOUVENIR CEMETERY  
VI. B. 3.  
France

**Country of Service**  
United Kingdom

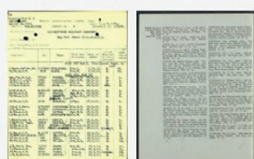
**Additional Info**  
Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter G. Coles, of Priorford House, Peebles.

**Personal Inscription**  
KILLED WHILE ON DUTY BY ENEMY AIRCRAFT

COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES

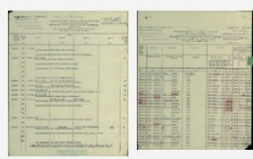
## FROM THE CWGC ARCHIVES

### 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

#### BURIED AT

##### LIJSSETHOEK MILITARY CEMETERY

West-Vlaanderen  
Belgium

Number of casualties: 10786

[View cemetery details](#)



## 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**. 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...?

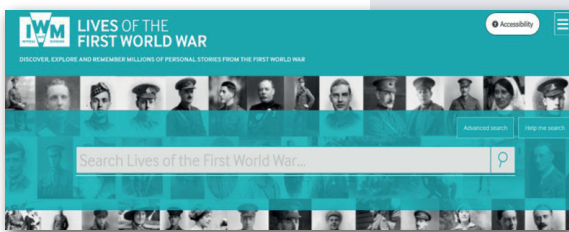
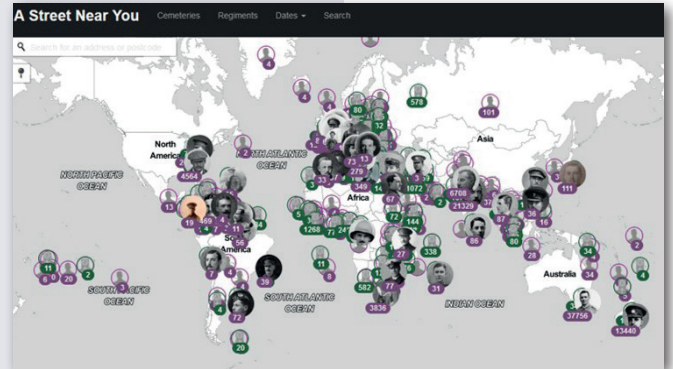
The Imperial War Graves Commission was founded in 1917. Before that, an army unit, Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries (DGRE) began the work of recording details of those who had died

## Step 3: Searching for additional information online

Next, you should consult the CWGC How to Research... guide for the service which is relevant. For example, if the individual you are researching served in the Merchant Navy, check out the 'Research a Merchant Sailor' guide. These guides include links which may help you discover more information.

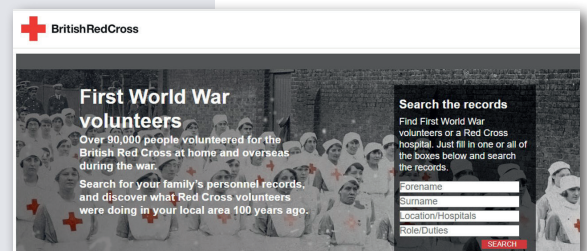
**A Street Near You** uses maps to locate where those who died in the First World War originally came from and where they are now commemorated. You can search by lots of different terms so see what you can discover. It also provides links to other archives.

<https://astreetnearyou.org>



The **IWMs Lives of the First World War** website is a memorial to those who served in the First World War. Enter the name and service number of the person to get the best results. Many stories were added during the First World War Centenary. You might even find a photo! <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/>

The **British Red Cross** website provides information on the 90,000 people who volunteered for the British Red Cross at home and overseas. This includes records of those who served with the Voluntary Aid Detachments. <https://vad.redcross.org.uk/>



The **Scarlet Finders** website provides some excellent information on those who served as nurses in the First World War. In particular, the website includes a roll of those who served with the units of the Scottish Women's Hospital. <http://www.scarletfinders.co.uk/index.html>



## 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.

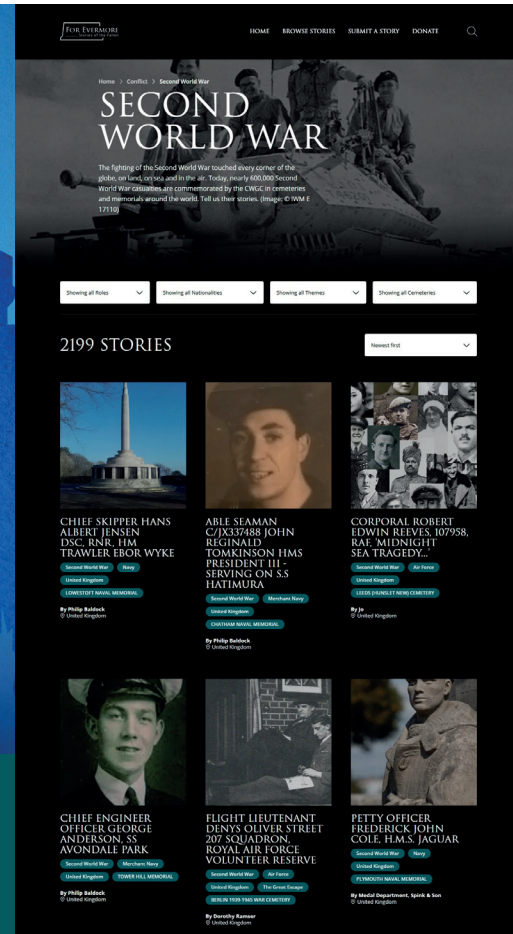
Has someone already shared something about the person you're researching?

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 is a large banner for 'SECOND WORLD WAR' with a black and white photo of soldiers. The banner text reads: 'The fighting of the Second World War touched every corner of the globe, on land, sea and in the air. Today nearly 60,000 Second World War casualties are commemorated by the CWGC in cemeteries and memorials around the world. Tell us their stories. (Image: © WMA F 13139)'. Below the banner are four filters: 'Showing all Roles', 'Showing all Nationalities', 'Showing all Themes', and 'Showing all Cemeteries'. A section titled '2199 STORIES' is visible, with a 'Newest first' dropdown. Below this are six story cards, each featuring a photo and a brief description of a fallen soldier's story. The stories include: 'CHIEF SKIPPER HANS ALBERT JENSEN', 'ABLE SEAMAN C/JX337488 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 includes a 'Submit a story' button and a 'View story' button.