COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

Duke of Edinburgh Award

Skills section – Guidance and Activity Log

Name:

Duke of Edinburgh Award and CWGC - Skills section

Military History Research

Here at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, we want to support young people who would like to conduct a research project as part of their work towards the DofE Skills Section. This can come under '*Military History Research*', which is a recognised skill by DofE.

We have created a series of suggested tasks and activities which will support you as you complete this section of the Award. However, you should set your own goals as part of the requirements given by the DofE Award.

Each week we suggest that you update the log to record what you have done and evidence your progress.

We hope that you enjoy your project.

Simon Bendry
Director of Education, Engagement and Volunteering

Reminder of the DofE Requirements:

• Your project/activity must not be for school credit/family chores
• It must be practised for at least one hour per week
• It can be a new skill, or one that you would like to improve
• It must be unpaid
• You must set your own goals
• Any group activities must be assessed by the individual's contribution to the activity

COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES

FOR EVERMORE
Stories of the Fallen
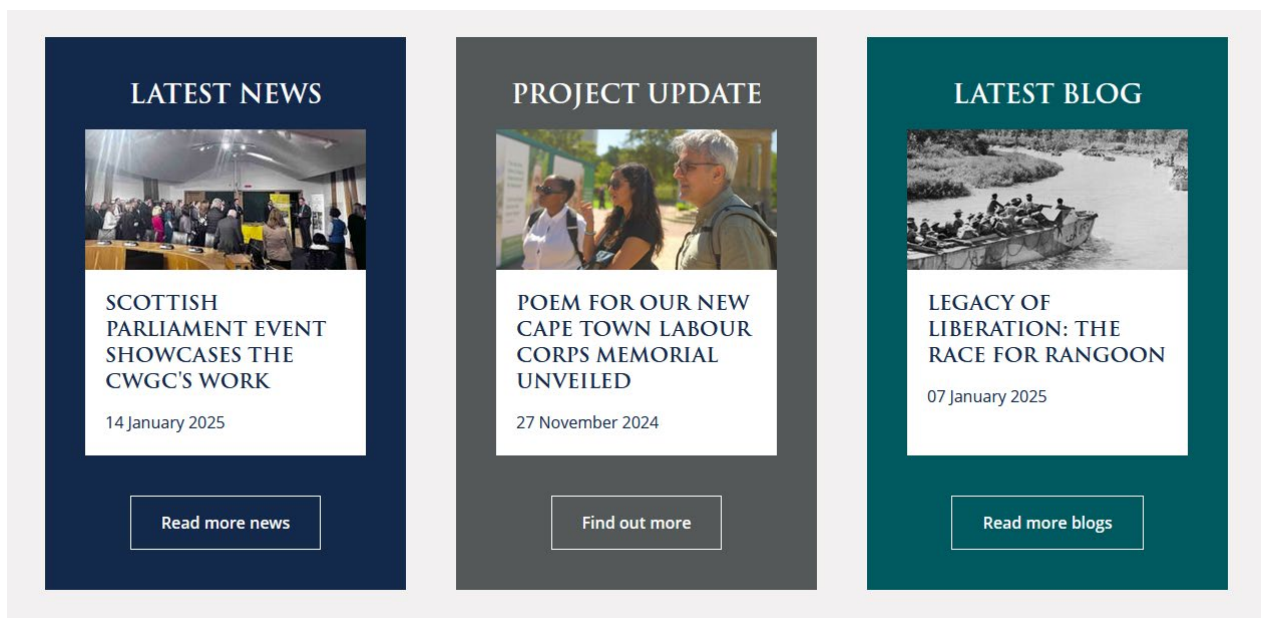
COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
Foundation

Suggested activity guidance:

In the first few weeks you will be building up your knowledge and understanding of who we are and what we do.

Introduction 1: The aim of this element is to introduce you to the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Watch the CWGC documentary. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rn1dak5IedU After each section make some notes about what you have learned about the organisation.

Introduction 2: Visit the CWGC website. www.cwgc.org The website provides you with all sorts of information about the work that we do. In this session we suggest that you explore the news and blogs sections of the site. You will find these in the 'WHO WE ARE' drop down, or by scrolling down the home page.

LATEST NEWS

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT EVENT SHOWCASES THE CWGC'S WORK

14 January 2025

Read more news

PROJECT UPDATE

POEM FOR OUR NEW CAPE TOWN LABOUR CORPS MEMORIAL UNVEILED

27 November 2024

Find out more

LATEST BLOG

LEGACY OF LIBERATION: THE RACE FOR RANGOON

07 January 2025

Read more blogs

Select three **News** items which interest you and record the key information you learn in a mind-map. Once you have done this, find the **Blogs** section. Search the titles until you find one which interests you. Read and make notes as before.

Having completed the introduction, it is now time to start developing your research skills.

Research Skills 1 and 2: CWGC Records and Archives

The CWGC maintains the records of more than 1.7m men and women who died in the First and Second World Wars. Our database gives access to the information we hold on these people. The aim of these sessions is to start exploring the records of the CWGC and understanding what they contain.

ACTIVITY: Visit the database https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/

You will see that you can search the database by a range of key search terms. As you explore, write down some of the facts and figures which you learn each time you search. To discover more about the type of information in the database, search each of the following:

❑ Your surname…
❑ Served with… (this provides access to the different nations armed forces we commemorate – the 'UK' covers many different countries of the former British Empire, as during the World Wars, troops from all over that Empire served with Imperial (or UK) forces.
❑ Served in…

You will also see that there are 'Additional Fields' which can be searched. Have an explore around the following fields:

❑ Country (commemorated in)
❑ Age

Lastly, you're going to explore the 'Additional Information' field. In this field, the database can hold information such as names of next of kin, but also where they came from.

❑ Search for where you live.
❑ Search for nearby locations, or places which you have connections to.

Research Skills 1 and 2: CWGC Records and Archives continued...

Now that you have a better understanding of what the CWGC records contain, it is time to start developing your research skills.

1. Visit https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/

2. Click on **How to research WW1 war dead**

Here you will find a range of 'How to research' guides. These bitesize guides are designed to help you research an individual who died in the First World War. These guides will take you step by step through your initial research, showing you how to search the CWGC records and archives before making suggestions about where to discover additional information online.

3. Watch this short film to find out how to use the guides -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ic0W5kiBlWo&t=30s

4. Select one of the research guides and have a go at following the stages of research. For this, you will need to decide who you will research... this could be one of the names you discovered while exploring the database.

5. Once you complete the research phase, you will move into final skills development stage. You will prepare your research for uploading onto *For Evermore,* which is an online archive of the stories of those the CWGC commemorates.

❑ Visit *For Evermore* - https://www.cwgc.org/stories/ Use the 'browse stories' drop-down to explore some of the stories already uploaded here.

You are now ready to start the main research phase. On the next pages are some ideas for what to focus your research on over the coming weeks as you develop your skills.

Research ideas

Local war graves

- Use the CWGC website (https://www.cwgc.org/) to look at Casualty Lists (https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/) or find cemeteries in the locality and background information on those buried in the cemetery.
- Investigate the service history of the individual(s); where did they enlist, what rank were they when killed, etc?
- Look at the history of the unit the individual was assigned to.
- What were the circumstances leading up to the death of the individual and where are they commemorated?

Wartime family history

- Did any ancestor serve in the Armed Services? Talk to parents, and grandparents, to find out the basics. Did anyone lose their life during WWI or WWII?
- Investigate the personal life of the ancestor; where did they live, were they married, do they have any other living relatives, did they have siblings who served and killed?
  Use family tree templates to draw out relationship to individual; family tree templates are freely available on the internet.
- Use the CWGC Casualty Lists to see if the ancestor was killed during WWI or WWII.
- Investigate the service history of the ancestor; where did they enlist, where did they serve, what rank was they when killed, etc?
- Look at the history of the unit the ancestor was assigned. Where was it based, etc?
- Investigate the timetable leading up the ancestor's death; look at the circumstances, did the action have key objectives and were they achieved?
- How was the ancestor killed and where are they remembered? How many others were killed in the action? Is there a major monument commemorating the action and where?
- Look for artefacts for your ancestor; see if parents/grandparents have photos or even medals.

Research a particular unit, squadron or ship

- Look at the wartime history of a unit, RAF squadron or ship; where was it based, what happened to it during the war, did the unit win any 'Battle Honours' for outstanding actions during the war, before and since?

- Look at the CWGC Casualty Lists to see who were killed from the unit; look at dates, locations, where buried, etc. Were any deaths part of a notable action?

- Use the information from wartime records to investigate individuals or actions of note from the unit's history

Research your local wartime history

- Investigate the wartime history of a base or an airfield; how was it used, what happened there? What happened to it after the war?

- Who operated from there? If it was an airfield, what aircraft and squadrons flew from there? Did any squadron(s) win any 'Battle Honours' for outstanding actions whilst at the airfield? If so, for what?

- Look at the CWGC Casualty Lists to see who died from units based there during the war; look at dates, locations, where buried, etc. Was this part of any notable action?

- Use the information from wartime records to investigate individuals, units, or actions of note.

Research your local wartime history - Investigate air crashes or military incidents in the local area

- Use the internet to trace any sites in the locality.

- What aircraft type(s) was involved, what squadron, what was the serial number/code?

- How many crew were onboard at time of crash, how many casualties (killed/injured)?

- What were the names of the crew?

- What were the circumstances leading up to crash?

- Where are the dead buried?

Uploading your research onto *For Evermore*

Now that you have completed the research phase, you will move into the final skills development stage and will prepare your research for uploading onto *For Evermore*.

The following stories have been selected to give you an idea of how to write-up your research as a story. Look at each example and consider the different ways in which the research has been presented. Keep some notes as these will help you later on when you write up your research..
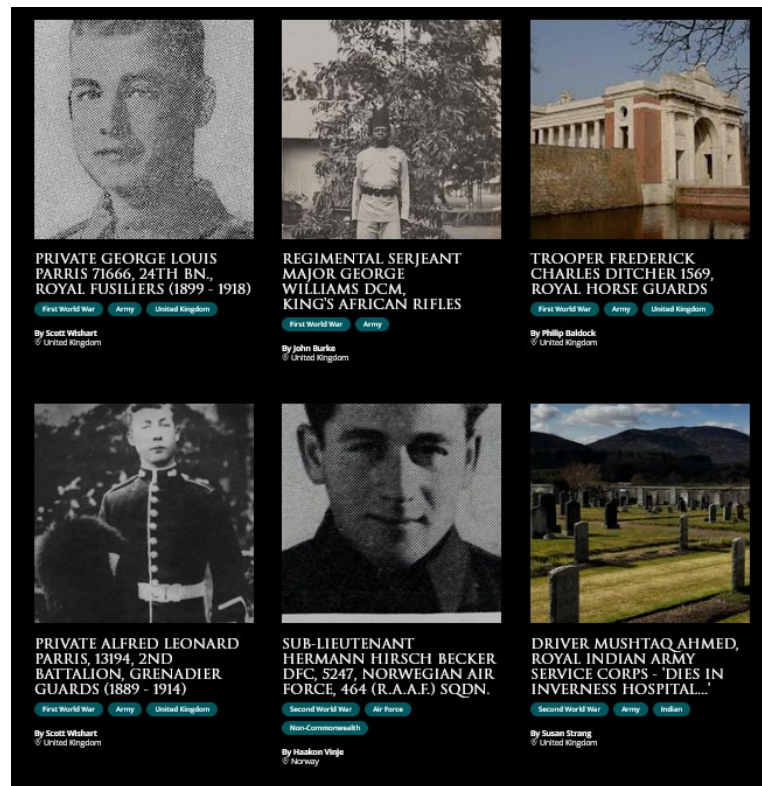
Example 1:

https://www.cwgc.org/stories/stories/flight-lieutenant-desmond-fred-ruchwaldy-dfc-dfm-rafvr-a-decorated-fighter-pilot/

Example 2:

https://www.cwgc.org/stories/stories/first-officer-stanley-richard-herringshaw-air-transport-auxiliary/

Example 3:

https://www.cwgc.org/stories/stories/naik-abdul-rakhman-royal-indian-army-service-corps-indian-soldier-buried-in-dornoch/

Adding your stories

❑ Visit *For Evermore* - https://www.cwgc.org/stories/ and click the **Submit a Story** link

❑ Select **View Tutorial** and watch the short film to find out how to upload a story

Use the last few weeks of your programme to add your research to For Evermore. Remember to keep a record of the link to the stories so that you can use them as evidence of completing your skill development section.

Bronze Award	Suggested activity to be completed	Date completed
Week 1	Introduction: CWGC documentary	
Week 2	Introduction 2: Visit CWGC website to discover more about our work and our records	
Week 3	Research skills 1: Casualty database	
Week 4	Research skills 2: Archives and Online Records	
Week 5	Research – Story 1	
Week 6	Research – Story 1	
Week 7	Research - Story 2	
Week 8	Research – Story 2	
Week 9	Editing and preparing your research 1: *For Evermore*	
Week 10	Editing and preparing your research 2	
Week 11	Editing and preparing your research 3: Upload your stories to *For Evermore*	
Week 12	Complete project documentation and evidencing your skills development	

For those participating in the Silver or Gold award we have several research projects underway which you can sign up for. These are appropriate for those who would like to move beyond the basic skills development, or who have already completed this as part of a Bronze Award programme.

Email us at education@cwgc.org to discover more.

Silver and Gold Awards	Suggested activity to be completed	Date completed
Stage 1	Introduction: CWGC documentary	
Stage 2	Introduction 2: Visit CWGC website to discover more about our work and our records	
Stage 3	Research skills 1: Casualty database	
Stage 4	Research skills 2: Archives and Online Records	
Stage 5	Research	
Stage 6	Editing, preparing and uploading your research to *For Evermore*	
Stage 7	Complete project documentation and evidencing your skills development	