



**CWGC**  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES  
COMMISSION  
IN THE UNITED  
KINGDOM AND  
IRELAND



# ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) honours the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the First and Second World Wars, and ensures they will never be forgotten.

Our work commemorates the war dead, from building and maintaining our cemeteries and memorials at 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries and territories to preservation of our extensive records and archives. Our values and aims, laid out in 1917, are as relevant now as they were 100 years ago.

THERE ARE OVER **306,000** **COMMEMORATIONS** TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE COMMONWEALTH FORCES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND AT OVER **13,000** **LOCATIONS**. AROUND **170,000** OF THESE ARE **BURIALS**, WITH THE **REMAINDER** BEING HONOURED ON **MEMORIALS** TO THE MISSING.

MOST SITES ARE **OWNED, OPERATED AND MAINTAINED** BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES, CHURCHES, PRIVATE COMPANIES OR INDIVIDUALS.



BEFORE WE UNDERTAKE ANY WORK **WE LIAISE** WITH LOCAL COUNCILS, PARISHES OR PRIVATE LANDOWNERS.

EACH SITE HAS A **UNIQUE PROGRAMME** OF INSPECTION, CARE AND MAINTENANCE.



WE CARE FOR WAR GRAVES WITHIN THESE SITES VIA **PLANNED INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES**.

THE UK HAS THE SECOND HIGHEST CONCENTRATION OF **WORLD WAR BURIALS** AFTER FRANCE.

- We adopt a conservation approach to caring for our headstones
- Inscriptions should be legible at reasonable light levels and viewing distances
- Headstones should be upright, clean and accessible
- The area surrounding the grave should be neat and tidy
- Badges and emblems are clear enough to be recognisable
- Natural wear, weathering, nicks and chips are acceptable if they don't affect legibility
- On average we clean our headstones every two to three years but more often if necessary
- Conservation and care are our priority; headstone replacement is the last option



- 1 HARROGATE (STONEFALL) CEMETERY, NORTH YORKSHIRE.
- 2 HAREFIELD (ST. MARY'S) CHURCHYARD, MIDDLESEX
- 3 BROOKWOOD MILITARY CEMETERY, SURREY
- 4 BROOKWOOD MILITARY CEMETERY, SURREY

# TYPES OF COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES IN THE UK

## PRIVATE MEMORIALS

- Over 37,000 graves are marked with private memorials chosen by family instead of a CWGC headstone
- CWGC does not own or maintain private memorials but we do monitor their condition to ensure the individual's name is legible

## SCATTERED GRAVES

- Individual graves make up the majority of burials in the UK, with 90% of sites having fewer than 10 war graves
- They are found in every type of burial ground from churches to cemeteries amongst other graves
- Individual border planting is not practical on individual graves within these sites



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5 PRIVATE MEMORIAL AT FOSTER HILL ROAD CEMETERY (BEDFORD CEMETERY), BEDFORDSHIRE

6 ARNOS VALE, BRISTOL

7 CHURCH OF ST MORWENNA AND ST JOHN THE BAPIST, MORWENSTOW, CORNWALL



7



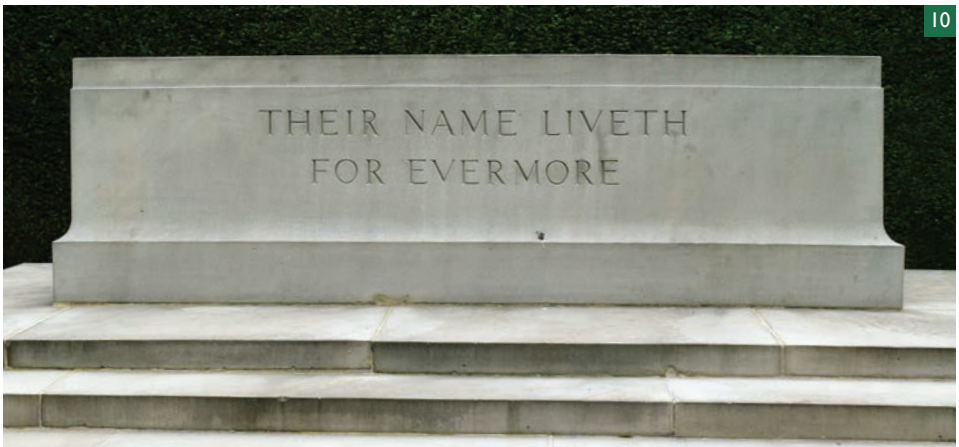
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## WAR GRAVE PLOTS

- There are nearly 600 plots with over 20,000 graves. At these sites the planting and uniform headstones resemble cemeteries more commonly seen in France and Belgium
- These plots are situated in land set aside after the wars within local authority areas and churchyards
- In many sites you will see the Cross of Sacrifice and, in larger sites, the Stone of Remembrance



- 8 CROSS OF SACRIFICE AT ISLINGTON CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM, LONDON
- 9 CAMBRIDGE CITY CEMETERY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
- 10 STONE OF REMEMBRANCE IN BIRMINGHAM (LODGE HILL) CEMETERY, WEST MIDLANDS



## OUR SITES

The CWGC own a small number of sites including the following:

- Brookwood Military Cemetery
- Cannock Chase War Cemetery
- Kilchoman Military Cemetery
- Kilnaughton Military Cemetery
- Lyness Royal Naval Cemetery
- Runnymede Air Forces Memorial

11 BROOKWOOD MILITARY CEMETERY, SURREY

12 CANNOCK CHASE WAR CEMETERY, STAFFORDSHIRE

13 RUNNYMEDE AIR FORCES MEMORIAL, SURREY



## OTHER MILITARY CEMETERIES

- CWGC are responsible for the burials of Commonwealth Casualties from the First and Second World Wars
- We also look after some non-World War graves on behalf of other Governments
- CWGC war graves are located at these sites alongside non-World War service burials

14 NETLEY MILITARY CEMETERY,  
HAMPSHIRE

15 SHORNCLIFFE MILITARY  
CEMETERY, KENT

16 TIDWORTH MILITARY  
CEMETERY, WILTSHIRE



## SCREEN WALLS

- Where conditions prevent the marking of individual graves, screen walls are placed to commemorate individuals by name. There are over 50 of these in the UK and Ireland.
- Casualties who were cremated are also commemorated on these walls
- Casualties whose graves are no longer maintainable, are also commemorated here

17 SCREEN WALL AT GRANGEGORMAN MILITARY CEMETERY, DUBLIN

18 SCREEN WALL AT SOUTH EALING CEMETERY, LONDON

19 SCREEN WALL AT YARDLEY CEMETERY, BIRMINGHAM



17



18



19



## MEMORIALS

Over 130,000 Commonwealth servicemen and women with no known grave are commemorated on our memorials to the missing across the UK. The main memorials are:

- Brookwood Memorial 1914–1918
- Brookwood Memorial 1939–1945
- Chatham Naval Memorial
- Hollybrook Memorial
- Lee-on-Solent Memorial
- Liverpool Naval Memorial
- Lowestoft Memorial
- Plymouth Naval Memorial
- Portsmouth Naval Memorial
- Runnymede Air Forces Memorial
- Tower Hill Memorial



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20 PLYMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL,  
DEVON

21 RUNNYMEDE AIR FORCES  
MEMORIAL, SURREY

22 TOWER HILL MEMORIAL, LONDON



22

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# TYPES OF HEADSTONE MATERIAL IN THE UK

Not all CWGC headstones are made from the familiar Portland stone commonly seen in Northern France. Various materials were used depending on availability at time of commemoration.

THESE ARE THE  
**MAIN TYPES OF STONE**  
YOU WILL SEE IN THE UK.



PORTLAND



SLATE



BOTTICINO

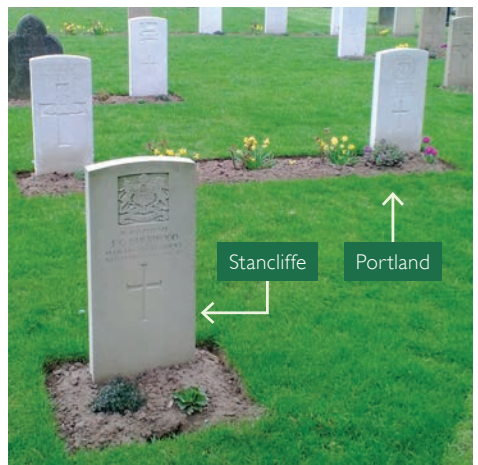
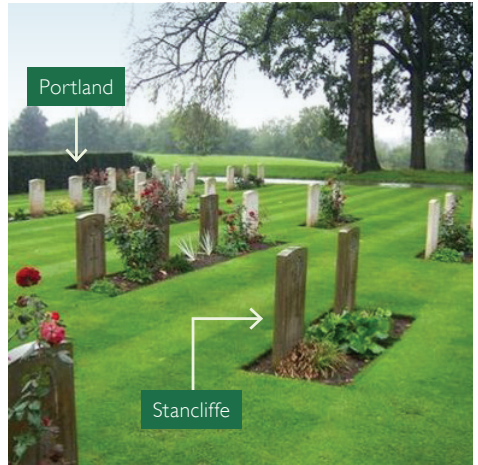
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IF A HEADSTONE IS IN SHADE  
OR UNDER TREE COVER  
IT WILL "GREEN UP" WITH  
ALGAE QUICKER THAN THOSE  
IN THE OPEN AIR.

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THE TYPE OF STONE AFFECTS THE LOOK OF A HEADSTONE. A HEADSTONE MAY NOT BE IN A POOR STATE OF REPAIR, IT COULD BE A DIFFERENT MATERIAL.



WE NEVER USE DETERGENTS OR BLEACH.

# EYES ON HANDS ON

## VOLUNTEER FOR US

Would you like to help us honour your local War dead?

Get in touch to find out more about volunteer groups and training in your area:

Email: [eyesonhandson@cwgc.org](mailto:eyesonhandson@cwgc.org)



EYES ON HANDS ON VOLUNTEERS CLEANING CWGC HEADSTONES IN ARNOS VALE CEMETERY, BRISTOL



BEFORE



AFTER

### BEFORE AND AFTER:

CWGC HEADSTONE CLEANED WITH WATER AND A SOFT BRUSH, ST LUKE'S CHURCH, CANNOCK, STAFFORDSHIRE.