

# SANCTUARY WOOD CEMETERY

During the first battles fought near Ypres in 1914, the wood here provided shelter for British troops from German observation and artillery fire. It soon became known as a 'sanctuary' from the fighting, and in the summer of 1915, several cemeteries were made amongst the trees. The wood and the cemeteries were destroyed a year later by shellfire during the desperate fighting for the nearby high ground of Mount Sorrel. After the 1918 Armistice, traces of one of the war time cemeteries here was found. Although records indicated that nearly 140 individuals had once been buried at this location, only 49 could be found.

Almost 10 years after the end of the war additional burials started to be made, and from 1927 to 1932 almost 2,000 servicemen were brought here for burial. The original war-time burials form a disordered plot near the Cross of Sacrifice, while the post-war burials were made in a distinctive fan-shaped design created by Sir Edwin Lutyens and Noel Rew. This remarkable layout is particularly breath-taking as the curving rows of headstones sit on gently rising ground, giving the effect of an amphitheatre of remembrance.



## SANCTUARY WOOD CEMETERY

COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES



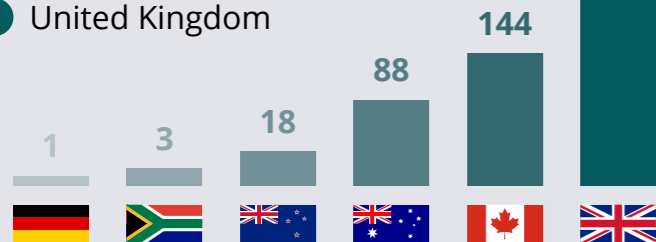
Total number of graves: **1,990**

- Identified
- Unidentified

### Force nationalities

- German
- South African
- New Zealand
- Australian
- Canadian
- United Kingdom

1,736



For more information please scan here.





## LIEUTENANT GILBERT TALBOT

Near the Cross of Sacrifice, out of alignment with several other headstones, you will find the grave of Lieutenant Gilbert Walter Lyttelton Talbot of the Rifle Brigade (Plot I, Row G, Grave 1). Gilbert was killed in action at Hooze on 30 July 1915 and was laid to rest here by his men. His older brother, Army Chaplain Neville Talbot, co-founded an 'Every Man's Club' which offered respite for soldiers behind the lines in Poperinge. It was named Talbot House in memory of Gilbert. His original wooden grave marker, a cross, is on display at Talbot House, which is still open today and well worth a visit.

1



2



3



## HIGHLIGHTS

### 1 When you arrive, pause at the entrance building.

The large and impressive entrance building here doubles as a shelter. You will find the cemetery register here but before heading in take in the view. The building has been designed and placed to carefully frame the view of the central avenue through the plots to the Stone of Remembrance and Cross of Sacrifice.

### 2 Walk up the path between the curving rows of headstones to the Cross of Sacrifice to see the original war-time graves.

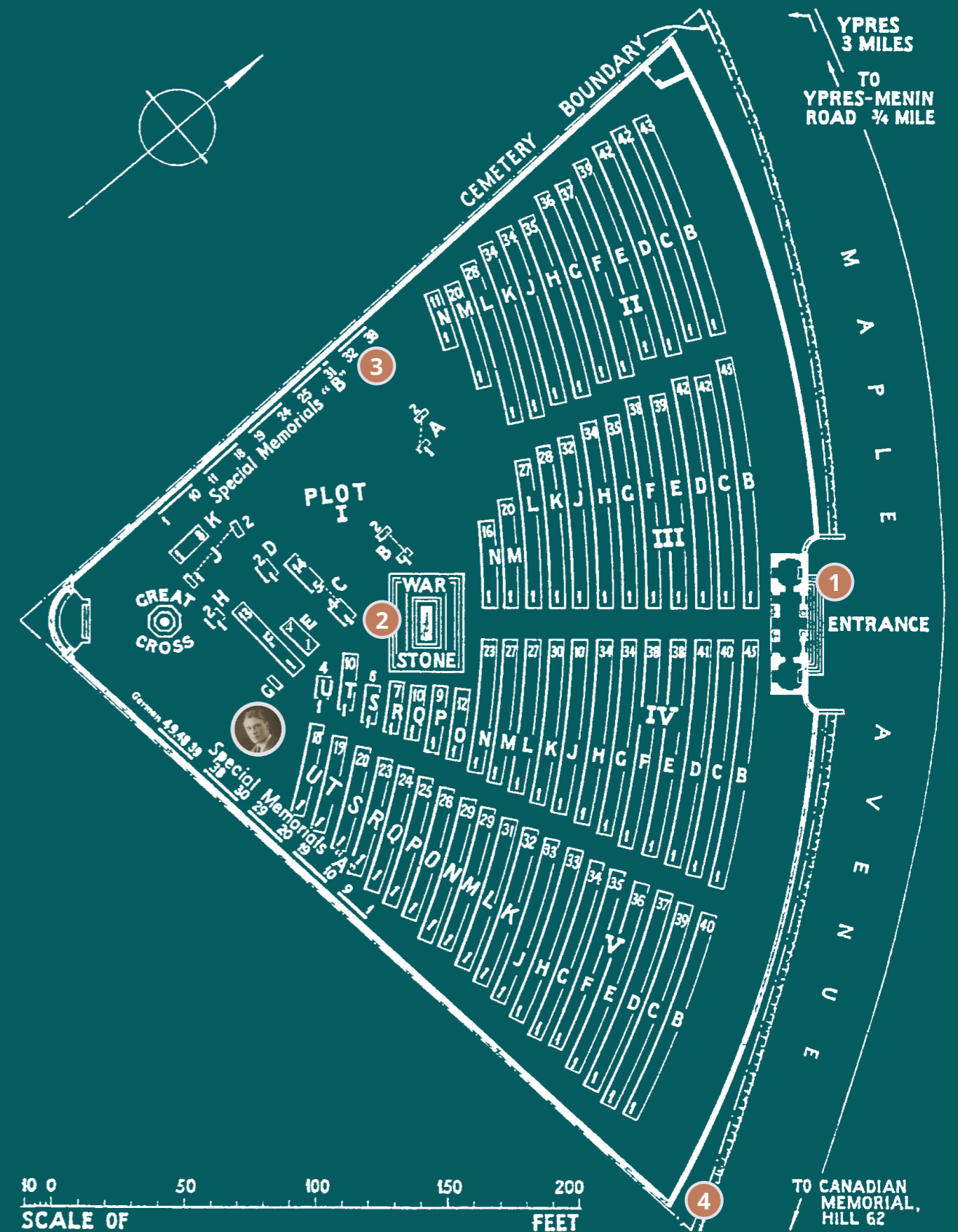
The disorder of these headstones shows the unplanned and chaotic nature of the war-time burials here. Remember that there were once trees amongst these graves which limited space, but equally, shellfire disinterred some of the dead who then needed reburial.

### 3 Along the walls nearest the Cross you will find headstones which bear superscriptions like 'Known to be buried in this cemetery'.

### 4 Before leaving, visit a memorial just outside the cemetery.

Just outside the cemetery you will find an ornate granite cross which marks the spot where Second Lieutenant Thomas Keith Hedley Rae of the Rifle Brigade fell in July 1915. After the war his grave could not be found and his name appears on our Menin Gate Memorial. His parents, Edward and Margaret, with no grave to visit, decided to mark this location as a place of remembrance for their youngest son.

Records showed that nearly 140 individuals were laid to rest here during the war. After the fighting was over this area was carefully searched but fewer than 50 graves could be found, the rest lost to shellfire and time. These men are not missing – you will find their names on special headstones in this cemetery, engraved with superscriptions like 'Buried near this spot', 'Buried elsewhere in this cemetery' or 'Believed to be buried in this cemetery'.



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#### In the area

At a walkable distance of the Hill 62 Canadian Memorial, just down the road. Also close to Maple Copse Cemetery.



#### Westtoer bike routes nearby

- Ieperboog
- Frontroute 14-18
- Vive le Vélo fietsroute – Paars
- Fietsen langs de Korte Keten – Ieper



#### Westtoer walking routes nearby

- Het landschap als getuige



#### Step free access



#### Parking space



#### Seats present in cemetery