



CWGC
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

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Maidenhead, United Kingdom

MEDIA RELEASE

Arnos Vale Cemetery war graves highlighted at open day this weekend

- **The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) has restored the graves and memorials for 238 war casualties at Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol.**
- **CWGC staff will be on site at the Arnos Vale Cemetery, as part of the Bristol Open Doors event from the 14 – 16 September.**
- **Visitors will be able to research their military connections and watch CWGC staff engraving a headstone.**

Bristolians can get a unique glimpse at the continuing work to commemorate World War casualties at an open day in Arnos Vale Cemetery this weekend with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), as part of the Bristol Open Doors event.

CWGC teams have worked, in collaboration with the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust, to restore the graves and memorials to 238 casualties from the First World War at the site's Soldiers' Corner as part of its ongoing work to remember the 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth who died in the two World Wars.

During both World Wars there were several military hospitals in Bristol. Many of the First World War casualties buried at Arnos Vale were treated at the 2nd Southern General and the Beaufort after returning to the UK from the Mediterranean on hospital ships, only to succumb to illness or injury on British soil. Most of the war graves honour British service personnel but CWGC also commemorates the fallen from Australia, Canada and South Africa in Soldiers' Corner.

Visitors to this weekend's open days (14-16 September, 10am – 4pm) will be able to see some of the Commission's expert stonemasons at work as they finish engraving the names of the war dead on some of the newly restored grave markers. There will be an opportunity to meet with the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust to learn more about the site and CWGC staff will also be on hand on Saturday and Sunday to help explain how to trace family descendants on the Commission's graves and memorials.

Julian Evans, Director of International and Community Engagement for CWGC, said: "Our teams have worked hard to restore the war graves and memorials in Arnos Vale and thanks to the co-operation of the Arnos Vale



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Cemetery Trust this space can continue to offer visitors with somewhere tranquil to come and remember those who gave their lives.

“The open days this weekend will also give visitors a unique opportunity to see our expert stonemasons at work as they put the finishing touches to some of the restored grave markers. Our team will also be available to help anyone interested in learning more about their own family connections to the World Wars through our online database.

“I would encourage anyone with an interest in how their local area was affected by the World Wars to come down and speak to our staff. Arnos Vale Cemetery is an excellent example of the reminders we have up and down the country to the sacrifices given by the generations before us.”

The work at Arnos Vale began three months ago in co-operation with the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust and is CWGC's largest UK restoration project this year. It has so far seen the realignment, replacement or restoration of all 238 grave markers in Soldiers' Corner, near to the main entrance of the cemetery and final landscaping works will continue over the coming weeks.

The Commission also assessed the condition of the rest of the headstones, grave markers and memorials spread throughout the site and ensured all were cleaned and restored and that all names and inscriptions were clearly legible. This included the Grade II listed memorial wall on Soldiers' Corner.

To maintain authenticity the 40 grave markers which needed replacing altogether have been carved out of Portland stone, the same as was used in the original headstones and grave markers. Archive photos and designs were used to confirm the original position of graves and research was undertaken to ensure engravings were updated if needed, in line with the Commission's constantly evolving casualty database.

For more information about the event see: <https://arnosvale.org.uk/events/bristol-doors-open-day-at-arnos-vale/>

For more information, images and spokespeople please contact:

Chris Anderson on chris.anderson@cwgc.org or on 01628 507217 / 07384 816714

Ends.



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Notes for editors:

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) commemorates the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during the two World Wars. It also holds and updates an extensive and accessible records archive.

The Commission operates in more than 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries.

Get to know the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

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Arnos Vale Cemetery

At Arnos Vale Cemetery the CWGC commemorates 514 casualties from the First and Second World Wars. Bristol was home to several military hospitals, RAF stations and prisoner of war camps. Some of the graves here are scattered throughout the site, while others are in designated plots – the largest being the ‘Soldiers’ Corner’ near the main entrance.

The cemetery is located at: Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bath Road, Bristol, BS4 3EW.