



**CWGC**  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

## **CWGC FAST FACTS**

- The Commission was founded as the Imperial War Graves Commission by Royal Charter dated 21 May 1917.
- The name changed to Commonwealth in March 1960.
- It was largely the creation of one man – Sir Fabian Ware.
- Ware was too old to fight but went to France with the British Red Cross. He felt compelled to ensure the final resting places of First World War casualties were never forgotten.
- The key aim of CWGC is to honour the 1.7 million men and women of the forces of the Commonwealth who died in the two world wars.
- We do so without distinction on account of race, religion or status.
- We care for their graves and memorials at 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries and territories and on every continent except Antarctica.
- The best architects and artists of the day designed the cemeteries and memorials – Sir Edwin Lutyens, Sir Herbert Baker, Sir Reginald Blomfield and Rudyard Kipling.
- The CWGC is the largest gardening organisation in the world – the equivalent of almost 1,000 football pitches are under fine horticultural maintenance.
- Out of our total workforce of 1,300, the vast majority, more than 850, are gardeners.
- The CWGC's work is paid for by our six Commonwealth member governments who share the cost of the Commission's work proportionately to the number of their graves.
- The six partner governments are United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India. UK is about three quarters of our budget.
- In 2015/16, the Commission received more than £61 million in funding.
- The largest Commission cemetery in the world is Tyne Cot in Belgium. It holds almost 12,000 graves of which more than 8,300 are unknowns.
- Our smallest cemetery is Ocracoke Island (British) Cemetery, North Carolina, US with just four burials.
- The first Commission memorial to the missing to be unveiled was the Menin Gate Memorial in Ieper, Belgium, in July 1927.
- The last Commission cemetery and memorial to be unveiled after the Second World War was in Ambon, Indonesia in June 1967.

- Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery in France is the newest Commission cemetery - dedicated in 2010.
- In the UK the CWGC cares for war graves and memorials at almost 13,000 locations, which together commemorate more than 300,000 men and women who died during the two world wars as a result of their injuries, accident or sickness.
- It is estimated that in the UK, everyone has at least one war grave or memorial within a few miles of their front door.
- The CWGC holds and updates an extensive and accessible records archive. The casualty database contains the names of all the Commonwealth war dead. It is available by visiting [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org).
- For those without internet access, a full enquiries service is available. The Enquiries Section at Head Office, Maidenhead, provides advice about locating individual war graves or names on memorials.
- They can be reached by email [enquiries@cwgc.org](mailto:enquiries@cwgc.org) or by phone 01628 507200
- Of the almost 1.7m servicemen and women the Commission commemorates, more than 200,000 graves are of unidentified individuals
- The Commission commemorate more than 68,000 civilians who died during the Second World War.
- Their names are listed on a roll of honour, housed near St George's Chapel in Westminster Abbey, London
- In addition to commemorating the Commonwealth forces, CWGC maintains more than 40,000 war graves of other nationalities and over 53,000 non-war military and civilian graves on a repayment basis.

Nationality	1914-1918 War		1939-1945 War		Both Wars		Overall Casualty count
	Identified Burials	Memorials	Identified Burials	Memorials	Identified Burials	Memorials	
Australian	38,914	23,245	28,588	12,096	67,502	35,341	102,843
Canadian	45,552	19,442	37,309	8,060	82,861	27,502	110,363
Indian	8,260	65,649	18,223	68,806	26,483	134,455	160,938
New Zealand	11,770	6,293	9,044	2,887	20,814	9,180	29,994
South African	6,706	3,197	10,020	1,888	16,726	5,085	21,811
United Kingdom	480,769	407,370	244,906	138,899	725,675	546,269	1,271,944
<b>Total</b>	<b>591,971</b>	<b>525,196</b>	<b>348,090</b>	<b>232,636</b>	<b>940,061</b>	<b>757,832</b>	<b>1,697,893</b>

## **Commonwealth Facts**

### **Australia**

- Despite a population of fewer than five million, more than 330,000 Australians would volunteer and serve overseas in the First World War.
- The CWGC commemorates more than 62,000 service personnel who died while serving with Australian forces in the First World War.
- In WW2 almost one million Australians, both men and women, served on land, at sea and in the air.
- The CWGC commemorates more than 40,000 people who died while serving with Australian forces in the Second World War.

### **Canada**

- During WW1 more than 650,000 men and women from Canada and Newfoundland served — over 66,000 gave their lives and more than 172,000 were wounded
- More than one million Canadians and Newfoundlanders served in the military during WW2 — more than 45,000 gave their lives and another 55,000 were wounded.

### **India**

- India made a vital contribution to Allied success in the First World War. The Indian Army grew from some 150,000 in 1914 to nearly 1.4 million by 1918
- More than one million served overseas.
- The CWGC commemorates some 74,000 who lost their lives while serving with Indian forces between 1914 and 1921.
- Over 9,200 decorations were earned, including eleven Victoria Crosses – the highest award for gallantry.
- With 2.5 million men, the Indian Army of the Second World War was the largest volunteer army in history.
- The CWGC commemorates more than 87,000 people who lost their lives while serving with Indian forces during the Second World War

### **New Zealand**

- More than 100,000 New Zealand troops and nurses served overseas during the war, not including those serving in British and other Dominion forces.

- This was around 10 percent of a population of just under a million and an estimated 42 percent of men of military age served in the NZEF
- The CWGC commemorates more than 18,000 people who died while serving with New Zealand forces between 1914 and 1921
- The CWGC commemorates more than 11,900 people who died while serving with New Zealand forces in the Second World War.

### **South Africa**

- 136,000 South African troops fought in the Middle East and on the Western Front during WW1
- CWGC commemorates almost 10,000 South African's who died during WW1
- The South African Native Labour Corps made an important contribution to the war effort of the British Empire – more than 24,000 were sent to Europe.
- More than 600 died on 21 February 1917 when the passenger steamship SS Mendi was struck by another ship in thick fog and sank off the Isle of Wight
- About 334,000 men volunteered for full-time service in the South African Army during the war.
- The CWGC commemorates more than 11,900 people who died while serving with South African forces during the Second World War