This bitesize guide is designed to help you research someone from the Air Forces who died in the First World War. Firstly, you will need to decide who you will research... this might be a relative, or you could choose a name from a local war memorial, or you might select a name from a Commonwealth War Graves (CWGC) headstone in one of our cemeteries, or within a parish churchyard local to you.

The first stage of your research starts with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Casualty Database. At CWGC, we keep a record of the place of burial or commemoration of all the men and women of the Britain and Commonwealth who died in the First and Second World Wars.

STEP 1: Visit our website at www.cwgc.org

Using the dropdown FIND RECORDS menu, select ‘Find War Dead’

Fill in the name of the individual you are researching

Select First World War box

Research tip
Records use different combinations of full names, name and initial, and initials only – you may have to try several of these to find the person you are looking for

Researching someone from the Air Forces who died in the First World War - guidance sheet
If you already have some more details about the person you are looking for, such as their age, service number, date of death, or any medals they received, you can add these into the **ADDITIONAL FIELDS** section.

If you know where the individual died, for example, you can put this into the Additional Information box.

You will then get a list of the results...

**Did you know...?**
Wherever possible, the relatives of a casualty were offered the opportunity to have a small, personal inscription listed on their headstone.

If known, the Additional Info can include next of kin details and address.

If the person you are looking for has a CWGC headstone, you will find any personal inscription engraved upon it listed here.

Lower down the page you will find a link to our **CWGC Archives** and any additional information which is held about this individual. You can find several different types of official CWGC reports here. Find out more about these on page 3.
Further down on your search page you can find more details about the cemetery where the person you are looking for is buried, or the memorial upon which they are commemorated.

### Step 2: Exploring additional resources to find out more about the individual

You need to check if there are any the Enquiry Files held by the CWGC Archives [http://archive.cwgc.org](http://archive.cwgc.org)

These contain correspondence between the family of those killed and the Commission. Only a small number of these files still survive.

Enquiry Files cover a range of subjects, including:

- Attempts to locate a missing individual
- Requests for the remains of a casualty to be returned to the country they came from, known as the ‘repatriation of remains’
- The addition of a personal inscription to a CWGC headstone
- Requests for a photograph of a grave
- Issues about the maintenance or upkeep of a grave
- The exhumation and reburial of a casualty
- The return of wooden crosses to families
Step 3: Searching for additional information online

A Street Near You uses maps to locate where those who died in the First World War originally came from and where they are now commemorated. You can search by lots of different terms so see what you can discover. It also provides links to other archives.

https://astreetnearyou.org

The RAF Museum has created a leaflet to guide you through the many resources which can help you develop your research further.


The RAF Museum Archive has a searchable database. Simply enter the name of the person you are researching to discover more.

http://www.rafmuseumstoryvault.org.uk/pages/raf_vault.php

Airhistory.org has a downloadable index of those who served in the Royal Flying Corps, and it contains references about where to find additional information.

http://www.airhistory.org.uk/rfc/people_index.html

The Imperial War Museum has created ‘Tracing Your Ancestry: Royal Flying Corps and Royal Air Force’, a very useful guide to help you develop your research further. It outlines other resources that are available, and how best to use them.