

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

RESEARCHING A SOUTH AFRICAN WHO DIED IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR - GUIDANCE SHEET



This bitesize guide is designed to help you research a South African, or someone who served with South African 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



Need help..?
Watch the 'How to search' video tutorials

Using the dropdown **FIND RECORDS** menu, select 'Find War Dead'



FIND WAR DEAD
EXPLORE THE RECORDS OF THE 1.7 MILLION COMMONWEALTH MEN AND WOMEN THAT WE COMMEMORATE

Last name
Enter the last name of the casualty

First name
Enter a first name

Initials
Enter initials

Service Number
Service numbers can contain numbers, letters and symbols

Regiment
Find records that relate to a particular regiment

Served with (country)
Served With

Served in (army etc.)
Served In

War
Select War

First World War Second World War

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 your the person you are looking for

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.

ADDITIONAL FIELDS

Select additional options to add them to your search criteria

+ Country (commemorated in)

+ Cemetery or Memorial

+ Unit

+ Rank

+ Secondary Regiment

+ Age at death

+ Date of Death

+ Honours & awards

+ Additional Information

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

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

SHOW 10 OF 28 WAR DEAD Download all results Sort by Relevance

Name, Rank & Service No.	Unit, Regiment, Country of Service	Date of Death	Commemorated at
T WELSH Captain	1st Field Amb. South African Medical Corps South African	Died 12 April 1917 33 years old	ATHIES COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION A. 17. France
VICTOR WILLIAM ALLEN Second Lieutenant	4th Regt. South African Infantry South African	Died 09 June 1918 19 years old	BOUCHOIR NEW BRITISH CEMETERY VI. E. 28. France
GEORGE LENNOX ANDERSON Lieutenant	12th Regt. South African Infantry South African	Died 11 August 1916 24 years old	DODOMA CEMETERY II. D. 6. Tanzania
CHARLES HENRY PERREM Second Lieutenant	1st Regt. South African Infantry South African	Died 19 October 1918 30 years old	ROISEL COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION II. B. 10. France
MAURICE ESMOND WHELAN Lieutenant	2nd Regt. South African Infantry South African	Died 18 October 1918	ROISEL COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION II. B. 20. France

Be aware,

CWGC records don't always include details about where an individual was from, or exactly where they died. Our records are centred around where a person is buried or commemorated.



If you have not found who you are looking for, you can refine the results

If you think you have found the person you are looking for, select 'More details' and you will get an at-a-glance record

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

SECOND LIEUTENANT VICTOR WILLIAM ALLEN

Regiment & Unit/Ship
South African Infantry
4th Regt.

Date of Death
Died 09 June 1918
Age 19 years old

Buried or commemorated at
BOUCHOIR NEW BRITISH CEMETERY
VI. E. 28.
France

Secondary Unit, Regiment attd. 103rd Sqdn. Royal Air Force **Country of Service** South African

Awards Military Cross, Military Medal

Personal Inscription TO US HE LIVETH FOR EVER

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

FROM THE CWGC ARCHIVES

GRAVE REGISTRATION (2)

Click to zoom in Click to zoom in

HEADSTONE (2)

Click to zoom in Click to zoom in

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.

What are **Headstone Reports**?

These provide details of what is inscribed on an individual's headstone. The main purpose of these reports was to help manage the enormous programme of headstone production and engraving embarked by CWGC during the world wars.

What are **Grave Registration Reports (GRRs)**?

These forms detail the graves we are responsible for within a particular burial site. Each grave is listed by Plot, Row and Grave number. These reports often provide basic details of the individual such as their name, service number, rank, regiment, unit and date of their death, when known to us.

What are **Concentration Reports**?

These record details of individuals who were originally buried in smaller or isolated cemeteries, but who, at a later date, were exhumed and reburied in 'concentrated' war cemeteries. This enabled CWGC to fully commemorate and look after otherwise unmaintainable graves.

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.



Did you know...?

The CWGC maintains more than 200 memorials across the globe. These record nearly 700,000 names of those who have no known grave, were buried at sea or cremated

BURIED AT

LIJSSENTHOEK MILITARY CEMETERY

West-Vlaanderen
Belgium

Number of casualties: 10786

[View cemetery details](#)



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> 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



Did you know...?

The Imperial War Graves Commission was founded in 1917. Before that, an army unit, Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquires (DGRE) began the work of recording details of those who had died

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 **South Africa War Graves Project** has a database of all those who died during the First World War, incorporating photos of graves and memorials, as well as some personal information about the casualties.

<https://www.southafricawar Graves.org/research.htm>

The **South African Military History** website contains a list of Southern Africans who served in the Royal Flying Corps, Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Air Force during the First World War.

<http://samilitaryhistory.org/ross/birdmen1.html>

**The South African
Military History Society**

Die Suid-Afrikaanse Krygshistoriese Vereniging

**Southern Africa's Birdmen of World War One, 1914-1919
A List of Southern Africans in the Royal Flying Corps, Royal Naval Air Service
and the Royal Air Force**



The **IWMs Lives of the First World War** website is a memorial to those who served in the First World War. Enter the name and service number of the person you are searching for to get the best results. Many stories were added during the First World War Centenary. You might even find a photo!

<https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/>