

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

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



This bitesize guide is designed to help you research a woman 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 British and Commonwealth soldiers 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 person 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

If you already have some more details about the person 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 died, for example, you can put this into the Additional Information box.

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

YOUR SEARCH RESULTS

Regiment: **voluntary aid detachment**

EXACT MATCHES CLOSE MATCHES ALL MATCHES

Only results that match exactly with all of the words you have entered into the search boxes. This is the same as inserting "AND" between the words.

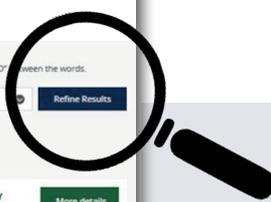
SHOW 10 OF 191 WAR DEAD

Download all results Sort by: Relevance Refine Results

Results per page: 10

Name, Rank & Service No.	Unit, Regiment, Country of Service	Date of Death	Commemorated at	More details
M. SILVIA STEPHENSON Worker	Voluntary Aid Detachment United Kingdom	Died 09 November 1915	CAIRO WAR MEMORIAL CEMETERY D. 185. Egypt	More details Save to My list
EVELYN GLADYS BROWN Nurse	Royal Herbert Hospital, Voluntary Aid Detachment United Kingdom	Died 04 May 1916 28 years old	BROOKWOOD 1914-1918 MEMORIAL Panel 11, United Kingdom	More details Save to My list
WINIFRED STANLEY COATES Nurse	Voluntary Aid Detachment United Kingdom	Died 08 February 1916 26 years old	SHERIFF HUTTON (ST. HELEN AND HOLY CROSS) CHURCHYARD South East Part PM of Churchyard United Kingdom	More details Save to My list
AMY CURTIS Nurse	1st Western General Hospital Voluntary Aid Detachment United Kingdom	Died 06 November 1918 30 years old	UNITED KINGDOM BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE United Kingdom	More details Save to My list

Be aware, CWGC records don't always include details about where a person 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

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 an individual has a CWGC headstone, you will find any personal inscription engraved upon it listed here.

MEMBER
DAISY KATHLEEN MARY COLES

Regiment & Unit/Ship
Voluntary Aid Detachment
58th General Hospital

Date of Death
Died 30 September 1917
Age 24 years old

Buried or commemorated at
LONGUEUESSE (ST. OMER) SOUVENIR CEMETERY
VI. B. 3.
France

Country of Service United Kingdom

Additional Info Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter G. Coles, of Priorsford House, Peebles.

Personal Inscription KILLED WHILE ON DUTY BY ENEMY AIRCRAFT

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**. 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

Next, you should consult the CWGC How to Research... guide for the service which is relevant. For example, if the individual you are researching served in the Merchant Navy, check out the 'Research a Merchant Sailor' guide. These guides include links which may help you discover more information.

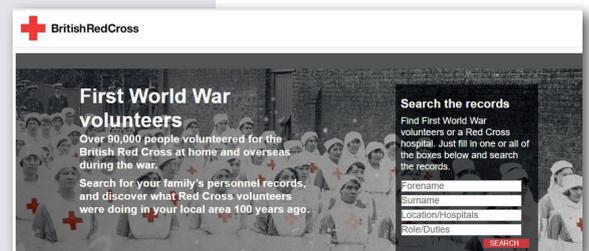
A Street Near You uses maps to locate where those who died in the First World War originally came from and where they are now commemorated. You can search by lots of different terms so see what you can discover. It also provides links to other archives.

<https://astreetnearyou.org>



The **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 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/>

The **British Red Cross** website provides information on the 90,000 people who volunteered for the British Red Cross at home and overseas. This includes records of those who served with the Voluntary Aid Detachments.
<https://vad.redcross.org.uk/>



The **Scarlet Finders** website provides some excellent information on those who served as nurses in the First World War. In particular, the website includes a roll of those who served with the units of the Scottish Women's Hospital.
<http://www.scarletfinders.co.uk/index.html>