

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

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



This bitesize guide is designed to help you research a sailor 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

 Match this search term exactly

First name
Enter a first name

 Match this search term exactly

or

Initials
Enter initials

 Match this search term exactly

Service Number
Service numbers can contain numbers, letters and symbols

 Match this search term exactly

Regiment
Find records that relate to a particular regiment

 Match this search term exactly

Served with (country)
Served With
 Match this search term exactly

Served in (army etc.)
Served In
 Match this search term exactly

War
Select War
 First World War Second World War

Fill in the name of the sailor 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 sailor

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

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

Name, Rank & Service No.	Unit, Regiment, Country of Service	Date of Death	Commemorated at
HENRY ALLEN Boy 1st Class Service Number: J/34509	H.M.S. "Black Prince," Royal Navy United Kingdom	Died 31 May 1916 15 years old	PLYMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL 13. United Kingdom
JOHN ARTHUR LONGSHAW Signal Boy Service Number: J/35836	H.M.S. "Indefatigable," Royal Navy United Kingdom	Died 31 May 1916 15 years old	PORTSMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL 15. United Kingdom
EDWARD HENRY JABEZ MULROONEY Bugler Service Number: PO/18698	H.M.S. "Black Prince," Royal Marine Light Infantry United Kingdom	Died 31 May 1916 15 years old	PORTSMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL 22. United Kingdom
ALFRED WILLIAM RUSH Bugler Service Number: RMA/14253	H.M.S. "Defence," Royal Marine Artillery United Kingdom	Died 31 May 1916 15 years old	PORTSMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL 21. United Kingdom
FRANK HERBERT DANIEL Bugler Service Number: PLV/16731	H.M.S. "Defence," Royal Marine Light Infantry United Kingdom	Died 31 May 1916 15 years old	PLYMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL 18. United Kingdom

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

BUGLER
ALFRED WILLIAM RUSH
Service Number: RMA/14253

Regiment & Unit/Ship
Royal Marine Artillery
H.M.S. "Defence."

Date of Death
Died 31 May 1916
Age 15 years old

Buried or commemorated at
PORTSMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL
21.
United Kingdom

Country of Service United Kingdom

Additional Info Son of Louise Rush, of 32, Jubilee Rd., Southsea, Portsmouth.

COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES

FROM THE CWGC ARCHIVES

GRAVE REGISTRATION (2)

Click to zoom in

HEADSTONE (2)

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 sailor. 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 your sailor 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



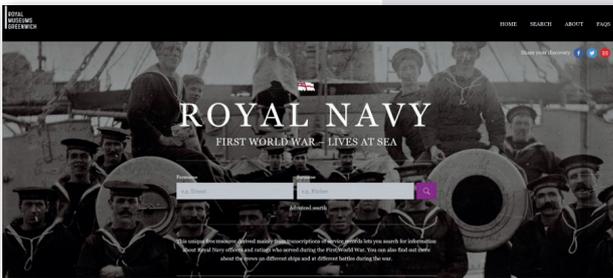
Did you know...?

The Imperial War Graves Commission was founded in 1917. Before that, an army unit, Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries (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>

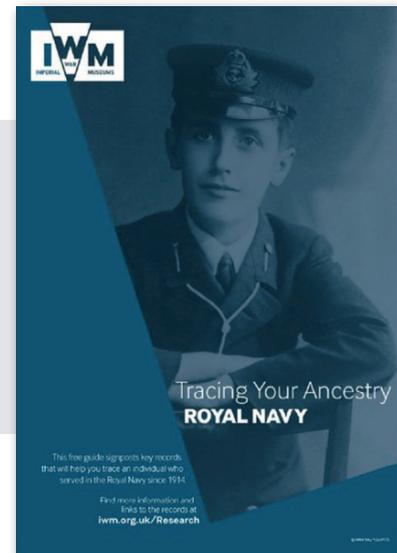


The **National Maritime Museum** has a free resource which lets you search for information about Royal Navy officers and ratings (non officers) who served during the First World War. The information available is taken mainly from transcriptions of service records.

<https://royalnavyrecordsww1.rmg.co.uk/>

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

https://www.iwm.org.uk/sites/default/files/public-document/Tracing_Your_Royal_Navy_Ancestry.pdf



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 your sailor 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/>