

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

RESEARCHING SOMEONE FROM THE AIR FORCES WHO DIED IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR - GUIDANCE SHEET



This bitesize guide is designed to help you research someone from the Air Forces who died in the Second 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.

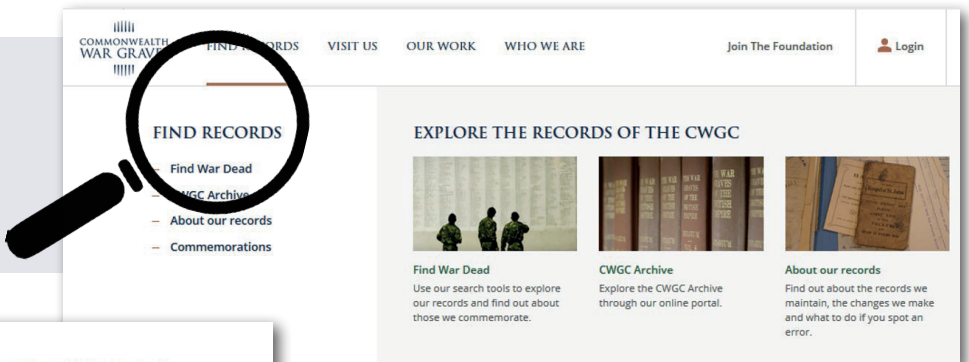
The first stage of your research starts with the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission Casualty Database**. At CWGC, we keep a record of the place of burial or commemoration of all the men and women of the Britain and Commonwealth who died in the First and Second World Wars.

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 **Second 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 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 individual died, for example, you can put this into the Additional Information box.

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

SHOW 10 OF 8308 WAR DEAD Download all results Sort by Relevance Refine Results

Name, Rank & Service No.	Unit, Regiment, Country of Service	Date of Death	Commemorated at
MARY HUGHES Aircraftwoman 2nd Class Service Number: 437410	Women's Auxiliary Air Force United Kingdom	Died 23 March 1942 27 years old	LIVERPOOL (ALLERTON) CEMETERY Sec. 1B, Gen. Grave 322. United Kingdom
JOHN McCULLOCH MIDDLEMORE HUGHES Flight Lieutenant Service Number: 33191	25 Sqn. Royal Air Force United Kingdom	Died 07 December 1940 23 years old	CHILWORTH (ST. DENYS) CHURCHYARD South part. United Kingdom
MICHAEL HENRY HUGHES Flying Officer Service Number: 133874	161 Sqn. Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve United Kingdom	Died 01 June 1944	UDEN WAR CEMETERY S. C. 5. Netherlands
MILDRED ANNE HUGHES Aircraftwoman 2nd Class Service Number: 743	Southern Rhodesia Women's Auxiliary Air Service United Kingdom	Died 17 September 1944 55 years old	HARBRE (PIONEER) CEMETERY Eur. War Graves Plot, Grave 149. Zimbabwe
MARGARET ELEANOR HUGHES Aircraftwoman 1st Class Service Number: 200338	Women's Auxiliary Air Force United Kingdom	Died 27 October 1942 21 years old	LAMPETER (SOAR) INDEPENDENT CHAPELYARD S.W. part. United Kingdom

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

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.

AIRCRAFTWOMAN 2ND CLASS
MARY HUGHES
Service Number: 437410

Regiment & Unit/Ship
Women's Auxiliary Air Force

Date of Death
Died 23 March 1942
Age 27 years old

Buried or commemorated at
LIVERPOOL (ALLERTON) CEMETERY
Sec. 1B, Gen. Grave 322,
United Kingdom

Country of Service United Kingdom

Additional Info Daughter of Benjamin and Sarah Jane Hughes, of Liverpool.

Personal Inscription CALLED BY THE KING OF KINGS FOR THE HIGHEST INVESTITURE

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 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



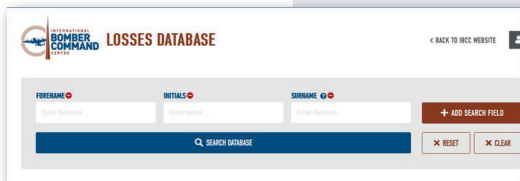
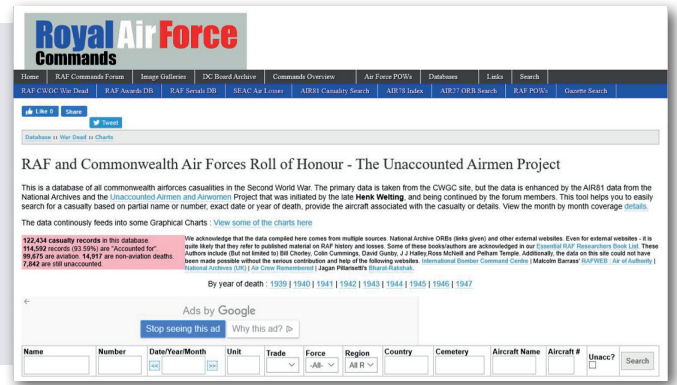
Did you know...?

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

The **RAF Commands** website includes information on all members of the RAF and Commonwealth air forces who died in the Second World War. You can search by lots of different terms so see what you can discover.

<http://www.rafcommands.com/database/wardead/>

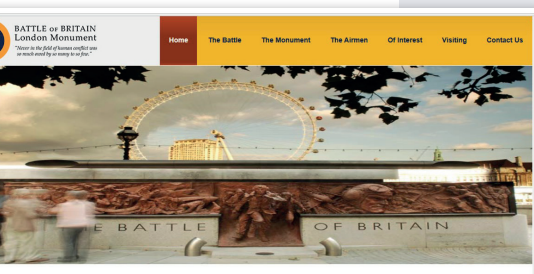
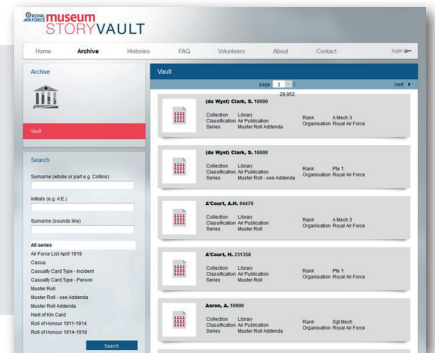


The **International Bomber Command Centre Losses Database** records the details of 57,861 Bomber Command deaths during WWII. If you are looking for someone who served with Bomber Command you can search the database at.

<https://losses.internationalbcc.co.uk/>

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



The **Battle of Britain Memorial** website has a Roll of Honour of all those who fought in the Battle of Britain. It contains details of the 2,937 British and Allied airmen who flew at least one authorised sortie with an accredited unit of RAF Fighter Command in the period 10th July to 31st October 1940.

<https://bbm.org.uk/the-airmen/>

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.

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

