

OUR WAR GRAVES YOUR HISTORY

HARROGATE (STONEFALL) CEMETERY



Many airfields were established in Yorkshire during the Second World War, among them were RAF stations at Harrogate, Linton-on-Ouse, Tockwith, Rufforth and Marston Moor. No. 6 (Royal Canadian Air Force) Bomber Group, had their headquarters at Allerton Park near Knaresborough and all the stations controlled by this group were in the area north of Harrogate, the largest base having its headquarters at Linton-on-Ouse. Almost all of the 991 Second World War commemorations in Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery are of airmen, two-thirds of them Canadian.

During the early months of the war, a Services Plot was set aside for wartime burials. As time went on, it became apparent that more space would be needed. In July 1943, the Air Forces Section was opened for burials from airfields in Yorkshire and the north-eastern counties. Originally known as an 'RAF Regional Cemetery', this plot today contains over 900 burials. A number of the war graves from the Second World War are scattered elsewhere in the cemetery and there are also 23 servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in the cemetery.

Key CWGC features to look out for:

'Special Memorials' to seven casualties who are commemorated here but buried elsewhere because their graves in nearby cemeteries or churchyards could no longer be maintained. These are situated to the right of the shelter building.

Different shaped headstones for different nationalities



Points of interest...

Commemorations: **1014**
First World War: **23**
Second World War: **991**

Casualties from the following nations;

Australia
Canada
Czechoslovakia
Fiji
Germany
Jamaica
Netherlands
New Zealand
Soviet Union
Trinidad
USA

Things to look out for...

The Hannah brothers buried in Section G of the Air Force Plot

Three **Soviet soldiers** buried in the Services Plot

Squadron Leader
K.S. Stammers DFC, AFC, DFM the most decorated airman buried here in Section H. Row L

Discovering CWGC graves at Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery



1 The Services Plot

Head to the **Services Plot**. This plot dates from the Second World War, and as well as Commonwealth casualties, this plot also contains foreign nationals from the Soviet Union, former Czechoslovakia and Germany – note the different headstone shapes used by the CWGC to show different nationalities. The three Soviet soldiers were liberated Prisoners of War who were evacuated to military hospitals in Yorkshire. Another of the CWGC casualties buried in this plot is Private **Selemani Shabani** of the African Pioneers Corps (East Africa) who was a Muslim; you will see an inscription in Arabic from the Koran on his headstone.

2 The 'Air Force Plot'

Now head over to the **Air Force Plot**. As you enter, amongst the graves on the right-hand side is **Flying Officer Hodgson**. He was the first serviceman laid to rest in this new section. Hodgson was killed when the Sunderland Flying Boat he was piloting crashed in Lough Erne in Northern Ireland. He is buried in Section C. Row A. Grave 1.

Elsewhere in Section C, is **Ulric Leslie Look Yan**, from Trinidad. One of five casualties from the Caribbean buried in this cemetery, Ulric was born in the Port of Spain, Trinidad. Aged 20, he joined the Trinidad Air Training Scheme as part of a larger programme: the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. The Plan was an agreement between the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to train 50,000 air crew annually for as long as was necessary. After four months of training in Trinidad, Ulric spent the next few months in Canada. By 1943 Ulric had been posted to England where he continued his training. In November of that year, Ulric was stationed at RAF Milfield in Northumberland. There Ulric started a 10-week course learning to fly Hurricane fighter planes. On the 14 January 1944, Ulric's Hurricane crashed while engaged on a low-level cross-country flight over Northumberland. He is buried in Section C, Row J, Grave 4.



Ulric Look Yan

3

Bomber Crew

As you look towards the shelter, on the left hand side you will find Section H. In row P, you will find the crew of a Halifax bomber (pictured right) one of several aircrews who died, and are now buried together here.

On the night of 5 March 1945, 35 Canadian casualties buried in this cemetery lost their lives. That night, 270 planes were setting off on a mission to bomb Chemnitz, Germany. The planes took off from different air bases with a rendezvous point above the Vale of York. Unfortunately, unforecasted extreme weather saw the wings on many of the planes ice up making them difficult to fly and leading to eight crashes. Halifax NP793 took off from Linton-on-Ouse and was circling trying to avoid the freezing fog when the pilot lost control and it crashed on farmland near Hutton-le-Hole. It is thought that three of the crew survived the initial crash and were trying to rescue their comrades when they were killed in the explosion from the bomb load. All seven crew perished. **Watts, Myers, Way, McCarthy, Coones** and **Biggerstaff** are buried in Section H, Row P (to the left of the shelter). The seventh crew member is buried in Derbyshire.



The crew of Halifax NP793

4

The Hannah brothers

Between Sections H and G, you will find the CWGC shelter building. Inside is a copy of the cemetery register. This register provides the details held by the CWGC on each casualty buried in the cemetery. Don't forget to sign the Visitors Book!

In Section G, you can find the graves of the **Hannah brothers**. Out of the nine Hannah siblings from Moose Jaw, Canada, four sons and one daughter served with the Canadian forces during the Second World War. Two of the sons did not return home, having died while serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force. They were both buried here.

On 14 October 1944, **Lloyd Hannah** courageously saved the lives of six crew members after an engine fire took hold aboard his Lancaster bomber, shortly after take-off. Lloyd held the plane steady whilst the crew baled out and then stayed with the aircraft to fly it away from a village. He was killed as the plane crashed. He is buried in Section G, Row A, Grave 11.

Less than three weeks later, his younger brother **Harold Hannah**, was flying over Germany as a pathfinder - dropping flares to highlight the target for the bombers following behind. A piece of shrapnel pierced the plane's canopy and entered Harold's lung rendering him unconscious. He died in hospital on 27 January 1945. He is buried in Section G, Row F, Grave 12.



Hannah brothers