

# COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

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



This bitesize guide is designed to help you research a Canadian, or someone serving with the Canadian 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 churchyard local to you.

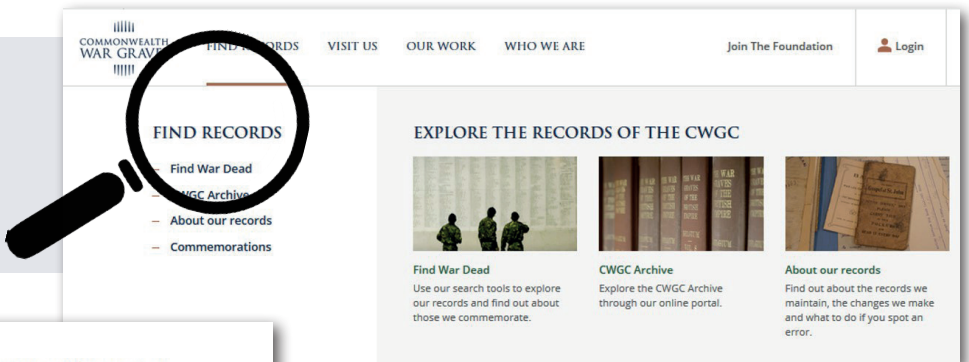
The first stage of your research starts with the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission Casualty Database**. At CWGC, we keep a record of the place of burial or commemoration of all the men and women of the Britain and Commonwealth who died in the First and Second World Wars.

### STEP 1: Visit our website at [www.cwgc.org](http://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 Help  
Enter the last name of the casualty

First name Help  
Enter a first name

Initials Help  
Enter initials

Service Number Help  
Service numbers can contain numbers, letters and symbols

Regiment Help  
Find records that relate to a particular regiment

Served with (country) Help  
Served With

Served in (army etc.) Help  
Served In

War Help  
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 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 15117 WAR DEAD Download all results Sort by Relevance [Refine Results](#)

Name, Rank & Service No.	Unit, Regiment, Country of Service	Date of Death	Commemorated at
<b>J McCRAE</b> Private Service Number: 216836	1st Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion Canadian	Died Between 07 April 1917 and 10 April 1917 23 years old	NINE ELMS MILITARY CEMETERY, THELUS III. G. 14. France
<b>JOHN McCRAE</b> Lieutenant Colonel	Canadian Army Medical Corps Canadian	Died 28 January 1918 45 years old	WIMEREUX COMMUNAL CEMETERY IV. H. 3. France
<b>JAMES GORDON McCRAE</b> Private Service Number: 252959	"C" Coy. 10th Bn. Canadian Infantry Canadian	Died 15 February 1918 22 years old	AIX-NOULETTE COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION II. A. 1. France
<b>ROBERT HENDERSON McCRAE</b> Private Service Number: 718793	"A" Coy. 16th Bn. Canadian Infantry Canadian	Died 11 November 1918 25 years old	SEAFORD CEMETERY A. 548. United Kingdom
<b>JEROME JOSEPH MADDEN</b> Sapper Service Number: 3467	Signal Coy. Canadian Corps Canadian	Died 09 June 1918 21 years old	LA TARGETTE BRITISH CEMETERY, NEUVILLE-ST. VAAST III. A. 2. 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

**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

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN McCRAE**

**Regiment & Unit/Ship**  
Canadian Army Medical Corps

**Date of Death**  
Died 28 January 1918  
Age 45 years old

**Buried or commemorated at**  
WIMEREUX COMMUNAL CEMETERY IV. H. 3.  
France

**Country of Service** Canadian

**Additional Info** Son of Col. David McCrae and Janet Simpson Eckford McCrae, of Guelph, Ontario.

John McCrae was a Canadian doctor who started to write verse at McGill University. He served as a Lieutenant in the Canadian Field Artillery during the Second Boer War (1899-1902) and he was appointed as the Medical Officer to the 1st Brigade Canadian Field Artillery at the beginning of the First World War. His poem 'In Flanders Fields' first appeared in Punch during December 1915 and became the most famous poem of the War. It was written during the second Battle of Ypres. In January 1918 McCrae was appointed consultant to all the British Armies in France, but he died of pneumonia before he could take up the post. A book of his poems was published in 1919. McCrae also wrote a book on pathology.

### 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 soldier. 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



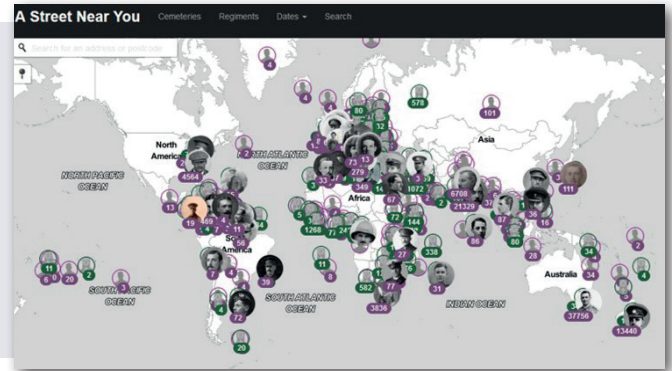
#### Did you know...?

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

# Step 3: Searching for additional information online

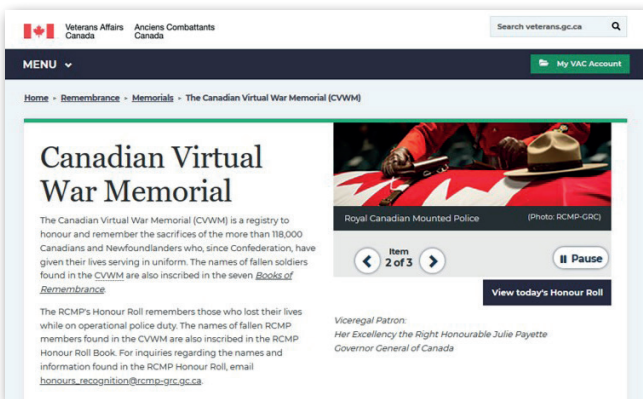
**A Street Near You** uses maps to locate where those who died in the First World War originally came from and where they are now commemorated. You can search by lots of different terms so see what you can discover. It also provides links to other archives.

<https://astreetnearyou.org>



The **Canadian Virtual War Memorial** is an online memorial to those who died in the First World War and later wars. Enter the name of your soldier to get the best results.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial>



The **Library and Archives Canada** website holds copies of the **Personal Records** of the soldiers, nurses and chaplains of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) who served in the First World War. It also holds the service files of those who served in the Newfoundland Regiment.

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/personnel-records.aspx>



The **Library and Archives Canada** website holds copies of the **War Diaries** of all army, navy and air force units which formed part of the Canadian Forces in the First World War. These files record the day-to-day activities of a unit and sometimes include the names of individual soldiers.

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/Pages/war-diaries-ship-logs-operations-records.aspx>