

Tottenham Cemetery



CWGC
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The British Home Front during the First and Second World Wars

During the two world wars Britain became an island fortress and a base for equipping and training troops and launching land, sea and air operations. In both conflicts, the skies above the island and the seas that surround her became the scene of fierce fighting involving aircraft, submarines and warships. Britain was also the main centre for the medical care of men and women serving in the armed forces. Thousands of hospitals located across the country were used to treat service personnel who were wounded, fell victim to disease, or were injured in accidents at home or overseas.

Many of the servicemen buried in the United Kingdom were killed in action in the air while defending the home front. Others, mostly naval men, drowned in British coastal waters. However the majority were wounded or contracted disease on active service, were transported back to Britain, and subsequently died while undergoing hospital treatment or recovering in private homes.

Today over 170,000 men and women who died in the United Kingdom, while serving in the armed forces during the first and second world wars, are buried in cemeteries and churchyards throughout the country. Some burials form small war graves plots within larger cemeteries, but the majority are scattered throughout cemetery grounds. In all, there are Commonwealth



Private Collection of Rob Higgins

war graves in almost 12,500 different locations throughout the United Kingdom.

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During the First World War, London was the site of more than 200 hospitals that cared for soldiers, sailors and airmen with every sort of medical condition. In 1915 the Edmonton Union Infirmary, a hospital located less than a mile from this cemetery, became Edmonton Military Hospital and subsequently grew to a capacity of close to 2,000 beds for sick and wounded

servicemen. As one of London's 'Central' military hospitals, Edmonton received casualties directly from the battlefields of France and Belgium via hospital ships and trains, and cared for military personnel until 1920 when it returned to civilian use as North Middlesex Hospital. London hospitals used designated areas in local cemeteries for military interments, unless families requested that their loved one be buried elsewhere. There are 291 servicemen and women of the First World War buried or commemorated in Tottenham Cemetery, many of whom were natives of north London. Most of the war graves are in a plot

backed by a screen wall bearing the names of those whose graves could not be individually marked.

Over 50 burials date from the months after the Armistice when influenza claimed the lives of up to 250,000 Britons. Influenza or 'Spanish flu' was a global pandemic that killed between three to six per cent of the entire world's population between 1918 and 1920. An estimated 25 million people died in the first six months alone and the virus may have killed more than 50 million people worldwide. The young and healthy were particularly vulnerable to the disease which struck with such severity that a victim could be fit at breakfast and dead by tea-time.

The screen wall was extended after 1945 to incorporate the names of 211 men and women of the armed forces who died during the Second World War and whose graves are scattered throughout the cemetery. A small plot of 30 graves near the screen wall dates from the Second World War and contains one joint grave of two heavy anti-aircraft gunners who were killed in a training accident in Kent. The inscription on the screen wall, Their Name Liveth For Evermore, was chosen by Rudyard Kipling, the first Literary Adviser to the War Graves Commission, and represents the determination of the organisation to mark in perpetuity the names of all those who gave their lives in the two world wars.

Patients and nurses in a ward, Edmonton Military Hospital, 1915

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The Commission is responsible for the commemoration of almost 1,700,000 members of the Commonwealth forces who gave their lives in the two world wars. The graves and memorials of these men and women, who came from all parts of the Commonwealth and who were of many faiths and of none, are found around the globe in 153 countries. For more information about the Commission, our work and how to search our records online visit www.cwgc.org Enquiries are also welcome at our offices: **CWGC** Head Office Tel: + 44 (0) 1628 507200 E-mail: casualty.enq@cwgc.org

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For more information about this location and some of those commemorated here, scan the QR code (right).

