

Friends of Darwen Cemetery

Hints & Tips for Searching the War Dead

Many thanks for adopting a war grave. Apart from tending the grave it possible that you may wish to know more about the person buried in grave. If you have not undertaken any family history research you may find the following notes will help with the research. Please bear in mind that for some individuals you may find very little information but for others you could be overwhelmed with the details you uncover. When you have completed the research we would be grateful if you can supply a copy to Rosemary Jackson (email: rosemaryjackson@darwencemetery.org.uk) so that we could include it on the Friends website.

Step 1: Check the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's website <www.cwgc.org>

This is a free to use website and if you don't have a computer you will be able to use the ones in Darwen or Blackburn libraries.

On the homepage click the **Search our Records** link.

On the search page you have the options for searching for an individual or search a cemetery. If your individual is buried in Darwen Cemetery it might be easier to search the cemetery.

North Africa 1940-43
New history section launched
Click here to find out more

CWGC
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

- Search our Records
- Who We Are
- What We Do
- Histories
- Audio - Video
- Publications
- Learning Zone
- Help and Information
- e-newsletter sign up?

NEWS AND EVENTS

29/10/2010 New educational film honours Indian soldiers' sacrifice
As Britain and the Commonwealth prepare to mark Remembrance Day, the Commission has produced a DVD about the often-overlooked contribution made by servicemen and women from undivided India during the First World War.

21/10/2010 Invitation to Tender for the redevelopment of cwgc.org
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is inviting tenders for the redevelopment of the Commission's website, click here for more details.

15/10/2010 Appeal for relatives of Irish casualties to come forward
In a joint appeal between the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and The Glasnevin Trust in Dublin, families and relatives of 43 servicemen and women who are buried there in unmarked graves are being asked to come forward.

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Debt of Honour Register

Search for ?

Cemetery ?

Welcome

The "Debt of Honour Register" is the Commission's database listing the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died during the two world wars and the 23,000 cemeteries, memorials and other locations worldwide where they are commemorated. The register can also be searched for details of the 67,000 Commonwealth civilians who died as a result of enemy action in the Second World War.

Place mouse over button for more information about the particular field.

Searches are not case sensitive. Search criteria may be entered in upper, lower or mixed case. Searches are not phonetic. The search will not find names that sound similar to the one you have entered.

When you click the **Submit** button you will be presented with three cemeteries:

Lower Darwen (St James) Churchyard

Darwen Cemetery

Darwen Municipal Borough

You need to click the one for Darwen Cemetery and then click the **Cemetery Reports**. One the next section of the website you will quickly be able to find the individual you are researching. You then need to click on the name you are interested in and

the next page will give you the details of the casualty.

If you are researching an individual not buried in Darwen Cemetery then you will need to use the **search for casualty** option.

Step 2: Check the local newspapers

Darwen library holds microfilmed copies of the Darwen News and the Darwen Advertiser. By using these papers you may be able add more detail to your individual. It is possible the news report of the person's death may include a photograph. It is possible to obtain a photocopy of the report but you will find that you can get a better quality image of any photos by using a digital camera.

Step 3: Use the Darwen Trade Directories

Whilst in the library you could use the trade directories to locate the family. Not all individuals will be listed in the directories and these are not published yearly.

Step 4: Use the Ancestry website <www.ancestry.co.uk>

This is a pay-per-view website but if you are a member of Blackburn with Darwen Library you can use the site free-of-charge in Darwen or Blackburn libraries. You may wish to use the site to search the censuses (1841-1901). The 1911 census is only available on <www.findmypast.co.uk> and the library does not have a subscription to this site¹. Also by using the Ancestry website you can search the Military Records. The records include:

- British Army WWI Medal Rolls -
- Royal Naval Division Casualties -
- British Army WWI Pensions -
- British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920

Step 5: Regimental Records

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission website will give you the person's regiment. By entering this into the Google search engine <www.google.co.uk> you should be able to locate the site of the regimental museum. From the war diaries it should be possible to find the events that were occurring around the time of your individual's death.

If you need further help or advice then do not hesitate to contact Tony Foster (Email: tonyfoster@darwencemetery.org.uk).

Births, Marriages and Deaths

If you wish to obtain a copy of the individual's birth, marriage or death certificate for events taking place in Lancashire then use the LancashireBMD website <www.lancashirebmd.org.uk>. For events taking place in other part of England and Wales then use <www.freebmd.org.uk>. Both these are free-to-use websites. The cost of each certificate, if obtained from the local register office, is £9.00 or £9.25 if obtained from the Certificate Services Section, General Register Office, PO Box 2 Southport PR8 2JD.

Further Reading

The following books may be useful in giving you additional sources you may wish to follow up. These are inexpensive books published by the Federation of Family History Societies and it is possible that the local libraries hold copies.

Holding, Norman (1997) "World War 1 Ancestry"

Holding, Norman (1998) "More Sources of World War 1 Army Ancestry"

Holding, Norman & Swinnerton, Iain (1999) "Location of British Army Records 1914-1918"

Tomaselli, Phil (2006) "The Second World War 1939-1945"

Tomaselli, Phil (2006) "The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902"

Tomaselli, Phil (2006) "The Crimean War 1854-1856"

Tomaselli, Phil (2006) "The Zulu War 1879"

¹ It is possible to search the 1911 census at the Lancashire Family History & Heraldry's Research Centre, 2 Straits, Oswaldtwistle BB5 3LU (01254 239919). The centre is open each Thursday and the first Saturday of each month from 1pm to 5pm. If you intend to use the 1911 census it is best to phone to book a computer.