

Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery

The Commonwealth War Graves 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 some 150 countries.

During the two world wars the United Kingdom became an island fortress and a base for equipping and training troops and launching land, sea and air operations. The thousands who were lost in these operations and have no known grave are commemorated on memorials across the country. Many more — nearly 170,000 who died of wounds received on active service, of sickness or disease, or in training accidents — are buried in cemeteries and churchyards throughout the United Kingdom.

In Yorkshire, numerous airfields were established during the Second World War as bases for the bomber offensive against targets in Germany and occupied Europe, most notably at Harrogate, Linton-on-Ouse, Tockwith, Rufforth, Marston Moor and Allerton Park.

Only a few First World War casualties had been buried in various sections of Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery but, as the Second World War intensified, the plot of land originally set aside by the local authorities for service war burials proved insufficient and in July 1943 burials began in the two acre plot known as the Air Forces Section.

These two plots contain nearly all the cemetery's 1,000 Second World War burials. Many of these casualties died in the military wing of Harrogate General Hospital and most were airmen, two-thirds of whom served with the Royal Canadian Air Force which had a strong presence in the area.

The Cross of Sacrifice was unveiled in July 1951 by the High Commissioner for Canada and dedicated by the Chaplain-in-Chief of the Royal Air Force.