

# Useful Web Sites for 1<sup>st</sup> World War Research

Prepared for a talk given to the Anglo-Scottish FHS

Ken Nisbet – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019

## **Casualties / Cemeteries**

It has to be said researching those that were killed or died during their military service from 1914-1921 are much easier to find basic information on. Check the CWGC firstly

Commonwealth War Graves Commission [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) (Free) – do download the cemetery / memorial register and any original documents related to your relatives burial

Scottish War Graves Project <http://scottishwargraves.phpbbweb.com/> (Free)

Also [www.scottishmilitaryresearch.co.uk](http://www.scottishmilitaryresearch.co.uk)

Find My Past has "Soldiers Died" also Rolls of Honour

Ancestry has "Soldiers Effects" this includes all men both those who left a will and those who did not.

Ancestry also has digitised the 6 volumes of de Ruvigny's Roll of Honour – these paid for published rolls of honour have both officers and other ranks

Also worth checking if their village or town has online memorials that have been created in the recent years

[www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) has both normal testaments for soldiers who died testate during the war period. It also has what were known as "paybook wills" the wills written into soldiers paybooks almost of these are for other ranks and are written in the soldiers own hand-writing

For Officer Casualties in 1914 and first half of 1915

<https://archive.org/details/bondofsacrificeb01clut>

## **Medals**

For Medal Cards use [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) as they show both sides of cards. Ancestry also has the medal rolls which usually also show all the battalions an soldier has served with rather than the regiment which a medal card may only show

For Gallantry medals use [www.gazette.co.uk](http://www.gazette.co.uk) for DCM MC DSO and VC shows citations for M.M. Will show date of award of citation but there are no online citations for Military Medals, written volume available for DCM DSO AND VC and M.S.M. note Ancestry has citations for the DCM online. Ancestry has the Military Medal Roll as does the Genealogist.

Both Ancestry and Find my Past have Silver War Badge Medal Rolls, which was not a gallantry medal but awarded to those leaving military service for medical reasons. I would use Ancestry as you can download copies of the original roll

Ancestry has medal cards for Navy for First World War

## **Service Records**

Any records for service personnel who served after 1921 including the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War have been retained by the Ministry of Defence)

Other Ranks British Army approx. 40% survival check both WO 363 (Burnt Series) WO364 (Unburnt created by Ministry of Pensions) see Ancestry also on Find my Past and Family Search. Find my Past usefully went through the files looking for other soldier's names mentioned, groups of men in hospital so worth checking both.

Ancestry also has the pension cards and ledgers (images only on Fold3) that it digitised in conjunction with the W.F.A. these can be very useful in that the cards will normally have an address on them. I used them to help reconstruct my grandmother's brother service, when his service records did not exist.

For Officers Records you need to go to National Archives at Kew but if they attended at one of the universities both Glasgow and Aberdeen have online rolls of honours (Note RAMC Officers records do not survive)

The National Library of Scotland have the Army Lists for Officers

<http://digital.nls.uk/british-military-lists/archive/88735803>

Officers rank movements both temporary and permanent as well as regimental changes can be tracked through the London Gazette and arrival / wounding / departures are usually mentioned in the "War diaries"

Note Counties of Morayshire and Nairnshire have published rolls of honours as does Aberdeen Grammar School, Robert Gordon's College and many of Scotland's public Schools

For Naval Records which have almost 100% survival rate see

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Home/OnlineCollections> (also Ancestry/ Find my Past)

Which also has the personnel records for Nurses for both Regular Army Nurses and T.F.N.S. this web-site also allows access to unit War Diaries for army units in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. Many Nurses records can be found on Find My Past

## **Royal Flying Corps/ Royal Naval Air Service**

Find my Past has copies of the service records. If your relative obtained his flying licence pre-war it can found on the Royal Flying Club records on Ancestry

## **Nurses**

Records can be downloaded through National Archives web-site and some records are on Find-my-Past. If they were from Scotland may also be worth looking at Nurses records on Ancestry which may refer to any military service.

### **VAD's**

For VAD's (voluntary aid detachment) personnel who served overseas and also Red Cross Volunteers who served in Belgium and France see <http://www.redcross.org.uk/en/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War> also <https://vad.redcross.org.uk/> for the service records this is free to use

### **Prisoners of War**

The records of the Red Cross are free to look at on <http://grandeguerre.icrc.org/> covers both officers and other ranks. Officer's files at the PRO usually contain a report on the on officer's circumstances of capture.

### **War Diaries**

Ancestry has the war diaries for the Western Front and Gallipoli/Palestine use the long-long trail website (see-below) to find out which division / brigade your relatives unit was. Note units under "Army" or "Corps" control such as Corps Siege Batteries of the Royal Garrison Artillery are not yet digitised and you would have to go to National Archives at Kew.

### **Wounded**

Local Newspapers through find past. Forces War Records <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/> is one site which is recording details from the military hospitals of those treated (from MH106), it is regularly updated, this site which is pay for view also contains a lot of useful information such as regimental magazines, and order of battle (ORBATS) details, court martial records (also found on Fold3 – index on Ancestry) note Find My Past is putting the images from MH106 online so worth checking that also

### **Erskine Hospital Records**

[www.erskine.org.uk/patient-records-1916-1936](http://www.erskine.org.uk/patient-records-1916-1936)

Free to use and again has original images of documents, easy to search index

### **Iyybank Auxiliary Hospital Nairn**

<http://www.morayandnairnfhs.co.uk/> has a spread-sheet listing all those treated

### **Canadian Records 100 % survival rate**

Have completed the project digitising the full service records for free access, Use site below also for access to War Diaries

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

### **Australia 100% survival rate and all free!!!**

See both <http://www.naa.gov.au/> and <http://www.awm.gov.au/search/all/> use the first for individual service records the latter is a must for casualties and for those awarded medals and for the war diaries, the service records are also on Ancestry.com

### **New Zealand 100% survival rate and all free**

<http://www.archway.archives.govt.nz/>

### **Other good sites**

Western Front Association <http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/> sources and records for 1<sup>st</sup> World War also try <http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk> which gives excellent information.

Imperial War Museum <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/dashboard>

A very good tour company which I have used on many occasions for trips to France / Belgium and

Other theatres is Battle Honours <http://www.battle-honours.eu/> highly recommended

For Trench Maps

Use the National Library of Scotland (Free)

<http://maps.nls.uk/ww1/trenches/>

Gordon Highlanders Museum

<http://www.gordonhighlanders.com/> and for the 1/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion

<http://gordonhighlanders.carolynmorrisey.com/index.htm>

Royal Flying Corps

<http://www.apw.airwar1.org.uk/rfc%20in%20france.htm>

If in doubt it is worth sticking names and regimental names on Google and see and what comes up.