



# CWGC

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

## Visiting the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemeteries and War Memorials of Hong Kong



A SOLDIER  
OF THE  
1939-1945  
WAR

HONG KONG-SINGAPORE  
ROYAL ARTILLERY



## 1 The Commonwealth War Graves Commission and Hong Kong

### Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) was created during the First World War to ensure that men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died during the two world wars would be remembered.

Today, we pay tribute to 1,700,000 men and women who gave their lives in both world wars, by caring for their graves and memorials at more than 23,000 locations in 154 countries.

### Common features of CWGC war cemeteries include...

**Headstones to mark the graves**



**The Cross of Sacrifice** – represents the faith of the majority of those remembered here.



**The Stone of Remembrance** – represents those of all faiths and none and is inscribed with words chosen by author Rudyard Kipling "Their Name Liveth For Evermore"



Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens

### CWGC and Hong Kong

The CWGC commemorates some 6,500 casualties of the two world wars, at more than 20 separate locations in Hong Kong. The vast majority of graves can be found in two war cemeteries situated at **Sai Wan** and **Stanley**.

? *Have you visited these cemeteries?*

? *Which will your class research and visit?*

**SECTION TWO**

**THE HISTORY OF OUR CITY - WWI AND WWII**

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**1. Questions**

**?** *What do you know about WWI and WWII and your City?*

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**?** *What do you know about the Battle of Hong Kong?*

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**3. History**

**First World War – 1914-1918**

In the First World War, Japan and the United Kingdom were allies. They fought together to defeat the German army at the port of Tsingtao, with the battle lasting over a month. More than 100 of the soldiers who lost their lives are buried in Hong Kong.

**Second World War – 1939-1945**

In the Second World War, Japan and Germany were allies. Hong Kong came under attack on the 8th of December 1941 and by Christmas Day the British governor of Hong Kong surrendered. Hong Kong was liberated on the 16th of August 1945.

**2. Work together as a class to complete the timeline below**

1938

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1939

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1940

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1941

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1942

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1945

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# 3

## 1. Questions

❓ *Can you use the CWGC database to find out who is commemorated in Sai Wan War Cemetery and Stanley Military Cemetery?*

❓ *How many people are buried at the cemeteries in Hong Kong?*

## 2. Research

### Using the CWGC Database

The CWGC database is really easy to use and can help you to find war casualties in cemeteries around the world.

1. Go to [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)
2. Select *Find a Cemetery* and enter the name of cemetery
3. Click on *View Casualty Record* and choose someone from the list
4. Read the records attached to their name

### To find a specific name in a cemetery

1. From the CWGC website click on the *Advanced Search* button in the search box
2. Enter the surname, then the initial or forename, if known.
3. If you know the name of the cemetery or memorial, enter the details in the box
4. Click search at the bottom.



**Tip:** You can then click on a specific cemetery and export a list of all those buried in that cemetery.



**Tip:** There are many other options in this search that will allow you to refine your search criteria. Feel free to explore the options in the box to see what you will find.



**📍 Can you find?**

**a) Brigadier John K. Lawson** – A Canadian soldier who was the highest ranked officer to be killed during the defense of Hong Kong.

**b) Company Sergeant Major John Robert Osborn VC** – Awarded a Victoria Cross for bravery.



The cemetery contains the graves of many nationalities and not just men – use the CWGC database to find the different regiments, nationalities and those female casualties buried and commemorated here.

**📝 Can you write about somebody you have found in the database?**

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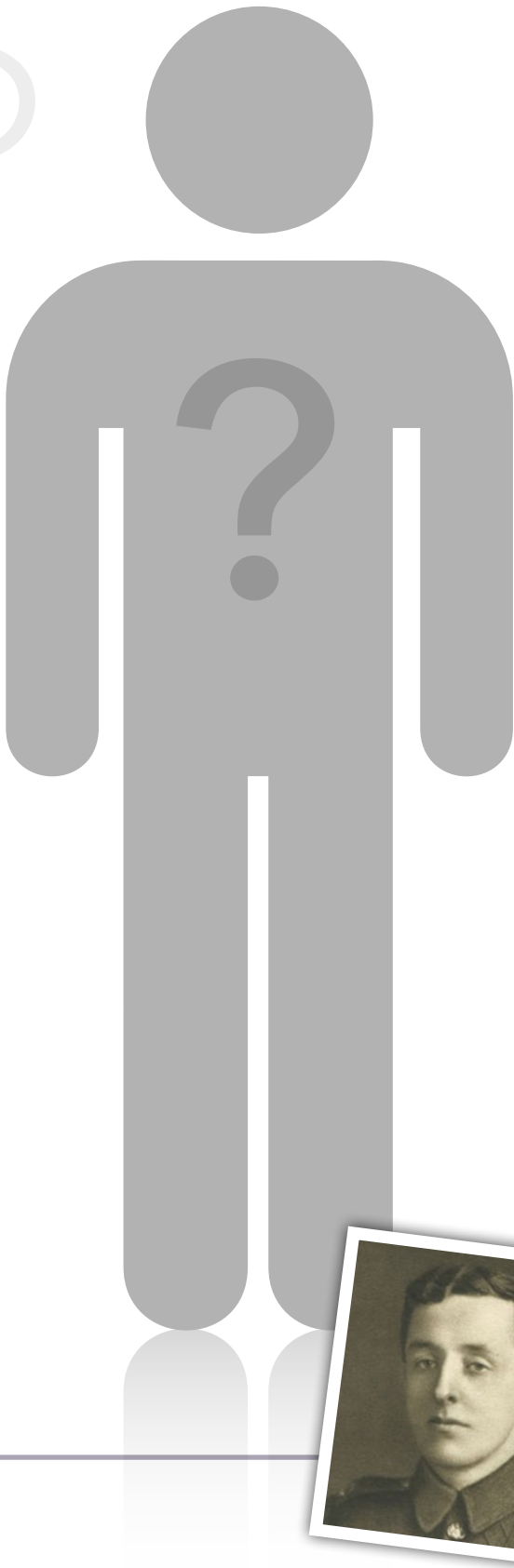
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**📍 Can you write the location of their grave and find them at the cemetery?**

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**Write down the details for a soldier you have found**

? *How old am I?*

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? *Who did I serve with?*

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? *What was my nationality?*

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Poem:

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### **A Soldier's Cemetery**

*Behind that long and lonely trenched line  
To which men come and go, where brave men die,  
There is a yet unmarked and unknown shrine,  
A broken plot, a soldier's cemetery.  
There lie the flower of youth, the men who scorn'd  
To live (so died) when languished Liberty:  
Across their graves flowerless and unadorned  
Still scream the shells of each artillery.*

*When war shall cease this lonely unknown spot  
Of many a pilgrimage will be the end,  
And flowers will shine in this now barren plot  
And fame upon it through the years descend:  
But many a heart upon each simple cross  
Will hang the grief, the memory of its loss*

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**John William Streets**

(killed in action on 1 July 1916 aged 31)





# 5

**When you arrive at the cemetery, can you find the Cross of Sacrifice and the Stone of Remembrance?**



### Interpreting a headstone

**National Emblem or Unit / Regimental badge**

Originally the headstones were carved by hand, now all headstones are made by computer aided machinery. Details of the individual will normally include the military number, name, rank, military awards, regiment, date and age of death.

**Religious Emblem**

Most CWGC headstones include a religious icon, like the Christian cross, Jewish or Muslim emblems.

**Personal Inscription**

Graves were made more individual by personal inscriptions. With a limit of 66 letters the words chosen were often religious or messages of loss from the family.





❓ *Who is the youngest person commemorated here?*

❓ *Can you find the graves of servicewomen?*

❓ *How many different nationalities can you find?*



**Find a personal inscription you find moving and write it down.**

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**Write a personal inscription of your own for one of the servicemen and women you have found – **stick to the 66 letter limit.****

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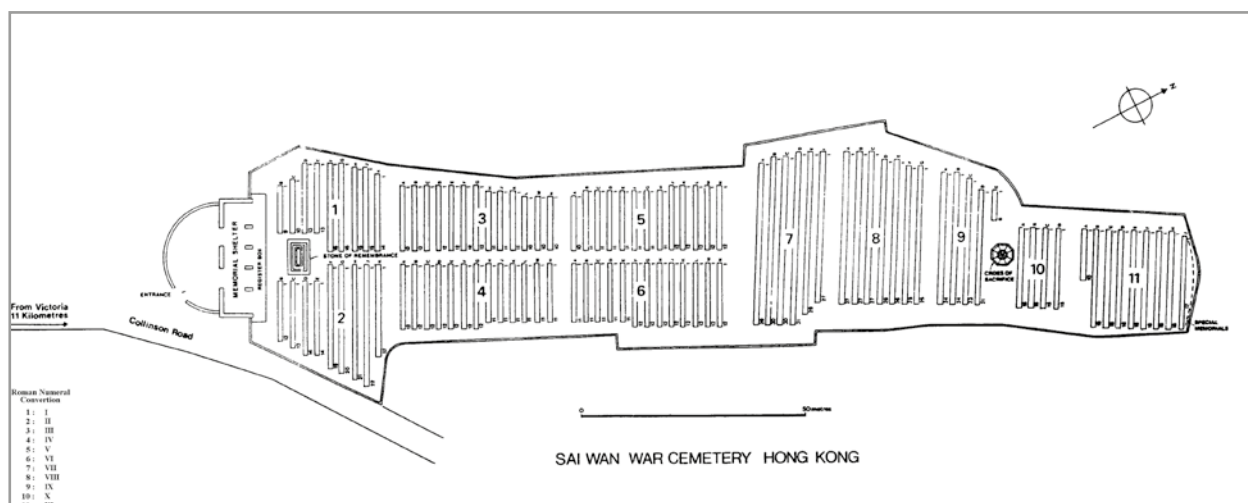
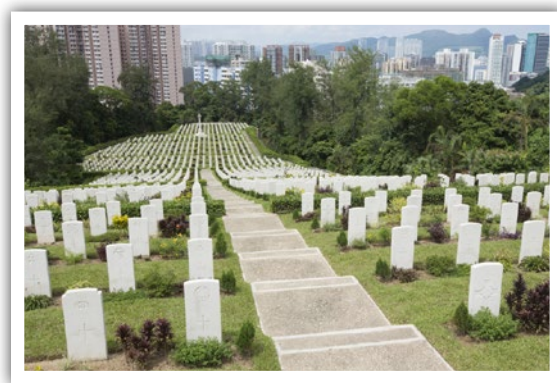


# 5

### Visiting Sai Wan War Cemetery

**Sai Wan War Cemetery is the largest CWGC cemetery in Hong Kong.**

The cemetery contains more than 1,500 Second World War and 12 First World War graves. The majority of those buried here were killed during the Battle of Hong Kong, or died later as prisoners of war during the Japanese occupation.



### Can you find the Sai Wan Memorial?

This bears the names of more than 2,000 casualties of the Second World War who died in Hong Kong and whose places of burial are unknown.

Both the cemetery and memorial were designed by Colin St Clair Oakes.



## INTERESTING STORIES

**Behind every headstone in a CWGC cemetery there is a personal story waiting to be told.**

**Can you find the graves of the soldiers you found in your research? Use the cemetery plan to navigate your way around the cemetery.**

1. There are a large number of Canadians buried in the cemetery – their graves marked with the Maple Leaf. Among them is the grave of **Brigadier John K. Lawson** – the highest ranking officer to be killed during the defence of Hong Kong. He served in WWI, where he was awarded a medal for bravery.  
He is buried in Plot 8 Row C Grave 27. Note how his grave is treated in exactly the same way as the other soldiers buried here. **This is a founding principle of the CWGC – that everyone should be treated equally regardless of their rank, race or faith.**
2. **Company Sergeant Major John Robert Osborn VC** is commemorated on Column 25 of the Sai Wan Memorial at the entrance to the cemetery. He was awarded the Victoria Cross – the highest Commonwealth award for bravery

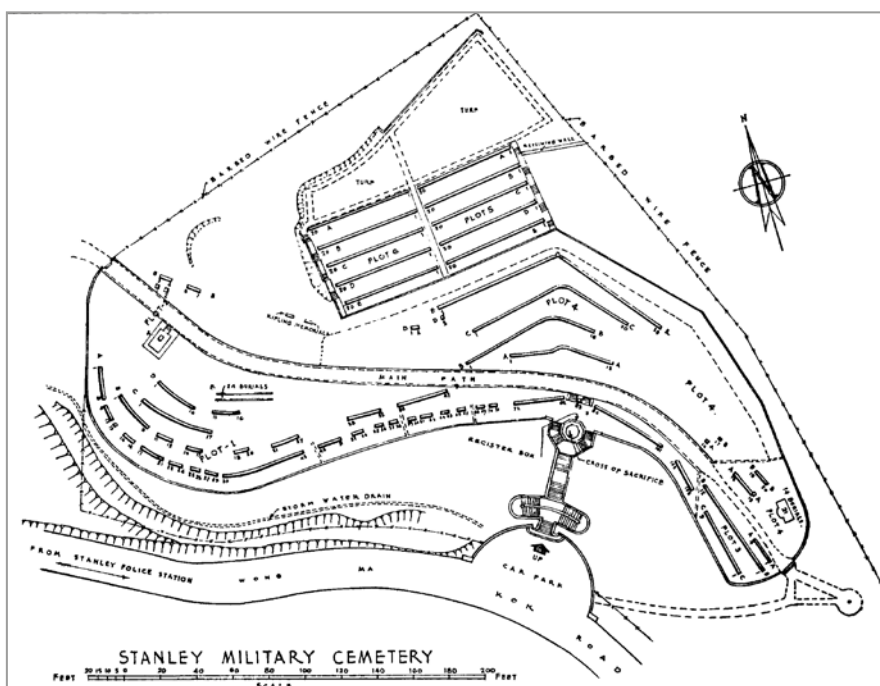
**There are a number of brothers buried or commemorated in the cemetery. They include...**

1. **Eric and William Mitchell**, both Lieutenants in the Winnipeg Grenadiers. William is commemorated on Column 26 of the Sai Wan Memorial. His brother Eric is buried in Plot 8 Row D Grave 13  
**? What does the personal inscription on his grave say?**
2. **Charles and Richard Cox** of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps are commemorated on Column 34 of the Sai Wan Memorial.
3. **Francis and Stephen Reed** are buried in Plot 6 Row E Collective Grave 1-20 and Plot 6 Row A Collective Grave 1-12 respectively, while their brothers **Arthur and Edgar** are commemorated on Column 34 of the Sai Wan Memorial.



# 5

### Stanley Military Cemetery



There are almost 600 Commonwealth Second World War burials in Stanley Military Cemetery. The cemetery, which had been unused since the 1860s, was reopened for burials from the nearby prisoner of war camps during WW2.



**Three First World War graves are located here. Can you find these?**

### The Hong Kong Memorial is located within the cemetery.

This was built and unveiled by the CWGC in 2006. The memorial commemorates Chinese casualties who served and died with the Commonwealth forces in both world wars.

- It is inscribed with the names of more than 2,400 casualties who have no known grave.
- It is inscribed, in English and Chinese, with words suggested by the Chinese community of Hong Kong – IN MEMORY OF THE CHINESE WHO DIED LOYAL TO THE ALLIED CAUSE IN THE WARS OF 1914-18 AND 1939-45.



## INTERESTING STORIES

Behind every headstone in a CWGC cemetery there is a personal story waiting to be told. Here are some examples, but why not see what you can find?

- Two brothers **Albert and Peter Ulrich** of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps are buried in Plot 6 Row D Collective Grave 1-6.

*What does their grave tell us?*

- **Captain Douglas Ford GC** (Plot 1 Row B Grave 41) and **Colonel Lanceray Newnham GC MC** (Plot 1 Row A Grave 58) are buried in this cemetery. They were awarded the George Cross for their bravery while prisoners of war.

The details are on the right were given in the London Gazette of **April 18th, 1946** →





## REMEMBER - ACTIVITIES AT THE CEMETERY

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- ✓ You can take photographs and build a remembrance tree from your research.
- ✓ You could play the Last Post or leave flowers for your serviceman or woman.
- ✓ You can create a presentation for your school and tell them about the war graves in their city.



- 🗣️ Can you read your poem for your serviceman or woman?
- ✍️ Can you take a rubbing of a headstone?
- ✍️ Sketch some of the symbols you found on the war graves. Did you find different religious badges?

Notes. *What did you discover?*

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## DRAWING WAR GRAVES



**Draw some of your favourite headstones, symbols or religious badges here**



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