

Remembering the Great War Anzacs



War Graves C 1918

by [Stefan Mackley](#)

April 25 will mark the centenary of ANZAC Day, where Australian and New Zealand soldiers who served and died in wars or conflicts are remembered.

The annual commemoration first took place after a combined total of 10,000 soldiers from both countries died during the Gallipoli Campaign during World War One, often seen as a defining moment in their respective histories.

The Wiltshire village of Codford became a key area for Australian and New Zealand troops during this time, as many arrived to attending training camps.

Codford Parish Church will be holding their annual dawn service on April 25 where a booklet by local historian Romy Wyeth will be available, listing every soldier buried at the ANZAC War Grave and a brief history on each man.

Buried at the Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery on Church Lane are 66 New Zealanders, 31 Australians and one British soldier who all died between 1916 and 1919.

The grave is the largest New Zealand War Grave Cemetery and the second largest ANZAC War Grave Cemetery in the UK and often attracts visitors from across the world every year.

The plot of land in a corner of the village near St Mary's Church was established not long after The Great War with some soldiers likely buried at the site before the war ended.

The families of those buried in the cemetery were asked to fill in forms listing the cause of death after the conflict, with 68 families responding.

Death ranged from a number of causes, most common of which was sickness followed by pneumonia likely caused due to the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1918.

Most men were killed during their early twenties with the most deaths occurring in 1917.

Each man buried in the cemetery has a story to tell, such as Private Edwin Beattie, who was born in Coomera, Queensland, in 1894 and enlisted in the 47th Infantry at the age of 21.

He enlisted with his brother George, and was deployed to England for training where he came down with mumps and was transferred to the military hospital in Sutton Veny, before he died from pneumonia on January 1, 1917.

His brother was killed in action at the Battle of Albert, March 28, 1918, and both are remembered on their father's headstone, located at Lower Coomera Cemetery in Queensland, Australia.

Or the story of Private Albert Arthur 'Sonnie' Harris, who was never to see his newborn child after dying of peritonitis as a result of receiving bullet wounds in Malta in 1917.

This year's Codford service will take place at 6.30am at St Mary's Church.

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