

# Search Guidelines



**HEADSTONE PROJECT**

*THEY SERVED THEY DESERVE*

*TO BE REMEMBERED*

The purpose of this guide is to provide assistance to individuals and/or groups wishing to either be part of The Headstone Project in your state or to undertake a similar project on your own.

This guide is in two parts. The first part deals with searching cemeteries for unmarked grave sites that might potentially be the last resting place of a First World War veteran.

The second part deals with the actual construction of a pedestal headstone once a grave has been identified. This is the preferred option so as to give continuity around Australia.

If you have any queries or need more information please contact The Headstone Project (Tas) Inc via email at [enquiries@theheadstoneproject.org](mailto:enquiries@theheadstoneproject.org) or via our Facebook Page.

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## Part 1:

### A guide to searching cemeteries for unmarked graves of WW1 Soldiers

- How to obtain information about cemeteries and grave sites
- Identifying potential grave sites of WW1 soldiers
- How to document your search activities and results
- Supports that are available to help you in your search

While the purpose of this guide is to provide volunteers for The Headstone Project with useful information, it is hoped that it can equally apply to anyone or any group who are interested in doing a similar project in their area or in a particular cemetery that might be of special interest.

Before starting it is important to try and discern some of the history of that cemetery, e.g. when it was opened or first used, when it closed and who used it. Some of this information can be sourced from a local history group or society or a local library.



## Part 2:

In this section is information on:

- Constructing a pedestal headstone including a plan
- What materials are used and their quantities
- Sourcing funding
- Obtaining a permit to use the Rising Sun or other unit emblem
- Holding a service of dedication or similar

## Safety First!

The most important part of the activities you will undertake in your search for unmarked WWW war graves is to ensure you are safe.

Before you start searching any Cemeteries you should be familiar with the types of hazards that may be present including graves that are unsafe, rabbit burrows etc.

Below is a list of hazards that you may find in a Cemeteries and information on you can minimise your exposure to those hazards.



Hazard	Things you can do to reduce risk
<b>Personal Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wherever possible search a cemetery with another person</li> <li>• Carry a charged mobile phone with you at all times</li> <li>• Always carry a supply of water with you</li> <li>• Carry a first aid kit with you if the cemetery is in a remote location</li> </ul>
<b>Wildlife</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid searching cemetery's in low light</li> <li>• Check your path for snakes and rodents</li> <li>• Do not move or disturb any plants within the cemetery</li> </ul>
<b>Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>• Be sun smart. On warm days light sleeve and long pants and a wide brim hat will keep you from being sunburned. Sun screen should always be applied.</li> <li>• Wear good walking shoes. Boots that cover the ankle are better for Cemeteries with uneven surfaces</li> <li>• Observe the environment around you. Look for</li> </ul>

- Uneven ground
- Damaged pathways
- Overhanging trees
- Open grave site
- Damaged headstones, fencing etc.
- Subsidence- Gravesites may have voids form below the surface. This creates the risk of subsidence. Take care when walking alongside a grave

For larger cemeteries, break the search into smaller sections, and to make more than one visit or enlist the assistance of others.



With nearly every town or settlement in Australia having at least one or more cemeteries, you will be very likely to find a cemetery to search that is close to your home. Visit the cemetery and familiarize yourself with it before starting your search.

When selecting a cemetery to work in, you might consider the following points:

- What state is the cemetery in – is it overgrown or well maintained?
- Is it on private land and if so, can you access it?
- Are there any spaced between graves that might have been used in the past?
- Who holds the burial records and plot plans?
- Are these accessible and are they complete?

If it is a church cemetery then it is likely that the name of the minister or contact person will be given on the notice board outside the church. Make contact and enquire as to who holds the records and if there is a current plot plan.

Many more cemeteries are now being controlled by the local shire or local councils. An enquiry at the nearest council office will hopefully lead you to the records or who in fact holds the records which may be local history society, or state records office.

Once you have explained what you are trying to do, most councils or churches are happy to help in whatever way they can. But beware that some cemetery plans are not a good interpretation of what you will see on the ground, but simply a guide to who is buried in which plot.

If you are unfamiliar in working with cemetery records and in cemeteries, it is recommended that you choose a cemetery that has a good clear plot plan that closely resembles what is on the ground as well as readable burial records as a starting point.

## Cemetery Research

There are multiple sources of information on cemeteries and gravesites. Below are suggested sources of information that you can contact for information on a Cemetery.

Information Source	Hints and Tips
<b>Councils</b>	Local Councils will often provide you with maps and information on a Cemetery and are a good source of information about who is buried within the Cemetery and which plot they are buried in.
<b>Churches</b>	Churches located next to a Cemetery will often have burial records. Churches may also have research that has already been undertaken on the Cemeteries and its occupants. If not, then someone hopefully can tell you where they are located.
<b>Historical Societies</b>	Local historical societies may have undertaken research into Cemeteries and its occupants. Check the internet for historical societies in your locality or in your state. Family History Societies also hold cemetery records. A local library might be able to help you locate or contact a local history or family history society. They may also hold relevant information about the cemetery, or the people buried there. Do not forget about the RSL or service clubs in the area.
<b>Google Maps Google Earth</b>	Google maps can provide you with an aerial view of a Cemetery. If you know the address of the Cemetery you can find it on Google Maps. This is a useful tool when a map of the Cemetery is not available and may show unmarked graves more clearly than whilst walking the ground.
<b>Internet</b>	The internet contains a trove of information about cemeteries, gravesites, local history etc. TROVE is useful when looking for notices in local newspapers.
<b>Word of Mouth</b>	Talk to people about the Headstone Project and the searches you are conducting. You may just get lucky and hear about someone's family member whose service is not recognised on their gravesite.

Keep a record of all of the information you are able to find about a Cemetery. It may be useful for someone else or for future research activity.

## Suggested Resources

- A map of the whole cemetery
- Maps of each section within the cemetery showing plots
- List of burials in each plot

These can be obtained from the cemetery authority.

## Searching a Cemetery

Below are some simple tips to conducting a search of a Cemetery when searching for the unmarked graves of our veterans.

- Remember Safety First and check for potential hazards
- A site visit will help to familiarize you with the layout and complexities involved – e.g. different sections, monuments, gardens etc.
- Complete your research before undertaking a physical inspection. Have a second copy of any site map so that you can note any features on it.
- Take a copy your site map with you. This copy will be handy for marking potential sites and reference materials (e.g. row numbers, plot numbers, details of person buried in plot).
- Take a clipboard or hard folder to use when writing your results.
- Find a starting point and walk the rows or sections noting all vacant spaces.
- Write as much detail about your search as possible. This will avoid the need to re-visit a Cemetery to obtain further information.
- Taking a photograph of the grave or plot means that you have something to refer to later if need be.
- You will need a photograph of the dirt plot if applying to the Department of Veterans Affairs for funding under the current pilot program
- If it looks like rain, cover your notes and maps. A few rain drops can ruin a printed map or notes!

## Documenting your search results

The use of a consistent method for documenting our search activity greatly assists your work by

- Recording potential sites for further investigation
- Re-visiting potential sites
- Collecting information on resources that may be useful for future searches
- Sharing our information

## Identifying potential grave sites of WW1 Soldiers

Record any unmarked gravesites that you have identified. From your list or record of unmarked graves delete the women and those of any men whose birthdate falls between 1870 and 1900. Your search now becomes an exercise in record matching to establish who are in fact First World War veterans.

It is not that the project isn't interested in marking any unmarked graves of one of our nurses, it is simply that so far only one or two have been located. Another problem is that many of them later married and this makes it harder to trace them.

## Research your search results

On completion of a search, review your notes and record any potential sites. At this point in time, your research is all about confirming the identity of the person who is buried.

If you locate a gravesite of a male whose birthdate falls between 1870 and 1900, record as many details as you can. A useful tool is to be found in Appendix A.

There are two useful sites to assist with the confirmation as to whether the person in the unmarked grave is in fact enlisted with the First Australian Imperial Force. Those who served with either the British or New Zealand forces can often be identified through the death notices in the newspaper.

 National Archives of Australia holds the service records of all who enlisted in the First Australian Imperial Force – <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au>

 AIF Database is also an excellent tool and easily searched – [www.aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html](http://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html)

Also, a check of the Trove section on the National Library website which contains newspapers from around the country might be useful, in particular the death, funeral notices and obituaries – <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>

**Beware that some men used a pseudonym or reversed their name – e.g. Thomas Paul Jones enlisted as Paul Thomas Jones or did not use their full name e.g. Aubrey William Frederick Appleby enlisted as Aubrey William Appleby.**

Once you have established that a person in an unmarked grave is a veteran, there are a range of materials publicly available that can be used to tell the veteran's story. Start with the veterans service record on the National Archives of Australia website. A name search may also show that there are other files for that veteran including court martial records and if they served in World War 2. A nominal roll for those who served in the Second AIF can be found on <http://www.ww2roll.gov.au>. Local history societies and family history societies often make a

great starting point along with local libraries who might have a family history sections which gives you access to databases and other information that they may hold.

### **British and New Zealand Veterans:**

Here in Tasmania we have included those men who served with the New Zealand and British forces. We have found that a number of Tasmanians in fact served with the New Zealand Forces as there was a direct shipping route between Hobart and New Zealand. Later some of these men returned to Tasmania. New Zealand service records can be accessed via <http://archives.govt.nz/world-war-one>

It is not necessary to apply for a permit to use the New Zealand emblems on a headstone.

Unfortunately, British records are much harder to access, and you do need to know where the person was living before coming to Australia. The Ancestry website does have some military records on it and could prove useful. Newspapers tend to be the most useful starting point if the veteran served with the British forces as they often state which unit or battalion.

### **Useful Information**

-  If the veteran died during the 1920's and 1930's and not from an accident, look at the possibility of purchasing a death certificate to see if the veteran might be eligible for an official war grave. Your local member of parliament might help with this.
-  It does not cost you anything to forward the front page of the attestation papers (service record) and a copy of the death certificate to the Department of Veterans Affairs and ask them if the veteran is eligible for an official war grave. If so then the Office of Australian War Graves will take over and organize this to be done.

## Part 2:

### What next?

Hopefully by now you will have finished researching the cemetery that you have chosen and through your record matching have discovered that there are First World War veterans in your cemetery in unmarked graves.

The decision you or your group now needs to make is whether you will mark the grave or graves and how you might wish to do this. At this point in time it is essential that you contact the cemetery authority. Whilst you may research the cemetery without their approval, it is NOT possible to undertake any work in any cemetery without the proper authorization.

Different cemeteries have certain requirements regarding what kind of marker you can install. It maybe that you are permitted to install a pedestal headstone as pictured or that they may require a full slab.

A number of the larger capital city cemeteries have a tenure system where it is necessary for a family to pay periodically for the right to continue to use or keep that particular grave. All graves in Tasmania and often in country areas are held in perpetuity. This means that they can not be reclaimed by the cemetery authority and reused by someone unrelated.

Cemeteries also have the right to charge permit fees which are usually used to help maintain the cemetery. These can be charged when any work is undertaken on an existing grave including those which are unmarked. They may also choose to waive the fees as a gesture of good will and in the ANZAC spirit. Again, you need to speak with the person in charge and ascertain their requirements and what if any assistance they are willing to give you in order to undertake the work.

The image on this page shows a simple pedestal headstone and plaque that was installed by The Headstone Project (Tas) at Cornelian Bay Cemetery near Hobart. These look neat, are cost effective and relatively easy to install at the top of the grave.

### Getting families involved!

This has always been the hardest part of The Headstone Project. It is great when a family member contacts us and tell us that a relative who was a First World War veteran is in an unmarked grave. So often though this is not the case and we have to try and trace families.

Because we believe in having families involved wherever possible we make every endeavor to contact families. Usually this is through placing an advertisement in a local paper or through social medial. Too often though we find that no one contacts us which is very sad.



## Constructing a pedestal headstone

A pedestal headstone as shown above is constructed from two pieces of formed concrete. A large base which fits across the grave and a smaller sloping piece to which the bronze plaque is attached. These two pieces are made from basic concrete but could have colour added to the mix if required.

Your first step is to make the moulds using the detailed plans attached in Appendix XX. Industrial or construction formboard has been found to allow repeated use if cleaned and maintained properly. The pieces that form the moulds are held together by 40mm roofing screws.

## Materials required

Each pedestal headstone requires the following materials:

3 x 20kg bags of general-purpose cement

1 x 200mm length of trench mesh

1/6 cm<sup>3</sup> of builder's mix

## A plaque!

The Headstone Project (Tas) and the Office of Australian War Graves use a bronze plaque. Our plaque starts with the Rising Sun or other emblem for the Navy or Air Force centred at the top of the plaque and with a Latin Cross is on the left-hand side.<sup>1</sup>

Currently we use 8 lines of text –

Row 1 – service number and rank on discharge

Row 2 – the veterans full name

Row 3 – Unit on discharge

Row 4 – Date of death, sometimes we include date of birth if known

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<sup>1</sup> While this is the model that The Headstone Project would prefer all groups to use, we recognise that we are unable to enforce it, but just encourage groups to consider using it. The same applies to the pedestal headstone.

Row 5 – 7 – change depending on what information we are can obtain but usually include either the names of the veteran’s wife or parents and either children or siblings.

Row 8 – a simple epitaph e.g. Lest We Forget, An Original ANZAC or similar

**NB** Before you can organize a plaque that includes the Rising Sun you must email [wargraves@dva.gov.au](mailto:wargraves@dva.gov.au) and ask permission. The Rising Sun is protected and foundries will not produce a plaque with the Rising Sun without the appropriate documentation from the Office of Australian War Graves.

There are two main foundries that could be approached;

Phoenix Foundry Pty Ltd, 44 Duke Street, Uralla, New South Wales. Phone 02 67382200

Arrow Bronze, 22-24 Elliott Road, Dandenong South, Victoria Phone 03 97942922

There maybe other smaller foundries in your area that might be prepared to produce the plaque or plaques for you.

### **Attaching the plaque**

The plaque is attached to the sloper using Sikaflex Glue. Four holes are drilled into the sloper using a template. The drill holes in the template correspond with those on the back of the plaque. A marking pen is used to mark where these need to go and then are drilled out using a masonry bit to the appropriate size and depth. Glue is then squeezed into each hole and on the back of the plaque. Small pieces of wood are place under the plaque to keep it in place whilst the glue hardens.

### **Support of a commercial or financial kind!**

The Headstone Project in Tasmania has been going since 2011. Over time we have grown the brand so to speak through a program of community awareness involving the media and talking to various groups. Also, we have slowly but surely built up a support base for the project through various ex-service organisations including the RSL, school groups, local businesses and local and state government. We have also done our own fundraising on a regular basis.

Over the last 5 years we have also applied for a variety of grants where appropriate, some related to the Centenary of ANZAC while others were to support volunteer groups such as ours. On a number of occasions we have been successful as we have had the support of our local and Federal politicians who have been prepared to write letters of support for us.

In February 2019 Mr Darren Chester, Minister for Veterans Affairs launched a two-year pilot program aimed at providing \$450 to individuals or groups to assist with the provision of a headstone and plaque for our veterans who are in unmarked graves. The application forms can be found on their website.

It is important to let members of your local community know what you are doing. This can be done through the media or by letting local service clubs and history groups etc., know that you are willing to talk to their members about what you are doing.

Don't be afraid to approach local businesses and ask if they can contribute or donate to the project. Also ask your local politician if they are aware of any grant programs that might be appropriate. These could be government grants or private sector community grants.

## Cemetery Search Tool

Information about the Searcher	
Name of Searcher (s)	
Date(s) Searched	

### Pre-search Activity

Information about the Cemetery		
Name of Cemetery		
Council Area		
Cemetery Contact Person	Name:	
	Role:	
Cemetery Contact Person Details	Phone:	
	Email:	
Cemetery Owner/Authority		
Address of Cemetery		

### Research Notes

*In this section record any information that you have located about the cemetery that you think would be of assistance when undertaking further research.*

### Potential Gravesites

*In this section record any unmarked gravesites that you have identified for men whose birthdate falls between 1870 and 1900. Locate and Mark the gravesite on your map. Record notes about the gravesite that will assist in future identification.*

Map Ref	Name	Date of Birth	Notes
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

### **Other Information**

Does the Cemetery have a memorial for WW1 service men? Yes / No

Have you completed the search of all gravesites in the Cemeteries? Yes / No

### **Map of Cemetery**

*In this section paste a copy of the cemetery map showing the location of any potential gravesites/memorials.*

### **Research Documents**

*In this section list the document used in the search.*