



## WAR MEMORIALS REGISTER DEFINITION OF A WAR MEMORIAL OCTOBER 2015

The following is an agreed working definition of a war memorial. It outlines what is recorded by IWM's War Memorials Archive on its register of war memorials and is a basis for other organisations to outline what can be funded, listed or interpreted by them as a war memorial for their purposes.

### **Definition of a war memorial**

A war memorial is any tangible object which has been erected or dedicated to commemorate war, conflict, victory or peace; or casualties who served in, were affected by or killed as a result of war, conflict or peacekeeping; or those who died as a result of accident or disease whilst engaged in military service.

### **WMA records:**

1. memorials located in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man
2. memorials to conflicts from any point in history to the present day
3. memorials that commemorate the impact or acts of war, conflict or victory
4. memorials that record thanksgiving for the safe return of individuals, the coming of peace or the prevention of war
5. dedications that have been added to other gravestones which commemorate a war casualty buried elsewhere
6. memorials that commemorate the service, return or death of military personnel during war, conflict or peacetime irrespective of the cause of death, as well as deaths after the end of the conflict as a result of wounds or the effects of war
7. memorials that commemorate the wartime service or death of civilians serving in non-combatant organisations
8. memorials that commemorate civilians, including refugees and internees who suffered or died as a result of enemy action or in a war related accident as well as a consequence of war or conflict
9. memorials to the service, suffering and death of animals during wartime

### **WMA does not record:**

1. memorials located outside the UK, Channel island and Isle of Man, even if they commemorate British citizens
2. headstones or grave-markers marking the place of burial of an individual or group of people killed as a result of war or conflict
3. houses, buildings or artefacts (e.g. medals) associated with people who died, served or suffered in war but which have no dedication as a memorial to that wartime experience
4. plaques, badges, medals or symbols recognising the existence of military units solely as units but not representing their active service or a war/conflict role
5. commemorations to those who had once served in the armed forces or in a civilian non-combatant organisation during wartime but whose death occurred subsequently and was not a result of their service
6. dedication plaques marking wartime non-military campaigns or activities
7. memorials, plaques, badges or symbols at the birth place, home or to the life of a well-known individual not dedicated to their wartime service
8. published or mass produced rolls of honour
9. individual horticultural elements within a larger horticulture setting
10. official items such as Next of Kin Memorial Plaques (known as Dead Man's Pennies), scrolls or service medals

11. body art or body parts

12. any intangible items such as events created in memory of conflict such as charity runs

### **What standing does this definition have?**

This definition outlines what is recorded by IWM's War Memorials Archive. The definition was prepared and agreed in 2014 as part of the First World War commemoration activities by members of the War Memorials Action Group. This definition has no legal status but is a working definition to help the public and organisations identify a shared understanding of what is meant by a war memorial. Other organisations may only fund, list or identify certain types or categories of war memorial.

### **What do you mean by 'erected or dedicated'?**

To be considered a memorial the object must have a clearly defined and stated commemorative purpose. This purpose can be expressed in the wording on the memorial itself or in a printed document, or it might be a newspaper announcement. A formal unveiling ceremony need not have taken place, although these are very common.

### **What types of events do you include within the terms 'conflict' or 'war'?**

**Conflict/war** includes formally declared states of war, armed conflict, civil war, rebellion and acts of terrorism. None of those organisations party to this definition neither makes any judgment on conflicts nor promotes any political or other viewpoint associated with either specific conflicts or the general principle of conflict.

### **What do you mean by military service?**

**Military service** refers to service in any of the armed forces during war, conflict or peacetime and the subsequent return home as well as deaths after the end of the conflict as a result of wounds or the effects of war.

### **Do you include civilian commemorations?**

WMA includes commemorations to civilians

- who served in wartime non-combatant services including, but not exclusive to Merchant Marine Service, Red Cross, Home Guard, Air Raid Wardens, Fire Watchers and similar groups involved with a war effort.
- whose death occurred as a result of enemy action or in a war related accident as well as a consequence of war or conflict

### **Why do you include memorials to animals?**

Commemorations of **animals** which were killed, or gave assistance or companionship, in war or conflict are included because they represent the diversity of people's experiences of war and conflict and this includes their wish to commemorate the role of animals.

### **Who do you include within the term 'casualty'?**

A **casualty** includes military personnel, civilians and animals.

### **What do you mean by 'published roll of honour'?**

Unique items such as a handwritten or printed scroll or illustrated book are recorded by WMA. Published rolls of honour where many copies were produced are not recorded.

### **What do you mean by 'individual horticultural elements'?**

Where specific planting of trees, hedging or flowers has taken place to form a memorial garden or arboretum, WMA would record the memorial as a whole. For example an avenue of trees will be recorded as a single memorial even if each tree has a separate dedication. However, if a tree is planted in isolation to any other elements, for example it is a war memorial tree in a council park the individual tree will be recorded.