



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

OFFICE OF AUSTRALIAN WAR GRAVES Information Brochure



**The Office of Australian War Graves (OAWG)
is part of the Department of Veterans' Affairs.
It has three distinct roles:**

- to maintain war cemeteries and individual war graves within Australia and the region, as agents of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission;
- to officially commemorate eligible veterans who have died post-war and whose deaths are accepted as being caused by war service;
- to provide and maintain national memorials overseas.

Official commemoration of eligible Veterans

The authority for the post-war commemoration of veterans whose deaths are accepted as due to war related causes is a War Cabinet Decision of 10 March 1922. Successive governments have reaffirmed their commitment to official commemoration.

Who is eligible?

Veterans entitled to official commemoration are:

- those whose deaths are accepted as being due to war service;
- those in receipt of a Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Pension (TPI) or an Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) where the veteran has seen war service;
- multiple amputees on Section 27.1 maximum pension rate where war service has been proven;
- ex-prisoners of war;
- VC recipients; and
- eligible under the *Military Rehabilitation Compensation Act 2004*

Determining who is eligible

Eligibility for a memorial is not established by OAWG but by the relevant State Office of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). A veteran may already meet the eligibility criteria at the time of his/her passing, in which case the State Office need only be informed of the death. In all other cases, an application should be made in writing to the DVA office in the state in which the veteran was resident, requesting that the veteran's death be accepted as being due to his/her war service.

What happens when a veteran is eligible?

The DVA State Office notifies OAWG that a veteran is eligible for commemoration. OAWG are unable to proceed with a memorial until this notification is received. Upon receipt, OAWG will send memorial forms to the nominated next-of-kin to determine the type of Memorial to be provided.

What types of memorials are available?

Official commemoration can take the form of a memorial:

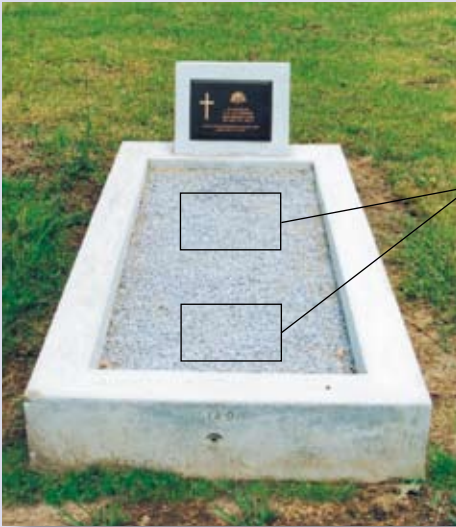
- in a general or lawn cemetery;
- in a crematorium; or
- in an OAWG Garden of Remembrance.

The basis of official commemoration is that each veteran is commemorated equally, uniformly and once only. Where variations occur in official memorials, they are due to individual differences in cemetery/crematoria regulations. All memorials include cast bronze plaques which will display the following:

- the relevant Service badge;
- the veteran's initials and surname;
- Service number (if applicable);
- rank and unit in which the veteran served (if the veteran served in more than one unit only one will be inscribed);
- date of death and age at death.

Once the next of kin has agreed to these details and the memorial is in place, the memorial may not be changed or altered in any way without the permission of OAWG.

Grave Memorial in a General or Lawn Cemetery



Additional plaques may be placed here only

In a **general cemetery** where a full monument is required OAWG will provide and maintain grave kerbing, infill and a headstone with a bronze plaque as illustrated. The plaque may also include an optional religious emblem and personal inscription. These memorials are constructed of concrete with a rendered finish. Where a general cemetery will not permit the placement of kerbing only a headstone and plaque will be provided according to the individual cemetery regulations.

Should the grave of a veteran be re-opened at a later date for the interment of a widow or other family member OAWG should be notified so that arrangements can be made to restore the grave. An additional plaque purchased at the arrangement and expense of the family may be placed in the centre or at the foot of the grave.



In lawn cemeteries OAWG abide by the regulations of the cemetery involved. In all cases, where permitted, OAWG will provide and maintain a bronze plaque, as

illustrated above. If required, a headstone base will also be provided. Where additional burials take place it will be necessary for the family to contact the cemetery authority to establish whether a further plaque may be placed on the grave. If OAWG is not permitted to place a memorial plaque in a particular lawn cemetery, official commemoration would need to take place in an OAWG Garden of Remembrance.

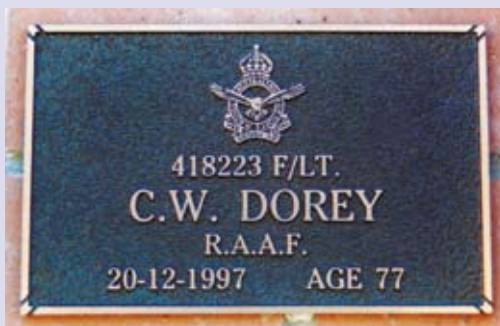
Memorial in a Crematorium

OAWG will arrange for placement of the ashes in a wall niche or garden setting at the crematorium of choice by the family or executor. The



plaque will be inscribed in a standard format as illustrated above. If the ashes are to be placed in a garden setting, the family or estate may incur additional costs. If ashes are to be scattered or retained by the family, official commemoration cannot take place at the Crematorium but would be offered in an OAWG Garden of Remembrance.

Memorial in a Garden of Remembrance



OAWG has established Gardens of Remembrance in all capital cities, Townsville and Launceston. This form of commemoration is used when a private memorial for a veteran exists or is proposed in a cemetery or crematorium or where ashes have been scattered. **This is an alternative form of commemoration and not in addition to an official memorial in a cemetery or crematorium.**

If for any reason a widow or family member is unable to visit the veteran's official memorial arrangements can be made for a photograph to be obtained.

Maintenance of war cemetery and post-war commemorations

OAWG is committed to the maintenance of official memorials in perpetuity, and has staff located in State capital cities as well as Townsville, Adelaide River (south of Darwin) and Launceston, Tasmania. Over 70 war cemeteries are maintained in Australia as well as three war cemeteries in Papua New Guinea. Official memorials are located in over 900 cemeteries and crematoria Australia-wide.

OTHER SERVICES

Permission to use the Service badge

As well as official memorials many unofficial plaques contain a Service emblem. All veterans who served in the Australian forces are entitled to use the relevant Service badge/insignia on their private memorial.

To obtain permission, a request in writing to OAWG is required. Service details of the veteran including Service number, full name and Branch of Service in which the veteran served and if possible, a copy of the veteran's discharge certificate should also be provided.

A letter of permission will then be issued and should be given to whoever is arranging the privately purchased memorial. All costs and arrangements associated with the private plaque/memorial would be the responsibility of the next-of-kin or executor.

Information on war dead and cemeteries/memorials overseas

OAWG provides information about the burial location of Commonwealth war dead. OAWG also provides details of those commemorated on Memorials to the Missing where no known grave exists.

For those proposing to travel overseas, OAWG is able to provide grave or memorial details, location of cemeteries/memorials and in many cases, a cemetery plan. Further brochures and information sheets may also be available.

It may be possible to provide a photograph of a memorial overseas for those unable to travel. However, requests will take some time to action from overseas destinations. This service, where available, is provided free of charge to next of kin.

Funeral benefits

Veterans eligible for official commemoration are, in most cases, entitled to a funeral benefit. Application for a funeral benefit should be made to the relevant State Office of the Department of Veterans' Affairs.



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OAWG is available, during normal office hours, to assist and advise on any matters affecting the commemoration of a veteran.

Please address all enquiries to:

Office of Australian War Graves

PO Box 21

WODEN ACT 2606

or telephone:

(02) 6289 6517 (Post War Commemoration)

(02) 6289 6510 (War Dead Information)

(02) 6289 6545 (Maintenance of Memorials)