Herts At War
www.hertsatwar.co.uk

Guide to 'Basic' & 'Basic+' Research
& HAWP Data Entry

Author: Jonty Wild, HAWP Roll of Honour Research Coordinator

Comments, corrections and suggestions welcomed!

jontywild@hertsatwar.co.uk

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(Last updated 3/7/2019)

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1 Purpose

This first part of this guide aims to help new researchers with the 'basic' research available from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (**CWGC**) www.cwgc.org/find/find-war-dead, and Internet searches and the subsequent data entry.

The second part helps those who also wish to undertake the 'basic+' research using the additional research available via the CWGC website.

This is the basic starting place for all and then, if you have access to genealogy sites, build on this work using: "***Guide to 'Advance' Research & HAWP Data Entry***". However, this will require access to an online genealogy site such as Ancestry or Findmypast.

2 Consider This

- There is no perfect method. This guide is a starting point and as you work you will no doubt tweak the methodology to suit yourself.

- You may wish to prepare all or some of your work 'offline' and then copy and paste it into the HAW data entry pages – in fact I strongly recommend this for at least the biography elements.

- if you find an easier way, use that.

3 Introduction

You probably wanted to get started, but it is important to read this section before you do so.

By undertaking basic research, you will be an important part of the Herts At War Project (**HAW or Project**) and part of the team. Our main aim is to identify and commemorate every Hertfordshire related man (and woman) who died as a result of the Great War, but where found we will also add information for survivors.

The aim of the research covered by this guide is either:

- to uniquely identify each man and give their basic, but essential information or, where that is not possible:

- to narrow down the possibilities so that we can seek further information to eventually identify the right man.

This guide will help you to complete the 'minimum level of research required, which is essential to our project. It assumes that you are able to 'copy and paste' and can either:

- work with two windows open on your screen or
- you will use the Word templates as an intermediate stage.

There is no one right way of doing this, what appears here is the way that I would currently do it, but

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The 'basic' level of research is vital because it begins to draw together relevant information and begins the person's biography, upon which you or others can build. When you get the hang of it, you will find interesting and challenging and may eventually want to do more than the 'basic'.

There are some key points to remember:

- Always 'sense check' information you are given or come across - *we can all make mistakes!*

- Don't guess, if in doubt about an identity ask for help.

- Don't be afraid to ask.

- Enjoy!

Jonty Wild, Herts At War Project Roll of Honour Research Coordinator

jontywild@hertsatwar.co.uk

4 Preparation

If you have not already done so or have not been allocated research, visit to the website's research log at http://www.hertsatwar.co.uk/research/research-log/ to choose a location you would like to research or contact jontywild@hertsatwar.co.uk for suggestions.

Please do not start without booking out the location – *there is a danger of duplicating effort.* If you have already started or have completed relevant research in the past, please contact me ASAP.

4.1 Background information

Normally you will receive some background information to help. Where available, it will include the following:

a) A spreadsheet with some information.

In the example below names, which memorials they appear on are provided or, if man's name does not appear on any of that location's memorials, he is listed as 'additional', with a reference[1] – **this is important.** Sometimes this will include any service numbers already identified and their source.

	Little Gaddesden	Serv No	Other Mem	Profiles	On Mem	Add		CWGC Add	Village	St Peter & St Paul CH Wooden	St Peter & St Paul CH Paper ROH
1	Charles Batchelor	12593	Great Gaddesden		1				Charles Batchelor	Charles Batchelor	Charles Batchelor
2	Vernon Batchelor				1				Vernon Batchelor	Vernon Batchelor	Vernon Batchelor
3	Albert Bierton	'F/3278'			1			1	Albert Bierton	A Bierton	Albert Bierton
4	William Arthur Cook	22068			1	sditgw			William Arthur Cook	William Arthur Cook	William Cook
5	William Ernest Cooper	'2170'			1			1	William Ernest Coo		
6	James Dunn				1				James Dunn		
7	Arthur William English	'G/53105'				1		1			
8	(Hamor) William Fenn	3531			1	sditgw		1	William Fenn		
9	Arthur Joseph Fowler				1				Arthur Joseph Fowl		

b) Photographs

Will be provided if they add information, i.e. clues that will help identify the man - *in this example,* regiments.

c) Templates

Above I mentioned preparing work offline, if you wish, before doing this you should read 7 The Biography. New researchers should receive two templates which can be used:

Template – HAW CWGC Basic Biography

This provides the fields that can be completed using CWGC information 'basic' and 'basic+'– see **Error! Reference source not found.**

Template Biography Fields

This template is limited to the biography fields. These fields draw together all of the person's relevant information to tell their story: Pre-War, War Service and Additional information- Appendix 3.

Using this will enable you to write and edit the text until you are happy to paste it into the online form

5 Start Researching – Basic Research

5.1 Googling

Always worth a try! Try Googling the '*location*' and '*war memorial'* or variations. It could:

- identify that some else has done the work, or
- provide the means to identify the right man or

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[1] *CWGC gives a clue in their 'additional data' field. SDITGW means list as born or resided in the Soldiers Died in the Great War database.*

- provide additional information or even photographs, that you may be able use

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If you would like to see an example, try Googling 'odsey war memorial hertfordshire' – this will reveal some limited research undertaken by others and revealed some good research undertaken by others.

***Tip:** Remember, be prepared to challenge what you find and if in doubt ask for help – we can all make mistakes. Also, if found refer to section 7.3 below.*

If you find that a significant amount of work has already been done or photographs please refer to 7.3 Googling & Acknowledgments and back to jontywild@hertsatwar.co.uk for advice.

5.2 Researching the Names

You will have been given the names and, during your research the single most important thing to remember is to ensure, as far as possible, that the correct man is. As you work you will gain confidence, but If in doubt ask for help.

Remember if in doubt over the identity ask for help.

Firstly, look at the information you have received for clues (see 4.1). Clearly, if the information gives a service number you can be certain that you have the correct man, otherwise perhaps, if listed, the regiment, battalion, or date of death will be enough to confirm the correct man. **Remember though, *memorials do sometimes contain errors and*** you will find occasional transcription errors by us, the CWGC or, and more likely, the SDITGW[2] records, but challenge what you find if necessary and try variations.

5.3 The Herts at War Database

First of all, you will need researcher access. If you do not have this, visit www.hertsatwar.co.uk/contribute/help-the-project/ register an interest by ticking 'Research The War Dead' and request access.

An administrator will create one and then invite you to log on via http://database.hertsatwar.co.uk.

5.4 Getting Started – Data Entry

The Herts at War website has an intelligent database, so it is a good place to start. Log on as above.

Select '*Add New Record*' and start completing as much of the form as possible and select submit.

Any potential matches will appear. These may contain either CWGC information or already existing HAW records.

If you are lucky the match will be clear! If not, more work will be needed.

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[2] *SDITGW means list as born or resided in the Soldiers Died in the Great War database.*

- *Remember when using the database save frequently as it will time out and any unsaved work will be lost.*

- *Remember all work can be saved and added to later and at any time before submission.*

a) If you have found a match

Tip: For more help on identifying war dead read Appendix 1.

Look at all the relevant fields to see if you can add any information from what you have so far. However, if you are only undertaking CWGC research, then what you may be able to add is likely to be limited.

The information you are likely to be able to add (*all from the information provided see 4.1 Background information*) is:

- Additional Hertfordshire location

- Additional war memorial(s) where the name appears or equally where they do not!

You may also be able to add:

- Information to the HAWP Name, e.g. the name should appear as a full name including any gallantry award, e.g. Frank Edward Young (VC). You may be able to add a middle name or in initial.

You may be able to create, add to or improve the following biography sections:

- Pre-war

- War Service

Tip: Remember look at the CWGC information as you may be able to add to that – see 5.5.

d) If you have not found a match

Tip: For more help on identifying war dead read Appendix 1.

You can try the following:

- Try variations in name spelling, e.g. bretland, britland etc.

- Investigate the CWGC data at www.cwgc.org/find/find-war-dead again you may have different spellings.

If no match is found, then leave the man for those undertaking advanced research – or if you have access to Soldiers Died in the Great War or a genealogy website. revisit after reading: "***Guide to 'Advance' Research & HAWP Data Entry***" which can be found at www.hertsatwar.co.uk/research/research-guides-and-templates/.

If you believe you have found a match or several men who might match but are not certain provide the information you have back and ask for help.

5.5 Commonwealth War Grave Commission (CWGC) Data

Remember even if you have found the man in the HAW database and are certain that the identity is correct you may be able to add to it.

Go to the CWGC site (war dead search page) at www.cwgc.org/find/find-war-dead. Alternatively, Google '*cwgc war dead*'.

From the information you have seen, find the record – surname and service number or officer rank should be sufficient, but if not try other fields.

Also check the First World War box.

e) The CWGC Records

When found the man's record will appear:

More information via:

f) Adding Information to Existing HAW Records

Often you will find the CWGC data is already present, but records are updated by the CWGC so check that HAW records are correct.

Remember check all CWGC fields against that in the HAW data and correct or add.

The information you are most likely to be able to add includes the following (if it exists):
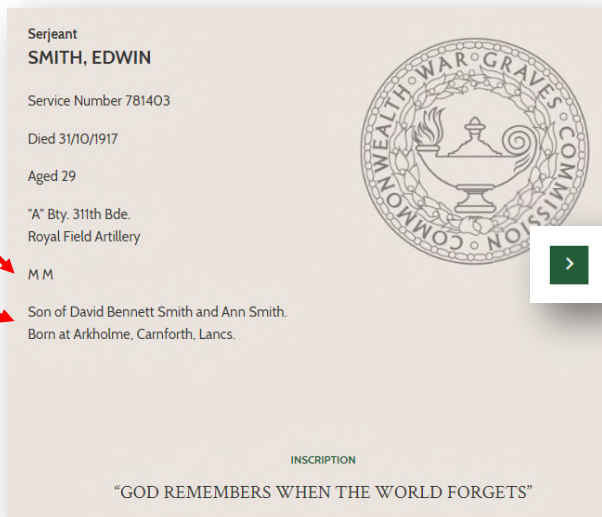
Honours Awards:

These are gallantry awards such as DCM, DSO etc.

If any exist, they will appear here

CWGC Additional Information

This will appear here, if any are recorded.

Tip: In many cases there will not be a record.

Now you have whether to decide to stop and do another man (or location if you have looked at all names) or move on the Basic+ Research

6 Basic+ Research

This section helps those who also wish to undertake the 'basic+' research. The '+' is used to describe the additional information that can also be added from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (**CWGC**) www.cwgc.org/find/find-war-dead.

We describe research beyond this level as 'advance research' which requires access to genealogy sites such as Ancestry or Findmypast and we have another guide to help: "***Guide to 'Advance' Research & HAWP Data Entry***" which can be found at www.hertsatwar.co.uk/research/research-guides-and-templates/.

Please note the following research will not exist for all men and women, but it is important that, where found, it is included and, where not, we know that to save others from looking for it.

6.1 Headstone Inscription

This will appear here, if any is recorded.

Tips:

In many cases there will not be a record.

Remember more information becomes available as you scroll down the screen.

Serjeant
SMITH, EDWIN

Service Number 781403

Died 31/10/1917

Aged 29

"A" Bty. 311th Bde.
Royal Field Artillery

M M

Son of David Bennett Smith and Ann Smith.
Born at Arkholme, Carnforth, Lancs.

INSCRIPTION
"GOD REMEMBERS WHEN THE WORLD FORGETS"

In this case type "*God Remembers When the World Forgets*" into:
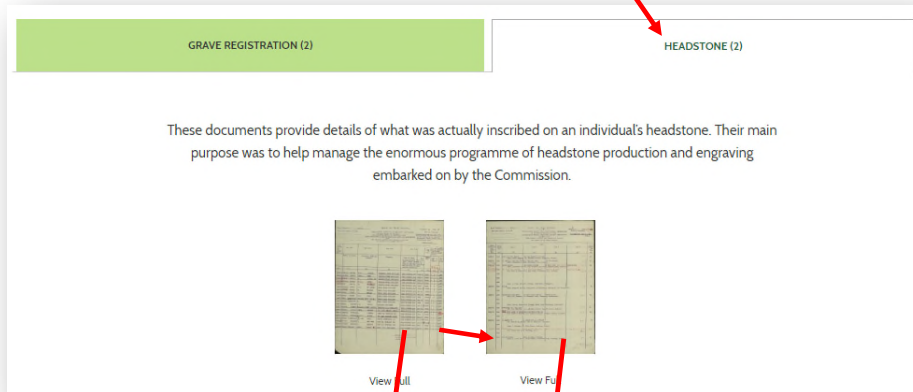

ⓘ Headstone Inscription

Not Researched

If none exists, select appropriately from the HAW dropdown list or type "Not Applicable".

<u>Order Placed By</u>
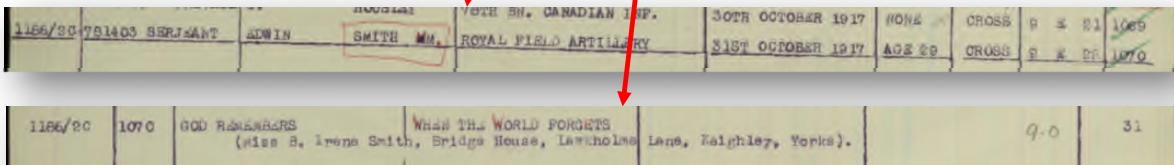
This relates to the headstone above scroll down and select

Tip: In some cases, there will be no record.

Tip: Images can be magnified even more with a further left-hand mouse click

The full information appears on two images on adjoining pages, the first will reveal the line on which the man's name appears. The second will reveal the detail.

Tip: the information will be at the same height on the second image/page.

In the above case type "*Miss B Irene Smith, Bridge House, Lawkholme Lane, Keighley, Yorks.*" into

If no details exist, select appropriately from the HAW dropdown list or type "*Not Applicable*".
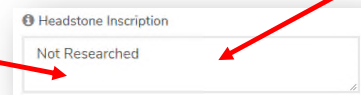
6.2 Grave Registration Documents

Scroll down the CWGC screen to reveal the following, if a record exists select

If none exists, select appropriately from the HAW dropdown list or type "*Not Applicable*".
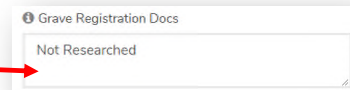
If a record exists, the following will appear:
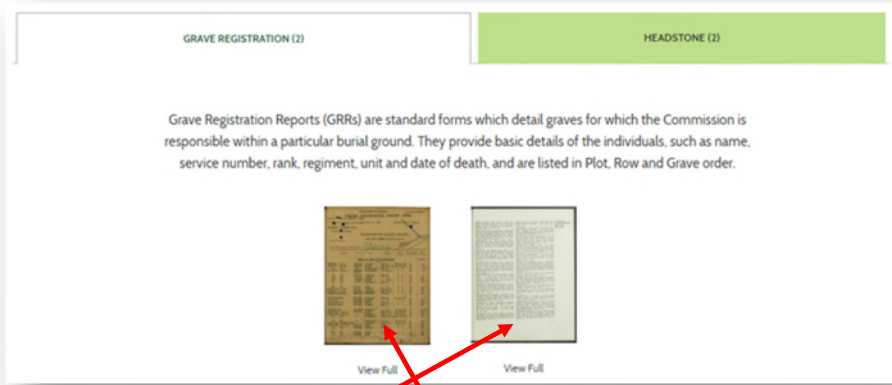
The full information appears on two images, the first may reveal a little or no more information than is held elsewhere but is worth a quick check to ensure that it is recorded already.

The second image may also reveal a little or no more information than is held elsewhere. However, occasionally information such as "Died of Wounds" is recorded but not included elsewhere.

If additional information is found, then add that to the appropriate HAW field(s) which may have some data already, and then select appropriately type HAW dropdown list or type "*All information included elsewhere*".
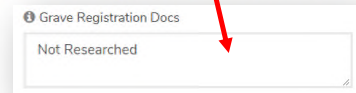
6.3 Concentration Details

Concentration means that a body was buried elsewhere, i.e. in another cemetery, or found after the war. In both cases the body was then reburied in a larger (concentration) cemetery.

Tip: In many cases there will not be a record.

Scroll down the CWGC screen to reveal the following

If no record exists, select appropriately from the HAW dropdown list or type "*Not Applicable*"
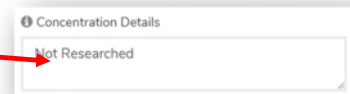
If there are concentration details, select

Then select

The record will appear.

Tip: it can be magnified with a further left-hand mouse click.

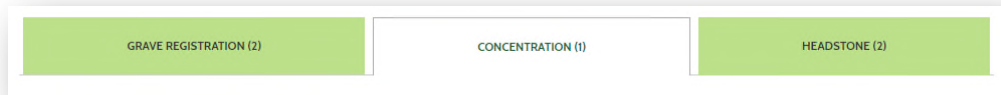These records often contain useful information, e.g.: 'Map ref'. (where found or the previous cemetery), how identified and possibly some effects.

Type this into the HAW data entry screen.

Typically, this might be: "*Body found at map ref. 44a.V.23 a.6.1.3. Identified by cross on grave and dis*c."

Once you have completed all that you can from the above you have completed all the CWGC fields, which only then leaves any information that you can add to the Biography.

7   The Biography

There are two types of biography available and you will almost certainly be using the first:

a)   Standard Biography

These fields draw together all of the person's relevant information from any or all other fields to tell their story. It is intended that these provide a 'timeline' biography for the war dead and to do this there are sections for Pre-War, War Service and Additional information.

The logic being:

- Pre-War: all information up to enlistment. For instance, this would include pre-Great War military service such as Boer War. Family or parent information.

- War Service: all information post enlistment

- Additional information: This is any information which forms the man/woman's biography, and which is not included the two above fields, e.g. the man's home address, the headstone inscription and who requested it etc.

All the information found in the above research is drawn together to provide their story.

Tips:

- *It is not necessary to include everything that appears in 'all' the other fields, but it can be as much as you like.*

- *Think of these sections as telling, but summarizing, the man's life.*

- *Remember is may be best to draft this separately, outside of the database so that you can refer to and select from all fields which contain research and then paste it in when ready.*

b)   'Story' Biography

This is the style which will normally be used if someone had already written the man's biography and is really intended to allow use of the material already written without changing the style.

To this end the guidance below is limited to the 'Standard Biography' style, if you wish to use the 'story' style, ask for help, if needed.

7.1 Completing the Biography Sections

Unless the biography is very simple, I strongly recommend use of the form in Appendix 3. as this will enable you to refer to all the research fields, decide what you want to include then write and edit the text until you are happy to paste it online. A Word version of this form ('**HAW Drafting Biography Form**') can be downloaded via www.hertsatwar.co.uk/ research/research-guides-and-templates.

Tip: Remember all work can be saved and added to later and at any time before submission.

First of all, if when you searched for the man you are working on and you found an existing record, check whether text already exists in any (or all) of the biography fields: Pre-War, War Service and Additional information.

Do this in your on-line draft for the man. Select   then
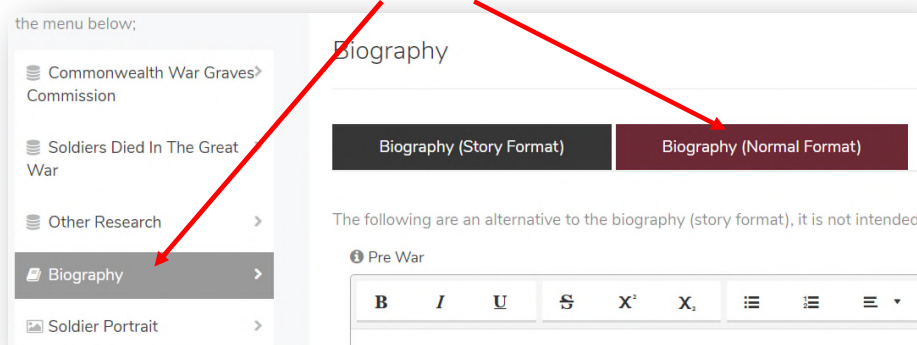
If it does, decide based on how comprehensive it is, whether to add to it or include it in your own.

Use the logic explained above in 7 a). and review what has already been written (if any). Review all the fields for information that you can add or edit in to create or improve the person's biography.

Tips:

- *Copy the text from each individual section (Pre-War, War Service and Additional information), paste it into your draft form before editing in any new data you have found.*

- *If the explanations above are not clear, visit our website www.hertsatwar.co.uk and search for a few names. Look for those with short biographies and see what others have done.*

- *If you wish, submit one or two and ask any questiosn you like before proceeding further. Submission are reviewed by an administrator before posting to the website and at that stage help can easily be given if you are uncertain of anything.*

7.2 Submitting

a) What Happens Next?

The process is:

- The administrators are notified of the submission

- An administrator will 'sense check' the biography[3], then:
    - If there are no issues, they will approve the biography and it will immediately appear on the website.
    - If there are very minor issues/corrections, then the administrator may make the change or may let you know and make the correction and approve.
    - If there are issues, corrections or any misunderstanding of the research process this will be explained in of constructive criticism[4]. To do this they may reject[5] the biography so that you can make any changes – ***Jonty Wild Note****: Please do not take this personally it is intended to improve consistency and save everyone time and effort, if you are unhappy with anything please ask for a an explanation.*

7.3 Googling & Acknowledgments

It is always worth Googling for existing information and if found:

- if it is very basic information – *do not copy but use it to 'sense check' your work.*
- if it is extensive but limited to the man you are looking for or if you find a photograph, either try to make contact yourself or, if you prefer, ask HAW to do so. Explain what the HAWP is and does and what you are doing[6]. Explain also what they will be used for (*website biography etc and not for profit*). Ask for permission to use it and if they agree, add them and/or their website to the acknowledgments field and inform us so that we can record them in the website acknowledgements too. If they do not agree contact Jonty Wild.
- if it is extensive and comprehensive, e.g. perhaps it lists multiple men appearing on the memorial and/or extensive research, then it may be better to contact Jonty Wild so that I can make a more formal or 'official' HAWP contact[6].

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[3] *Please patient, our administrators are all volunteers, if lots of biographies are pending or work. Holidays or they have other commitments, this may take some time.*

[4] *Please do not be discouraged as any constructive criticism is intended to help and improve the experience and efficiency of the process to all.*

[5] *Reject is too strong a term and is not meant to be criticism – sorry!*

[6] *Most are willing to share if we explain that we share the same goals in seeking to commemorate the men; that we are commemorating all the men and women from Hertfordshire who died; that we wish avoid duplication of effort and that we will also share information with other individual and projects and that we acknowledge properly.*

Appendix 1. Identifying War Dead

Treat each man separately. Some will be easily identified, for others there will be more than one name who could be the right man and in some cases it will not be obvious.

It is very important not to guess or assume. If in doubt, ask for help, providing any additional information you have found (if any).

1. Avoiding Research Pitfalls

a) Spelling

Tips:

- *Beware of miss-spelling or changes in names.*

- *You may need to try variations before being certain that a man is identified.*

Spellings may change (especially in the census) as people became more literate or who completed the records (a family member or the census collector, if the family were illiterate). So, members of the same family could be recorded as Shepherd, Shephard, Sheppard or Shepard etc.

So, for Bretland I would try Britland, Bredland etc. - it is worth trying variations.

b) Unique Names

If the name is uncommon and found in the CWGC records as a unique entry, then these should be the easy ones and the man can be immediately identified. For example, if the memorial lists an E Bretland and if CWGC research identified only one possibility, e.g. an E or an Edward Bretland then we can assume that we have identified the right man – *easy!*

Tips:

- *It is usually better to search for E Bretland even if his name is known to be Edward.*

- *Always cross reference with all and any information you have, e.g. any information or memorial photographs provided to you.*

c) Non-unique Names

These are obviously more difficult, but in these cases, it is even more satisfying when a man is found, however, take care. Below are some examples to consider:

If a search for '*E*' Bretland produces four men possibilities, e.g.:

> *E Bretland, E S Bretland, Edward Bretland and Ernest Bretland.*

and if we know him as E Bretland then 'our' man could be any one of the four.

If the memorial had named the man as *Edward* Bretland, then possibilities have reduced from four to three, i.e. E Bretland, E S Bretland, Edward Bretland, but not Ernest.

Other information may be available on the memorial to narrow down the possibilities, e.g. a date of death or regiment, but try to keep an open mind as these may not be conclusive - *memorials are not always free of mistakes* – some men moved between regiments and are sometimes recorded against their original and not the one that they were in when they died.

d) Not Certain?

When a unique man is not identified or identity is not clear or you are in anyway uncertain, and if you are limiting your research to HAW sources and the CWGC database, then send what information you have to the Herts At War Project Roll of Honour Research Coordinator via jontywild@hertsatwar.co.uk.

What will then happen is either:

- If the matter can be resolved easily that I will give guidance, or

- The man will be passed to someone for advanced research using the census etc.

Please note: this cannot always be done straightway and may have to be done at a later date.

Appendix 2. Template – HAW CWGC Basic Biography

These are just the Basic and Basic+ rows from the 'full' Word template:

Rows 1 to 23, row 28 and rows 52 to 54 are the 'Basic' research and rows 24 to 27 are the Basic+.

	Field Name	Text/Numeric (sample data/guidance for reference)	Help/Guidance to appear on website via link
1.	Location	Odsey	City, town, village or hamlet, as provided by HAWP.
2.	UK Cemetery/Memorial:	• Odsey War Memorial • Not on the Odsey memorials	This is a list contains all known memorials in the relevant location (city, town, village or hamlet). This list needs amending for each individual and any not relevant require deleting.
3.	War death?	• Yes • No • ?	Completed by HAWP.
4.	Comment on death		Add only if needed for clarification.
5.	Conflict	First World War	Change if required
	CWGC: Commonwealth War Graves Commission	**The blue sections are populated from the CWGC**	
6.	Surname		Copy and paste from CWGC
7.	Forename		Copy and paste from CWGC
8.	Initials		Copy and paste from CWGC
9.	Comments on name		Add if needed for clarification, e.g. alternative spelling found
10.	Age		If given, copy and paste from CWGC
11.	Awards		If given, copy and paste awards, e.g. MM, DCM
12.	Date of Death		Copy and paste from CWGC
13.	Comments on Date of Death		Paste any CWGC' comments relating 'Date of Death', if any
14.	Rank		Copy and paste from CWGC
15.	Regiment/Service		Copy and paste *just* regiment/service, e.g. "*Hertfordshire Regiment*" not battalion,
16.	Unit (e.g. Battalion)		If given, copy and paste just unit, e.g. "*1st/1st Bn.*" or "*1st Bn.*"
17.	Company		If given, copy and paste - sometimes appears as part of Regiment/Service, e.g. "*"E" Coy.*"

	Field Name	Text/Numeric (sample data/guidance for reference)	Help/Guidance to appear on website via link
18.	Location (Country)		Found under grave/memorial link
19.	Service Number		If given, copy and paste from CWGC
20.	Comments on Service Number		Comments if required, e.g. alternative if found
21.	Grave/Memorial		Copy and paste
22.	Grave/Memorial Ref.'		If given, copy and paste
23.	Additional Information (if given in CWGC)		If given in CWGC, copy and paste
24.	Headstone Inscription	Not researched, None, Not Applicable or type information	If given, quote inscription
25.	Who placed the order	Not researched, None, Not Applicable or type information	If given, provide name & address
26.	Grave Registration Docs'	• Not researched • Not Applicable • All information included elsewhere	Occasionally there are additional details here - Add any details not already given above.
27.	Concentration Details	• Not researched • Not Applicable • All information included elsewhere	Where given add: • Map ref', e.g. where found or previous cemetery • How identified • Effects
28.	Acknowledgments	Jonty Wild	The name of the researcher (you) and any other contributors or none general sources, i.e. not CWGC, Ancestry.co.uk etc. – these are acknowledged elsewhere.
52.	Pre-war	I suggest typing this into another Word document and the pasting into here – see **Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.**	This is a text field for relevant pre-war (WW1) information can be added, in biography/story form, up to enlistment location. This can be sourced from above and any relevant additional information, e.g. from census, newspapers, pre-WW1 military service etc. etc.
53.	War Service	I suggest typing this into another Word document and the pasting into here – *see Appendix 5. - Biography Fields*	This is a text field for relevant war service information can be added, in biography/story form, from enlistment location on. This can be sourced from above and any relevant additional information, e.g. from service records, newspapers etc.

	Field Name	Text/Numeric (sample data/guidance for reference)	Help/Guidance to appear on website via link
54.	Additional Information	I suggest typing this into another Word document and the pasting into here – see ***Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.***	This is a text field for additional relevant information can be added, in biography/story form. This could be siblings war service, relationship to other names on a war memorial etc.

Appendix 3. Template Biography Fields

Here all research is drawn together to give a biography for those who died, and which can be added to at any time and can be of any length.

Pre-War

(Anything pre-war and up to enlistment including Pre-WW1 military service).

War Service

(Anything that is known or relevant to the person's war service post enlistment).

Additional information

(Anything not included above, e.g. perhaps other men from the same family also died or the details of his headstone inscription can be given).