

## Internment & Battlefield Burials

The varying nature of men's deaths in the front line and the specific conditions at the time of their death meant that their ultimate fates differed widely. For example:

*some men would have been identifiable and would be buried close to the front line.* This would have included, for example, men killed by a sniper or shell explosion whilst holding a trench, working party or on a road close behind the lines; men dug out of a collapsed mine, trench, sap or dug-out; and men dying of wounds having begun their evacuation, but whilst still in their Battalion or Brigade area. These men would be identified by comrades, NCOs or officers.

*Some men would have been less easily identifiable, but buried in burial plots still quite close to the firing line.* This might typically have included those men who had attacked and been killed or died of their wounds, but whose bodies could not be brought in because the place they were laying was under fire. Eventually when the fighting moved away, their bodies would be buried if possible. In this category too would be men who died in a successful advance, whose bodies would be cleared by units other than their own. Identification would be through pay books, tags, and other physical means by men who did not know the individuals.

*Some men would be unidentifiable, if the damage to them was such that they ceased to exist as a body or where any form of identification had been lost.* Fragments of men, once found, would be buried if possible.

*Many men were simply not found,* although post-war battlefield clearance 1920-1931 reduced the total of missing.

Many thousands of small burial plots were created on or very close behind the battlefields. They were often damaged by shellfire, and in 1918 many were over-run first by the advancing enemy and later by the Allies pushing eastwards again. Plots were destroyed as the ground was shelled, and the locations of many graves that had been registered and known about were made uncertain.

Men who died on the casualty evacuation chain

Cemeteries were created at most of the places where the Field Ambulance Aid posts, Casualty Clearing Stations and the less mobile [Base Hospitals](#) were located. These cemeteries were rather more orderly in terms of layout, tended to be rather larger due to the concentration of death. In most cases, the man was identified and usually his burial was attended by a Chaplain. Some of these cemeteries suffered from shellfire or other damage.