



ROYAL NAVY CEMETERY

The Royal Naval Cemetery, Yeovilton came into being when the Crown purchased a piece of land from Mr Ernest Wetherall of Manor Farm in September 1942. The need arose primarily because of the high number of young trainee aircrew killed in flying accidents from the adjacent and hastily built HMS Heron at the outbreak of WWII. The Saint Bartholomew's Churchyard already had 15 men buried there and was almost at full capacity. Still in use today, the Royal Naval Cemetery contains over 100 military graves of which 22 are Second World War casualties cared for by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Some who are laid to rest here are far from home such as Lieutenant Gerard Mallee, aged 22 from the Netherlands, who died when his Wildcat aircraft stalled and crashed into a tree on approach to the airfield on 26 April 1944. Sadly there is very little space left in the main part of the cemetery, so another plot was purchased by the Ministry of Defence in December 2000.

Although not yet fully open for the interment of deceased eligible military personnel, this extension does have space set aside for the committal of Fleet Air Arm veteran's ashes. More recently in 2019 the late Honorary Vice Admiral Sir Donald Gosling KCVO Royal Naval Reserve and Vice Admiral of the United Kingdom was buried in an area of the extension. A long standing benefactor of the church and Naval Service, the landscaping and features of the extension were funded through Sir Donald's generosity. There is an impressive Wayfair Cross, a brass Armillary and stone seating for those visitors who wish to reflect quietly in its tranquil surroundings.