



COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES

## Background

The Gaza Strip is home to two significant CWGC cemeteries: Gaza War Cemetery (GWC) and Deir El Balah (DEB). The GWC contains 3,217 Commonwealth burials from the First World War, of which 781 are unidentified, and 210 burials from the Second World War. Additionally, there are 30 post-war burials and 234 war graves of other nationalities. DEB holds 732 burials, all from the First World War, with 5 unidentified.

A report submitted in October 2024 detailed the damage sustained by both cemeteries during the first 12 months of conflict. Since that time, we have obtained occasional updates and photographs showing that there has been little additional damage. However, in the last two weeks, we received video footage showing additional damage at the GWC. This report outlines the new damage observed since the October 2024 analysis.

## Updated Status – September 2025

An updated damage assessment plan is provided in Appendix A, with photos in Appendix B. The plans illustrate the original damage reported in 2024 and the new damage assessed from recent videos received in August 2025. Key impacts include:

- **Clearing of headstones** in six plots marked in yellow on the plans in Appendix A (plots A, B, 17, 18, 25, and 26). This damage appears to have been caused by bulldozers (photos in Appendix B).
- **Increased destruction** of the base site storage and office, including equipment previously intact (marked in maroon on plans in Appendix A, photos in Appendix B).
- **Further removal of cemetery boundary walls** and destruction of the Stone of Remembrance and Memorial Cross wall (marked in maroon on plans in Appendix A).
- **Additional damage** to the wider cemetery, likely caused by military vehicles passing through.

## Potential Impact on Commemorations by Nationality

The October 2024 report highlighted that 370 graves had been impacted by damage. Recent reports indicate an additional 448 burials have been affected, bringing the total to 818. This represents 22% of the casualties within the cemetery. A breakdown of impacted nationalities is provided in the table below:

Nationality	Oct-24	Aug-25	Total
United Kingdom	235	234	469
New Zealand	5	4	9
Australian	40	106	146
Polish	2	13	15
Indian	1	1	2
Canada	4	5	9
German	1	3	4
Unknown	82	80	162
Greek	0	2	2
Totals	<b>370</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>818</b>
Percentage Damage	<b>10%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>22%</b>

It is anticipated that the damage to headstones across the site will increase significantly once a full inspection can be conducted.

### Protection of the Sites

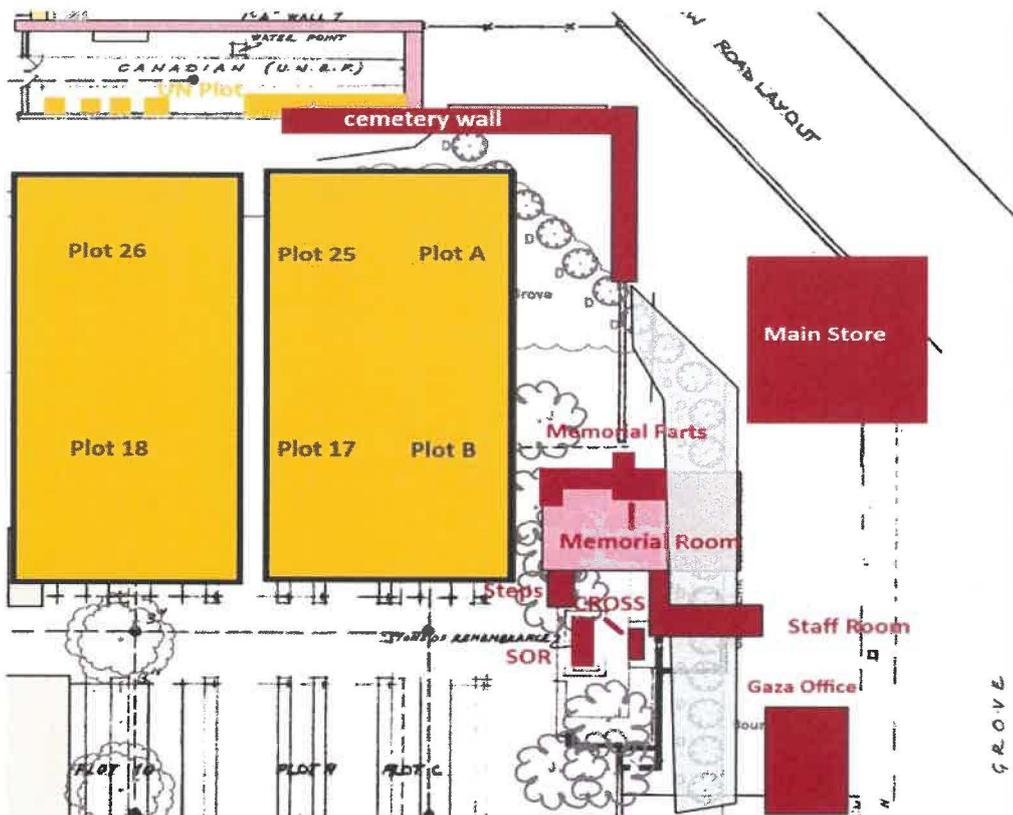
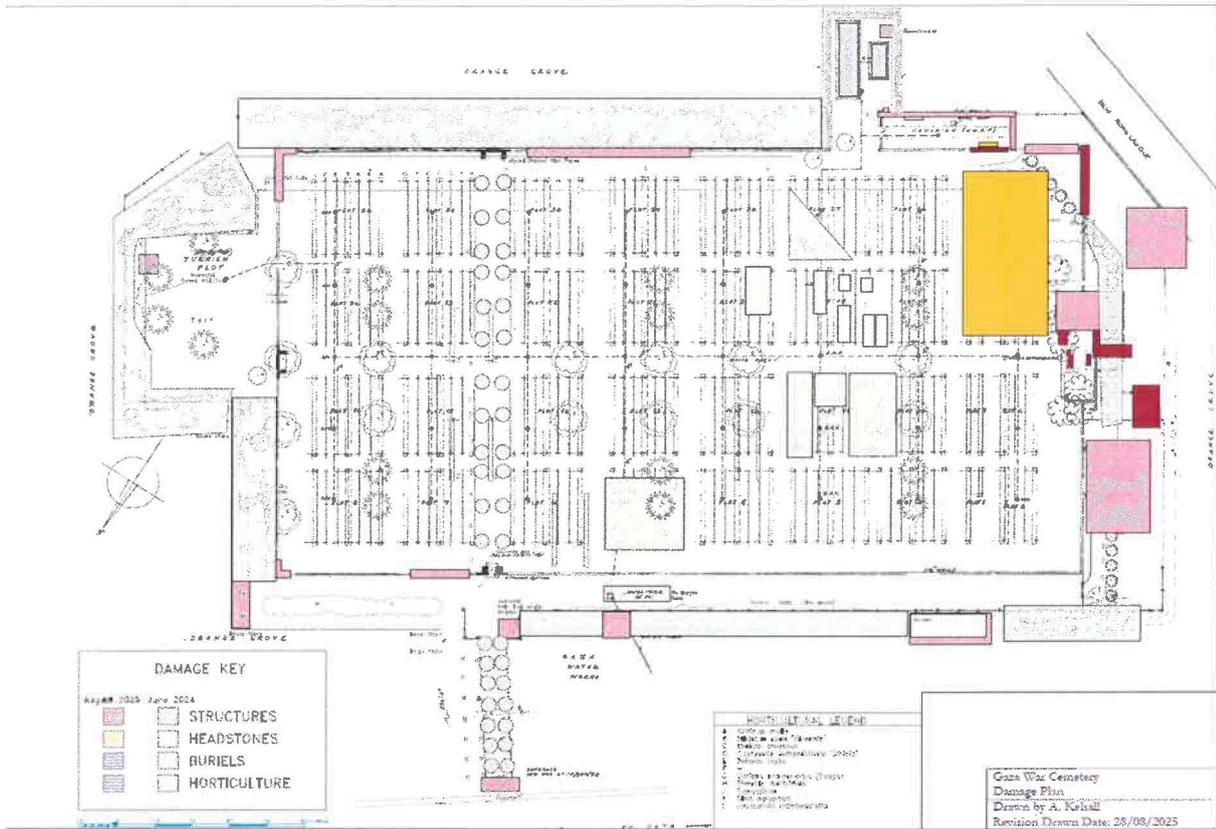
As previously reported, the area around the cemetery remains volatile and dangerous, making entry unlikely for some time. Re-entry will depend on a return to localised peace and FCDO approval to travel.

We continue to liaise with the UK Defence Section in Tel Aviv and report any increased damage as it occurs. They have highlighted the cemeteries and our concerns to the IDF where possible, although the initial benefits of this appear to be limited.

Additionally, we have raised our concerns with the Israeli Embassy in London and to the FCDO.

# APPENDIX A

## GAZA WAR CEMETERY DAMAGE PLAN



**APPENDIX B**

Increased damage to stone structures



Damage to store buildings and equipment



Land bulldozed in plots