



**CWGC**  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Revd Gibson  
Holy Trinity Church  
Hurdsfield

By Email Only: james@hthmacc.com

3 April 2020

Dear Revd Gibson,

**Relocation of war grave headstone commemorating Private Ryder – Response to Public Notice**

We understand that the Church of Holy Trinity has applied for a faculty to, amongst other things, create a pathway adjacent to the entrance road at the church and relocate the Commission headstone commemorating Private Ryder.

As you know, the Commission was established in 1917 as the sole authority charged with both the care of the graves and the commemoration world-wide of those 1.7m Commonwealth service personnel who died during the two world wars. There are four war graves in the churchyard of Holy Trinity, Hurdsfield, including that of Private Ryder.

The Commission has considered your proposals and can confirm that, whilst we do have some concerns, we will not be raising any objections to the covering of Private Ryder's grave by the new path and secondly the relocation of his headstone as proposed on the faculty application.

We do, however, wish to discuss with you some pertinent points in relation to this decision and the future protection of both the burial and commemoration.

We always wish to take families' views into consideration in relation to such proposals. We have therefore contacted Pamela Hudson, the great-niece of Private Ryder. We understand that, providing that the grave and headstone are dealt with in a reverent way, Ms Hudson does not have an objection to the proposals. We have taken this view on board and it has been instrumental in our decisions in

2 Marlow Road, , Maidenhead, Berkshire,  
SL6 7DX, United Kingdom  
Telephone +44 1628 634221  
Direct +44 1628 507138  
Mobile +44 7580 992007  
Facsimile +44 1628 771208  
E-mail katie.huxtable@cwgc.org  
Website www.cwgc.org



relation to this matter.

We understand that you feel the works are required for health and safety reasons and to improve access. They would ensure that pedestrians are not sharing the narrow roadway with vehicles. In addition, Private Ryder's headstone is the only remaining headstone in the cleared area of the churchyard, and you feel that it presents a risk to people using the area for recreational purposes. In the application, we can see that you have considered diverting the pathway to dogleg around the war grave, but this does not mitigate your concerns.

An important point is whether it is appropriate for the burial to be under a roadway used by vehicles. We understand that the pathway will be demarcated from the road by curb stones, so that it does not inadvertently become part of the road. We believe that this distinction is important and that the curbing is an essential part of the scheme.

We understand that you intend to mark the grave location with a small plaque. However, these plans have not yet been finalised. We support this idea as it will ensure the grave locations remains visible and connected to the commemoration of Private Ryder. However, we believe that a plaque inserted directly in to the bitmac, as proposed, would not be fitting nor provide longevity. We therefore request that any plaque marking the war grave be inserted in, or surrounded by, stone blocks flush with the bitmac and hope that we can work together to find a solution that would be agreeable to us both.

As the headstone will no longer mark the grave, we will need to produce a new Commission headstone with additional wording to show that the new commemoration does not mark the actual burial location. As a not for profit organisation, we would be grateful for a contribution towards the costs of the production of a new headstone.

We would also insist that Commission staff remove the existing headstone, rather than your contractor doing so. We would hope that this can be done as near in time to the creation of the pathway as possible, so to ensure commemoration on the war grave for as long as possible.

As the Commission retains responsibility for the care and protection of the grave itself, not just the headstone, we would also request that the church confirm that the burial of Private Ryder will not be disturbed as part of these works, or at any time in the future.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you in the near future, should the faculty be granted.

Please let me know if you need any further information.

Yours sincerely

Katie Huxtable  
Legal Counsel