

Definition of a war memorial (extended version)



According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a memorial is “a sign of remembrance; preserving or intended to preserve the memory of a person or thing”.

Any object can be considered a war memorial. They can be created or erected by anyone and they do not have to be officially unveiled or dedicated, although many are. As long as the inscription and/or purpose behind the creation or erection of the object links it to the remembrance of a war or conflict then it is considered to be a war memorial. Please note that War Memorials Trust does not consider grave markers for individuals killed during a war or conflict and where the body is present as war memorials.

War memorials can be permanent (e.g. a sculpture, cross or roll of honour), temporary (e.g. a street shrine, the temporary Cenotaph erected for the Peace Celebrations of 1919) or living (e.g. a tree).

A war memorial can be in a public or private location. It can be inside or outside a building or can have no permanent location (e.g. a roll of honour book maybe moved to different locations over time).

War memorials can commemorate individuals as well as groups of people. Those commemorated on a war memorial can have died in action, in wartime accidents and friendly fire, or can have died of wounds or from disease either during or subsequent to a conflict. War memorials can commemorate those who served during a war and survived. Civilians involved in or affected by a conflict or war can also be commemorated as can animals.

War memorials can be created or erected at any time. They can be created or erected either during or shortly after the event they are commemorating or a significant time after the event.

Please see the UK National Inventory of War Memorials at the Imperial War Museum for a full list of the different types of war memorials.

Definition of a war memorial (shortened version)

Any physical object created, erected or installed to commemorate those involved in or affected by a conflict or war should be considered a war memorial. Memorials to civilians and animals should be included.