

British Cemetery Marker ^[1]

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British Cemetery Marker
Ocracoke

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Description: This memorial, a small metal marker mounted on a wooden post, commemorates the burial of the recovered bodies of British sailors who died in the sinking of the trawler the HMT Bedfordshire in May of 1942 off the coast of North Carolina. The marker sits outside the white picket fence surrounding the burial plot. It honors the dead and the establishment of the cemetery, and a companion memorial to the HMT Bedfordshire sits several feet away in the cemetery garden area. The British flag flies over the site.

Inscription:

These gravesites contain the bodies of four British seamen. Their ship, the armed trawler HMS Bedfordshire, was on loan to our Navy by Great Britain to help protect our shores during the early days of World War II.

On May 11, 1942 the Bedfordshire was torpedoed and sunk by a German sub. All hands were lost and these four were the only bodies recovered. This cemetery is maintained by Ocracoke Coast Guard Station personnel.

Dedication date: 1942

Materials & Techniques: Wood base, metal placard lined with rope

Post dedication use: Every year on the Thursday and Friday closest to May 11th, a memorial service is held by the U.S. National Park Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, and members of the British Royal Navy.

Subject notes: In 1942, the British trawler, the *HMT Bedfordshire*, came to the United States as part of the Allied effort during World War II. While patrolling the waters of the Outer Banks for German Naval activity, the boat was torpedoed by a U-Boat on May 11, 1942, and all thirty-seven crewmen aboard were lost. Only four bodies were recovered. They were laid to rest on Ocracoke in a tiny plot considered the smallest Commonwealth War Graves Commission grave site in the world. Coast Guard service members buried the four recovered bodies in a plot gifted by an Ocracoke family, with the subsequent addition of a fence around the plot. The burial event in 1942 was attended by a 21-gun salute.

Location: The marker is located in front of the burial plot. The cemetery is located on British Cemetery Road and on the right when traveling north. The Wahab-Howard family Cemetery adjoins the memorial cemetery area to the north.

Landscape: The memorial sits within the cemetery landscape and garden. It sits off the road, sheltered by trees and near historic homes.

City: Ocracoke

County: Hyde

Subjects: World War II

Latitude: 35.11668

Longitude: -75.98079

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