

MND (SE) J9 BASRA BRITISH CEMETERY RECCE

Aim of Trip:

1. To assess the condition of the Basra British Cemetery in Ar Rabbat, Grid 7067 8087.

Narrative:

2. A team of J9 members traveled to the cemetery. The team consisted of the following members:



3. The team traveled by road to the BaOC where Waterloo Company provided an orders brief prior to a road move to the cemetery. The recce group departed the BaOC at 13:10 in 4 Bulldog vehicles and arrived at the cemetery without incident at approx 13:40.

4. The cemetery occupies two areas separated by a busy road with a Christian/British Cemetery on the north side of the road and another faiths Cemetery on the southern side of the road, both sides of the cemetery have buildings marking the entrance. The road dividing the cemeteries is currently undergoing construction work which reduced access to both vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

5. The north cemetery:

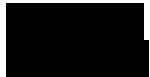
- a. Wide open space with limited vegetation at the perimeter
- b. Archway entrance has a plaque on the top 'Basra War Cemetery'
- c. A large amount of civilian headstones in the north eastern corner -
- d. A large plinth as a memorial damaged – WWI this can be seen clearly on www.roll-of-honour.com/Overseas/IraqWW1GravesRecovery
- e. A wall approx 30 metres long which appears to have plaques or name boards removed from it. This may be the memorial moved in 1997
- f. Probable remains of war graves in south west corner
- g. Remains of headstones can be seen covering the ground
- h. A football field has been established on the northern part of the cemetery with goal posts

6. The south cemetery:

- a. Overgrown with vegetation
- b. Archway entrance has a plaque below the 'Basra War Cemetery' which is engraved with the following:
Here are honoured men of the Indian army who gave their lives in the great war for their king and country 1914 – 1921
- c. A lot of rubbish and litter

- d. Clear indication of war graves – broken headstones however a couple can be partially read.
- e. An obelisk in the central area
- f. Large memorial to 278 Turkish Soldiers
- g. In the south west corner there are two large memorials to the Gurkhas – 5th Gurkha Rifles can be clearly listed along with 1939-1945. These memorials are in a particularly overgrown area and may be the reason they remain untouched
- h. Another entrance arch by the Gurkha memorials which has been sealed up and a house now appears to join up to the building.

7. Both sides of the cemetery were war cemeteries, both are listed on a number of websites. In the north the gravestones marking the graves of over 2500 burials were removed in 1935 and the screen wall recorded their names. The wall still stands but the names are no longer there and it should be possible to check if the names are located at the Basra Memorial located on the road to Nasiriyah. In the south cemetery there appear to be gravestones which were once repaired.



J9 PMO
HQ MND(SE)