

## **British Cemetery Memorial Ceremony - May 10, 2019**

The British Cemetery Memorial ceremony will take place Friday, May 10, 2019 at 11am, with a reception immediately following at the Berkley Barn, 58 Water Plant Road in Ocracoke, North Carolina. The ceremony commemorates the sinking of the *H.M.T. Bedfordshire* off the coast in 1942. Four sailors from the Bedfordshire are buried on Ocracoke, in a small plot of land that is "forever England." Representatives from the U. S. Coast Guard, British Royal Navy, and Royal Canadian Navy, as well as Ocracoke School students, participate in the annual ceremony, which includes a reading of the crew list, the playing of bagpipes, and a 21-gun salute. The event is open to all who wish to pay their respects, and brings family members and World War II historians from all over the world to honor these grave sites. This will be the 77th commemoration of four British World War II soldiers buried in the small plot of British land along British Cemetery Road.

The Ocracoke ceremony can trace its ties to island families back to May 1942. The British Cemetery site has meant a lot to the people of Ocracoke and has also become an important stop for visitors. As one stands at these grave sites, one begins to understand the kindness and respect people have shown for the men who died so far from home. The Ocracoke community has continued to help care for the grave sites, memorial and to honor these British sailors.

While the Ocracoke Occupancy Tax Board grants money to cover the cost of the cemetery plantings and the reception afterwards, this does not cover the total cost. To donate, please send checks to OCBA, P.O. Box 456, Ocracoke, NC 27960. Please note "British Cemetery Ceremony" in the memo line. Donations can also be made online: <https://www.gofundme.com/>

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*Photo by Connie Leinbach*