



A Rededication Service for

Captain Ernest Cecil Blencowe

6th Battalion Dorsetshire Regiment

**15.00 hours Wednesday 11 June 2025
CWGC Bedford House Cemetery, Belgium**

**Service conducted by Reverend John Storey OF
Chaplain to 5th Battalion, The Rifles**



Ernest Cecil Blencowe Gortweitz
16 March 1881 – 16 February 1916

Ernest was born in Derby in 1881. He was the only son of Ernest Gortweitz, a soap manufacturer, and Sarah Snee - sadly Sarah died just a few months after Ernest was born.

Ernest was educated at Sherborne School, leaving there in 1899 and moving to London. From there he moved frequently between the UK, the United States and Canada throughout the early 20th century.

In 1910, Ernest married Elsie Mary Blanche Edwards in Devon, and in 1913 they had a daughter – Eileen Winifred Blanche Blencowe, who was born in Budeigh Salterton.

Ernest joined the army at the outbreak of war, receiving his commission in September 1914. He also changed his name, dropping the Germanic

sounding Gottscheitz for Blencowe to avoid problems should he be captured by the Germans.

Ernest was attached to Bⁿ of the Dorsetshire Regiment, and arrived in France in July 1915. With the Dorsetshires he was engaged in various actions on the Western Front, including holding lines around the south of the Ypres Salient. In early 1916, the regiment arrived on The Bluff – an area of unusual raised ground near the Ypres – Comines canal – which was fought over extensively throughout the war due to the strategic advantage it offered whoever controlled it.

Ernest lost his life in an action to try to wrest control of The Bluff back into the hands of the British in mid-February 1916. He was Mentioned in Despatches for his actions during this period. His body was not recovered and following the war he was listed on the Menin Gate memorial to the missing.

In June 1921 the remains of an unknown British officer were recovered by a large spoil heap known as The Bluff. The remains bore buttons and badges identifying them as an officer of the Dorsetshire Regiment, but further identification proved impossible and the remains were reburied at Bedford House Cemetery, near Ypres. Recently, research has revealed the un-named officer to be Captain Ernest Blencowe and today we rededicate his grave accordingly.

The Cemetery

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Bedford House Cemetery is situated in the grounds of Chateau Rosendal, a former country house that was used by field ambulances and brigade headquarters during the war. It was gradually destroyed by shelling and the grounds became covered by small cemeteries or enclosures. The largest of these, Enclosure No. 4, was used between June 1916 to February 1918, and later enlarged after the Armistice when over three thousand graves were brought in from other burial grounds and the battlefields of the Ypres Salient. Among those buried here is Captain Ernest Cecil Blencowe, whose previously unidentified grave we rededicate today.

Welcome

'I am the resurrection and the life,' says the Lord. 'Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'

John 11:25,26

Opening Prayer

My Brothers and Sisters, we meet in the name of Jesus Christ, who died and was raised to the glory of God the Father.

We remember before God our brother Ernest,
giving thanks for his life, service, and sacrifice;
we commend him to God our merciful redeemer and judge,
as we rededicate this grave where his mortal remains lie for all time.

God of all consolation,
your Son Jesus Christ was moved to tears
at the grave of Lazarus his friend.

We pray for those who have grieved for Ernest:
look with compassion on your children;
give to troubled hearts the light of hope
and strengthen us all by the gift of faith,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Amen.

Reading: 1914 by Francis Blakeley (extract)

Chosen by the family of Captain Blencowe

Read by Amanda Taylor, great-granddaughter of Capt. Blencowe

He went without fears, went gaily, since go he must,
And drilled and exercised and sang, and rode in the heat and dust
Of the summer; his fellows were round him, as eager as he,
While over the world the gloomy days of the war dragged heavily.

He fell without a murmur in the noise of battle; found rest
'Midst the roar of hooves on the grass, a bullet struck through his breast.
Perhaps he dreamily lay; for him alone it was still,
And the blood ran out of his body, it had taken so little to kill.

Scripture Readings: John 11:17-27

Read by a representative of the British Embassy

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

Reading: A Soldier's Grave by Francis Lawbridge

Read by Lieutenant Fintan Feehan, 1st Bn The Rifles

Then in the hush of midnight, gentle arms
Lifted him slowly down the slopes of death
Lest he should hear again the mad alarms
Of battle, dying moans, and painful breath.

And where the earth was soft for flowers we made
A grave for him that he might better rest.
So, Spring shall come and leave it sweet arrayed,
And there the lark shall turn her deep nest.

Address

The Reverend John Stapp CP

The Act of Dedication

We rededicate this grave to Captain Ernest Blencowe in the name of Christ who died and rose again;

as a symbol of our remembering, as a sign of our thanksgiving,
a token of recognition and expression of our love.

We look forward with confidence to our reunion with him
and all those whose dwelling is forever with Christ in the everlasting
Kingdom of the Father.

The Exhortation

Read by a soldier from 1st Bn, The Rifles

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn,
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them,
We will remember them.

The Last Post

*Played by Rifleman Torress Matshiba
The Band and Pipes of The Rifles*

Silence

Reveille

Rollins Epitaph

Read by a soldier from 1st Bn, The Rifles

When you go home tell them of us and say:
"For your tomorrow, we gave our today".

Laying of Wreaths

The Collect of the Dorsetshire Regiment

Read by Elliot Mosecote

Director of the Fleet Military Museum

O Jesus, King of Glory, who hast gone to prepare a place for us, give, we pray Thee, to thy servants of the Dorsetshire Regiment, who were the first to obey when called to go out into a strange country, grace so to obey thee here that thou mayest at last receive us into thy Father's house, with whom in the unity of the Holy Ghost thou livest and reignest for ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (all)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

The Blessing

God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest; to the Church, The King, the Commonwealth, and all mankind, peace and concord; and to us and all his servants, life everlasting; and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, come down upon you and remain with you always.

Answer,



The Ministry of Defence, through the Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre, is responsible for the research, identification and burial of all British casualties worldwide.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for the graves, memorials, records and history of the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during the two world wars.

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