



A Rededication Service for

Serjeant Robert Sutherland

6th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders

15:30 hours 9 July 2025

CWGC Highland Cemetery, Roclincourt, France

**Service conducted by Reverend Andrew Thompson CP
Chaplain to 2 Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland**

*Déroulement de la Cérémonie présidé par
le Révérend Andrew Thompson*



Robert Sutherland

21 June 1892 – 9 April 1917

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Robert Sutherland was born in Brora in 1892, the second of five children born to George Sutherland and his wife Robina McKay. George worked as a carpenter, and as soon as he was old enough to learn a trade, Robert joined him.

In September 1908, aged 16, Robert started work as a bank teller with the North of Scotland Bank – first in his home town of Brora, though shortly afterwards he moved to the Eastgate branch in Inverness. Robert joined the territorial army on 21 December 1908, and thanks to his pre-war service he was immediately mobilised for action in World War One – 1 on 4 August 1914 in Inverness.

The Seaforth's Highlanders spent until May 1915 training in Bedford and sailed for France on 2 May 1915. As part of the 152nd Brigade, of the 51st Division, the Seaforth's took part in several bloody battles once they had arrived at the theatre of war, including the Battle of Festubert and the second action of Glencroix in 1915, the attacks on High Wood and the Battle of the Ancre in 1916.

Robert would have spent the early days of April 1917 preparing for what would become known as the Battle of Arras. The Seaforth's would be engaged in the Battle of the Scarpe to the south-east of Vimy. The battle began at 5am on the morning of 9th April and lasted six weeks – though Robert died on that first day. He was buried directly in the Highland Cemetery at Rodencourt, and although his Battalion affiliation could be established from his uniform, he wasn't carrying anything which could identify him by name.

On 26th April his Commanding Officer, recorded in the local Northern Times, "He was an excellent soldier and died gallantly. He was admired and respected by officers and men alike and was one of the best Non-Commissioned Officers in the Battalion."

Recent research has shown that Robert is the only missing Sergeant of the 8th (th) Seaforth Highlanders to have been lost in this part of France at this time, and that therefore he must be the unknown Sergeant buried at Rodencourt. Today we rededicate his grave accordingly.

The Cemetery

Le cimetière

Rodincourt was just within the British lines before the Battle of Arras in 1917. It was from this village that the 51st (Highland) and 34th Divisions advanced on the opening day of the battle on 9 April. Among these men was Sergeant Robert Sutherland, whose grave could not be identified at the time. He lies in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Highland Cemetery, Rodincourt, which was made when the battlefields were cleared following 9 April 1917 and subsequently expanded.

Welcome

Applaud & Adoration

We are here to worship Almighty God, whose purposes are good; whose power sustains the world he has made; who loves us, though we have failed in his service; who gave Jesus Christ for the life of the world and who leads us by his Holy Spirit in his way.

As we give thanks for God's great works, we remember those who have lived and died in his service and in the service of others; we pray for all who suffer through war and are in need; we ask for his help and blessing that we may do his will, and that the whole world may acknowledge him as Lord and King.

We remember this day those who have laid down their lives in the cause of justice and peace for their country and for the world. May we, with the help of God, be worthy of their sacrifice.

Opening Prayer

Prayer

Let us confess our sins and our shortcomings: our pride, our selfishness, our greed; our contribution to the evils and divisions of the world; our failure to seek and establish that peace God wills for all his children.

All: Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy, forgive our sins and lead us in your ways,
That we may do justly, love mercy,
and walk humbly with you our God:

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Scripture Reading: Exodus 12: 21 - 28
Lecture des Écritures Saintes

Read by a representative of the British Embassy

Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them,
"Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the
Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the
basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the
doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until
morning. When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the
Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe
and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to
enter your houses and strike you down.

"Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your
descendants. When you enter the land that the Lord will give you as he
promised, observe this ceremony. And when your children ask you,
"What does this ceremony mean to you?" then tell them, "It is the
Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the
Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the
Egyptians." Then the people bowed down and worshiped.
The Israelites did just what the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron.

Reading: From the Northern Times, 11 April 1916
By the George & Robina Sutherland

Lecture:

Read by Hilma MacFadden – Robert Sutherland's great-niece

In ever loving memory of our dear son and brother,
Dearl' loved and sorely missed,
Anchored by love,
Death cannot sever.
We sadly miss thee and will forever,
In a soldier's grave far over the sea,
But not too far to think of thee.

Address **Allocution**

The Reverend Andrew Thompson

Reading: Do Not Stand At My Grave and Weep **(author disputed)**

Lecture

Read by Captain Fion MacPherson
2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the sweetest music you hear
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift, spitting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there. I did not die.

The Art of Dedication **L'Acte de Dédication**

We rededicate this grave to Sgt Robert Sutherland 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

L'Exhortation

*Played by Captain Finn MacPherson
2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

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

Sonnette aux Morts

*Played by Corporal Paul McEneaney
2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

Silence

Highland Cathedral

*Played by Lance Corporal Donald Stewart
7th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

L'Épithaphe de Kohima

Read by Captain Fion MacPherson

2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland

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

Laying of Wreaths

Dépôt des Gerbes

Collect of the Seaforth Highlanders

Récitation du Seaforth Highlanders

Read by Captain Fion MacPherson

2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland

Almighty God, who givest salvation unto kings, teach us, thy servants, the Seaforth Highlanders, who are vowed to help our Lord the King against his enemies, ever to lift up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help, even from thee, maker of heaven and earth, for Jesus Christ our saviour's sake.

The Lord's Prayer (all)

Prayer du Seigneur

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

Séparation et Dernière Bénédiction

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.

Amen.



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

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

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