



A Rededication Service for

Private George Pert

7th Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders

Tuesday 22 September 2026 at 10.30 hours
Harlebeke New British Cemetery, Belgium

Service conducted by Reverend Thomas Wilde CF
4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland

Private George Pert

George was born on 23 June 1896 in Craig, Forfarshire, Scotland, to Robert and Helen Pert. He was one of 12 siblings, growing up in Ferryden, a traditional fishing village on the bank of the River Esk. Unsurprisingly, George's father, and his older brothers all worked as line fishermen, living within a stone's throw of the harbour front. The 1911 census lists the 14-year-old George, along with his older sister, working at Paton's Mill, a large flax factory across the River Esk in Montrose.

George's service record did not survive, and as a result, the date of his enlistment remains unknown. However, it is known that he joined the Seaforth Highlanders and served with the 7th Battalion. By October 1918, the battalion formed part of the 9th (Scottish) Division during the final stages of the Allied advance on the Western Front.

At this stage of the war, the German Army had been forced into a series of withdrawals, creating vulnerable salients around Lille and Douai in the north and between the Oise and Aisne further south. Seeking to spare Lille and its industrial districts from further destruction, the Allied strategy was to encircle the city and compel the Germans to abandon it.

The 9th Division was tasked with advancing to the Courtrai-Lendelede railway before securing crossings over the River Lys between Courtrai and Harlebeke. The offensive commenced on 14 October 1918, and by the end of the day George's battalion had reached positions between Steenen-Stampkot and the Steenbeek. The following days were spent resting in billets in the area before the battalion moved out on 18 October, marching to positions west of the River Lys near Harlebeke.

On 19 October, the battalion crossed the river and, in the early hours of 20 October, took up assembly positions east of Harlebeke in preparation for further operations. It was during the fighting on this day that George lost his life. His body was never recovered and he was officially recorded as missing.

Subsequent research submitted by a member of the public has shown that George was originally buried east of Harlebeke and later concentrated to Harlebeke New British Cemetery after the war. At the time of his concentration, the Graves Registration Unit were unable to identify George and so he was buried as an unknown soldier of the Seaforth Highlanders. The location of the original burial made it clear that this unknown soldier was killed during the fighting in the Harlebeke area in October 1918. George was the only Seaforth Highlander who is still missing from when his battalion was in the original recovery location. Therefore, it was agreed that the unknown soldier buried in Harlebeke New British Cemetery was actually Private George Pert and his headstone has been changed accordingly.

Order of Service

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
And the love of God
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with you all.

We are gathered here today in this place of remembrance to honour our fallen in conflicts past.

We gather to rededicate and remember with thanksgiving George Pert who was killed in action on 20 October 1918. He, alongside so many others, answered the call of his country, served with honour and gave his life in the service of his nation, counting service to others greater than service to self.

His sacrifice is summed up in Jesus' words to His disciples:

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. **John 15:12-13.**

Bidding Prayer

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we remember with thanksgiving all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for us in time of war. We thank you that the offering of these soldiers' lives was not in vain. By your grace, enable us this day to dedicate ourselves anew to the causes of justice, freedom and peace; and give us the wisdom and strength to build a better world, for the honour and glory of your name.

Amen.

Ghosts of War by Lieutenant Ewart Alan Mackintosh

Read by Second Lieutenant Findlay Johnstone

4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland

When you and I are buried
With grasses over head,
The memory of our fights will stand
Above this bare and tortured land,
We knew ere we were dead.

Though grasses grow at Vimy,
And poppies at Messines,
And in High Wood the children play,
The craters and the graves will stay
To show what things have been.

Though all be quiet in day-time,
The night shall bring a change,
And peasants walking home will see
Shell-torn meadow and riven tree,
And their own fields grow strange.

They shall hear live men crying,
They shall see dead men lie,
Shall hear the rattling Maxims fire,
And by the broken twists of wire
Gold flare light up the sky.

And in their new-built houses
The frightened folk will see
Pale bombers coming down the street,
And hear the flurry of charging feet,
And the crash of Victory.

This is our Earth baptized
With the red wine of War.
Horror and courage hand in hand
Shall brood upon the stricken land
In silence evermore.

Scripture Reading
John Chapter 20:11-16 (NIV)

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

Address

The Reverend Thomas Wilde CF

The Act of Dedication

So, let us now bless and dedicate this grave as the final resting place of the mortal remains of Private George Pert.

O God, whose Son Jesus Christ was laid in a tomb: Bless and dedicate, we pray, this grave as the place where the body of your servant George may rest in peace, in the knowledge that he now abides in your glory through the merits of your Son, who is the resurrection and the life; who died and is alive and reigns with you now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Exhortation

Read by Sergeant Jahvon Granger

4th 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.

Last Post

Silence

Reveille

Lament

Kohima Epitaph

Read by Sergeant Jahvon Granger

4th 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

Prayer

Let us pray. God of peace and compassion, as we lay these wreaths, we honour those who gave their lives in service to others. We remember with gratitude Private George Pert and all who have fallen in the pursuit of justice and peace. May their courage never be forgotten, their sacrifice never be in vain, and their example inspire us to live with integrity, compassion and hope for a better world. Grant peace to the departed, and to us who remain, the strength to uphold the values for which they gave their lives. **Amen.**

Collect of The Seaforth Highlanders

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. **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,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Blessing

**Go out into the world in peace; be brave and strong.
Hold on to what is good; do not repay evil with evil;
encourage those who are discouraged; support those
who are weak. Help anyone who is suffering; honour
everyone; love and serve the Lord with joy, trusting in
the power of the Holy Spirit. May God Almighty, the
Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you and
remain with you always. Amen.**



The Ministry of Defence, through the Joint Casualty and 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 memory of the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during the two World Wars.

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