



A Rededication Service for

**Serjeant William Augustus Fritz
4th Battalion The Royal Fusiliers**

**10:00 hours on Thursday 13 November 2025
CWGC St Symphorien Military Cemetery, Belgium**

**Service conducted by The Reverend David Jeal CF
Chaplain to The Royal Dragoon Guards
Déroulement de la cérémonie présidé par
Le Révérend David Jeal CF**

Serjeant William Augustus Fritz

Serjeant William Augustus Fritz was born in London in 1880. He was one of eight children born to Daniel Fritz and his wife Maria. His grandfather, John Fritz, was born in Germany. On 2 December 1906, William married Emily Ann Chrichley in Islington. Their daughter, Alice, was born in 1912. Before enlisting William worked as a dairyman.

At the outbreak of the First World War, 4th Battalion The Royal Fusiliers was immediately mobilised for the Western Front and landed at Le Havre on 13 August 1914. On the morning of 23 August 1914 the battalion was located north of Mons holding outposts along the canal at Nimy. The Germans attacked with at least four battalions of infantry as well as cavalry and artillery. 4th Battalion The Royal Fusiliers suffered heavy casualties at the bridges over the canal from rifle and artillery fire. Practically all the machine gun detachment under Lieutenant Maurice James Dease VC, was killed or wounded. Lieutenant Dease was wounded multiple times and was eventually killed. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions that day. The machine guns were disabled by artillery fire and had to be destroyed and abandoned.

At 13:10 hours the first order to retire was given. The final order to retire was received at 13:40 hours. Famously, Private Sidney Frank Godley VC offered to stay behind and single handedly defended the railway bridge at Nimy while the rest of the section retreated. He was wounded twice and eventually taken prisoner. Private Godley was also awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions that day. The battalion reported casualties of around three Officers and a hundred and fifty men. Serjeant Fritz was one of the men killed during the fighting that day. He was 34 years old.

The remains of many of those killed at Nimy were recovered by the Germans and buried in St Symphorien Military Cemetery. Serjeant Fritz is now known to have been amongst those buried there although he was not identifiable at the time. As he was missing, Serjeant Fritz was commemorated on the La Ferté-sous-Jouarre Memorial. However, new research has shown that this is the grave of Serjeant Fritz and the headstone over his grave has been changed to reflect this. Today we will remember Serjeant William Augustus Fritz and his grave will be rededicated.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's St Symphorien Military Cemetery was established by the German Army following the Battle of Mons in August 1914 as a final resting place for British and German soldiers. Privates John Parr and George Lawrence Price are buried in the cemetery, who are thought to be the first and last Commonwealth soldiers killed in action during the First World War. Among those killed during the Battle of Mons and buried here by the Germans was Serjeant William Augustus Fritz.

Serjeant William Augustus Fritz est né à Londres en 1880. Il était l'un des huit enfants nés à Daniel Fritz et de sa femme Maria. Son grand-père, John Fritz, était né en Allemagne. Le 2 décembre 1906, William a épousé Emily Ann Chrichley à Islington. Leur fille, Alice, était née en 1912. Avant de s'engager, William travaillait comme laitier.

Au début de la Première Guerre mondiale, le 4^e Bataillon du Royal Fusiliers a été immédiatement mobilisé pour le front occidental et a débarqué au Le Havre le 13 août 1914. Le matin du 23 août 1914, le bataillon se trouvait au nord de Mons et tenait des avant-postes le long du canal à Nimy. Les Allemands ont attaqué avec au moins de quatre bataillons d'infanterie ainsi que de la cavalerie et de l'artillerie. Le 4^e Bataillon du Royal Fusiliers a subi de lourdes pertes aux ponts

sur le canal sous les tirs de fusils et d'artillerie. Pratiquement tout le détachement de mitrailleurs sous le commandement du Lieutenant Maurice James Dease VC fut tué ou blessé. Lieutenant Dease fut blessé à plusieurs reprises et finit par être tué. Il a reçu la Victoria Cross pour ses actions ce jour-là. Les mitrailleuses furent mises hors de service par les tirs d'artillerie et durent être détruites et abandonnées.

À 13:00 heures, le premier ordre de retraite était donné. L'ordre final de retraite était reçu à 13:40 heures. Private Sidney Frank Godley VC est célèbre pour avoir proposé de rester sur place et défendu à lui seul le pont ferroviaire de Nimy pendant que le reste de la section battait en retraite. Il fut blessé à deux reprises et finit par être fait prisonnier. Private Godley reçut également la Victoria Cross pour ses actions ce jour-là. Le bataillon a signalé environ trois officiers et cent cinquante hommes parmi les victimes. Serjeant Fritz était l'un des hommes tués au cours des combats ce jour-là. Il avait 34 ans.

Les restes de nombreuses victimes tuées à Nimy ont été récupérés par les Allemands et enterrés au St Symphorien Military Cemetery. On sait aujourd'hui que Serjeant Fritz fait partie des personnes enterrées là-bas, même s'il n'a pas pu être identifié à l'époque. Comme il était porté disparu, Serjeant Fritz a été commémoré au monument commémoratif des disparus à La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. Cependant, la nouvelle recherche a permis le site de son dernier repos d'être identifié. Aujourd'hui nous nous souviendrons de Serjeant William Augustus Fritz et sa tombe sera consacrée une nouvelle fois.

Call to Worship

Appel à Adoration

We gather here today in this place of peace and remembrance to honour Serjeant William Augustus Fritz of 4th Battalion The Royal Fusiliers - a husband, a father, a son, and a soldier of great courage. More than a century ago, he stood firm with his comrades at Mons, in the first desperate days of the Great War. He faced the full measure of duty and sacrifice, giving his life in the service of his country and for the freedom of others.

Today, we remember his courage and devotion, and we give thanks that his name and resting place are known and honoured once more. As we stand among these graves where former enemies now lie side by side in peace, we are reminded of the cost of war and the hope that reconciliation can bring. May this act of rededication renew in us a spirit of gratitude, humility, and peace, as we remember Serjeant Fritz and all who gave their lives in the service of others.

May the Peace of the Lord be always with you,
All **and also with you.**

Bidding Prayer

Prière

Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God, we gather here in gratitude and remembrance to honour Serjeant William Augustus Fritz, who served with courage and devotion and gave his life in the early days of the Great War.

We thank you for his faithfulness,
for his steadfast spirit, and for the example of duty and sacrifice he gave in the face of great trial.

As we rededicate his grave today,
we give thanks that his resting place is now known and marked with honour. We remember, too, all who fought beside him, those who lived and those who fell,
and all who, in every generation, have served their country in the cause of freedom, justice, and peace.
Grant, O Lord, that the memory of their sacrifice may strengthen our resolve to seek peace among nations, to cherish the gifts of freedom,
and to live with courage and compassion in our own time.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Scripture Reading

Lecture des Écritures Saintes

Read by Commodore Richard Hutchings

UK National Military Representative to SHAPE

Psalm 23 (NIV)

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Reading

Lecture

Read by Major Ret'd Mick McCarthy MBE
Regimental Area Secretary (South)
The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

For the Fallen by Laurence Binyon

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

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.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

Gospel Reading

Lecture de l'Évangile

Read by Warrant Officer Class 1 Matthew Hale-Smith
1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

John Chapter 14 v 1-6 (NIV)

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Address

Allocution

The Act of Dedication

L'Acte de Dédicace

So let us now bless and dedicate this grave as the final resting place of the mortal remains of Serjeant William Augustus Fritz.

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 William 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.

All **Amen.**

The Exhortation

L'Éxhortation

Read by Lance Corporal Reece Rigley

1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

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.

All **We will remember them.**

Last Post

Sonnerie aux Morts

Played by Rifleman Tomasi Matakibau

5th Battalion The Rifles

Silence

Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

L'Épitaphe de Kohima

Read by Lance Corporal Tom Armstrong

1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

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

Laying of Wreaths

Dépôts des Gerbes

Prayer

Prière

Let us pray.

We lay these wreaths in gratitude and remembrance symbols of our respect for Serjeant William Augustus Fritz and for all who gave their lives in the service of others. May the memory of their courage and sacrifice inspire us to work for peace, to show compassion to one another, and to build a world where understanding and justice prevail.

May this grave, now marked with his name, stand as a lasting reminder that every life given in war was a life loved, a story valued, and a sacrifice not forgotten. We give thanks for all who serve still today, and we pray for peace among all nations and peoples.

All **Amen.**

The Collect of The Royal Fusiliers

Récitation du Royal Fusiliers

Read by Warrant Officer Class 1 Matthew Hale-Smith
1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

O God, who art our God for ever and wilt guide us even unto death, be pleased, we pray thee, so to guide The Royal Fusiliers, whose great city is rich in glory and honour, that, coveting rather the riches of Christ, we may do thy commandments, and enter at last into thy holy city; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Prière du Seigneur

Trusting in the compassion of God, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

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

Séparation et Dernière Bénédiction

May the God of peace bless us all.

May we carry hope and thankfulness in our hearts.

As we leave this place, may we remember the courage and selflessness of those who gave their lives for others.

May their example help us to live with peace,

with care for one another,

and with strength to do what is right.

And may the blessing of God Almighty
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
be with us and remain with us always.

All **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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