



A Burial Service for

Unknown Soldiers of the Great War

10:00 hours Wednesday 15 July 2020

CWGC Portcaspelle British Cemetery

**Service conducted by Reverend Mark Nightingale OF
Chaplain to 9 Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps**

Background

The remains of a group of 12 men were recovered by archaeologists in the Langemark-Poelkapelle area between 25 March - 17 April 2024.

Ultimately the three sets of remains we bury today were determined to have been those of Commonwealth soldiers. They most likely lost their lives either during the Third Battle of Ypres in August - September 1917, or during The Lys Offensive (also known as the German Spring Offensive) in April 1918.

Very few artefacts were recovered alongside the men – mostly bits of kit and uniform, all of which indicated that they were Commonwealth soldiers, but there was nothing to signify the nationality of any of the men, let alone their regiment, rank or any other identifying information.

Although the identities of these men will remain known only to God, today we give thanks for their sacrifice, and that of all those who died alongside them.

The Cemetery

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Poelcapelle British Cemetery was made after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the surrounding battlefields and several smaller cemeteries. The casualties being laid to rest today were recovered from these same former battlefields. There are over 7,400 Commonwealth service personnel of the First World War buried in the cemetery, of whom more than 5,000 remain unidentified.

Call to Worship

We meet in the name of Jesus Christ,
Who died and was raised to the glory of God the Father.
Grace and mercy be with you.

We come here today to recognise the bravery, commitment, and
sacrifice given by these soldiers who, on the day of decision, ventured
their all for the liberties we now enjoy.

I pray that as we commend them to God our merciful redeemer and
judge and commit their bodies to be buried and to lay their mortal
remains to rest, God will help us to recognise the immeasurable debt
we owe them for their sacrifice.

Bidding Prayer

Almighty God, we come to you in Jesus' name,
who loved us and gave himself for us.

We thank you for his example of self-giving,
in that he willingly gave up his life for our freedom
And bless you for all who have served by his example
Laying down their lives for the sake of others.

We thank you for the life and service of these soldiers
Who we come to commit to you now, in Jesus' name.
Amen

Scripture Reading: Luke 12: 4-12

Read by Reverend Richard Clement, St George's Memorial Church, Tyres

"I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

"I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. But whoever disavows me before others will be disavowed before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

"When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

Reading: To the Unknown Soldier, a thank you - Aron

Read by PFC Hachi Jallow, 8th Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps

I do not know your name,
although you were a mother's son.
She must have waited patiently for some word from you,
and for your safe return.

Your race, politics, creed - they matter not to me,
As you, and the woman who let you go,
sacrificed everything for my liberty.

A word of thanks I say for you, and for the mother who lost a son,
and for the rights that I have, that your sacrifice for me won.

Address

Blessing of the Grave

O God, whose Son Jesus Christ was laid in a tomb:
Bless, we pray, this grave, as the place where the bodies of your
servants may rest in peace, through your Son, who is the resurrection
and the life; who died and is alive and reigns with you now and for ever.

All Amen.

Commendation

Let us commend our fallen comrades to the mercy of God
Our maker and redeemer.

God our creator and redeemer,
By your power Christ conquered death
And entered into glory.
Confident of his victory
And claiming his promises
We entrust these soldiers known by name to you,
To your mercy
In the name of the Jesus our Lord,
Who died and is alive
And reigns with you
Now and for ever.
All Amen.

The Commital

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and of great goodness.
As a father is tender towards his children,
so is the Lord tender to those that fear him.
For he knows of what we are made;
he remembers that we are but dust.
Our days are like the grass; we flourish like a flower of the field;
when the wind goes over it, it is gone
and its place will know it no more.
But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures
for ever and ever toward those that fear him
and his righteousness upon their children's children.
All Amen.

Almighty and merciful God,
We commend to your eternal care these soldiers,
Unknown to us, but fully known to you.
We know you receive them into your peace,
Where conflict is ended,
Where divisions are healed,
And where every tear is wiped away.

And so we have entrusted these soldiers to God's mercy,
and we now commit their bodies to the ground:
earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
be sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who will transform our frail bodies
that they may be conformed to his glorious body,
who died, was buried, and rose again for us.
To him be glory for ever.

All Amen.

The Exhortation

Read by a soldier of B Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps

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.
At We will remember them.

Last Post

*Played by Musician Alexander Brown,
The Band of the Royal Yorkshire Regiment*

Silence

Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

Read by a soldier of B Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps

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

Laying of Wreaths

Prayers

Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of conflict,
And ask that God may give us peace;
For the service men and women who have died
in the violence of war
each one remembered by and known to God.

May God give peace.

Response: God give peace

For all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership,
Political, military and religious
And those who seek to keep the world secure and free;
Asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve
In the search for reconciliation and peace.

May God give peace.

Response: God give peace

O God of truth and justice,
we hold before you those whose memory we cherish,
and those whose names we will never know.
Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world
And grant us the grace to pray for those who wish us harm.
As we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future;
For you are the source of life and hope, now and forever.

All Amen.

Prayer for the Armed Forces

Read by a soldier of B Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps

O Lord God of Hosts, stretch forth, we pray, your almighty arm to strengthen and protect our service men and women. Support them in times of conflict, and in their rest and training keep them safe from all evil; endue them with courage and loyalty; and grant that in all things they may serve without reproach; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

The Lord's Prayer

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

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

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the faint-hearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honour all people;
love and serve the Lord our God.
And as the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among 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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