



A Burial Service for

An unknown Commonwealth Soldier of the Great War

10.45am hours Thursday 16 July 2025

CWGC Heerne Hill British Cemetery

**Service conducted by Reverend Mark Nightingale CF
Chaplain to 9 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps**

Background

In September 2025 the remains of a casualty of the First World War were recovered from a shell hole near the Canal du Nord in France. The man was found with several artefacts which indicated that he was serving with the Commonwealth forces, but nothing which could suggest his nationality or regimental affiliation, much less his personal identity.

Considering all the available information, it is highly probable that the man died in September 1918, but there was also fighting in the area in March 1918 and April 1917, and without a clue as to who he was, it is also difficult to establish exactly when he died.

Whilst his identity remains known only to God, today we give thanks for the sacrifice of this man, and all those who died alongside him.

The Cemetery

Fighting units started burials at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Hemmes Hill British Cemetery in November 1917, continuing until March 1918 with further graves added in September. After the Armistice, additional graves were brought in from small cemeteries and the battlefields around Hemmes. It is in this vicinity that the unknown soldier being laid to rest today lost his life.

Welcome Director

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 this soldier who, on the day of decision, ventured
their all for the liberties we now enjoy.

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

Guiding Prayer Priest

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 this soldier
Who we come to commit to you today, in Jesus' name.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 6, 1-10

Lecture des Écritures Saintes

Read by a representative of the British Embassy

We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation).

Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

By purities, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;

As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Reading: I do not know your name

by Karen Martin

Lecture

Read by a soldier of B Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps

I do not know your name, but I know you died.
I do not know from where you came, but I know you died.

Your uniform, branch of service, it matters not to me
Whether Volunteer or Conscript, or how it came to be.
That politicians' failures, or some power-mad ambition
Brought you too soon to your death, in the name of any nation.

You saw, you felt, you knew full well, as friend and foe were taken
By bloody death, that your life too, was forfeit and forsaken.
Yet on you went and fought and died, in your close and private hell
For Mate or Platoon or Regiment and memories never to tell.

It was for each other, through shot and shell, the madness you endured
Side by side, through wound and pain, and comradeship assured.
No family ties, or bloodline link, could match that bond of friend
Who shared the horror and kept on going, at last until the end.

We cannot know, we were not there, it's beyond our comprehension
To know the toll that battle brings, of resolute intention.
To carry on, day by day, for all you loved and hoped for
To live in peace a happy life, away from bloody war.

For far too many, no long life ahead, free of struggle and pain and gun
And we must remember the price that was paid, by each and every
one.

Regardless of views, opinions aside, no matter how each of us sees it
They were there and I cannot forget, even though I did not live it.

I do not know your name, but I know you died.
I do not know from where you came, but I know you died.

Address:
Allocution

Blessing of the Grave
Bénédiction de la Tombe

O God, whose Son Jesus Christ was laid in a tomb:
bless, we pray, this grave as the place where the body of your servant
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.

Commemoration

Let us commend this soldier 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 Committal

L'Enterrment

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.

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

And so we have entrusted him to God's mercy,
and we now commit his body to the ground:
earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
in 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

L'Exhortation

Read by a soldier of B Regiment, Royal Logistic 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.

All We will remember them.

Last Post

Sommeil aux Morts

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

Silence

Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

L'Épithaphe de Kohima

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

Depôt des Gerbes

Prayer for the Armed Forces

Prrière

Read by a soldier of B-Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps

Almighty God, stretch forth your mighty arm to strengthen
And protect the Armed Forces;
grant that meeting danger with courage
and all occasions with discipline and loyalty,
they may truly serve the cause of justice and peace;
to the honour of your holy name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

Prayer of Commemoration for the Fallen
Prrière de commémoration pour les morts

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 those who love them in death as in life,
Offering the depths of our grief and the sadness of our loss;

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.

The Lord's Prayer
Prière du Seigneur

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
Séparation de Dernière Bénédiction

God grant to the living, grace;
to the departed, rest;
to the Church, The King, the Commonwealth, and all people,
unity peace and concord;
and to us and all God's servants,
life everlasting;
and 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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