



A Burial Service for

***An Unknown South African Soldier
Killed during the Great War***

***14:00 hours Tuesday 18 September 2024
CWGC Wytschaete Military Cemetery, Belgium***

***Service conducted by the Reverend John Storey CF
Chaplain to 1st Battalion The Rifles***

Hill 80, in the village of Wytschaete, was the site of a windmill before the First World War. It became an entrenched German gun position following the village's capture in 1914. The location afforded observational advantage to the Germans as it overlooked the town of Ypres and formed part of the Messines Ridge.

The site remained in German hands until the Battle of Messines in June 1917 when it was recaptured. In 1918, Hill 80 was again taken by the Germans during the Battle of the Lys, before finally returning to Allied hands in September 1918.

In 2017 a crowd funded archaeological excavation took place at the former site of Hill 80 after the location had been acquired by developers for house building. This was known as Dig Hill 80.

The remains of this South African soldier were found during the Dig Hill 80 excavation. Today he will be laid to rest alongside the other British and Commonwealth soldiers found during the Dig Hill 80 excavation who were buried here on 18 October 2018.

Created after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the surrounding area, including the vicinity of Hill 80, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Wytschaete Military Cemetery contains almost 1,000 burials. The South African soldier being buried today, although unidentified, like two-thirds of the burials within this cemetery, can now be laid to rest alongside his comrades.

Call to Worship

'I am the resurrection and the life,' says the Lord. 'Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'

John 11:25,26

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All And also with you.

Bidding Prayer

My Brothers and Sisters, we meet in the name of Jesus Christ, who died and was raised to the glory of God the Father.

We remember before God our brother who we lay to rest in this place, a South African Soldier of the Great War known only unto God. Although we do not know his name, we give thanks for his life, his service, and his sacrifice; we commend him to God our merciful redeemer and judge, and commit his body to be buried.

God of all consolation,
your Son Jesus Christ was moved to tears
at the grave of Lazarus his friend.

We pray for all those who have grieved for the loss of this man whom they loved in life and mourned in death:
look with compassion on your children;
give to troubled hearts the light of hope
and strengthen us all by the gift of faith,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Scripture Reading

Revelation Chapter 21 v 1-8 (NRSV)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

'See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.'

And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Reading

We Shall Keep the Faith (1916)

By John Macdonald

Oh! you who sleep in Flanders Fields,
Sleep sweet - to rise anew!
We caught the torch you threw
And holding high, we keep the Faith
With All who died.

We cherish, too, the poppy red
That grows on fields where valour led;
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies,
But lends a lustre to the red
Of the flower that blooms above the dead
In Flanders Fields.

And now the Torch and Poppy Red
We wear in honour of our dead.
Fear not that ye have died for naught;
We'll teach the lesson that ye wrought
In Flanders Fields.

Gospel Reading

John Chapter 11 v 17-27 (NRSV)

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

AF Thanks be to God.

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 body 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.**

The Commendation

God our creator and redeemer, by your power Christ conquered death and returned to you in glory. Confident of your victory and claiming His promises, we entrust this Soldier whom you know into your keeping in the name of Jesus our Lord, who, though He died, is now alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

The Committal

We have entrusted our fallen comrade to God's mercy and now we commit his body to the ground: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, 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

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.

The Last Post

Silence

Reveille

Kobuna Epitaph

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

Laying of Wreaths

Prayers

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace
proceed: kindly, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love
of peace and guide with your pure and peaceable
wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the
earth that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward, till
the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

All Amen.

Most merciful and ever-living God,
we remember those whom you have gathered
from the storm of war into the peace of your presence;
grant that we, being faithful till death,
may receive with them the crown of life that never fades,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All. Amen.

Eternal Father, who did not spare your own beloved Son,
but gave him to die for the redemption of mankind;
hear us as we pray for those who have mourned him
whom we lay to rest here, and all those who continue to
mourn loved ones lost to violence and war.
May your love be known to those who weep;
may they be comforted in their loneliness and desolation;
may they be drawn ever into a closer fellowship with you
until they are reunited with those they have loved in the
boundless eternity that you promise to all your children;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

All. Amen.

Collect for the Commonwealth

O Lord God of our fathers, who in thy goodness hast led
this people hitherto by wondrous ways, who makest the
nations to praise thee, and knittest them together in the
bonds of peace: We beseech thee to pour thy blessing
on the Commonwealth of Nations over which thou hast
called thy servant Charles to be King. Grant that all, of
whichever race or tongue, may, in prosperity and peace,
be united in the bond of brotherhood, and in the
fellowship of the one Faith, so that we may be found a
people acceptable unto thee; through Jesus Christ our
Lord.

All. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

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

The Blessing

Support us, O Lord,
all the day long of this troublous life,
until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, the
busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over and our
work is done.

Then, Lord, in your mercy grant us a safe lodging,
a holy rest, and peace at the last;
and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy
Spirit, be upon you and those whom you love and
remember now and for evermore.

All Amen.



The Ministry of Defense, 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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