



A Rededication Service for

Second Lieutenant Eric Arthur Hopkins

1st Battalion The Bedfordshire Regiment

15.00 hours Thursday 23 October 2025
CWGC Bedford House Cemetery, Belgium

Service conducted by Reverend Joseph Roberts CF
Chaplain to 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment



Second Lieutenant Eric Arthur Hopkins.
9 September – 5 May 1915

Eric was the third of six children born to Arthur Hopkins, a Mercantile Clerk and church organist, and his wife Annie, in York. He was well educated, receiving his schooling at Archbishop Holgate's school in York and gaining a degree from Leeds University, where he was also chair of the Student Union.

By the time of the 1911 census, Eric had moved away from home to Grays in Essex, where he was an assistant schoolmaster at Bishop School. It was here that he was instrumental in forming an Officers Training Corps, an experience that set him up to join the army on the outbreak of war.

Eric originally joined the 3 Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment, arriving in France in October 1914. He was injured later that same month, and on his return to the front he transferred to the 3 Battalion. At the time of his death he was attached to the 1 Battalion, who were engaged in the struggle for Hill 60 – a small area of slightly raised ground which was a strategic advantage to whichever side held it.

On or around 8 September 1918 an unknown British Officer of the Bedfordshire Regiment was recovered near Hill 60 and reburied at Bedford House cemetery. The casualty's partial identification as an officer of the Bedfordshires was made from his boots, clothing and buttons. A further 2 soldiers were recovered from the same place at the same time, and three of these were identified as men of the 1st Bedfordshire who died on 5 May 1915.

Research has now revealed this unknown officer to be Second Lieutenant Eric Arthur Hopkins.

The Cemetery

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Bedford House Cemetery is situated in the grounds of Chateau Rosendaal, a former country house that was used by field ambulances and brigade headquarters during the war. It was gradually destroyed by shelling and the grounds became covered by small cemeteries or enclosures. The largest of these, Enclosure No. 4, was used between June 1918 to February 1919, and later enlarged after the Armistice when over three thousand graves were brought in from other burial grounds and the battlefields of the Ypres Salient. Among those buried here is Second Lieutenant Eric Hopkins.

Welcome

"Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
I once was lost, but now am found."

We have gathered together here in this hallowed place, to rededicate this grave as the final resting place of Second Lieutenant Eric Arthur Higgins. Already known and loved by our creator God, today we entrust him again into the arms of God's loving mercy and place a headstone with his name as a fitting memorial to his service and ultimate sacrifice. This 'Unknown Officer of The Bedfordshire Regiment' retains his identity and his humanity, as a beloved child of God.

As we partake in this time together to remember and give thanks for the life of Eric, we do so conscious of those who have fallen who still remain unknown to us. Those whose families and friends continue to not have the answer as to the whereabouts of their loved ones.

Therefore, in this rededication let us continue to honour not just Eric, but also all those who answered the call of their country, served with honour and gave their lives in the service of their nation. And though we may not know their names, we importantly commit ourselves to 'never forget'.

Opening Prayer

Father in heaven,
we thank you because you made us in your own image
and gave us gifts in body, mind and spirit.
We thank you now for Eric
and what he meant to us.
As we honour his memory,
make us more aware that you are the one
from whom comes every perfect gift,
including the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Amen

Scripture Reading: Psalm 27

*Read by Reverend Richard Clement,
Chaplain of St George's Memorial Church, 1995*

The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?

When the wicked advance against me
it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.

Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.

One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock.

Reading: Prayer Before an Attack by GA Studdert-Kennedy
Chosen by the family of Second Lieutenant Hopkins

Read by Helen Foxcote, a relative of 2Lt Hopkins

It ain't as I 'opes 'E'll keep me safe
While the other blokes goes down,

It ain't as I wants to leave this world
And wear an 'ero's crown,

It ain't for that as I says my prayers
'When I goes to the attack,

But I pray that whatever comes my way
I may never turn me back,

I leaves the matter o' life and death
To the Father who knows what's best,

And I prays that I still may play the man
Whether I turns east or west,

I'd sooner that I were east, ye know,
To Blighty and my gal Bee,

I'd sooner be there, wif the gold in 'er 'air,
And the skies be'ind all blue,

But still I pray I may do my bit,
And then, if I must turn west,

I'll be unashamed when my name is named,
And I'll find a soldier's rest.

Address:

The Reverend Joseph Roberts CF

The Act of Dedication

We rededicate this grave to Second Lieutenant Eric Arthur Hopkins in the name of Christ who died and rose again; as a symbol of our remembering, as a sign of our thanksgiving, a token of recognition and expression of our love, we look forward with confidence to our reunion with him and all those whose dwelling is forever with Christ in the everlasting kingdom of the Father.

The Exhortation

*Read by Lt Henry Addi,
The Royal Anglian Regiment*

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.

The Last Post

*Played by Drummer Jacob Smith
The Royal Anglian Regiment*

Silence

Reveille

Katima Epitaph

Read by Sgt John Maslen, The Royal Anglian Regiment

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

Laying of Wreaths

The Collect of The Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment

Read by Lt Henry Astill, The Royal Anglian Regiment

O Lord, God of battles, make us worthy of the soldiers who have fought under the Colours of the 16th Foot, and the glorious achievements of our regiment. Create within us a fervent desire for freedom, justice and truth; give us strength, perseverance and loyalty in all our undertakings, so that we may prove truly valiant; in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Amen.

Prayers

Prayers

Lord of all,
we praise you for Eric and for all who have entered into their rest,
reaching the promised land where you are seen face to face.
Give us grace to follow in their footsteps
as they followed in the way of your Son.
Thank you for the memory of those you have called to yourself:
by each memory, turn our hearts from things seen to things unseen,
and lead us till we come to the eternal rest
you have prepared for your people,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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

The Blessing

God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest; to the Church, The
King, the Commonwealth, and all mankind, peace and concord; and to
us and all his servants, life everlasting; and the blessing of God
Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, come down upon you and
remain with you always.
Amen.



The Ministry of Defence, through the Joint Casualty & 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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