



A Burial Service for

**Private Horace Frederick Cook
Private Frederick Martin
Private Thomas Redvers Whitaker
Private Courtney Darvill Hart
Private Joseph Turnley
Private Charles Richard Russell**

All of 2/4 Battalion Queens Royal West Surrey Regiment

**10:30 hours Wednesday 10 June 2026
CWGC Tyne Cot Cemetery, Belgium**

**Service conducted by Reverend (Major) Adèle Rees CF
Chaplain to 1st Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment**

The Recovery

In the summer of 2020 a piece of agricultural land near Gheluwe in Belgium was being excavated prior to the commencement of a construction project. The archaeologists expected to find Roman artefacts, which they did, but they also found evidence that the ground had more recently been disturbed – likely during the removal of ammunition and unexploded ordinance left behind after this area was fought over during the First World War. Soon, more traces of the war emerged, and on 27 August, human remains were discovered in a shell crater below the surface of the field. Over the course of the next week these remains were carefully recovered by a skilled team of archaeologists.

The remains themselves, and the artefacts found alongside them were meticulously recorded, and some initial research and anthropological work was carried out before the case was passed over to the Ministry of Defence in late 2024. It was determined that the remains of six men had been recovered from the trench, and that they had likely died as a result of a shell strike.

The artefacts found with the men indicated that they had served with the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, and that they had most likely died sometime after 1917. Remains of a tool bag containing kit for repairing a Lewis Gun indicated that they might have been a gun crew.

The Research & Identification

Study of war diaries, trench maps, casualty lists and previous recovery of human remains in this area revealed that the six men had probably died in late September or October 1918 – and that at the time, several different battalions of the Queen's were in the general area. Only three battalions still had men missing from that period though – 2/4 Battalion, 10 Battalion and 11 Battalion.

The war diaries for these battalions were scoured, and in diary for 2/4 Battalion on 6 October recorded:

In the early hours of the morning...the battalion came under heavy trench mortar fire. This resulted in a direct hit on a Lewis Gun team of 6 who were occupying a small trench, killing the whole team and blowing up the gun.

Puzzlingly there were no recorded deaths on 6 October on the CWGC Casualty database, though four men of 2/4 Battalion were recorded as missing, assumed killed on 8 October. Further research revealed the names of a further two men who had died on 8 October, but whose dates of death were mis-recorded in the CWGC list – making a total of 6 missing men to investigate. Family trees were built for each of these men, and suitable candidates for DNA matching were identified and contacted.

In this way it was possible to prove the identities of the six men found in Gheluwe as Private Horace Frederick Cook, Private Frederick Martin, Private Thomas Redvers Whitaker, Private Courtney Darvill Hart, Private Joseph Turnley and Private Charles Richard Russell.

Today, some 108 years after their deaths, they receive the dignified burial they were denied all those years ago, in the presence of their descendants and with the support of their military family.

Private Horace Frederick Cook
1899 – 8 October 1918

Horace was born in 1899 in Matching, Essex, to Frederick and Jane Cook. He had one older sister called Doris. Horace's father was a horseman on a nearby farm, and both he, and Horace's mother, came from long lines of agricultural workers.

Private Frederick Martin
1895 – 8 October 1918

Frederick was born in Wandsworth in 1895 – one of nine children born to Henry Martin and his two wives Barbara Lewis and Ada Wallage. Henry was a 'Carman', a general contractor and dustman and by 1911 Frederick was out at work too – a fishmonger's errand boy. Several of Frederick's brothers also saw service in the war. Tragically his brother Albert died just three days after him on 11 October 1918, at Terhand - a few kilometres north of where Frederick died – Albert is named on the Tyne Cot Memorial just as his brother was.

Private Charles Richard Russell
23 October 1898 – 8 October 1918

Charles was born in 1898 in Rotherhithe, the son of Catherine Russell. Sadly Charles' father, Eugene Russell, had died 6 months before his son was born. Charles had five older brothers – William, Alfred, Frederick, Percy and Walter. All six brothers saw service in the war, and unfortunately William and Alfred also died – Alfred died in January 1917 and is buried at Laventie Military Cemetery in France, whilst William died in July 1917 and is named on the Nieuport Memorial in Belgium.

Charles originally enlisted with the Hertfordshire Yeomanry under number 20553, before being transferred to the Queens Royal West Surreys prior to going overseas.



Private Thomas Redvers Whitaker
January 1900 – 8 October 1918

Thomas was born in 1900 in Bradford, the son of William and Edith Whitaker. He had one younger brother, Walter. Thomas and Walter's father was a grocer's assistant. On the 1901 census William is living with his maternal grandparents at 875 Bolton Road, Bradford – his parents were living at no. 132-134 Bolton Road. By the 1911 census Thomas and Walter were living with both their parents, plus Edith's father and brother as well as one of William's sisters. At some point between 1911 and his enlistment in the army Thomas moved to Newmarket where he became a groom at the stables. He enlisted at Ipswich.



Private Courtney Darvill Hart
January 1900 – 8 October 1918

Courtney – known at home as Jim – was born in 1900 in Northampton, the son of William and Sarah Hart. He had four older sisters – Phyllis, Gladys, Katherine and Grace, and their father was employed in the leather trade. Courtney was educated at Eaglehurst College, and whilst there he had joined the OTC for the Royal Flying Corps. Unfortunately, Courtney did not pass the final medical examination for the RFC and so he transferred to the Queens Royal West Surrey Regiment instead. He was described as a first-class shot and Lewis Gunner, and prior to his army service he had been a Scout on the East Coast of England. He had been in France for around 2 months at the time of his death.

Private Joseph Turnley
1899 – 8 October 1918

Joseph Turnley was born in Wales, the son of Joseph and Franchetta (Fanny) Turnley. He had one older brother, George. Joseph & George's father was a commercial traveller selling starch and blue, as well as black lead, and by the time of the 1901 census the family were living in Bristol. Joseph enlisted in Bristol, having some early training with the Hertfordshire Yeomanry Dragoons, before being transferred to the 2/4 Queens Royal West Surrey Regiment.

Welcome

It is our privilege to gather today and remember these bold young men. Though we may not have known them they are forever bound to us, be that by blood relation or service given. In this act of burial we give to them the honour their sacrifice deserves.

Opening Prayer

Father of all mercies:
Grant that our remembrance this day
May be consecrated for practical service
That the witness of these lives given
May quicken our souls to service
that the world be made better
For our children's children
Amen

Reading: Thoughts of Home by Joe Whitaker

Read by Joe Whitaker, Thomas Redvers Whitaker's great-great-nephew

Thoughts of home

He lies awake, a sleepless night,
The rain, it drives and chills.
In his wandering mind, the din of war
Becomes the Bradford mills.

Instead of weary soldiers now,
He sees his oldest friend,
His brother, clean and bright with youth,
With a future to defend.

And when, in bitter nights, our boy
Feels furthest from the light,
He travels in a reverie
To the place that feels most right.

The fire lights up his Bradford home,
Illuminates her face
And he longs to be no more than just
A boy in his mother's embrace.

Now comforted by thoughts of home,
At peace in foreign hills,
He finally drifts away to sleep,
His mind on Bradford mills.

Scripture Reading: Wisdom Ch 3 vs. 1-4

Read by Colonel Nick Thom, Defence Attache to Belgium & Luxembourg

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
and no torment will ever touch them.

In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,
and their departure was thought to be an affliction,
and their going from us to be their destruction;
but they are at peace.

For though in the sight of men they were punished,
their hope is full of immortality.

Reading: Farewell by Sir Henry Newbolt

Chosen on behalf of the families

Read by Private Joshua Duplock, 1st Bn Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

Mother, with unbowed head
Hear thou across the sea
The farewell of the dead,
The dead who died for thee.
Greet them again with tender words and grave,
For saving thee, themselves they could not save.

To keep the house unharmed
Their fathers built so fair,
Deeming endurance armed
Better than brute despair,
They found the secret of the word that saith,
'Service is sweet, for all true life is death.'

So greet thou well thy dead
Across the homeless sea,
And be thou comforted
Because they died for thee.
Far off they served, but now their deed is done
For evermore their life and thine are one.

The Reverend Adèle Rees CF

Eternal God, as we prepare to bury these faithful servants of King and country, bless this grave as a place of remembrance and thanksgiving, for their service and sacrifice, where their names are written for all ages in the palm of your hand. May this grave and this cemetery, always be a place of rest and peace.

The Commendation and Committal

Private Horace Frederick Cook
Private Frederick Martin
Private Thomas Redvers Whitaker
Private Courtney Darvill Hart
Private Joseph Turnley
Private Charles Richard Russell

and

We therefore commit their earthly remains
to this hallowed ground,
reunited with comrades
who also paid the ultimate cost of sacrifice,
earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust...

The Exhortation

Read by Colonel Mark Nooney, The Princess of Wales's Royal 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.

Last Post

Played by LCpl James Adcock, The Band & Bugles of The Rifles

Silence

Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

Read by Private Jone Wainile, The Princess of Wales's Royal 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 Queens Royal Surrey Regiment

Read by Dee Hutchison,

Secretary, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association

O Lamb of God, in whom we behold the Savior of the world
in whom we triumph even in adversities, keep, we pray Thee,
Thy servants of the Queen's Royal (West Surreys) Regiment ever
mindful in all duty by sea and by land of the valour of old unto death,
who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost,
one God world without end.

Amen.

Prayers

Let us offer our thanksgivings to Almighty God,
for the victory achieved on land, at sea, and in the air,
and for the liberation of so many
from the cruelty of occupation and oppression.

Let us give thanks for the heroism and courage of those
who served in the armed services;
who worked on the home front in civil defence,
hospitals and relief agencies;
in factories, shops and farms.

And let us pray for those who endured captivity, torture, or death that
others might live.

Amen

Almighty God,
from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed:
kindle, 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.

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 humanity,
peace and unity;
and to us and all his servants, life everlasting.

Go out into the world in peace: be brave and strong;
hold fast to what is good; do not repay evil with evil;
encourage the discouraged, support the weak,
help those who suffer, honour everyone,
and love and serve the Lord with joy,
trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with 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.

© Crown Copyright/JCCC – 2026