



A Burial Service for

Corporal Alfred James Marrant

Private Henry Joseph Rycraft

Two Unknown Soldiers

11th Battalion The Essex Regiment

Private Arthur Albert Grayston

Private Lewis Ephraim Lambert

8th Battalion The Bedfordshire Regiment

and

Two Unknown Soldiers of Unknown Regiments

10:30 hours on Wednesday 16 July 2025

CWGC Loos British Cemetery Extension, France

Service conducted by the Reverend Carl Stokes CF

Chaplain to Blandford Garrison

Déroulement de la cérémonie présidé par

le Révérend Carl Stokes CF

Corporal Alfred James Marrant



Corporal Alfred James Marrant was born in Hutton, near Brentwood, Essex, in 1889. He was one of eight children born to Joseph Marrant and his wife Sarah. Before enlisting into the Army he worked as a horseman on a farm. Alfred joined The Essex Regiment and was posted to 9th Battalion. He arrived on the Western Front on 30 May 1915. The then Private Marrant was wounded in the autumn of 1915. It is most likely that it was after this that he transferred to 11th Battalion The Essex Regiment. Corporal Marrant was killed on 22 April 1917. He was 27 years old. His elder brother Corporal Charles Alfred Marrant was killed on 10 September 1914 whilst serving with 4th Battalion The Royal Fusiliers. He is still missing and is commemorated on La Ferté-sous-Jouarre Memorial.

Corporal Alfred James Marrant est né à Hutton, près de Brentwood, dans l'Essex, en 1889. Il était un des huit enfants nés à Joseph Marrant et de sa femme Sarah. Avant de s'engager dans l'armée, il travaillait comme cavalier dans une ferme. Alfred s'est engagé dans l'Essex Regiment et a été affecté au 9^e bataillon. Il est arrivé sur le front occidental le 30 mai 1915. Il a été blessé à l'automne 1915. Il est très probable que c'est après cela qu'il a été transféré au 11^e Bataillon du Essex Regiment. Lance Corporal Marrant a été tué le 22 avril 1917. Il avait 27 ans. Son frère aîné, Corporal Charles Alfred Marrant, a été tué le 10 septembre 1914 alors qu'il servait dans le 4^e Bataillon du Royal Fusiliers. Il est toujours porté disparu et est commémoré au monument commémoratif des disparus à La Ferté-sous-Jouarre.

Private Henry Joseph Rycraft

Private Henry Joseph Rycraft was born in 1895 in Little Bentley, near Tendring, Essex. He was one of four children born to Frederick Rycraft and his wife Elizabeth. Before enlisting into the Army he worked as a farm labourer. Private Rycraft arrived on the Western Front on 30 August 1915. He was killed in action on 22 April 1917 whilst serving with 11th Battalion The Essex Regiment. He was 22 years old.

Private Henry Joseph Rycraft est né en 1895 à Little Bentley, près de Tendring, dans l'Essex. Il est l'un des quatre enfants nés à Frederick Rycraft et de sa femme Elizabeth. Avant de s'engager dans l'armée, il travaillait comme ouvrier agricole. Private Rycraft est arrivé sur le front occidental le 30 août 1915. Il a été tué au combat le 22 avril 1917 alors qu'il servait dans le 11^e Bataillon du Essex Regiment. Il avait 22 ans.

Private Arthur Albert Grayston

Private Arthur Albert Grayston was born in Ipswich, Suffolk, in 1889. He was one of four children born to Thomas Daniel Grayston and his wife Eliza. Before enlisting into the Army he worked as a dock labourer. In 1911, Arthur married Florence Caroline Webster. The couple had three children, Florence born in 1912, Arthur Albert born in 1913 and Jessie born in 1915. Private Grayston was killed in action on 19 April 1917 whilst serving with 8th Battalion The Bedfordshire Regiment. He was 28 years old. His younger brother, Private Ernest Daniel Grayston, was killed on 24 April 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres, whilst serving with 1st Battalion The Suffolk Regiment and is commemorated on the Menin Gate.

Private Arthur Albert Grayston est né à Ipswich, dans le Suffolk, en 1889. Il est l'un des quatre enfants nés à Thomas Daniel Grayston et de sa femme Eliza. Avant de s'engager dans l'armée, il travaillait comme docker. En 1911, Arthur a épousé Florence Caroline Webster. Le couple a eu trois enfants, Florence née en 1912, Arthur Albert né en 1913 et Jessie née en 1915. Private Grayston a été tué au combat le 19 avril 1917 alors qu'il servait dans le 8^e Bataillon du Bedfordshire Regiment. Il avait 28 ans. Son frère cadet, Private Ernest Daniel Grayston, a été tué le 24 avril 1915 au cours de la deuxième bataille d'Ypres, alors qu'il servait dans le 1^{er} Bataillon du Suffolk Regiment, et il est commémoré sur le Menin Gate.

Private Lewis Ephraim Lambert

Private Lewis Ephraim Lambert was born in 1897 in Wootton, Bedfordshire. He was one of four sons born to George William Lambert and his wife Caroline. Before enlisting into the Army he worked as a farm labourer. Private Lambert was killed in action on 19 April 1917 whilst serving with 8th Battalion The Bedfordshire Regiment. He was 19 years old.

Private Lewis Ephraim Lambert est né en 1897 à Wootton, dans le Bedfordshire. Il est l'un des quatre fils nés à George William Lambert et de sa femme Caroline. Avant de s'engager dans l'armée, il travaillait comme ouvrier agricole. Private Lambert a été tué au combat le 19 avril 1917 alors qu'il servait dans le 8^e Bataillon du Bedfordshire Regiment. Il avait 19 ans.

The Battle of Arras

The Battle of Arras commenced on 9 April 1917. Following the successful capture of the high ground at Vimy Ridge by Canadian forces, the Douai Plain was open to Allied forces. On the morning of 18 April 1917, 8th Battalion The Bedfordshire Regiment was located south of Loos-en-Gohelle. The battalion sent out patrols and took up positions in trenches around Netley Alley and Novel Alley. At 06:30 hours on 19 April the enemy shelled the area. 8th Battalion The Bedfordshire Regiment reported that they had reached the junction of Novel Alley and Netley Alley. After three attempts their right company had not been able to take the strong point south of the railway. At 12:25 hours they were positioned along Nero Trench with a strong point protecting their flank and along Netley Alley. The battalion was relieved that night. It was during the fighting on 19 April 1917 that Privates Grayston and Lambert were killed.

On 22 April 1917, 11th Battalion The Essex Regiment attacked in the same location. The assaulting companies left the front line in Novel Alley, assaulting on a front of three hundred and

fifty yards. C Company which was in reserve, moved up into Novel Alley as B and D Companies moved off and A Company remained in reserve. B Company reached its objective but encountered opposition. D Company also reached its objective and attacked along Nash Alley. Severe fighting followed and when their supply of bombs had run out, they were forced to retire. A platoon from C Company and 3 platoons of A Company were brought into action. At 16:00 hours a heavy enemy bombardment of the area commenced causing severe casualties amounting to approximately ten Officers and two hundred and fifty other ranks. It was during this action that Corporal Marrant, Private Rycraft, and most likely these four unknown soldiers were killed.

The remains of all of these men were discovered during work to clear ordnance from the site where a new hospital was to be constructed on the edge of Lens. Although the identities of some of these men have been established using artefacts found with their remains, for others there was not enough evidence to assist in identifying them. DNA testing was used to confirm the identities of Corporal Marrant, Private Rycraft, Private Grayston and Private Lambert. As they had been missing, all four men were previously commemorated on the Loos Memorial. Today we will remember them and their remains will be laid to rest alongside their unknown comrades.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Loos British Cemetery Extension was opened by H.R.H. The Princess Royal on 26 September 2024, and is only the second new cemetery established by the CWGC since the work to construct the Second World War cemeteries and memorials was completed. It has been designed to be in keeping with the Commission's First World War cemeteries in France. It provides a fitting place of burial for those Commonwealth casualties still being recovered today from the former battlefields across France, including the eight casualties being buried here today

La bataille d'Arras

La bataille d'Arras commence le 9 avril 1917. Après la capture réussie des hauteurs de la crête de Vimy par les forces canadiennes, la plaine de Douai est ouverte aux forces alliées. Le matin du 18 avril 1917, le 8^e Bataillon du Bedfordshire Regiment se trouve au sud de Loos-en-Gohelle. Le bataillon envoie des patrouilles et a priront position dans des tranchées autour de Netley Alley et Novel Alley. À 06:30 heures le 19 avril, l'ennemi bombarda la zone. Le 8^e Bataillon du Bedfordshire Regiment rapporte qu'il a atteint la jonction entre Novel Alley et Netley Alley. Après trois tentatives, leur compagnie de droite n'avait pas réussi à prendre le point fort au sud de la voie ferrée. À 12:25 heures, ils sont positionnés le long de la tranchée Nero avec un point d'appui protégeant leur flanc et le long de Netley Alley. Le bataillon fut relevé cette nuit-là. C'est au cours des combats du 19 avril 1917 que les soldats Grayston et Lambert furent tués.

Le 22 avril 1917, le 11^e Bataillon du Essex Regiment attaqua au même endroit. Les compagnies d'assaut quittèrent la ligne de front dans Novel Alley, attaquant sur un front de trois cent cinquante yards. C Company, qui était en réserve, avança dans Novel Alley tandis que B et D Companies s'éloignaient et que la A Company restait en réserve. B Company atteint son objectif mais rencontre de l'opposition. La D Company atteint également son objectif et attaque le long de Nash Alley. De violents combats s'ensuivirent et, une fois leur réserve de bombes épuisée, ils furent contraints de se retirer. Une section de C Compnay et trois sections de A Company furent mises à contribution. À 16:00 heures, un bombardement ennemi intense de la zone commença, causant des pertes sévères d'environ dix officiers et deux cent cinquante autres soldats. C'est au cours de cette action que Corporal Marrant, Private Rycraft et ces quatre soldats inconnus ont été tués. Les restes de tous ces hommes ont été découvertes lors de travaux d'enlèvement de munitions sur le site où un nouvel

hôpital devait être construit à la périphérie de Lens. Bien que l'identité de certains de ces hommes ait été établie grâce aux objets trouvés avec leurs restes, pour d'autres, il n'y avait pas suffisamment de preuves pour aider à les identifier. Des tests ADN ont permis de confirmer l'identité du Corporal Marrant, du Private Rycraft, Private Grayston et Private Lambert. Comme ils étaient portés disparus, ces quatre hommes étaient déjà commémorés au monument commémoratif des disparus à Loos. Aujourd'hui, nous nous souviendrons d'eux et ils seront enterrés aux côtés de leurs camarades inconnus.

Call to Worship

Appel à Adoration

We have gathered here to inter the mortal remains of Corporal Alfred James Marrant and Private Joseph Rycraft of 11th Battalion The Essex Regiment, Private Arthur Albert Grayston and Private Lewis Ephraim Lambert of 8th Battalion The Bedfordshire Regiment, and four soldiers known only to God, all of whom gave their lives in the Battle of Arras in April 1917.

Today we accord these men the dignity and respect that they are due and commend them to the mercy and grace of God our redeemer and judge, and in the hope of the resurrection and life given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us.

All May the Peace of the Lord be always with you,
and also with you.

Bidding Prayer

Prière

We meet in the presence of God.

To commit ourselves to work in penitence and faith for reconciliation between the nations, that all people may live together, in freedom, justice and peace.

We come to pray for all who in bereavement, disability and pain continue to suffer the consequences of fighting and terror.

We come to remember with thanksgiving and sorrow those laid before us, and all whose lives, in conflicts past and present, have been given and taken away.

All **Amen.**

Scripture Reading

Lecture des Écritures Saintes

Read by a Representative of The British Embassy Paris

Ecclesiasticus Chapter 44 v 1, 8-15 (RSVCE)

Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers in their generations. There are some of them who have left a name, so that men declare their praise. And there are some who have no memorial, who have perished as though they had not lived; they have become as though they had not been born, and so have their children after them. But these were men of mercy, whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten; their prosperity will remain with their descendants, and their inheritance to their children's children. Their descendants stand by the covenants, their children also, for their sake. Their posterity will continue forever, and their glory will not be blotted out. Their bodies were buried in peace, and their name lives to all generations.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Reading

Lecture

Read by Captain Harry Di-Lieto
2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment

Memorial Hymn

By Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley

From out the deeps to Thee we cry
Our Hope and Refuge sure,
Thy comfort to our souls supply
And teach us to endure.

O Heavenly Father, to Thy care
We trust our sons who died
That all the world may Freedom share
And Right not Might abide.

Grant us for those brave lives laid down
In pure self-sacrifice,
That each may wear the victor's crown
In peaceful Paradise.

Oh bid us, as we mourn their loss,
Be strengthened by their deed
To bear in turn our bitter cross,
For this our country's need.

God of the Living, Grant us grace
To keep our hearts in peace,
Till we behold them face to face
Who died that war might cease.

Gospel Reading

Lecture de l'Évangile

Read by Sergeant Paul Meehan

2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment

John Chapter 15 v 12-15 (ESV)

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Address

Allocution

The Committal

L'Enterrement

Almighty God we commit unto you the souls of our brothers departed, Corporal Alfred James Marrant, Private Henry Joseph Rycraft, Private Arthur Albert Grayston, Private Lewis Ephraim Lambert, and these four souls whose names are thus, known only unto you. We commit their remains to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the resurrection unto eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in him shall be changed, and made like unto his own glorious body; according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

The Exhortation

L'Éxhortation

Read by Sergeant Paul Meehan

2nd Battalion 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.

All **We will remember them.**

The Last Post

Sonnerie aux Morts

Played by Lance Corporal April Farthing

The Band of The Royal Yorkshire Regiment

Silence

Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

L'Épitaphe de Kohima

Read by a Soldier of the Bearer Party

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

Laying of Wreaths

Dépôts des Gerbes

Prayers

Prières

Eternal God, in your wisdom and grace you have given us freedom through the lives of your departed servants. And so today, in this place of remembrance, surrounded by the witness of those who went before us, We thank you for their courage and exploit. We recognise that each of these men's lives was precious in your sight, as are the souls of all gathered here.

We ask that their memory will inspire each of us, to live our lives with purpose and intent. As their lives continue to speak to us of selfless commitment for the sake of others, enable us to live virtuous lives, for their sake and memory.

All **Amen.**

Collect of The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment

Récitation du Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment

Read by Captain Harry Di-Lieto

2nd Battalion 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.

All **Amen.**

Collect of The Essex Regiment

Récitation du Essex Regiment

Read by Captain Harry Di-Lieto

2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment

O Lord, our stony rock and our defence, hear us, we pray thee, thy servants of The Essex Regiment, and ever bear us as on eagles' wings in the faith and truth of him who is our shield and buckler, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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:

**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

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,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be among you all and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Go forth with hope and seek for peace in the service of
God.

In the name of Christ.

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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