



A Rededication Service for

**Second Lieutenant Joseph Bryson MC
1st Battalion The Royal Irish Fusiliers**

And

**Second Lieutenant William Cunningham
4th Battalion The Royal Irish Fusiliers**

**11:15 hours on Wednesday 10 July 2024
CWGC Dadizeele New British Cemetery, Belgium**

**Service conducted by The Reverend Jason Clarke MBE CF
Chaplain to 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment**

Second Lieutenant Joseph Bryson MC

Second Lieutenant Joseph Bryson MC was born on 9 June 1888 in Newtowngore, County Leitrim, Ireland. He was one of 5 children born to Francis William Bryson and his wife Fanny. He enlisted into 8th (King's Royal Irish) Hussars in 1907.

At the outbreak of the First World War the regiment was located in Ambala in India, forming part of the Ambala Cavalry Brigade. The brigade arrived on the Western Front on 11 November 1914. The regiment fought on the Western Front for the rest of the war notably at Givenchy, Ypres, the Somme and around Saint Quentin. Their last mounted charge was made in 1917. The then Serjeant Bryson was Mentioned in Despatches in the London Gazette of 7 December 1917. The London Gazette of 15 April 1918 records that Serjeant Bryson was also awarded the Belgian Croix de Guerre.

On 26 June 1918, Joseph was Commissioned into 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Fusiliers and he was attached to 9th (North Irish Horse) Battalion. Second Lieutenant Bryson was awarded the Military Cross on 25 September 1918 for his actions on 4 September 1918, when the battalion had seen fighting at Wulverghem. The citation for the award, which was published in the London Gazette of 2 December 1918, reads:

'This Officer led his platoon with great dash and gallantry over open ground, subjected to heavy machine gun fire, capturing one gun and its crew. He then forced a defensive flank with his platoon, maintaining his position, under withering machine gun fire, both frontal and enfilade, until it became necessary to withdraw.'

The War Diaries of 9th Battalion The Royal Irish Fusiliers show that on 4 October 1918 they relieved 9th Battalion The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers on Hill 41 south of Dadizele. On 6 October the battalion was still in the same location and it is recorded

that Second Lieutenant Bryson, aged 30, was killed by a shell whilst on patrol reconnoitring Goldflake Farm. His body had to be left where he had fallen as it was behind enemy lines. He was recovered 7 days later and buried.

Second Lieutenant Bryson's elder brother, Trooper Thomas Bryson, of The North Irish Horse, was killed on 21 August 1918 and is buried in Queens Cemetery, Bucquoy, France.

Second Lieutenant William Cunningham

Second Lieutenant William Cunningham was born on 8 February 1891 in Selkirk, Scotland. He was the eldest of 4 children born to James Cunningham and his wife Alexandrina. William enlisted into The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Following the outbreak of the First World War, he arrived on the Western Front on 15 December 1914. The then Serjeant Cunningham was wounded on the Somme in November 1916 whilst serving as with 1/7th Battalion. He was Commissioned into 4th Battalion The Royal Irish Fusiliers in 1918 and was attached to 1st Battalion.

The War Diaries of 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Fusiliers show that at 06:15 hours on 1 October 1918 they attacked Hill 41. Heavy resistance was met from machine gun and trench mortar fire but Twig Farm was captured and a line was established north and south of that location. They suffered very heavy casualties.

At 11:30 hours the enemy attempted to counterattack but this was fought off. The battalion consolidated their positions and at 18:40 hours the enemy counterattacked again in an attempt to retake Twig Farm. After severe fighting the counterattack was fought off by C Company but at the cost of many further casualties. Second Lieutenant Cunningham, aged 27, was listed as killed that day.

After the war the remains of Second Lieutenant Bryson and Second Lieutenant Cunningham were recovered and buried next to each other in Dadizeele New British Cemetery as unknown second lieutenants. One was recorded as having had 2 medal ribbons on him. As they were missing they were commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial. However, new research has shown that these are in fact the graves of Second Lieutenant Bryson and Second Lieutenant Cunningham. The headstones have now been changed to reflect this. Today we will remember Second Lieutenant Bryson and Second Lieutenant Cunningham and their graves will be rededicated.

The village of Dadizeele, which lay behind German lines for most of the war, was captured by British forces in late September 1918. It wasn't until after the armistice that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Dadizeele New British Cemetery was established. The graves, including the previously unidentified bodies of Second Lieutenant Bryson and Second Lieutenant Cunningham, were brought in from the surrounding burial grounds and battlefields. There are now over 1000 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in this cemetery.

Call to Worship

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

St John 11 v 25-26

We have come to this place to recognise and commend to God the mortal remains of our brothers in arms Second Lieutenant Joseph Bryson MC, of 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Fusiliers, who gave his life in battle at Hill 41 on 6 October 1918 and Second Lieutenant William Cunningham of 4th Battalion The Royal Irish Fusiliers, who gave his life at Hill 41 on 1 October 1918.

Today we accord Joseph and William 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 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

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, together, live 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 Second Lieutenant Joseph Bryson MC and Second Lieutenant William Cunningham, and all whose lives, in World Wars and conflicts, past and present, have been given and taken away.

All **Amen.**

Gospel Reading

Read by an Embassy Representative

John Chapter 14 v 1-6 (NRSV)

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places.

If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

And you know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?'

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Scripture Reading

Read by Roy Stratton

Great Nephew of Second Lieutenant Bryson

Psalm 23 (KJV)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Reading

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan
1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

Do Not Stand At My Grave And Weep

By Mary Elizabeth Frye

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there. I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.

I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there. I did not die.

Address

The Act of Dedication

So let us now bless and dedicate these graves as the final resting places of the mortal remains of Second Lieutenant Joseph Bryson MC and Second Lieutenant William Cunningham.

O God, whose Son Jesus Christ was laid in a tomb:
Bless and dedicate, we pray, these graves as the place where the bodies of your servants Joseph and William may rest in peace, in the knowledge that they now abide in your glory through the merits of your Son, who is the resurrection and the life; who died and is alive and reigns with you now and for ever.

The Exhortation

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan
1st Battalion The Royal Irish 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

Played by Lance Corporal Barry Norton
1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

Silence**The Reveille****Oft in the Stilly Night**

Played by Pipe Major William Mitchell
1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

Kohima Epitaph

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan
1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

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

Laying of Wreaths

Prayers

Eternal God, in your wisdom and grace you have given us freedom through the lives of your departed servants. We thank you for the lives of Second Lieutenant Joseph Bryson MC and Second Lieutenant William Cunningham and for those who loved them. We thank you for your goodness and mercy that followed them all the days of their lives and their ultimate faithfulness to the tasks to which you had called them.

May God give peace:

All **God give peace.**

We pray for all who have died or suffer as a result of conflict. Those whose lives are disfigured by war or terror. For service men and women, for civilians, for those held captive, each one remembered by and known to God.

May God give peace:

All **God give peace.**

We pray for peace-makers and peace-keepers; those who seek to keep this world secure and free; for all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership, political, military and religious; asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve in the search for reconciliation and peace.

May God give peace:

All **God give peace.**

Finally, we pray for all members of the armed forces who are in danger this day, remembering family, friends and all who pray for their safe return.

May God give peace:

All **God give peace.**

Amen.

The Collect of The Royal Irish Fusiliers

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan
1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

O god, who crownest man with loving kindness, and makest him young and lusty as an eagle, may it please thee to give boldness to us, The Royal Irish Fusiliers, so in unity with our brethren to prepare and make ready thy way by bearing witness for thee, that men may take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Saviour.

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,
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 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.**



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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