



**A Rededication Service for**

**Company Quartermaster Serjeant John Doherty MM  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers**

**10:30 hours on Tuesday 9 July 2024  
CWGC Savy British Cemetery, France**

**Service conducted by The Reverend Jason Clarke MBE CF  
Chaplain to 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment  
Déroulement de la Cérémonie présidé par  
le Révérend Jason Clarke MBE CF**

Company Quartermaster Serjeant John Doherty MM



Company Quartermaster Serjeant John Doherty MM was born on 8 February 1882 in Letterkenny, County Donegal, Ireland. He was the eldest of 9 children born to Maurice Doherty and his wife Elizabeth. John enlisted into The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and served in South Africa.

After the outbreak of the First World War, John was initially sent to the Western Front, arriving on 23 August 1914 with 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. In 1915 he was involved in the Gallipoli Campaign. Having returned to the Western Front, he was later awarded the Military Medal which was published in the London Gazette of 18 July 1917. On 13 March 1918, John was appointed the acting Company Quartermaster Serjeant to D Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

Just 8 days later, on the morning of 21 March 1918, the German Army launched Operation Michael, the first phase of its Spring Offensive. The War Diaries of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers show that they were located at Le Hamel when the attack commenced. They were ordered up to the battle area and were in position by 06:00 hours. They remained in these positions under heavy shellfire until at 15:00 hours, the enemy was seen advancing towards them. However, the enemy did not attack that day. At about 04:00 hours on 22 March the shelling recommenced and at 11:00 hours the enemy was seen concentrating in the dead ground in front of their line and in the village of Fontaine-les-Clercs.

At 13:00 hours A Company were heavily attacked and were forced back having suffered heavy casualties. At 13:30 hours the line of B Company was breached. A and B Companies retired to the line of C Company who were ordered to hold out as long as possible. The enemy attacked and again breached the line suffering heavy casualties themselves. At 14:30 hours the battalion was ordered to withdraw to Ricardo Redoubt which was being held by D Company. The enemy surrounded

the redoubt and heavy fighting ensued. Around 40 men were able to cut their way through the enemy. They were all that remained of the battalion. In addition to Officer casualties, 531 men were missing by the end of the day. Company Quartermaster Serjeant Doherty, aged 36, was amongst the missing.

In total 4 of the Doherty brothers served with The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers during the First World War, with 3 of them making the ultimate sacrifice. Lance Corporal Daniel Doherty was killed on 1 July 1916 whilst serving with 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial. Corporal James Doherty was killed on 16 August 1917 whilst serving with 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion and attached 109<sup>th</sup> Trench Mortar Battery and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

After the war, the remains of Company Quartermaster Serjeant Doherty were recovered and buried in Savy British Cemetery as an unknown CQMS. As he was missing, Company Quartermaster Serjeant Doherty was commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial. However, new research has shown that this is in fact his grave and the headstone has now been changed to reflect this. Today we will remember Company Quartermaster Serjeant Doherty and his grave will be rededicated.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Savy British Cemetery was created in 1919 when graves were concentrated from the surrounding battlefields and several smaller cemeteries. More than half of the 850 Commonwealth First World War burials in the cemetery are unnamed. Until recently, this included the grave of Company Quartermaster Serjeant John Doherty MM, which has now been identified.

Company Quartermaster Serjeant John Doherty MM est né le 8 février, 1882 à Letterkenny, dans Donegal, en Irlande. Il été l'ainé des 9 enfants de Maurice Doherty et de sa femme Elizabeth. John s'est engagé au Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers et a servi en Afrique du Sud.

Après le début de la Première Guerre mondiale, John a d'abord été envoyé sur le front occidental, arrivant le 23 août, 1914 avec le 2<sup>e</sup> Bataillon du Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. En 1915, il a participé à la campagne de Gallipoli. De retour sur le front occidental, il a reçu le Military Medal, publiée dans la London Gazette du 18 juillet, 1917. Le 13 mars, 1918, John a été nommé Company Quartermaster Serjeant de D Company de 1<sup>er</sup> Bataillon du Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

8 jours plus tard, le matin du 21 mars, 1918, l'armée allemande lance l'opération Michael, la première phase de son offensive de printemps. Les journaux de guerre du 1<sup>er</sup> Bataillon du Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers montrent qu'ils se trouvaient à Le Hamel lorsque l'attaque a commencé. Ils reçurent l'ordre de se rendre sur la zone de combat et furent en position à 06 :00 heures. Ils restèrent dans ces positions sous un feu nourri d'obus jusqu'à 15 :00 heures, quand l'ennemi soit vu en train d'avancer vers eux. L'ennemi n'attaqua pas ce jour-là. Le 22 mars, vers 04 :00 heures, le bombardement reprit et à 11 :00 heures, on vit l'ennemi se concentrer dans le terrain mort devant leur ligne et dans le village de Fontaine-les-Clercs.

À 13 :00 heures, A Company a été lourdement attaquée et contrainte de reculer après avoir subi de lourdes pertes. À 13 :30 heures, la ligne de B Company est percée. A et B Companies été retirées vers la ligne de C Company qui a reçu l'ordre de tenir aussi longtemps que possible. L'ennemi attaque et ouvre une nouvelle brèche dans la ligne, subissant lui-même de lourdes pertes. À 14 :30 heures, le bataillon reçoit l'ordre de se replier sur la redoute Ricardo, tenue par D Company. L'ennemi encercle la redoute et de violents combats

s'ensuivent. Une quarantaine d'hommes ont réussi à se frayer un chemin à travers l'ennemi. C'était tout ce qui restait du bataillon. En plus des pertes parmi les officiers, 531 hommes étaient portés disparus à la fin de la journée. Company Quartermaster Serjeant Doherty, âgé de 36 ans, figurait parmi les disparus.

Au total, 4 des frères Doherty ont servi au Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers pendant la Première Guerre mondiale, et 3 d'entre eux ont fait le sacrifice ultime. Corporal Daniel Doherty a été tué le 1 juillet, 1916 alors qu'il servait dans le 11<sup>e</sup> bataillon et il est commémoré sur le monument commémoratif des disparus à Thiepval. Corporal James Doherty a été tué le 16 août, 1917 alors qu'il servait dans le 11<sup>e</sup> bataillon et était rattaché à la 109<sup>e</sup> batterie de mortiers de tranchée. Il est commémoré sur le monument commémoratif des disparus à Tyne Cot.

Après la guerre, les restes du Company Quartermaster Serjeant Doherty furent concentrés dans Savy British Cemetery et il a été enterré en tant qu'un company quartermaster serjeant inconnu. Comme il était porté disparu son nom est ainsi commémoré sur le monument commémoratif des disparus à Pozières. Cependant, la nouvelle recherche a permis le site de son dernier repos d'être identifié. Aujourd'hui nous nous souviendrons de Company Quartermaster Serjeant Doherty et sa tombe sera consacrée une nouvelle fois.

## **Call to Worship**

*Appel à Adoration*

'I, John heard a voice from heaven say to me, 'Write down: Happy are those who die in the Lord! Happy indeed, the Spirit says; now they can rest for ever after their work, since their good deeds go with them.'

Revelation 14 v 13

We have come to this place to recognise and commend to God the mortal remains of our brother in arms Company Quartermaster Serjeant John Doherty MM, of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, who gave his life in battle near Le Hamel on 22 March 1918.

Today we accord John the dignity and respect that he is due and commend him 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**

*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, 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 Company Quartermaster Serjeant John Doherty MM, and all whose lives, in World Wars and conflicts, past and present, have been given and taken away.

*All* **Amen.**



**Scripture Reading**

*Lecture des Écritures Saintes*

Read by an Embassy Representative

**Psalm 90 (NRSV)**

Lord, you have been our dwelling-place  
in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

For a thousand years in your sight  
are like yesterday when it is past,  
or like a watch in the night.

You sweep them away; they are like a dream,  
like grass that is renewed in the morning;  
in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;  
in the evening it fades and withers.

So teach us to count our days  
that we may gain a wise heart.

Have compassion on your servants!

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,  
so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Let your work be manifest to your servants,  
and your glorious power to their children.  
Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us.

This is the word of the Lord.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel Reading**

*Lecture de l'Évangile*

Read by Christina Doherty, Great Great Niece of  
Company Quartermaster Serjeant Doherty

#### **John 11 v 32-38 (NRSV)**

When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.

Jesus said to Mary, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

**Reading***Lecture*

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

**A Soldier's Grave**

By Lance Corporal Francis Ledwidge  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers

Then in the lull of midnight, gentle arms  
Lifted him slowly down the slopes of death  
Lest he should hear again the mad alarms  
Of battle, dying moans, and painful breath.

And where the earth was soft for flowers we made  
A grave for him that he might better rest.  
So, Spring shall come and leave it seet arrayed,  
And there the lark shall turn her dewy nest.

**Address***Allocution*

### **The Act of Dedication**

*L'Acte de Dédicace*

So let us now bless and dedicate this grave as the final resting place of the mortal remains of Company Quartermaster Serjeant John Doherty MM.

O God, whose Son Jesus Christ was laid in a tomb: Bless and dedicate, we pray, this grave as the place where the body of your servant John may rest in peace, in the knowledge that he now abides 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**

*L'Éxhortation*

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan  
1<sup>st</sup> 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***Sonnerie aux Morts*

Played by Lance Corporal Barry Norton

1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment**Silence****The Reveille****Oft in the Stilly Night**

Played by Pipe Major William Mitchell

1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment**Kohima Epitaph***L'Épitaphe de Kohima*

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan

1<sup>st</sup> 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***Dépôts des Gerbes*

## **Prayers**

### *Prières*

Eternal God, in your wisdom and grace you have given us freedom through the lives of your departed servants. We thank you for the life of Company Quartermaster Serjeant John Doherty MM and for those who loved him. We thank you for your goodness and mercy that followed him all the days of his life and his ultimate faithfulness to the tasks to which you had called him.

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 Inniskilling Fusiliers**

*Récitation du Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers*

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan

1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

O God, our house of defence and our castle, grant, we beseech thee, to The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, that, as we stand by our brethren in equal honour against every enemy, so, while thou art on our side, we may not fear what man may do; through 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,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**The Blessing**

*Séparation et Dernière Bénédiction*

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 this day and for evermore.

*All* **Amen.**





Four of the Doherty brothers with their mother Elizabeth.



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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