



**ARMY**

A Burial Service for

**An Unknown Soldier of the Great War**

**10:30 hours Wednesday 19 June 2024**  
CWGC Serre Road Cemetery No. 2, France

**Service conducted by Reverend Ben Norton CF**  
Chaplain to 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, The Royal Anglian Regiment

## Background

In the spring of 2023 human remains were discovered by tourists walking a freshly ploughed field near Beaumont Hamel. The remains were recovered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

This area was subject to several peaks in activity during the First World War, not least the first day of the Battle of the Somme on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. The ground was subsequently fought over during the Battle of the Ancre in November 1916, and the German Spring Offensive and subsequent 100 Days Offensive in spring – summer 1918.

Due to the extensive fighting in this area by multiple battalions of multiple regiments across a wide span of time, the list of missing is extensive. Unfortunately, the remains were found with no significant identifying artefacts to help us narrow the potential candidates, though the General Service buttons and ammunition found alongside the remains indicates that they were of Commonwealth origin and likely an ordinary soldier.

With no way to distinguish this man from the hundreds missing in this area, today we bury him as an unknown soldier, known unto God.

Established in May 1917, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Serre Road Cemetery No.2 contained close to 500 graves by the end of the war. It was greatly enlarged after the Armistice when graves were brought in from smaller cemeteries and the surrounding battlefields. Nearly 5,000 of the 7,000 Commonwealth casualties buried here could not be identified, including the unknown soldier being laid to rest today.

## **Welcome**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
And the love of God  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
Be with you all.

We are gathered here today in this place of remembrance to honour the fallen in conflicts past.

Today we honour with thanksgiving this brave man whom, alongside so many others, answered the call of their country, served with honour and gave their lives in the service of their nation.

We will shortly commit his body to be buried. In so doing let us commit ourselves anew to remember his courage. For by so doing we honour his memory and we reflect upon his sacrifice.

Let us honour ourselves also to God's service, that His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven and that His kingdom of justice and peace be established everywhere.

### **Bidding Prayer**

*Prière*

Let us recall the presence of God, the Father of all mankind, maker and sustainer of all that is, whose purposes are good, whose love is never withheld and whose mercy never passes away. We call to mind His faithfulness in times of darkness and despair.

We remember before Him our brothers and sisters whose names are known only to God, and all who have served in the Armed Forces of our nation; who counted service to others greater than service of self, and who gave their lives in battle.

Merciful Father,  
hear our prayers and comfort us;  
renew our trust in your Son  
whom you raised from the dead;  
strengthen our faith  
that all who have died in the love of Christ  
will share in His resurrection;  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen**

### **Scripture Reading**

*Lecture des Écritures Saintes*

Genesis 1:1-9

### **The Beginning**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning – the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning – the second day.

And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so.

## **Scripture Reading**

*Lecture des Écritures Saintes*

Revelation 21:1-8

### **A New Heaven and a New Earth**

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride dressed beautifully for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolators and all liars – they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death."

## **Address**

*Allocution*

**Blessing of the Grave**  
*Bénédiction de la Tombe*

O God, whose Son Jesus Christ was laid in a tomb:  
bless, we pray, this grave as the place where the body of your  
servant may rest in peace, through your Son, who is the  
resurrection and the life; who died and is alive and reigns with  
you now and for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

**Commendation**

God our creator and redeemer, by your power Christ  
conquered death and returned to you in glory.  
Confident of your victory and claiming his promises,  
we entrust this man into your keeping in the name of Jesus our  
Lord, who, though he died, is now alive and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

**The Committal**  
*L'Enterrement*

We have entrusted our fallen comrade to God's mercy  
and now we commit his body to the ground: earth to earth,  
ashes to ashes, dust to dust: in sure and certain hope of the  
resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who  
will transform our frail bodies that they may be conformed to  
his glorious body, who died, was buried, and rose again for us.  
To him be glory for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

### **The Exhortation**

#### *L'Éxhortation*

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*

### **Silence**

### **Reveille**

### **Kohima Epitaph**

#### *L'Épitaphe de Kohima*

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

### **Laying of Wreaths**

#### *Dépôts des Gerbes*

### **Collect of The Royal Anglian Regiment**

*Récitation du Royal Anglian Regiment*

O Lord God, who by the brightness of a star didst lead men to the Saviour of mankind; give thy grace to the Royal Anglian Regiment, that trusting in thee as our strong rock and castle, we may in unity with thee and with one another rightly serve our Sovereign and our native land, and at the last be led by thy mercy to thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**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:

**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.**



## **Prayers**

### *Prières*

Almighty God, protect all who serve in the Forces of the King; strengthen us in danger and temptation, give us courage and loyalty, that we may remain true to the highest traditions of our profession; and keep us steadfast when faced with the perils of action in war; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

Almighty God, who has revealed your only Son as the resurrection and the life; raise us, we pray, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness that, when we depart from this life, we may rest in Him, and at the last may receive the blessing; Well done good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Lord. Grant this, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our mediator and redeemer.

## **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 humankind, peace and concord; and to us and all his servants, life everlasting; and may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, come down upon you and all those whom you love now and always. **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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