



A Funeral Service for

Second Lieutenant Eric Henderson

8th (City of London) London Regiment
Post Office Rifles

Killed in action on 07 June 1917

Oak Dump Cemetery
Nr Ypres, Belgium

Wednesday 16 May 2018 at 10:30 hours

Service Conducted by
The Revd Thomas Hiney CF,
19 Royal Artillery Regiment



Second Lieutenant Eric Henderson
(10 November 1895 – 7 June 1917)

History

Eric was born on 10 November 1895 in Heckmondwike, Yorkshire. He was the son of Rev. Joseph Graham and Alice Henderson. Eric had a brother, Charles, and a sister, Elsie. Eric had a close relationship with his siblings and his parents. Surviving letters show the strong family ties that existed, and the huge hole in their lives that his loss caused.

Both Eric and his brother, Charles, served in the trenches during the First World War. Eric initially joined the 28th Battalion London Regiment in July 1915 as a Private. He was soon commissioned as a Second Lieutenant into the 10th Battalion London Regiment. Six months later, Eric wrote a letter requesting a transfer into the 8th Battalion as he had many friends serving there. Eric was killed on 7 June 1917 during the Battle of Messines near Ypres, Belgium.

For 100 years, Eric's final resting place was unknown to his family until road works on Eekhofstraat near Voormezele uncovered the remains of a British soldier. Recovered with the soldier was a silver coin engraved with "2nd Lt. Eric Henderson, London Regiment". Further research showed that the location of the soldier was exactly where the Oak Reserve Line was during the Battle of Messines, which corresponded with the location of Eric's regiment on the day of his death.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission Oak Dump Cemetery was made by fighting units in the summer of 1917 and further graves from 1918 were brought in during 1927. It is in this area that 2nd Lieutenant Henderson fought and was killed in action in June 1917. He was buried on the battlefield by his comrades and can now be laid to rest with other men of his Battalion.

Post Office Rifles

The Post Office Rifles were first formed in 1868 in response to Irish acts of terror in London. Volunteers were initially trained up as special constables and charged with protecting Post Office buildings. However, after the Fenian threat had passed, some of the men requested to stay on as part-time army corps.

In 1899 they saw combat for the first time when a force of Post Office workers were sent to South Africa to fight in the Boer War. Only two men died in action, although many more died of disease.

To accommodate the swell of recruits due to the First World War, a second Post Office Rifles battalion was formed in September 1914. They were titled the 2/8th Battalion, City of London Regiment.

Like many other regiments, the Post Office Rifles were stationed on the Western Front and were involved in many battles. They fought at Loos, the Somme, Ypres, and Passchendaele suffering tremendous losses. More than half their fighting force was lost at the capture of Wurst Farm Ridge in September 1917.

The Post Office Rifles received 145 awards for gallantry including one Victoria Cross. In 1921 the 8th Battalion was amalgamated into the 7th Battalion. They find their successor today in the Royal Artillery.

Welcome

John 1, 25 – 26

Jesus said: I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me will live even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

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

Today we remember with thanksgiving 2nd Lieutenant Eric Henderson who, alongside so many others, answered the call of his country, served with honour and gave his life in the service of his 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 that sacrifice.

Let us offer 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

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

Ecclesiastes 3, 1 – 8 (King James Version)

To everything there is a season,
and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted:
A time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up:
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance:
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones
together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing:
A time to get, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away:
A time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak:
A time to love, and a time to hate;
a time of war, and a time of peace.

For the Fallen

Read by Judith Leyman

Great niece of 2/Lt Eric Henderson

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill; Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres,
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs into battle, they were young
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;
They fell with their faces to the foe.

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.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hope profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars that are known to the Night.

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

Lawrence Binyon

Scripture Reading

John 14, 1 – 6 (King James Version)

Let not your heart be troubled:
ye believe in God, believe also in me.
In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I
would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and
receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.
And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.
Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest;
and how can we know the way?
Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no
man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Interment

Our days are like the grass;
we flourish like a flower of the field
when the wind goes over it; it is gone
and its place will know it no more.
But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures
for ever and ever.....

We have entrusted 2nd Lieutenant Eric Henderson to God's
eternal keeping. We now commit his earthly remains to the
ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust in the sure
and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night,
Before the rising sun.

Volley of Shots

The Exhortation

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.

The Last Post

Silence

Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

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

Wreath Laying

Prayers

Almighty God, protect all who serve in the Forces of The Queen; 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.
Amen

The Lord's Prayer

**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**

Regimental Collect of the Royal Regiment of Artillery

O Lord Jesus Christ, who dost everywhere lead thy people in the way of righteousness, vouchsafe so to lead the Royal Regiment of Artillery that wherever we serve, on land or sea or in the air, we may win the glory of doing thy will.

Amen

The Dismissal

Support us, O Lord,
all the day long of this troublous life,
until the shadows lengthen and the evening falls,
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 last;
through Christ our Lord.

And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
rest upon you and remain with you
and all those you love and for whom you pray,
this day and always.

Amen





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