



A Funeral Service for

**One Unknown Soldier of the
Machine Gun Corps**

and

Three Unknown Soldiers of Unknown Regiments

Killed in action during the Great War

Wednesday 13 June 2018 at 10:30 am

**Loos British Cemetery
France**

**Service Conducted by
The Reverend Stephen Pratt CF
The Royal Tank Regiment**

History

The Machine Gun Corps was created by Royal Warrant on 14 October 1915, after the need for more effective use of machine guns on the Western Front during the First World War. Its Infantry, Cavalry, Motor and Heavy branches grew into formidable self-contained units in every theatre of war.

The Machine Gun Corps saw action in all the main theatres of war, including France and Belgium, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Salonika, East Africa and Italy. A total of 170,500 officers and men served in the corps, which suffered 62,049 casualties earning it the nickname of 'the suicide club'.

The Machine Gun Corps also served prominently in the British Force that occupied parts of Germany in the period between the Armistice of 1918 and the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919. The heavy branch of the Machine Gun Corps was the first to use tanks in combat and was subsequently amalgamated into the Tank Corps, later renamed the Royal Tank Regiment.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Loos British Cemetery was begun by the Canadian Corps in July 1917. The remainder of the cemetery was formed after the Armistice by the concentration of graves from smaller cemeteries and the battlefields over a wide area North and East of the village of Loos. It is in this area that the four casualties being buried today were discovered. Sadly, almost two thirds of those commemorated here remain unidentified.

Welcome

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. *John 1, 25 – 26*

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

Today we remember with thanksgiving the one unknown soldier of the Machine Gun Corps and the three unknown soldiers of unknown regiments who, 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 their bodies to be buried. In so doing let us commit ourselves anew to remember them and reflect upon their sacrifice. For by so doing we honour them.

Let us also offer ourselves in 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 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.

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.

Commendation and Interment

God our creator and redeemer,
By your power Christ conquered death and entered into glory.
Confident of his victory and claiming his promises entrust these
soldiers to your mercy
In the name of Jesus our Lord,
Who died and is alive and reigns with you
Now and for ever.

Amen.

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 these four soldiers to God's eternal keeping.
We now commit their 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

Anthem for Doomed Youth

By Wilfred Owen

What passing bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them, no prayers nor bells.
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs;
the shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
and bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
their flowers the tenderness of patient minds.
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

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 Tank Regiment

Almighty God, whose perfect love casteth out fear, mercifully grant that thy servants of the Royal Tank Regiment may fear naught but to fall from thy favour; for his sake in whom thou art well pleased, thy beloved son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord.
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.

May God in his infinite love and mercy
bring the whole church, living and departed in the Lord Jesus
to a joyful resurrection and the fulfilment of his eternal kingdom.
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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