



A Rededication Service for

**Serjeant William Clay Cubberley
2nd Battalion The Worcestershire Regiment**

**10:00 hours Wednesday 22 March 2023
CWGC Perth Cemetery (China Wall), Belgium**

**Service conducted by The Reverend Daniel Njuguna CF
Chaplain to 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment**

Serjeant William Clay Cubberley

Serjeant William Clay Cubberley was born on 25 November 1888, in Norton, Worcestershire. He was the eldest of seven children born to William Cubberley and his wife Sarah. His father enlisted into The Worcestershire Regiment on 1 April 1879 and at the time of William's birth was a serjeant serving with 2nd Battalion. After promotion, he served as a Warrant Officer firstly with 3rd and then 2nd Battalion. William's childhood was therefore spent living in barracks in Norton, Kempsey and Great Malvern in Worcestershire. William's father was discharged in 1905, but having previous experience as a Serjeant Instructor, he re-joined the regiment on the outbreak of the First World War and served again until 1916.

William's uncle, Thomas Cubberley, was also a Warrant Officer in The Worcestershire Regiment at the same time as his father. Thomas' sons Serjeant Frederick Norton Cubberley and Lance Serjeant Francis George Cubberley, were both killed on the Western Front whilst serving with the regiment. William's brother Harold James Cubberley served as a serjeant in The Worcestershire Regiment but survived the war.

William himself enlisted into The Worcestershire Regiment and in 1911 was serving as a Drummer with 1st Battalion. By September 1917, Serjeant William Clay Cubberley had transferred to 2nd Battalion. On 24 September 1917 the battalion took over the line near Veldhoek. B Company moved into the frontline while D Company took up positions behind the line near Northampton Farm and A and C Companies moved to positions north of Inverness Copse. The Battalion HQ was located in the Tower in Inverness Copse. The plan was for the battalion to attack on 26 September.

On 25 September the battalion was heavily shelled. This was followed by a German attack which was successfully repulsed in the section of the line held by 2nd Battalion The

Worcestershire Regiment. At 05:30 hours on 26 September, the day of Serjeant Cubberley's death, the Germans redoubled their bombardment making several direct hits on the roof of Battalion HQ. The battalion War Diaries state 'To carry on in the open under such a fire was impossible. The whole ground was churned up, even the bodies of the killed soon disappeared.' The shelling made evacuation of the wounded impossible and for twenty four hours stretcher bearers were not able to evacuate the wounded.

At the last hour the plans for the attack were changed due to the heavy losses already experienced by 33rd Division. 98th Brigade and 4th Battalion The King's Liverpool Regiment would wheel forward in support of the Australian attack at Polygon Wood while 1st Battalion The Queens and 9th Battalion The Highland Light Infantry attempted to retake the ground lost the previous day. All other battalions of 100th Brigade were ordered to stand fast, and 2nd Battalion The Worcestershire Regiment provided supporting fire. They were relieved on the night of 27 to 28 September 1917.

On 30 November 2012 a set of remains were found near Waterstraat during the laying of a pipeline. The soldier was found with buttons and a shoulder title of The Worcestershire Regiment as well as a crown, indicating that the soldier was most likely a Serjeant Major. After unsuccessful DNA testing, the soldier was buried as an unknown soldier of The Worcestershire Regiment in Perth Cemetery (China Wall) on 6 September 2017.

During the Covid-19 Pandemic, JCCC began to reinvestigate old cases where DNA was taken but no match had been found prior to the burial of the soldier. This further research revealed that three serjeants of 2nd Battalion The Worcestershire Regiment were still missing from their time in the line at Veldhoek in September 1917. DNA testing was carried out for these men. John Cubberley, the great nephew of Serjeant

Cubberley and grandson of his brother Harold, was found to be a match to the soldier.

As he was missing Serjeant Cubberley had previously been commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial. It is believed that he may have been promoted to Company Serjeant Major in the field, but no record of this was made prior to his death. Today we will remember Serjeant William Clay Cubberley and his grave will be rededicated.

Begun by French troops in November 1914, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Perth Cemetery (China Wall) was adopted by the 2nd Scottish Rifles for front line burials from June to October 1917. Also known as Halfway House Cemetery, it was named after Perth, where the predecessors of the 2nd Scottish Rifles were raised, and China Wall from a nearby communication trench known as the Great Wall of China. After the Armistice further graves from the battlefields around Ypres, including that of Serjeant Cubberley, were brought in for burial.

*The Cubberley chain is broken
And nothing seems the same.
But as God calls us one by one
The chain will link again.*

By John Cubberley

Call to Worship

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous;
be strong.

Do everything in love.

1 Corinthians Chapter 16 v13-14

We meet this day to remember before God Serjeant
William Clay Cubberley who lived and died in the service
of his country, and to rededicate his grave.

Bidding Prayer

Almighty and eternal God,
from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted,
either by death or life: hear our prayers for your servant
William whom we remember this day.

Fulfil in him the purpose of your love
and bring us, with him, to your eternal joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Scripture Reading

Read by Group Captain John Dickson
Defence Attaché to Belgium and Luxembourg

Micah Chapter 7 v 7-9 & 18-19 (KJV)

Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Scripture Reading

Read by Lieutenant Colonel Ret'd Mark Jackson OBE
The Mercian Regiment Museum (Worcestershire)

Romans Chapter 8 v 31-39 (NIV)

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Reading

Read by Second Lieutenant Richard Langley
1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment

Patience

By 'Woodbine Willie'

*The Reverend Geoffrey Anketell Studdert Kennedy MC
Chaplain to the Forces 1914-1919
Vicar of St Paul's Church, Worcester*

Sometimes I wish that I might do
Just one grand deed and die,
And by that one grand deed reach up
To meet God in the sky.
But such is not Thy way, O God,
Not such is Thy decree,
But deed by deed, and tear by tear,
Our souls must climb to Thee,
As climbed the only Son of God
From manger unto Cross,
Who learned, through tears and bloody sweat,
To count the world but loss;
Who left the Virgin Mother's Arms
To see those arms of shame,
Outstretched upon the lonely hill
To which the darkness came.
As deed by deed, and tear by tear,
He climbed up to the height,
Each deed a splendid deed, each tear
A jewel shining bright,
So grant us, Lord, the patient heart,
To climb the upward way,
Until we stand upon the height,
And see the perfect day.

Address

The Act of Dedication

Almighty God, by whose grace your servant
William fought the good fight,
kept the faith and finished the race;
we give thanks for the example of his life of service
and the peace in which he rests.
We rededicate this grave in which his mortal remains
repose, in the name of Jesus our Lord,
who died and is alive and reigns with you,
now and for ever.

The Exhortation

Read by Lance Corporal James Beckett
1st Battalion The Mercian 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 Colin Streetin
5th Battalion The Rifles

The Silence

The Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

Read by Lance Corporal James Beckett
1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment

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

Laying of Wreaths

Prayer

We give you thanks, O God, for William;
and for the memories we treasure as a lasting legacy of
his service and dedication. In your mercy, look upon his
loved ones and all who remember him this day.

Almighty God, through Christ you have given us the hope
of glorious resurrection, so that although death comes to
us all, yet we rejoice in the promise of eternal life;
for to your faithful people life is changed, not taken away,
and when our mortal flesh is laid aside, an everlasting
dwelling place is made ready for us in heaven.

Grant us, therefore, that we may humbly and faithfully
serve you in this mortal life and at last bring us to your
everlasting Kingdom which you have promised to those
who love and serve you.

All **Amen.**

The Collect of The Worcestershire Regiment

Read by Second Lieutenant Richard Langley

1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment

O God, our hope and strength, who hast built us upon the rock of Christ our foundation, uphold, we pray thee, thy servants of The Worcestershire Regiment in every trial by sea or by land, that, trusting in thy everlasting strength, we may be steadfast and unmoveable, and may hold fast our hope firm unto the end, in the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

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

Heavenly Father,
we share together the blessing of your presence.
Give us in this life knowledge of your truth,
and in the world to come life everlasting;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son
and the Holy Spirit; be upon you and remain with you
always.

All **Amen.**



ARMY

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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