



**A Burial Service for  
An Unknown Soldier of  
The Black Watch (Royal Highlanders)  
and  
An Unknown Scottish Soldier**

**11:30 hours on Thursday 26 September 2024  
CWGC Loos British Cemetery Extension, France**

**Service conducted by Reverend David Anderson CF  
Senior Chaplain HQ 51 Infantry Brigade and HQ Army  
of Scotland.**

**Attended by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal**

## **Welcome by Padre and call to worship.**

We gather here today to worship God and give thanks not just for our two colleagues here, but also for their forty-six comrades recently given their final resting place in this cemetery at a service conducted by The Reverend Heather Rendell. Before God we remember those, who have made the supreme sacrifice by the giving of their lives in the service of their country. Let us remember them in joy, sadness, and gratitude, and commend them to God's sure keeping. We remember and pray for all those who have suffered, and who still suffer, as a consequence of war. Finally, we pray for peace and reconciliation – especially remembering those with the responsibility for the leadership of nations – that conflict may be avoided.

We remember with thanksgiving these two soldiers; whose names are known only to God, killed in action in September 1915. They, alongside so many others, answered the call of their country, served with honour, and gave their lives in the service of their nation, counting service to others greater than service of self.

We will shortly commit their bodies to be buried. In doing so let us commit ourselves anew to remember them. For by doing so we honour, and we reflect upon their sacrifice. Their sacrifice is summed up in Jesus' words to his disciples:

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

*John 15, 12-13*

## **Reading**

### **Psalm 121**

I lift up my eyes to the hills –  
From whence comes my help?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
Who made heaven and earth.  
He will not allow your foot to be moved;  
He who keeps you will not slumber.  
Behold, he who keeps Israel  
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.  
The Lord is your protector –  
The Lord is your shade at your right hand;  
the sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.  
The Lord shall keep you from all evil,  
He shall preserve your soul,  
The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in  
From this time forth and for evermore.

## **Prayer**

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 forever.

**Amen.**

## Reading

### **Before the Summer – by Ewart Alan Mackintosh (1916)**

*Read by Major Patrick Marshall, The Black Watch, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion  
The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

When our men are marching lightly up and down,  
When the pipes are playing through the little town,  
I see a thin line swaying through wind and mud and rain  
And the broken regiments come back to rest again.

Now the pipes are playing, now the drums are beat,  
Now the strong battalions are marching up the street.  
But the pipes will not be playing and the bayonets will not shine.  
When the regiments I dream of come stumbling down the line.

Between the battered trenches their silent dead will lie  
Quiet with grave eyes staring at the summer sky.  
There is a mist upon them so that I cannot see  
The faces of my friends that walk the little town with me.

Lest we see a worse thing than it is to die.  
Live ourselves and see our friends cold beneath the sky,  
God grant we too be lying there in wind and mud and rain  
Before the broken regiments come stumbling back again.

*Ewart Alan Mackintosh was killed in action  
on 21 November 1917 aged twenty-four.*

**Address - Padre**

## **Blessing**

O God, by whose mercy the faithful departed find rest, bless these graves, and send your holy angel to watch over them. As we bury here the bodies of our brothers known only to you, deliver their souls from every bond of sin, that they may rejoice in you with your saints for ever. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Committal**

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 two soldiers to God's eternal keeping; whose names are known only to God. They rest safely in His arms at peace eternally.

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. May they rest in peace and rise in glory. In the earth we give them a final resting place. They will not be forgotten.

**Amen.**

## **Volley of Shots**

## **The Exhortation**

*Read by Warrant Officer Class Two Andrew Reid  
The Black Watch, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

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**

*Played by Private Archie Keith  
The Black Watch, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

## **Silence**

## **Lament**

*Played by Corporal Jake Noble  
The Black Watch, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

## **Reveille**

## **Kohima Epitaph**

*Read by Private Owen Greene  
The Black Watch, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.*

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

## Laying of Wreaths

### Reading

#### Epitaph by Black Watch poet Joseph Johnston Lee

*Read by Dame Menna Rawlings DCMG CVO  
His Majesty's Ambassador to France*

Where the long trench twines snake-like  
To keep the foe at bay,  
There be the place to lay me,  
And this be what you say:  
Here lieth the one who loved all life,  
Sunshine and song, and sword and strife;  
Sea and storm, and wind and rain,  
Breaking bud, and bursting grain,  
Pulsing pleasure, and stabbing pain -  
Who would, an he could, live all over again!

#### The Collect of The Royal Scots

*Read by Major Patrick Marshall, The Black Watch, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The  
Royal Regiment of Scotland.*

O Lord Jesus Christ, who art the first and the last, grant, we pray thee,  
that, as thou hast promised to be with us even unto the end of the  
world, so may The Royal Scots be the first to follow thee and the last to  
forsake thee, who art with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God  
world without end.

**Amen.**

## **Prayers**

### **Padre**

Almighty God, Stretch forth your mighty arm to strengthen and protect the armed forces: Grant that meeting danger with courage and all occasions with discipline and loyalty, they may truly serve the cause of justice and peace; To honour your holy name,  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
**Amen.**

God of truth and justice, we hold before you those whose memory we cherish, and those whose names we will never know. Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world and grant us the grace to pray for these we pray for today. And together we say the words our Lord and Saviour taught us:

### **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,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever.

**Amen.**



## **Blessing**

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 and the blessing of God Almighty; the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you, and those whom you love, wherever they may be, this day and always.

**Amen.**

Loos British Cemetery Extension was completed in early 2024. The land on which it stands has been granted in perpetuity to the CWGC by the French State, having been acquired from the Town of Loos en Gohelle.

It currently contains 46 unknown British casualties, but it has been created to provide a peaceful and dignified last resting place for all Commonwealth war casualties recovered from the former battlefields in the surrounding areas.



The Ministry of Defence, through the Joint Casualty & 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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COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES



## WELCOME

Your Royal Highness, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. As the Vice Chairman of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, it is an honour to welcome you to Loos British Cemetery and to this new extension. Today is a special day, as we reaffirm the ties to the past and commit to honouring the fallen for generations to come.

The Battle of Loos began on 25 September 1915. It was part of a wider combined campaign with the French Armies who fought further to the south. General Haig commanded 6 divisions. Two of these divisions, the 9th and the 15th, gained the name of the "Scottish" divisions; indeed 30,000 Scotsmen fought here; men of the Cameron, Gordon and Seaforth Highlanders - and the Black Watch - toiled in battle. Many had joined the Kitchener's New Army just a few short months before and then they participated in the biggest battle of 1915. It lasted a little over 21 days and despite the 15th Division briefly capturing the village of Loos; it ended in stalemate. Of the 74 Battalions who fought in this battle, 12 of them lost over 500 men - eight of those were Scottish. There were 60,000 casualties, and at least 22,000 men died in those few short weeks.

This area would remain the scene of fighting for nearly three more years, until the last months of the war. In August 1917 the high ground behind us - Hill 70 - was captured by the Canadian Corps in what one senior officer described as 'the fiercest and most bitter fighting which the Battalions of this Brigade have experienced or ever seen.'

At the end of the war, in early 1919, the land around us was scoured by soldiers and civilians, hunting for the remains of the brave soldiers who fell. The battlefields around this town were sites of utter desolation, disorder and decay, full of unexploded bombs and debris - for over two years they searched and searched. 3000 are buried next to this extension, the majority are unknown. The Loos Memorial records the names of 20,600 soldiers who were never found, who were never buried with honours, who are known only to God and still lie, somewhere, in the battlefields.

We do not rest; over recent years, there have been many discoveries across Northern France of the remains of First World War casualties. We still receive into our care the fallen who are released from the rich, dark earth of Northern France. The two soldiers we are laying to rest this morning fought in and around Loos. We don't know how, or when they died. We don't know where they are from nor of their families. We do not know the heartbreak and pain their deaths created for their loved ones at home over one hundred years ago. What we do know is that they will now lie here, amongst their friends and pals, and will be cared for by the people of Loos and the Commission.

The task of recovering the fallen of both world wars will continue, as will the process of ensuring that those entitled to commemoration are recorded by name. As a result, as well as this new cemetery, our teams are working on new memorials to be built in South Africa and in Sierra Leone - a reminder of our global commitment to commemorate the dead of the British Empire from two world wars.

This new cemetery extension is only the second of its kind to be built by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission since the work finished, in the early 1960s, on the cemeteries and memorials built to commemorate all those who died in the Second World War. Its purpose is no different to those other 23,000 sites spread around the globe - it is to provide a haven of peace in which we can care for our fallen with dignity and love, in perpetuity.

Last weekend, I was in the Netherlands as part of the commemorations to mark the Battle of Arnhem in 1944. As here in Loos, it was a shining example of how a community has adopted one of our cemeteries and works in partnership with us to ensure their local history is not forgotten. The local community attend commemorative events in large numbers, but more importantly they ensure that every new generation is engaged and inspired. As here in Loos, school children visit the cemetery to learn about the battle, to discover their local history and to learn about those buried there, ensuring that a new generation will remember.

This new cemetery at Loos offers an opportunity for us all to renew our commitment to those buried here, and those who will be buried here in the future, ensuring that their names live on, that who they were and what they did is not forgotten, that they are commemorated, and that coming generations WILL remember them.

I would like to finish with two personal inscriptions I noticed earlier on headstones in the original Loos British Cemetery: They seemed most fitting for explaining why we are here today - the first was, "OUR SCOTTISH SOLDIER. AT LAST AT REST AMONG FRIENDS" and the second simple read "WORTHY OF EVERLASTING REMEMBRANCE".

Thank you.