



A Rededication Service for

**Captain Valentine Knox Gilliland
2nd Battalion The Royal Irish Rifles**

**14:30 hours on Thursday 11 July 2024
CWGC Divisional Collecting Post Cemetery
and Extension, Belgium**

**Service conducted by The Reverend Jason Clarke MBE CF
Chaplain to 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment**

Captain Valentine Knox Gilliland



Captain Valentine Knox Gilliland was born on 15 February 1889 in Londonderry, Ireland. He was the youngest of 3 sons born to George Knox Gilliland D.L. and his wife Frances Jane of the Brook Hall Estate. Valentine was educated at Lockers Park Prep School in Hemel Hempstead and Foyle College in Londonderry before attending Trinity College Cambridge in 1907, where he studied Mechanism and Applied Science. He was a keen sportsman and is said to have owned one of the first sports cars in Donegal. Upon his graduation in 1910, Valentine was apprenticed to a London grain merchant. In the spring of 1912, he travelled across Canada to Vancouver.

Whilst at Cambridge Valentine was a member of the Officers' Training Corps and he received a commission into the Reserve of Officers in 1912. He joined the Ulster Volunteer Force and commanded a company within 5th Donegal Regiment. On 10 January 1915, Valentine was posted to the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion The Royal Irish Rifles, in Dublin. He was promoted to the rank of Captain.

Captain Gilliland arrived on the Western Front on 18 January 1915 where he joined 2nd Battalion The Royal Irish Rifles in Belgium. On 21 April 1915, Captain Gilliland was wounded when a periscope he was looking through was hit by a sniper's bullet. Fragments of the glass smashed into his face cutting his nose and chin.

On 7 May 1915, D Company of 2nd Battalion The Royal Irish Rifles moved into the frontline close to Hill 60 near Zillebeke. They joined an attack on Trench 46 which was met by heavy fire and the attack failed. On 8 May their trench was bombed, and it is recorded that Captain Gilliland was killed by a stray bullet whilst in Trench 47. His Company Commander, Major Gerald Achilles Burgoyne, recorded that Captain Gilliland was buried in a small graveyard just behind their support trench. He was 26 years old.

A week before the death of Captain Gilliland, news reached the family of the death of his cousin, Lieutenant William Millar Major Gilliland of 2nd Battalion The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, who was killed in action in the Dardanelles on 30 April 1915. On the day that Captain Gilliland's mother, Frances, learned the news of her son's death, she had received a letter from him informing her that the battalion was going into action.

After the war, the remains of Captain Gilliland were recovered and buried in Divisional Collecting Post Cemetery and Extension as an unknown Captain of The Royal Irish Rifles. As he was missing, Captain Gilliland was commemorated on the Menin Gate. However, new research has shown that this is in fact the grave of Captain Gilliland and the headstone has now been changed to reflect this. Today we will remember Captain Gilliland and his grave will be rededicated.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Divisional Collecting Post Cemetery and Extension was begun by field ambulances of the 48th (South Midland) and 58th (London) Divisions in August 1917. It continued in use until January 1918 and at the Armistice contained 86 graves (Plot I, Rows B-E). Between 1924 and 1926, the original cemetery was considerably enlarged by an extension for casualties who were brought in from the surrounding battlefields and some small burial grounds in the area. This included Captain Valentine Knox Gilliland whose grave could not be identified at the time.

Call to Worship

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

St John 11 v 25-26

We have come to this place to recognise and commend to God the mortal remains of our brother in arms Captain Valentine Knox Gilliland, of 2nd Battalion The Royal Irish Rifles, who gave his life in battle near Hill 60 on 8 May 1915.

Today we accord Valentine the dignity and respect that he is due and commend him to the mercy and grace of God our redeemer and judge, and in the hope and life given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us.

Bidding Prayer

We meet in the presence of God, to commit ourselves to work in penitence and faith for reconciliation between the nations, that all people may, together, live in freedom justice and peace.

We come to pray for all who in bereavement, disability and pain continue to suffer the consequences of fighting and terror.

We come to remember with thanksgiving and sorrow Captain Valentine Knox Gilliland, and all whose lives, in World Wars and conflicts, past and present, have been given and taken away.

All **Amen.**

Scripture Reading

Read by an Embassy Representative

Isaiah Chapter 25 v 6-8 (NRSV)

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.

And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations;

he will swallow up death for ever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan
1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

John Chapter 19 v 25-30 (NRSV)

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Reading

Read by Anne Gilliland
Cousin of Captain Gilliland

The Fields of Flanders

By Edith Nesbit

Last year the fields were all glad and gay
With silver daisies and silver may;
There were kingcups gold by the river's edge
And primrose stars under every hedge.

This year the fields are trampled and brown,
The hedges are broken and beaten down,
And where the primroses used to grow
Are little black crosses set in a row.

And the flowers of hopes, and the flowers of dreams,
The noble, fruitful, beautiful schemes,
The tree of life with its fruit and bud,
Are trampled down in the mud and the blood.

The changing seasons will bring again
The magic of Spring to our wood and plain;
Though the Spring be so green as never was seen
The crosses will still be black in the green.

The God of battles shall judge the foe
Who trampled our country and laid her low. . .
God! hold our hands on the reckoning day,
Lest all we owe them we should repay.

Address

The Act of Dedication

So let us now bless and dedicate this grave as the final resting place of the mortal remains of Captain Valentine Knox Gilliland.

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

The Exhortation

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan
1st Battalion The Royal Irish 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 Barry Norton
1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

Silence**The Reveille****Off in the Stilly Night**

Played by Pipe Major William Mitchell
1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

Kohima Epitaph

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan
1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

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

Laying of Wreaths

Prayers

Eternal God, in your wisdom and grace you have given us freedom through the lives of your departed servants. We thank you for the life of Captain Valentine Knox Gilliland and for those who loved him. We thank you for your goodness and mercy that followed him all the days of his life and his ultimate faithfulness to the tasks to which you had called him.

May God give peace:

All **God give peace.**

We pray for all who have died or suffer as a result of conflict. Those whose lives are disfigured by war or terror. For service men and women, for civilians, for those held captive, each one remembered by and known to God.

May God give peace:

All **God give peace.**

We pray for peace-makers and peace-keepers; those who seek to keep this world secure and free; for all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership, political, military and religious; asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve in the search for reconciliation and peace.

May God give peace:

All **God give peace.**

Finally, we pray for all members of the armed forces who are in danger this day, remembering family, friends and all who pray for their safe return.

May God give peace:

All **God give peace.**

Amen.

The Collect of The Royal Irish Regiment

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan

1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

Almighty God whose love knows no bounds grant that we, The Royal Irish Regiment, may do our duty courageously so that, undaunted by the difficulties which beset us, your will may be done and, united as members one with another may we, mindful of the valour and sacrifice of those who have gone before us, clear the way for those that follow, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Trusting in the compassion of God, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

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

God grant to the living grace,
to the departed rest,
to the Church, The King, the Commonwealth
and all people, unity, peace and concord,
and to us and all God's servants, life everlasting.
And the blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be among you all and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**



A portrait of Captain Gilliland hangs at the Brook Hall Estate.



Captain Gilliland (front right) with his fellow Officers in Belgium.



Captain Gilliland, a keen sportsman, rides on the Brook Hall Estate.



Captain Gilliland (right) with his Company Commander Major Burgoyne.



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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