



A Rededication Service for

**Lieutenant Harry Noel Leslie Renton
9th Battalion The King's Royal Rifle Corps**

**14:30 hours Thursday 15 September 2022
CWGC Oostaverne Wood Cemetery, Belgium**

**Service conducted by The Reverend Martin Pritchard CF
Chaplain to 4th Battalion
The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment**



HARRY NOEL LESLIE RENTON

Lieutenant Harry Noel Leslie Renton was born in Colombo, Ceylon, on 18 December 1894. He was one of three sons born to James and Louisa Renton of Aspley Guise in Bedfordshire. He was educated at The Knoll, Woburn Sands and Harrow. Whilst at Harrow he was a monitor, head of his house and in the Upper VI. As a keen sportsman, he was house cricket and football captain and was the wicketkeeper of the school's cricket eleven in 1914.

After leaving Harrow he was due to take up a place at Magdalen College, Oxford, but instead took a Commission on the outbreak of the war. On 23 September 1914 he was Gazetted as a Second Lieutenant with 9th Battalion The King's Royal Rifle Corps. He was promoted to Lieutenant on 13 February 1915. He embarked for France on 20 May that year.

On 30 July 1915, the day of Lieutenant Renton's death, 9th Battalion The King's Royal Rifle Corps took part in an attack at Hooze. After a preliminary bombardment, B and D Companies took Trench G10, north of the Menin Road. 3 Platoons of C Company, including Lieutenant Renton, then charged towards Old Bond Street Trench, but were almost wiped out by machine gun fire.

Major Hennessy of the same battalion wrote of Lieutenant Renton: 'He was a real soldier through and through, absolutely fearless, painstaking, trustworthy, and his men loved him. He was my right hand in everything, and however difficult the task set him I could always be absolutely sure he would see it through alright.'

His Captain wrote: 'All through the day Noel behaved with the greatest coolness, and I do not know what we should have done without him, as there were only three of us. He never paid the slightest attention to danger, and he was tremendously pleased, when I ordered the charge. Not only his own Platoon, but the whole Company were devoted to him and

would have followed him anywhere, as they did... He died as well as a man could.'

Lieutenant Renton's body was recovered, and he was buried at the side of the Menin Road with three riflemen. After the First World War his remains were moved to Oosttaverne Wood Cemetery, where he was buried as an unknown Lieutenant of The King's Royal Rifle Corps. He was commemorated on the Menin Gate. New research has shown that Lieutenant Renton is in fact the unknown Lieutenant in this grave. Today we will remember Lieutenant Renton and his grave will be rededicated.

The 'Oosttaverne Line' German positions were captured on the first day of the Battle of Messines in June 1917 and two cemeteries were made on the site. After the Armistice the cemeteries were enlarged and became the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Oosttaverne Wood Cemetery. Amongst the graves brought into the cemetery from the surrounding battlefields were those of The King's Royal Rifle Corps casualties from the action at Hooze in 1915, including Lieutenant Harry Noel Leslie Renton.

Call to Worship

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

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

Today we remember with thanksgiving Lieutenant Harry
Noel Leslie Renton, who alongside so many others,
answered the call of his country, served with honour and
gave the ultimate sacrifice of his life in the service of his
nation.

As we rededicate this grave, as it no longer holds the
remains of an unknown Lieutenant, let us also rededicate
our lives in the service of God, so that His will may be
done on earth as it is in heaven. With malice toward
none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God
gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work
we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for all
those who need our care, and to do all which may
achieve and cherish just and lasting peace among
ourselves and with all nations.

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.

As we rededicate these remains and this headstone we give thanks for the life, the service and the sacrifice of Lieutenant Harry Noel Leslie Renton.

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.

All **Amen.**

Reading

Read by a member of The Renton family

From The Peroration of Pericles

By Thucydides

Let us draw strength by remembering the greatness of these men with the fighter's daring, the wise man's understanding of his duty and the good man's self discipline in its performance - to men who sacrificed their lives on our behalf. They gave their bodies to the commonwealth and received, each in his own memorial, praise that will never die, and with it the grandest of all sepulchres, not that in which their mortal bones are laid, but a home in the minds of men, where their glory remains fresh to speech or action as the occasion comes.

For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men, and their story is not graven only on stone over their native earth, but lives on in other lands, without visible symbol, woven into the stuff of other men's lives.

For us now it remains to rival what they have done, knowing that the secret of happiness is freedom, and the secret of freedom a brave heart.

Reading

Read by a member of the Renton family

Aftermath

By Siegfried Sassoon

Have you forgotten yet?...

For the world's events have rumbled on since those
gagged days,
Like traffic checked while at the crossing of city-ways:
And the haunted gap in your mind has filled with
thoughts that flow
Like clouds in the lit heaven of life; and you're a man
relieved to go,
Taking your peaceful share of Time, with joy to spare.
But the past is just the same—and War's a bloody
game...
Have you forgotten yet?...
Look down, and swear by the slain of the War that you'll
never forget.

Do you remember the dark months you held the sector at
Mametz—
The nights you watched and wired and dug and piled
sandbags on parapets?
Do you remember the rats; and the stench
Of corpses rotting in front of the front-line trench—
And dawn coming, dirty-white, and chill with a hopeless
rain?
Do you ever stop and ask, 'Is it all going to happen
again?'

Do you remember that hour of din before the attack—
And the anger, the blind compassion that seized and
shook you then
As you peered at the doomed and haggard faces of your
men?

Do you remember the stretcher-cases lurching back
With dying eyes and lolling heads—those ashen-grey
Masks of the lads who once were keen and kind and
gay?

Have you forgotten yet?...

Look up, and swear by the green of the spring that you'll
never forget.

Gospel Reading

Read by Group Captain John Dickson

Defence Attaché to Belgium and Luxembourg

John Chapter v 14:1-6 (KJV)

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.

Address

The Act of Remembrance

Most gracious God, Father of all mercies,
We offer our thanks for the bounty of your providence
and the renewing liberty of your grace.
We rejoice in our inheritance in holy things,
and in the freedom and peace in which we live.
Especially this day we give thanks for the life of
Lieutenant Harry Noel Leslie Renton, for all that he was
and for all that he accomplished and that he now rests in
your eternal presence no longer in an unknown grave.

The Exhortation

Read by Second Lieutenant Hayder Al-Azzawi
8th Battalion The Rifles

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 Stephen Elliott
8th Battalion The Rifles

The Silence

The Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

Read by Second Lieutenant Hayder Al-Azzawi
8th Battalion The Rifles

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

Laying of Wreaths

Prayer

Eternal God, by your dear Son's rising from the dead you have destroyed the power of death.

In you the dead find life for ever, and the faithful who served you on earth praise you for all eternity in heaven.

As we return to our tasks, may we labour for goodwill and co-operation among the nations of the world.

Cheer us by the hope of everlasting life and support us by the sure love of your guiding hand.

In so doing, may we put away from us all prejudice and all selfish ambition; and in our foreign policy help us to pursue only those ends and purposes that will promote unity and concord among the peoples of this world.

As your children teach us to cherish this precious planet that you have entrusted to our care.

Bring us at the last, with all the faithful, to the full knowledge of your love and the unclouded vision of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Collect of The King's Royal Rifle Corps
Read by Major Andrew Holsgrove
4th Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment

O Eternal God, in whom we live and move, quicken, we pray thee, thy servants of The King's Royal Rifle Corps in thy way, and give us boldness to seek thy grace in every time of need, through 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

The peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with us all, this day and forever more.

All **Amen.**



Lieut. H. N. L. RENTON,
9th King's Royal Rifles.



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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