



A Burial Service for

**Lance Serjeant Robert Brand
9th (Glasgow Highland) Battalion,
The Highland Light Infantry**

and

**Two Unknown Soldiers
9th (Glasgow Highland) Battalion,
The Highland Light Infantry**

**11.00 hours 25 October 2023
CWGC Messines Ridge Cemetery, Belgium**

**Service conducted by Reverend (Captain) David Jeal
Chaplain to The Royal Highland Fusiliers,
2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland**

During the period from June 2018 to November 2019 the remains of three First World War servicemen were recovered from a field in Neuve Eglise, Belgium, whilst archaeological work was taking place prior to the expansion of a potato farm.

Artefacts found alongside the casualties allowed them to be identified as soldiers from the 9th (Glasgow Highland) Battalion, The Highland Light Infantry. Other artefacts indicated that they must have died after August 1916; this information combined with that from Battalion War Diaries and other records, narrowed their dates of death to a period between 13th – 15th April 1918. This was during the Battle of the Lys.

Whilst efforts have been made to identify all three, so far only one man has been positively identified – Lance Serjeant Robert Brand.

Robert Brand was born on 13 September 1893 in Stirling, to William McPhail Brand and Christina Johnston Arthur, who had been married in the July of the same year. Robert was the eldest of 12 children, he had first gone to France with the army in November 1914, in 1916 he was hospitalised following a gunshot wound to the neck. Following this he was entitled to wear a wound stripe on his uniform.

Robert died during the Battle of the Lys, also known as the Fourth Battle of Ypres, which was fought from 7 to 29 April 1918. It was part of the German spring offensive in Flanders during the First World War. The main objective of the German attack was to capture Ypres before forcing the British forces back to the Channel ports and out of the war. Whilst the German attacks did penetrate almost 10 miles into British held territory, ultimately they failed in their objective to force a British withdrawal from the Ypres Salient.

British casualties during this engagement are thought to have been in the region of 80,000 men, with similar losses on the German side.

Lance Serjeant Brand and his two compatriots are being buried at the closest Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery to where they were found – Messines Ridge Cemetery.

The Cemetery

Created after the Armistice on the grounds of the "Institution Royale", the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Messines Ridge Cemetery was formed by the concentration of graves from surrounding battlefield cemeteries and isolated graves. It was in this same area that the three casualties being interred today were discovered. Sadly, nearly two thirds of the burials within this cemetery remain unidentified.

Words from the Family

Robert Brand's family want to record here how proud they are of him and his selfless fight for their freedom and that of his fellow soldiers and their descendants.

Welcome

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

We remember with thanksgiving these three soldiers: Lance Serjeant Robert Brand of the 9th Battalion The Highland Light Infantry, and two other soldiers of the same Battalion whose names are known only to God, who were killed in action in April 1918. 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 so doing let us commit ourselves anew to remember them. For by doing so we honour them 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

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 for ever.

Amen

Moment of Reflection

Reading – Chosen by the Brand family

The Fallen Soldier – by Branden Hidalgo
Lieutenant Thomas Purslow.
2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland

Fallen Soldier All Alone
Fallen Soldier Far From Home.
Trickling Down His Face A Tear,
Forgetting How It Feels To Fear
Death And All It's Fate And Glory.
Now It's Here, No Need To Worry.

Fallen Soldier All Alone
Fallen Soldier Far From Home
He's One Of Those They'll All Forget;
Life He Lived, The Goals He Set,
The Ones He Loved, The Ones Who Wait
To See His Nearly Forgotten Face.

Fallen Soldier All Alone
Fallen Soldier Far From Home
Now Breathing's Just A Waste Of Breath
And Living's Just A Waste Of Death
As He Searches For A New Address;
A Brand New Home Free Of Loneliness.

Fallen Soldier All Alone
Fallen Soldier Far From Home
Lying Motionless On The Ground,
The Battle Raging All Around.
For Now He Is Not All Alone.
This Fallen Soldier Is Welcomed Home.

Scripture Reading: Ecclesiastes 3, 1 – 8

Read by Group Captain John Dickson

Defence Attaché to Belgium and Luxembourg

There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven;

a time to be born and a time to die,

a time to plant and a time to uproot,

a time to kill and a time to heal,

a time to tear down and a time to build,

a time to weep and a time to laugh,

a time to mourn and a time to dance,

a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,

a time to embrace and a time to refrain,

a time to search and a time to give up,

a time to keep and a time to throw away,

a time to tear and a time to mend,

a time to be silent and a time to speak,

a time to love and a time to hate,

a time for war and a time for peace.

Prayer

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we remember with thanksgiving all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for us in time of war. We thank you that the offering of these soldiers' lives was not in vain. By your grace, enable us this day to dedicate ourselves anew to the causes of justice, freedom and peace; and give us the wisdom and strength to build a better world, for the honour and glory of your name.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Reading – Chosen by the Brand family

Before the Summer – by Ewart Alan Mackintosh (1916)

*Read by Colonel Campbell Close,
Commander Field Army Liaison Officer, France
Representing the Colonel of 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 to 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 the 21st November 1917, aged 24.*

The Collect of The Highland Light Infantry

*Read by Lieutenant Thomas Purslow,
2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

O God, who measurest the seas in thy hand and weighest the mountains, hear us, we pray thee, thy servants of The Highland Light Infantry, that we may ever be ready to be offered in sacrifice, and when we come into deep waters and the floods run over us, set us up upon the rock of thy strength, even Jesus Christ our Saviour
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 three soldiers to God's eternal keeping: Lance Serjeant Robert Brand, and our brothers 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.

The Exhortation

*Read by Warrant Officer Class Two Darran Pasifull,
2nd 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 Corporal William Crawford,
2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

Silence**Flowers of the Forest**

*Played by Piper Sergeant Joe Davies
2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.*

Reveille**Kohima Epitaph**

*Read by Warrant Officer Class Two Darran Pasifull,
2nd 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

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,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Prayers

Almighty God, protect all who serve in the Forces of The King; 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

The Dismissal

Let us remember before God, and commend to His sure keeping, those who have died for their country in war; those whom we knew, and those whose memory we treasure, and all who lived and died in the service of mankind.
And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
rest upon you and remain with you today and always.
Amen.

Amazing Grace *played by Piper Sergeant Joe Davies*



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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