



**A Rededication Service for**

**Lance Corporal James Edward Freer  
Corporal Edward Doyle  
Private Bertie George Reynolds MM  
And  
Lance Corporal George Washington**

**1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusiliers**

**10:30 hours on Thursday 11 July 2024  
CWGC Hoge Crater Cemetery, Belgium**

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

**Private Bertie George Reynolds MM**



Private Bertie George Reynolds MM was born in Homerton, Middlesex, in 1894. He was one of 7 children born to Thomas Reynolds and his wife Alice. Before enlisting into the Army he worked as a porter. He was awarded the Military Medal which was published in the London Gazette of 6 July 1917. Private Reynolds initially served with 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry before transferring to The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He served with 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Battalions of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Private Reynolds died on 28 September 1918. He was 24 years old.

### **Corporal Edward Doyle**

Corporal Edward Doyle was born in Bagnalstown, County Carlow, Ireland in 1897. He was one of 8 children born to Michael Doyle and his wife Katie. Having enlisted into The Royal Dublin Fusiliers he arrived in the Balkans on 2 August 1915. During this time 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion were involved in the Gallipoli Campaign. The battalion relocated to the Western Front in March 1916 and Corporal Doyle was wounded on the Somme in August 1916. The battalion took part in the Battle of Arras and the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917 and were in the Somme region once more during the German Spring Offensive of 1918. Corporal Doyle was killed on 28 September 1918. He was 21 years old.

### **Lance Corporal George Washington**

Lance Corporal George Washington was born in Salford, Lancashire, in 1898. He was one of 6 children born to James Washington and his Irish wife, Margaret. Lance Corporal Washington is commemorated on the wall of the War Memorial Chapel in the Cathedral Church of St John the Evangelist in Salford. Lance Corporal Washington was killed on 29 September 1918 aged 20.

Lance Corporal James Edward Freer



Lance Corporal James Edward Freer was born in Cropston, Leicestershire, in 1888. He was one of 10 children born to James Freer and his wife Elizabeth. Before enlisting into 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusiliers, he worked in shoe manufacturing. He is recorded as having been wounded in the Spring of 1918. Lance Corporal Freer was killed on 29 September 1918. He was 30 years old.

The War Diaries of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusiliers record that at on 28 September 1918, after a bombardment, they moved forward in an attack at 05:30 hours behind 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Lancashire Fusiliers. After the Red Line had been captured, they moved through 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Lancashire Fusiliers and captured the Black Line. The 'Red Dotted' line was taken at 08:45 hours and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion The Royal Fusiliers passed through them to exploit the success.

At 10:45 hours they were ordered to march down the Menin Road. By this stage 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade had reached as far as Geluveld and at 16:00 hours the battalion took up positions north of Geluveld. Battalion HQ moved to a pillbox at Polderhoek Chateau. At 06:00 hours on 29 September 1918 the advance continued. They encountered considerable machine gun fire from the left flank and their progress was slow. At 08:30 hours the battalion took up positions around 2 kilometres east of Geluveld. It was during the fighting on 28 and 29 September 1917 that Lance Corporal Freer, Corporal Doyle, Private Reynolds and Lance Corporal Washington were killed.

After the war, the remains of all 4 men were recovered and buried in Plot XVII, Row B, in Hooge Crater Cemetery. Although their identities were not known they were all recorded as having been soldiers of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. As they were missing, they were commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial. However, new research has confirmed that Corporal

Doyle is buried in Grave 13 and that Private Reynolds is buried in Grave 14. Both Graves 11 and 15 were recorded as belonging to lance corporals. It was therefore not possible to establish which grave belongs to Lance Corporal Freer or Lance Corporal Washington. As it is known that they are both buried in one of these graves, Special Memorials recording that they are 'Buried Near This Spot' have been created for them. Today we will remember Lance Corporal Freer, Corporal Doyle, Private Reynolds and Lance Corporal Washington and their graves will be rededicated.

Hooge Chateau was located on the frontline for much of the First World War and was the scene of very fierce fighting throughout the conflict. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Hooge Crater Cemetery was established in early October 1917, but was greatly increased after the Armistice when graves were brought in from smaller cemeteries and the surrounding battlefields of Zillebeke, Zantvoorde and Geluveld. This included the graves of Corporal Doyle, Private Reynolds, and Lance Corporal Freer and Lance Corporal Washington who could not be identified at the time. Sadly, more than half of the nearly 6,000 Commonwealth servicemen commemorated in this cemetery remain unidentified.

## **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 brothers in arms Corporal Edward Doyle, Private Bertie George Reynolds MM, Lance Corporal James Edward Freer and Lance Corporal George Washington, of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusilliers, who gave their lives in battle nearby at Geluveld in September 1918.

Today we accord them the dignity and respect that they are due and commend them 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.

*All*    May the Peace of the Lord be always with you,  
**And also with you.**

### **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 James Edward Freer, Edward Doyle, George Washington and Bertie George Reynolds, 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

**Psalm 121 (NRSV)**

I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
from where will my help come?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.  
He who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper;  
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.  
The sun shall not strike you by day  
nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.  
The Lord will keep  
your going out and your coming in  
from this time on and forevermore.

This is the word of the Lord.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Reading**

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

**Matthew Chapter 11 v 25-30 (NRSV)**

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants;

Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

This is the word of the Lord.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

### **Reading**

Read by Les Reynolds

Great Nephew of Lance Corporal Reynolds

### **We Shall Keep the Faith**

By Moina Michael

Oh! you who sleep in Flanders Fields,  
Sleep sweet - to rise anew!  
We caught the torch you threw  
And holding high, we keep the Faith  
With All who died.

We cherish, too, the poppy red  
That grows on fields where valour led;  
It seems to signal to the skies  
That blood of heroes never dies,  
But lends a lustre to the red  
Of the flower that blooms above the dead  
In Flanders Fields.

And now the Torch and Poppy Red  
We wear in honour of our dead.  
Fear not that ye have died for naught;  
We'll teach the lesson that ye wrought  
In Flanders Fields.

### **Address**

### **The Act of Dedication**

So let us now bless and dedicate these graves as the final resting places of the mortal remains of Lance Corporal James Edward Freer, Corporal Edward Doyle, Private Bertie George Reynolds MM and Lance Corporal George Washington.

O God, whose Son Jesus Christ was laid in a tomb: Bless and dedicate, we pray, these graves as the places where the body of your servants James, Edward, Bertie and George may rest in peace, in the knowledge that they now abide 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  
1<sup>st</sup> 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  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

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

Played by Pipe Major William Mitchell  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

**Kohima Epitaph**

Read by Captain Johnathan Cowan  
1<sup>st</sup> 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 lives of James Edward Freer, Edward Doyle, George Washington and Bertie George Reynolds and for those who loved them. We thank you for your goodness and mercy that followed them all the days of their lives and their ultimate faithfulness to the tasks to which you had called them.

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.**

### **A Prayer for the Armed Forces**

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 the honour of your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**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**

Support us, O Lord,  
all the day long of this troublous life,  
until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, the  
busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over and our  
work is done.

Then, Lord, in your mercy grant us a safe lodging,  
a holy rest, and peace at the last;  
and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy  
Spirit, be upon you and those whom you love and  
remember now and for evermore.

*All* **Amen.**





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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