



**A Rededication Service for**

**Serjeant John Harold Bott DCM  
11<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Royal Fusiliers  
(City of London Regiment)**

**14:15 hours on Wednesday 20 March 2024  
CWGC Hooze Crater Cemetery, Belgium**

**Service conducted by The Reverend Tom Sander CF  
Chaplain to The Household Cavalry**

Serjeant John Harold Bott DCM



Serjeant John Harold Bott DCM was born in Longton, Staffordshire, in 1896. He was one of four brothers born to Herbert Bott and his wife Mary Ann. His younger half-sister, Ethel, was born later to his mother and stepfather. The 1911 Census records that he was working as a hairdresser's apprentice.

John enlisted into the Army in September 1914, shortly after the outbreak of the First World War, and was posted to 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment). He arrived on the Western Front on 26 July 1915. In the summer of 1916, he fought and was wounded on the Somme. He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his actions there. The medal citation, which was published in the London Gazette of 25 November 1916, stated that it was awarded 'For conspicuous gallantry in action. He led a bombing party with great courage and determination, capturing an enemy machine gun and killing the team.'

In the spring of 1917, the battalion fought in the Battle of Arras before moving to Flanders. On 31 July 1917, the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres, 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Royal went into action again. The battalion War Diaries show that on 10 August 1917, they took part in an attack on the Westhoek Ridge with the aim of taking Inverness Copse, Glencorse Wood and the southern end of the ridge. The two attacking companies proceeded behind a barrage at 04:35 hours and they and the support company reached the Jargon Support Line north of Fitzclarence Farm.

Having come under machine gun fire, the advance halted and their position remained the same until around 06:00 hours, by which stage most of the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers, including Serjeant Bott, aged 21, had become casualties. The enemy counterattacked from Inverness Copse with machine gun fire and bombing parties who moved up the trenches in their southern flank and took the right company in

the rear. The uncovered flank of the battalion was rolled up and pushed back to a strong point on the crest of the ridge. The position was consolidated and held until they were relieved.

After the war Serjeant Bott's body was recovered and he was buried as an unknown soldier of The Royal Fusiliers in Hooge Crater Cemetery. It was noted that the soldier had received the Distinguished Conduct Medal. As he was missing, Serjeant Bott was commemorated on the Menin Gate. However, new research has shown that this is in fact the grave of Serjeant Bott and the headstone has now been changed. Today we will remember Serjeant Bott and his grave 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 Gheluvelt. These included the grave of Serjeant John Harold Bott DCM, 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**

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous;  
be strong.

Do everything in love.

1 Corinthians Chapter 16 v 13-14

We meet this day to remember before God John Harold  
Bolt who lived and died in the service of his country, and  
to rededicate his grave.

**Bidding Prayer**

Almighty and eternal God,  
from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted,  
either by death or life: hear our prayers for your servant  
John whom we remember this day.

Fill in him the purpose of your love  
and bring us, with him, to your eternal joy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

**Scripture Reading**

Read by Group Captain John Dickson  
Defence Attaché to Belgium and Luxembourg

**Romans Chapter 8 v 31-39 (NIV)**

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long;  
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Gospel Reading**

Read by Captain Jordan Whiteman  
Regimental Adjutant, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

**Matthew Chapter 5 v 1-12 (NIV)**

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.

He said:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.  
Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.  
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for  
righteousness,  
for they will be filled.  
Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.  
Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.  
Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.  
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of  
righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you  
and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of  
me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in  
heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the  
prophets who were before you.

**Reading**

Read by Vern Littley

**The Soldier's Grave**

by William Barnes

The warrior, when he sinks to rest,  
By many a grateful tongue is blest;  
His decent grave demands a sigh  
From everyone that passes by.  
Tread lightly on the hallowed soil  
Where he is resting from his toil.  
And think upon the woes he bore  
When you were couched in peace before.

Remember all the toil and pain  
He suffered in the long campaign,  
And how he fainted on the way  
While untrod leagues before him lay;  
How oft he saw his fellows fall  
Where gleamed the sword, and flew the ball,  
But now in a celestial band,  
He triumphs in a happier land.



**Address**

**The Act of Dedication**

So let us now bless and dedicate this grave as the final resting place of the mortal remains of Serjeant John Harold Bott DCM.

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 John 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 Jordan Whiteman  
Regimental Adjutant, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

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 Edward Watts  
The Band and Bugles of The Rifles

**Silence****The Reveille****Kohima Epitaph**

Read by Captain Jordan Whiteman  
Regimental Adjutant, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

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

**Laying of Wreaths**

**The Collect of The Royal Fusiliers**

Read by Captain Jordan Whiteman  
Regimental Adjutant, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

O God, who art our God for ever and wilt guide us even unto death, be pleased, we pray thee, so to guide The Royal Fusiliers, whose great city is rich in glory and honour, that, coveting rather the riches of Christ, we may do thy commandments, and enter at last into thy holy city, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

**Prayer**

We give you thanks, O God, for this thy servant; and for the memories we treasure as a lasting legacy of his service and dedication. In your mercy, look upon his loved ones and all who remember him this day.

Almighty God, through Christ you have given us the hope of glorious resurrection, so that although death comes to us all, yet we rejoice in the promise of eternal life; for to your faithful people life is changed, not taken away, and when our mortal flesh is laid aside, an everlasting dwelling place is made ready for us in heaven.

Grant us, therefore, that we may humbly and faithfully serve you in this mortal life and at last bring us to your everlasting Kingdom which you have promised to those who love and serve you.

**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 mankind, peace and concord; and to us and all his servants, life everlasting; and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, come down upon you and remain with you always.

**All** **Amen.**



**ARMY**

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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