



A Funeral Service for

Private Joe Stevenson

One Unknown Soldier

1st Battalion, King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment

Killed on 10 April 1917

and

One Unknown British Soldier

Of an Unknown Regiment

CWGC Brown's Copse Cemetery, Roeux

Wednesday 21 June 2023 at 10:30 hours

Service Conducted by

The Reverend Paul Van Sittert CF

1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment

Private Joe Stevenson

Private (Pte) Stevenson was born in Framlingham, Suffolk on 14 November 1882. He was the son of James and Rachel Stevenson. He had two brothers and four sisters. He was working as a labourer when he enlisted in April 1916. Pte Stevenson was initially posted to the 9th Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment. Five months later, he transferred to the 1st Battalion, King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment. Unfortunately, no photograph of Pte Stevenson survives.

Pte Stevenson and the two Unknown Soldiers were discovered after construction work in the village of Fampoux, France.

An Extract from "The British Campaign in France and Flanders 1917" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The 1st Battalion, King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment fought as part of the 12th Brigade, 4th Division during the Battle of Arras.

The Advance [on the 9 April 1917] had already been a splendid one, the ninth Division having 2,000 prisoners to its credit, but this movement of the fourth Division against an enemy who was already badly shaken was a very fruitful one. The 12th Brigade was nearest the Scarpe, with the 11th upon the left, while the 10th moved forward in close support. Two obstacles faced the division, the straggling village of Fampoux upon the bank of the river, and the Hyderabad Redoubt, a considerable fort to the north of the village.

The 12th Brigade moved swiftly forward in the nearest approach to open warfare that had been seen for years. The 1st Royal Lancasters were on the right of the swift flexible line, the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers in the centre, and the 2nd Essex upon the left. The brigade fought its way in the teeth of a very hot fire to the outskirts of Fampoux, where the reserve battalion, the 2nd West Ridings, passed through the King's Own and carried the village in splendid style late in the evening at the point of the bayonet. It is a remarkable fact that the wire in front of the village had not been cut by the artillery, and the infantry passed in single file through the gap in it, after disposing of the German machine-gunner who offered resistance.

The second day of the Battle of Arras, April 10, was spent partly in consolidation of the ground gained and partly in increasing the area now occupied. The troops were in high heart, for although the full extent of the victory had not yet been realised, it was already known that at least 10,000 prisoners and 100 guns had fallen into their hands, figures which showed that the battle had been the most serious military disaster which had yet befallen the enemy.

Welcome

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 these brave men whom, alongside so many others, answered the call of their country, served with honour and gave their lives in the service of their nation.

We will shortly commit their bodies to be buried. In so doing let us commit ourselves anew to remember their courage. For by so doing we honour their memory and we reflect upon that sacrifice.

Let us offer ourselves also to God's service, that His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven and that His kingdom of justice and peace be established everywhere.

Bidding 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.

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

Scripture Reading

Ecclesiastes 3, 1 – 8 (King James Version)

Read by a representative from the British Embassy.

To everything there is a season,
and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted:
A time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up:
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance:
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones
together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing:
A time to get, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away:
A time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak:
A time to love, and a time to hate;
a time of war, and a time of peace.

Scripture Reading

John 14, 1 – 6 (King James Version)

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 Reverend Paul Van Sittert CF

The Soldier by Rupert Brook

**Read by Second Lieutenant William Hayward, 1st Battalion
The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment.**

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich dust a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by the suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Internment

Jesus said: I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me will live even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

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 men in to the hands of God. We therefore commit their bodies to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust having our whole trust and confidence in the mercy of our heavenly Father, and in the victory of His son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who died, was buried and rose again for us, and is alive and reigns for evermore.

Amen

Volley of Shots

The Exhortation

**Read by WO1 Martin Harrison, Regimental Sergeant Major,
1st Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's 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.

We will remember them.

The Last Post

Silence

Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

**Read by WO1 Martin Harrison, Regimental Sergeant Major,
1st Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment.**

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

The Laying of the Wreaths

Prayers

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

Almighty God, who has revealed your only Son as the resurrection and the life; raise us, we pray, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness that, when we depart from this life, we may rest in Him, and at the last may receive the blessing; Well done good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Lord. Grant this, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our mediator and redeemer.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

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

Regimental Collect of the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment

Lord Jesus, King of glory, who dost love thine own unto the end, grant, we pray thee, that we, the King's Own Royal Regiment, may faithfully serve our Sovereign Lord The King, whose true soldiers we are; and in all our service may ever seek thy Kingdom, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest for ever. **Amen.**

The Dismissal

Support us, O Lord,
all the day long of this troublous life,
until the shadows lengthen and the evening falls,
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 last;
through Christ our Lord.

And the blessing of God Almighty,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
rest upon you and remain with you
and all those you love and for whom you pray,
this day and always.

Amen

Having been made in the summer of 1917, the CWGC's Brown's Copse Cemetery in Roeux contains the graves of over 2,000 Commonwealth service personnel. Following the Armistice, the cemetery was expanded when 850 graves were brought in from a wide area north and east of Arras. The three casualties being laid to rest, including Private Joe Stevenson, were recovered from these former battlefields.



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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