



A Rededication Service for

Captain Ernest Charles Parry

16th (Waikato) Company

1st Battalion, Auckland Infantry Regiment

1100 hours

Wednesday 12 October 2022

**Dochy Farm New British Cemetery, Langemark-Poelkapelle, West-
Vlaanderen, Belgium**

Captain Ernest Charles Parry



CAPTAIN E. C. PARRY,
of Pueron.
Killed in action.

Welcome - Wing Commander Gareth Russell

Opening Prayer - Padre Andrew McMullon

Service Record - Wing Commander Gareth Russell

Captain Ernest Charles Parry, the husband of Mary Okaro Parry (nee Walmsley), and father of two sons, William and Joseph, was killed in action near 's Gravenstafel on 6 October 1917.

The son of Joseph William Parry and Emily Matilda, Ernest was born in New Zealand on 7 February 1886. He enlisted in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force on 8 May 1915. Sailing as a member of the 7th Reinforcements, Capt Parry joined his unit, the 1st Battalion, Auckland Infantry Regiment, in Egypt on 8 January 1916. His Unit embarked for France in April 1916. Shortly after his arrival in France Captain Parry took ill and had to be evacuated to England, on 20 September 1916 Captain Parry re-joined his Battalion in the field while the New Zealand Division was involved in heavy fighting near Fleurs-Corchellete.

In March 1917 Captain Parry was appointed to the role of Company Commander. He was then granted the temporary rank of Major while the Battalion Second in Command Major Orr attended a promotion course. In August 1917 Maj Orr returned to the Battalion and Captain Parry reverted back to the rank of Captain.

On 4 October 1917, the New Zealand Division commenced the Battle of Broodseinde. Capt Parry's company and the 1st Battalion, the Auckland Regiment were situated on the left flank of the Division in the first wave of attack. The Divisions objective was to capture a sector between Gravenstafel Spur and Abraham Heights. The Division attack area was 2000 yards wide and they had to penetrate the enemy defence system over some 1200 yards.

At 6am the attack began in light drizzle. The German defences were made up with mutually strongpoint pillboxes, intersecting machine gun fields of fire and protected by barbed wire. After 50 minutes fighting the 1st Battalion, Auckland Regiment had secured its objective, the Red Line on the Gravenstafel Ridge. Consolidation was fast and trench digging began. 2nd Wellington went through in the second wave and advanced to the Blue Line, the final objective that day. By sunset on 4 October, despite shell and sniper fire the position had been

secured. The New Zealand Division had suffered 1653 casualties of whom 488 had been killed. Captain Parry gallantly led his company throughout this period.

On 6 October Captain Parry's Battalion was withdrawn to Salvation Corner in Ypres. Captain Parry alongside Sergeant McLean remained to the rear of the company to ensure that all their men were safely away from the front line. It was while conducting this leadership action that an enemy artillery shell burst near Captain Parry and Sergeant McLean killing them both.

Rediscovering Captain Parry - Mr Freddy Declerck

When making statistics about the 18,070 NZ soldiers who died in WWI, I was especially looking for the missing because I know very well how hard it is for the family back home not to know where their husband, father or son was buried somewhere.

From the 4,633 New Zealanders who fell in Belgium, 2,371 (51%) are still missing and have no known grave. About 943 have a partially identified grave, this means a grave where we know he's New Zealander, maybe also his regiment, rank, the date of death or any combination but surely not a name. This means also that 1,428 soldiers are still missing in Flanders Fields or in a grave as Unknown Soldier.

But they are remembered, because all their names are on one of the three memorials for the missing: 828 at MESSINES RIDGE (N.Z.) MEMORIAL, for those who fell in June and July 1917, 378 on BUTTES NEW BRITISH CEMETERY (N.Z.) MEMORIAL for those who fell in the Winter 17-18 and 1,165 on TYNE COT MEMORIAL for those who fell here during the Battle of Passchendaele.

I knew that there was an unknown Captain buried on this cemetery and only 6 Captains on the Tyne Cot Missing memorial. The unknown Captain should be one of those six officers. The next step was to find the exact place where he was found in a field grave after the war before he was reburied here at Dochy Farm Cemetery. When I checked the other known soldiers in the same row on the cemetery and on the burial return sheet of Sgt Donald McLean from 1st Auckland Bn, I saw that the unknown Captain was found on exactly the same spot. Most probably, both had been of the same battalion. Further historical research learned that only 1st Auckland and 2nd Wellington have been there on that spot at the Battle of Broodseinde from 3 October till the night of 5/6 October. Only Captain Parry of the six Captains was from 1st Auckland Bn. By elimination I could prove that the other Captains couldn't be the unknown Captain because they have been buried on another place or they were too far away from the spot where the unknown Captain was found. It is also important to know that the spot where the unknown Captain was buried was far out of the medical evacuation chain for the other 5 Captains who died here in October 1917.

However my submission was rejected by the CWGC but send to Wellington NZ. They had a written account from the commanding officer of 1st Auckland Bn

"at 1 am on the 6th the bn was relieved and Captain Parry was killed while coming out" and they had also a newspaper article stating that "Captain Parry on its way out of the lines with a sergeant went to have a look round to see if all the men were safely away, when a shell came and caught both he and the sergeant". I discovered that only one sergeant died on 6 October 1917 here in this area, Sgt Donald McLean so he was the ultimate key for the rededication of this gravestone. He helped to identify Ernest Charles Parry beyond the grave.

Ka whawhai tonu ake ake

this is the Regiment's motto "We will fight against you for ever" and is the famous battle cry of Rangi Maniapoto, who fought British forces in the Waikato in 1864.

Reading - Her Excellency Diana Reaich

Have you news of my boy Jack?"

Not this tide.

"When d'you think that he'll come back?"

Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

"Has anyone else had word of him?"

Not this tide.

For what is sunk will hardly swim,

Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

"Oh, dear, what comfort can I find?"

None this tide,

Nor any tide,

Except he did not shame his kind -

Not even with that wind blowing, and that tide.

Then hold your head up all the more,

This tide,

And every tide;

Because he was the son you bore,

And gave to that wind blowing and that tide!

Rudyard Kipling's only son John, was killed in the Battle of Loos on 27 September 1915, aged 18. After the war Kipling visited the battlefields and war graves in Flanders, but he never saw his son's John's grave. The body of his son was eventually found in 1992. It lay in the grave of an 'unknown Irish lieutenant'.

Unveiling of the Headstone - 'O Valiant Hearts' sung by Lies Verholle

Prayer and Blessing of the Headstone - Padre Andrew McMullan

The Exhortation in Te Reo - Wing Commander Gareth Russell, RNZAF

E kore ratou e kaumatuaia
Penei i a tatou kua mahue nei
E kore hoki ratou e ngoikore
Ahakoa pehea i nga ahuatanga o te wa
I te hekenga atu o te ra
Tae noa ki te aranga mai i te ata
Ka maumahara tonu tatou ki a ratou

All: Ka maumahara tonu tatou ki a ratou

The Exhortation in English - Mr Geert Bekaert

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

Minutes Silence

The Reveille

Kohima Epitaph - Ms Marijke Vandevyvere

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

Laying of Wreaths

New Zealand National Anthem - Sung by Ms Lies Verholle

The Lords 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 the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.

Amen

Closing Blessing - Padre Andrew McMullon



A private letter from the front, received in Paeroa recently, contained the following:—"I got back to the company yesterday and at once set about looking for Captain Parry, only to be informed he was missing and a search party had gone out to look for him. It returned soon after my arrival with the fatal news, "They found him dead." We have reason to be proud of Ernie. I am told by his brother officers that he acted gallantly right throughout the advance, and was recommended for a D.S.O. The thing was most unfortunate. The advance was over and the company relieved, and was on its way out of the lines when Parry, with a sergeant, went to have a look round to see if all the men were safely away, when a shell came and caught both he and the sergeant.



CAPTAIN E. C. PARRY, of Paeroa,
Ohinemuri. Killed in action on Oc-
tober 6.



Family Postscript – Sergeant Joseph Parry

Sergeant Pilot Joseph Parry, the younger son of Ernest and Mary Parry, was killed in action in the North Sea on 29 September 1941. After a bombing raid on Genoa in Northern Italy, while piloting his 99 Squadron, Wellington Bomber, Sergeant Parry's aircraft crashed into the sea near Landsmeer, the Netherlands. All members of the crew were killed. Sergeant Joseph Parry's body was never recovered. He is remembered on the Air Forces Memorial, Runnymede Memorial, in Englefield Green, United Kingdom.



Sergeant-Pilot J. S. Parry, of Paeroa, missing on operations.





12/2904 Captain Ernest Charles Parry

1st Battalion, Auckland Regiment, NZEF

KIA 6 October 1917

Lest we Forget – Kei Wareware Totou

