



A Rededication Service for

**Corporal Bertie Frederick George Jeffs
Royal Flying Corps**

Tuesday 28 September 2021 at 10:30 hours

Douchy-les-Ayette, France

Bertie Frederick George Jeffs was born on 15 July 1895 in Headington, Oxfordshire to Francis Henry Jeffs and Amelia Elizabeth Jacobs. Bertie's father died in 1931 aged 63 and his mother died aged 75.

He was baptised on 2 August 1895 in Headington, St Andrew, Oxfordshire. Bertie had an older brother Francis who married and had one daughter. He died in Oxford aged 76 in 1970. Bertie also had a younger sister Millie, born on 21 September 1896: she died as an infant in 1897.

Bertie Jeffs was serving as the Observer aboard a Royal Aircraft Factory F.E.2b fighter aeroplane piloted by Ernest Haxton and on the afternoon of 10 October 1916 at approx. 2.40pm they were attacked by hostile forces north east of Bapaume and brought down in flames.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Douchy-Les-Ayette British Cemetery was begun in August 1918. The cemetery was enlarged after the Armistice by the concentration of graves from the battlefields of Arras and the Ancre and from other burial grounds, including Fremicourt German Cemetery, where Corporal Jeffs was initially buried.



Cpl Bertie Jeffs



An FE.2b two-seat fighter pictured high above the trenches on the Western Front

Order of Service

Conducted by

Rev'd Dr (Sqn Ldr) Kate Bruce RAF
Station Chaplain RAF Coningsby

Introduction

We have come together, family, friends, and the Royal Air Force, to give thanks for the lives of Corporal Bertie Jeffs and Flight Sergeant Ernest Haxton who died together on 10 October 1916, and to dedicate this place to their memory. As we remember their lives, devotion to service and sacrifice, we continue to commend to God's sure keeping all those who died in service of their country.

Opening Prayer

Almighty God,
you judge us with infinite mercy and justice
and love everything that you have made.
In your mercy turn the darkness of death into the dawn of new
life, and the sorrow of parting into the joy of heaven;
through our saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Reading

Read by: Flight Lieutenant Jack Bosworth XI(F) Sqn

The Song of the Aeroplane, written by Second Lieutenant Fenton Ellis Stanley Phillips, 1915

This is the Song of the Aeroplane,
As it mounts to the clouds on high,
While her engine roars,
Up above she soars,
A speck in the clear blue sky.
The breeze which rushes beneath her planes
Gives life to her slender frame;
And she sings 'Ho! Ho!'
Through the winds that blow –
The Song of the Aeroplane!

I watch the clumsy Zeppelins come
Like silver clouds the sky,
Their sides aglint
With a steely tint
From the sun which rides on high.
Then up and up, like a bird of prey,
I long to commence my game;
And I sing 'Ho! Ho!'
As a bomb I throw –
And the 'Zep' is sheet of flame.
With wings white in the setting sun
I glide to the restful earth,
And still I remain
A victorious plane
Enclosed in my wooden berth.
Admired by all with my ceaseless drone,
As queen of the skies I reign;
And I'll sing 'Ho! Ho!'
Though the winds may blow –
The Song of the Aeroplane.

Reading***John 15:12-17 (NIV)***

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. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

Reading***Ecclesiastes 3:1-8***

Read by: Corporal Christopher Arnold XI(F) Sqn

To everything there is a season,
a time for every purpose under the sun,
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 weep and a time to laugh:
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to lose and a time to seek;
a time to rend and a time to sew;
a time to keep silent and a time to speak;
a time to love and a time to hate;
a time for war and a time for peace.

Reading

Read by: Corporal Jack Ryder XI(F) Sqn

The poem by Rev E Stanley Phillips

Not dead – but sleeping.
Your fragile craft hurled headlong to the earth.
'Twas but the travail of the Soul's New Birth.
Safe – in God's keeping.

"Not lost – but gone before."
Brave pioneers in Freedom's noble strife.
Winging your way into the Larger Life,
From shore – to shore.

Not far – but very near.
"Nearer than breathing, closer than hands and feet,"
Prayer linked with prayer, heart-beat attuned to beat
Surpassing dear.

Through Cross – to Crown.
No mournful dirge attend your upward climb,
But Trumpet Blast and Triumph Song sublime,
Earth's sorrows down.

Not taken – but given.
So the whole world must make great sacrifice,
And, purged with the Fire, shall Phoenix-like arise
From Hell – to Heaven.

Address by Padre

The Act of Remembrance

Let us remember before God, and commend to his sure keeping those who have died for their country in conflict; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; and all who have lived and died in the service of humanity.

The Exhortation

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

The Silence

The Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

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

The Laying of Wreaths

The Prayers

Almighty God, we give you thanks for the lives of Bertie and Ernest and for the grace and mercy that they have received from you. For all that was good in their lives and for the treasured memories they left behind. We give thanks for their courage, devotion to duty and their sacrifice.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Almighty God, from you alone comes wisdom and understanding.

We humbly ask you to bless and inspire the hearts and minds of those who bear the responsibility of government in every land, and especially our Queen and all those in authority under her. Give to them the vision of your truth and righteousness, and guide them to work together for justice and peace.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Almighty Father, your love enfolds us in both life and death; we thank you for all the men and women who have served in the Royal Air Force and her allies, especially for those who gave their lives or health, for their families and all who have supported them.

We thank you for their sacrifice, their loyalty, their commitment, their courage and their devotion to duty. Keep us, through their example, always loyal in our service; in danger, calm; in conflict bold; in resolve, undaunted and in success, free of pride.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Almighty Father, we thank you for those whose lives were and are defended by the service of the Royal Air Force and her allies and offer our debt of gratitude for our own lives and liberty. We pray for all those who suffer as a result of war or conflict; for the injured, the wounded, the hurt and the bereaved; for the homeless and the refugee; for the fearful and the oppressed; for the prisoner and the vulnerable; for those who seek to bring relief and protection.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Prayer for the Royal Air Force

Read by: Sergeant Robert Cross XI(F) Sqn

Almighty God, who has promised that they who wait upon thee shall renew their strength and mount with wings, as eagles; we commend to thy fatherly protection all who serve in the Royal Air Force. Uplift and support them in their endeavour, that they may be a safeguard unto our most gracious Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth, and a sure defence to our homeland, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

In praise, thanksgiving, remembrance and hope, we pray for the coming of God's Kingdom in the words that Jesus taught us:

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,
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

May God grant to the living, grace;
to the departed, rest;
to the Queen, Commonwealth
and all people, peace and concord.
And to us and all his servants, life everlasting.
And the blessing of Almighty God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.
Amen.

