



A Burial Service for

**One Unknown Officer and Two Unknown Soldiers**  
The Suffolk Regiment

**One Unknown Soldier**  
The Royal Fusiliers

**One Unknown Officer and Seven Unknown Soldiers**  
of Unknown Regiments

**09:30 hours Thursday 20 June 2024**  
CWGC Wancourt British Cemetery, France

**Service conducted by Reverend Ben Norton CF**  
Chaplain to 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, The Royal Anglian Regiment

## Background

These men were found in 2019 during ongoing construction work on the outskirts of Monchy-le-Preux and were recovered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

It is likely they were originally buried in a battlefield cemetery but were accidentally missed when the graves at the nearby Quarry British Cemetery were concentrated elsewhere after the war. The burial location, just outside of Monchy-le-Preux, was immediately behind the area where the frontlines stabilised at the end of the First Battle of the Scarpe (9-14 April 1917).

Some of the men had Suffolk Regiment and Royal Fusiliers artefacts but unfortunately a majority of them could not be attributed to any regiment. It is likely that the men were killed between April-August 1917 but despite numerous attempts, the DNA samples taken from the casualties were not viable. Sadly this meant that attempting an identification was not possible so these men are to be buried as 'Known Unto God'.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Wancourt British Cemetery was initially named Cojeul Valley Cemetery or River Road Cemetery. It was established in April 1917 and used until October 1918, being in German hands from March-August 1918. At the Armistice, this cemetery contained 410 graves, but was enlarged when burials were brought in from a number of small cemeteries and isolated positions from the battlefields south-east of Arras. It is from this same area that the twelve unknown casualties being interred today were recovered.

## 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 the fallen in conflicts past.

Today we honour 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 their sacrifice.

Let us honour 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**

*Prière*

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**

*Lecture des Écritures Saintes*

Psalm 133 – A song of ascents.

How good and pleasant it is  
when God's people live together in unity!

It is like precious oil poured on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
running down on Aaron's beard,  
down on the collar of his robe.

It is as if the dew of Hermon  
were falling on Mount Zion.  
For there the Lord bestows his blessing,  
even life forevermore.

### **Scripture Reading**

*Lecture des Écritures Saintes*

John 15:9-17

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 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.

## **Address**

*Allocution*

## **Blessing of the Grave**

*Bénédiction de la Tombe*

O God, whose Son Jesus Christ was laid in a tomb: bless, we pray, this grave as the place where the bodies of your servants may rest in peace, through your Son, who is the resurrection and the life; who died and is alive and reigns with you now and for ever.

*All Amen.*

## **Commendation**

God our creator and redeemer, by your power Christ conquered death and returned to you in glory. Confident of your victory and claiming his promises, we entrust these men into your keeping in the name of Jesus our Lord, who, though he died, is now alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever.

*All Amen.*

## **The Committal**

*L'Enterrement*

We have entrusted our fallen comrades to God's mercy and now we commit their bodies to the ground: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust: in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our frail bodies that they may be conformed to his glorious body, who died, was buried, and rose again for us. To him be glory for ever.

*All Amen.*

### **The Exhortation**

#### *L'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.  
**All We will remember them.**

### **The Last Post**

#### *Sonnerie aux Morts*

### **Silence**

### **Reveille**

### **Kohima Epitaph**

#### *L'Épitaphe de Kohima*

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

### **Laying of Wreaths**

#### *Dépôts des Gerbes*

### **Collect of The Suffolk Regiment**

#### *Récitation du Suffolk Regiment*

O God, our rock and our fortress, uphold we pray Thee, thy servants of the Suffolk Regiment, that when we pass through the waters thou wilt be with us who art strong to save, and wilt set us up on a rock in time of trouble, for the love of thine only son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Collect of The Royal Fusiliers**

*Récitation du Royal 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.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Prière du Seigneur*

Trusting in the compassion of God, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

**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,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**



## **Prayers**

### *Prières*

Almighty God, protect all who serve in the Forces of the King; 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.

## **The Blessing**

### *Séparation de Dernière Bénédiction*

God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest; to the Church, The King, the Commonwealth, and all humankind, peace and concord; and to us and all his servants, life everlasting; and may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, come down upon you and all those whom you love now and always. **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.