



A Funeral Service for

Able Seaman James Cameron Robertson

Anson Battalion
Royal Naval Division

Killed in action on 28 April 1917

Orchard Dump Cemetery
France

Wednesday 11 July 2018 at 10:30 hours

Service Conducted by
The Revd Andrew Hillier RN

History

James was born on 21 April 1890 in Charles Street, Aberdeen. He was the son of James and Helen Robertson. James was the eldest of six siblings and was listed in the 1911 census as being a shop assistant.

James joined the Navy in October 1914 and after training was drafted into the Hood Battalion in July 1915. He went on to serve in Gallipoli and Northern France, being wounded several times during the war. In January 1917, he joined the Anson Battalion. It was during the fierce fighting, when the village of Gavrelle was captured, that James lost his life on 28 April 1917.

For 100 years, James' final resting place was unknown to his family until construction work taking place on the outskirts of the village of Gavrelle uncovered the remains of a British sailor. Recovered with the sailor were Anson Battalion shoulder titles. Further research showed that the location of the soldier was exactly where the Anson Battalion line was stationed during the capture of Gavrelle on 28 April 1917. Research narrowed the potential candidates down to two men. Their families were traced and DNA testing came back positive for James Cameron Robertson.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Orchard Dump Cemetery was begun in April 1917, on the new front resulting from the Battles of Arras, and was used by the units holding that front until the following November. The cemetery was greatly enlarged after the Armistice by the concentration of graves from other small burial grounds and from the surrounding battlefields, including the area where Able Seaman Robertson was killed. The site was given by the widow of a Captain in the French 72nd Infantry Regiment, killed in action in August 1914.

Welcome

John 1, 25 – 26

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.*

We are gathered here today in this place of remembrance to honour our fallen in conflicts past.

Today we remember with thanksgiving Able Seaman James Cameron Robertson who, alongside so many others, answered the call of his country, served with honour and gave his life in the service of his nation.

We will shortly commit his body to be buried. In so doing let us commit ourselves anew to remember his courage. For by so doing we honour his 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)

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.

Guns at Sea

Let me get back to the guns again, I hear them calling me,
And all I ask is my own ship, and the surge of the open sea,
In the long, dark nights, when the stars are out, and the
Clean salt breezes blow, and the land's foul ways are half
forgot, like nightmare, and I know that the world is good, and life
worthwhile, and man's real work to do,
In the final test, in nature's school, to see which of us rings true.
On shore, in peace, men cheat and lie – but you can't do that at
sea, for the sea is strong; if your work is weak, vain is the
weakling's plea of a "first offence" or "I'm only young", or "it shall
not happen again", for the sea finds out your weakness, and
writes its lesson plain.

"The liar, the slave, the slum-bred cur – let them stay ashore"
say I, "For, mark it well, if they come to me, I break them and
they die. The land is kind to soul unsound; I find and probe the
flaw, for I am the tears of eternity that rock to eternal law".

I love the touch of the clean salt spray on my hands and hair
and face. I love to feel the long ship leap, when she feels the
sea's embrace, while down below is the straining hull, o'erhead
the gulls and clouds.

And the clean wind come 'cross the vast sea space, and sings
it's song in the shrouds. But now in my dreams, besides the
sounds one always hears at sea,

I hear the mutter of distant guns, which call and call to me,
singing "Come! The day is here for which you have waited
long."

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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.

Interment

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 Able Seaman James Cameron Robertson to God's eternal keeping. We now commit his earthly remains to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Volley of Shots

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

Silence

Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

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

Wreath Laying

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

The Naval Prayer

O Eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens and rulest the raging of the sea; who hast compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end: be pleased to receive into thy almighty and most gracious protection the persons of us thy servants and the Fleet in which we serve.

Preserve us from the dangers of the sea and of the air and from the violence of the enemy; that we may be a safeguard unto our most gracious Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth and her dominions, and a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions; that the inhabitants of our Islands and Commonwealth may in peace and quietness serve thee our God;

And that we may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land with the fruits of our labours and with a thankful remembrance of thy mercies to praise and glorify thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

