



A Burial Service for

**An Unknown Soldier of The Royal Field Artillery
Killed During the Great War**

14:00 hours 20 June 2023

CWGC Guards' Cemetery, Lesboeufs, France

**Service conducted by the Reverend Roger Grafton CF
Chaplain to 14th Regiment Royal Artillery
Déroulement de la Cérémonie présidé par
le Révérend Roger Grafton CF**

The remains of this soldier were discovered north of the village of Ginchy during preliminary work to install wind turbines. The casualty was found with a shoulder title of The Royal Field Artillery, indicating that he most likely belonged to that regiment.

Extensive research carried out by JCCC showed that the casualty was most likely a Gunner belonging to or attached to 20th (Light) Divisional Artillery, who were located in 'Toc 7 Valley', where the remains were discovered, from 25 September until November 1916. Conditions in the valley were bleak, with the Gunners continuously exposed to the elements and enemy artillery fire. The book 'A History of the Twentieth (Light) Division' gives the following description of their time there:

'The batteries were in a valley about 800 yards north-east of Delville Wood, known from its map reference as Toc 7 Valley. It was a most unpleasant place. Within a length of a mile all the guns of the whole artillery covering 20th Division were crowded together, being in places only ten yards apart. The gun-pits were very rough at first, consisting of a sandbag parapet with a tarpaulin or matting over the gun. The men lived in slits in the ground, with a sheet of corrugated iron over the top and a great deal of water at the bottom. The Germans knew well enough that our guns were concentrated in this valley – the only place in the neighbourhood that gave any flash cover – and shelled the positions continually. There was great difficulty at this time in getting up ammunition, all of which had to come by night over the exposed ridge east of Delville Wood.'

DNA testing was carried out for the missing Gunners belonging or attached to 20th (Light) Divisional Artillery who were killed during this period. However, as yet, no match has been found. He will, therefore, be buried today as an unknown soldier of The Royal Field Artillery.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Guards' Cemetery was created after the capture of Lesboeuifs in September 1916. Originally consisting of 40 graves, the cemetery was greatly increased after the Armistice when isolated graves and small cemeteries from the surrounding battlefields were brought in. Sadly, over half of the burials within this cemetery, including this unknown soldier of The Royal Field Artillery, remain unidentified.

Les restes de ce soldat ont été découverts au nord du village de Ginchy lors de travaux préliminaires à l'installation d'éoliennes. Il a été trouvé avec une épaulette du Royal Field Artillery, ce qui indique que ce homme été un membre de ce régiment.

Des recherches approfondies qui ont été effectuées par JCCC ont indiqué que ce soldat était très probablement un artilleur appartenant ou attaché à 20th (Light) Divisional Artillery, qui se trouvait dans 'Toc 7 Valley', où les restes ont été découverts, du 25 septembre à novembre 1916. Les conditions dans la vallée étaient difficiles, les artilleurs étant continuellement exposés aux éléments et aux tirs de l'artillerie ennemie. Le livre 'A History of the Twentieth (Light) Division' donne la description suivante de leur séjour là-bas :

'Les batteries se trouvaient dans une vallée située à environ 800 mètres au nord-est du bois de Delville, connue sous le nom de Toc 7 Valley d'après les références de la carte. C'était un endroit très désagréable. Sur une longueur d'un mile, tous les canons de l'artillerie couvrant la 20e Division étaient entassés, n'étant par endroits séparés que de dix yards. Les trous de tir étaient très sommaires au début, consistant en un parapet de sacs de sable avec une bâche ou une natte au-dessus du canon. Les hommes vivaient dans des fentes dans le sol, avec une feuille de tôle ondulée au-dessus et une grande quantité d'eau au fond. Les Allemands savaient très bien que nos canons étaient concentrés dans cette vallée - le

seul endroit du voisinage qui offrait une couverture éclair - et ils bombardaient continuellement les positions. À cette époque, il était très difficile d'obtenir des munitions, qui devaient toutes être acheminées de nuit par la crête exposée à l'est du bois Delville.'

Des tests ADN ont été effectués pour les artilleurs appartenant ou attaché à 20th (Light) Divisional Artillery, tués au cours de cette période. Cependant, jusqu'à présent, aucune correspondance n'a été trouvée. Ce soldat sera donc enterré aujourd'hui en tant qu'un soldat inconnu du Royal Field Artillery.

Call to Worship

Appel à Adoration

We have come to this place to inter the mortal remains of a Gunner of The Royal Field Artillery, known unto God; whose life was lost near the village of Ginchy, between September and November 1916.

Today in this place we accord this man the dignity and respect he is due and commend him to the mercy and grace of God our redeemer and judge, and in the hope and life given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us.

All May the Peace of the Lord be always with you,
and also with you.

Bidding Prayer

Prière

We meet in this solemn moment to worship Almighty God, who calls those who follow Him to live lives of justice, mercy and humility;

To give thanks for the life of our fallen comrade and to commend him to God's loving and faithful care:
and through our love and prayers we remember those who grieved his loss.

All Hallow this place and those who stand here before you
today as we reflect upon man's humanity and your great
gift of life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Scripture Reading*Lecture des Écritures Saintes*

Read by Colonel Richard Harmer ADC

Regimental Colonel, The Royal Regiment of Artillery

Romans Chapter 8 vs 18, 28, 31-35, 37-39 (NRSV)

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading

Lecture de l'Évangile

Read by a Representative of the British Embassy Paris

John Chapter 15 v 9-17 (ESV)

Jesus said, 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Reading

Lecture

Read by Warrant Officer Class 1 Len Sanders
Royal Artillery Sergeant Major

The Royal Artillery Poem

Author Unknown

What manner of men are these
These Gunners of The King,
The black beret they wear with pride,
The enemy dead tells where they have been.

To join their ranks you have to prove
You can pass the course without a tear,
To know that you can be trusted
To fight by their sides and show no fear.

These men are hard but still can show
Compassion to a beaten foe,
They fight hard and fight to win
Surrender is a word they do not know.

The Royal Gunner is hard to beat
They are warriors of a special breed,
Where right and glory lead is their motto
And that motto says all it need.

If you have one for a friend
Then a friend indeed he will be too,
Treat him right and you will find
That he will sacrifice himself for you.

These men have a code of honour
That you might not understand,
But once you get to know them
You will wish you were part of that band.

Address

Allocution

The Committal

L'Enterrement

Man born of woman has but a short time to live.
Like a flower we blossom and then wither;
like a shadow we flee and never stay.
In the midst of life we are in death;
to whom can we turn for help,
but to you, Lord, who are justly angered by our sins?
Yet, Lord God most holy,
Lord most mighty,
O holy and most merciful Saviour,
deliver us from the bitter pains of eternal death.
Lord, you know the secrets of our hearts;
hear our prayer, O God most mighty;
spare us, most worthy judge eternal;
at our last hour let us not fall from you,
O holy and merciful Saviour.

We have entrusted our fallen comrade to God's mercy
and now we commit his body 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'Éxhortation

Read by Warrant Officer Class 1 Len Sanders
Royal Artillery Sergeant Major

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

Played by Sergeant Adam Desborough
Trumpet Major, King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery

Silence

Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

L'Épitaphe de Kohima

Read by Gunner Omar Cham
14th Regiment Royal Artillery

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

Laying of Wreaths

Dépôts des Gerbes

Prayers

Prières

Eternal God, we thank you for the life of our fallen comrade and for those who knew him and loved him. We thank you for your goodness and mercy that followed him all the days of his life and his ultimate faithfulness to the tasks to which you had called him.

May God give peace:

All **Amen**

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 dangers and perils of war; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen**

We pray for peace-makers and peace-keepers; those who seek to keep this world secure and free; for all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership, political, military and religious; asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve in the search for reconciliation and peace. Grant this, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our mediator and redeemer.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Prière du Seigneur

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

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 thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Collect of The Royal Regiment of Artillery

Récitation du Royal Regiment of Artillery

All **O Lord Jesus Christ,
who dost everywhere lead thy people
in the way of righteousness,
vouchsafe so to lead The Royal Regiment of Artillery
that wherever we serve,
on land or sea or in the air,
we may win the glory of doing Thy will.
Amen.**

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 people, unity, peace and concord,
and to us and all God's servants, life everlasting.
And the blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be among you all and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Go forth with hope and seek for peace in the service of
God, in the name of Christ.

All **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.

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