



A Rededication Service for

**Captain Oliver Steele
1st Battalion The Royal Berkshire Regiment
(Princess Charlotte of Wales's)**

**14:30 hours Wednesday 14 September 2022
CWGC Divisional Collecting Post Cemetery and
Extension, Belgium**

**Service conducted by The Reverend Martin Pritchard CF
Chaplain to 4th Battalion
The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment**

Captain Oliver Steele



Captain Oliver Steele was born on 7 April 1882, in Wairoa, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand. He was one of nine children born to Thomas James Steele and his wife Malvina Florence. Oliver attended Auckland Grammar School and was a keen sportsman. In 1896 he set the school record for the under 15 100 yards sprint and he was a keen swimmer. Oliver's first military service was with the Auckland College Rifles and he became an original member of the College Rifles Rugby Football Club in Remuera. He worked as an accountant to Messrs Jackson and Russell, Barristers and Solicitors, before volunteering for service in the South African war.

Oliver saw service in Africa with the Auckland College Rifles 5th New Zealand Contingent part of the New Zealand Rhodesian Field Force Artillery, serving in Rhodesia, the Cape Colony, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Oliver was Commissioned into The Royal Berkshire Regiment in May 1901 and was posted to 1st Battalion. He was promoted to Lieutenant in March 1902 and to Captain in 1910. Following the Boer War the battalion moved to India where they were stationed for eight years, returning to the United Kingdom shortly before the outbreak of the First World War.

Captain Steele arrived on the Western Front on 14 September 1914 and took part in the Battle of the Aisne. A month later 1st Battalion The Royal Berkshire Regiment were in the Ypres Salient. At 18:00 hours on 24 October 1914, the battalion took part in the capture of the ridge between Zonnebeke and Beselare. They dug in throughout the night and were heavily shelled all day on 25 October. It is recorded that Captain Steele was killed instantly by a shell.

An obituary produced by Auckland Grammar School states that the battalion was exposed to German guns: 'Captain Steele, with a few of his men, rushed forward and succeeded in removing the sights from the guns, thus rendering them useless. He succeeded in regaining the trenches, and was

reorganising his men, when he was struck by a large shell.' One of his men told the Reading Mail that 'You would hear him giving us words of encouragement. As for taking cover, that was the last thing he thought of. He would walk through under very heavy fire, and would see that everything was done properly.'

After the war, Captain Steele's remains were concentrated into Divisional Collecting Post Cemetery and Extension, where he was buried as an unknown Officer of The Royal Berkshire Regiment. As Captain Steele was missing, he was commemorated on the Menin Gate. However, new evidence has shown that this is the grave of Captain Steele. Today we will remember him, and his grave will be rededicated.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission Divisional Collecting Post Cemetery was begun by field ambulances of the 48th (South Midland) and 58th (London) Divisions in August 1917. It continued in use until January 1918 and at the Armistice contained 86 graves. Between 1924 and 1926, the original cemetery was considerably enlarged when casualties, including Captain Steele, were brought in from the surrounding battlefields and some small burial grounds in the area. It is only now that his grave can be identified by name.

A message from the family of Captain Steele:

'Captain Oliver Steele's immediate family would have been very grateful for the effort and dedication involved in his Service today. As an eldest brother he was a hero, particularly to his youngest brother. For us, it has been a privileged journey of togetherness and fulfilment, of family endurance and of remembering those gone before us.

R.I.P. Uncle Oliver.'

Call to Worship

Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run
and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.
Isaiah 40.31

Jesus says: 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to
you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them
be afraid.' The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All **And also with you.**

We look not to the things that are seen, but the things
that are unseen: For the things that are seen are
transient but the things that are unseen are eternal.
Today we remember before God, Captain Oliver Steele,
we give thanks for his life, we honour his service to our
nation and we give thanks for his example of dedication
and selfless commitment especially on 25 October 1914
when he gave his life for so many others. Father in
Heaven, we give you thanks for your servant Oliver, for
the example of his life, for the love and grace you
granted him and the peace in which he now rests.
As we recall his life lived in the service of others may we
be inspired by his example and may his memory fill our
hearts with determination to live as best as we can and
to serve those around us.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Bidding Prayer

Stir up your power, O God, and come among us. Heal
our wounds, calm our fears and give us peace; through
Jesus our Redeemer.

All **Amen.**

Gospel Reading

Read by Group Captain John Dickson
Defence Attaché to Belgium and Luxembourg

Luke Chapter 16 v 1-13 (NIV)

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager

Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.' "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg—I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.'

"So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' "Nine hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied. "The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.' "Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?' "A thousand bushels of wheat," he replied. "He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.'

"The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings."

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been

trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Reading

Read by Second Lieutenant Hayder Al-Azzawi
8th Battalion The Rifles

Pastures Green

By Mike Subritzky

Pastures green, poppy fields,
graves for soldiers fallen.
A wooden cross marks a resting place,
a thousand miles from loved ones.
Rusted wire, silent guns, trenches torn and broken.
A helmet rests on a rifle butt,
the tools of war unspoken.
Anzac Days, colours blaze,
their battle honours borne on.
Old men March and a bugle plays,
In memory of the fallen.

Scripture Reading

Read by Major Andrew Holsgrove

4th Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment

Ephesians Chapter 6 v 10-17 (NRSV)

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Address

The Act of Dedication

We remember with thanksgiving at God's throne of grace all those who have died during operational service. We remember this day especially Captain Oliver Steele. Merciful God, you have made us all and given your Son for our redemption. We once again commend our brother to your perfect mercy and wisdom and rededicate his final resting place into your care. For in you alone we put our trust.

The Exhortation

Read by Second Lieutenant Hayder Al-Azzawi
8th Battalion The Rifles

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

Played by Lance Corporal Stephen Elliott
8th Battalion The Rifles

The Silence

The Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

Read by Second Lieutenant Hayder Al-Azzawi
8th Battalion The Rifles

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

Laying of Wreaths

Prayer

Teach us, good Lord, to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labour and not to seek for any reward, save that of knowing that we do your will. *Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556)*

All **Amen.**

The Collect of The Royal Berkshire Regiment

Read by Major Andrew Holsgrove
4th Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment

O Eternal God, who didst summon thine ancient people before thee three times every year, and dost thrice a year rejoice thy church with the pledges of thy presence among men, grant, we beseech thee, that we, The Royal Berkshire Regiment, recalling on three days the valour of our fathers in the presence of their enemies, may every day and all our days remember thee, our creator, and rejoice in thy salvation, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's 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 thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good; render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak; help the
afflicted; honour everyone; love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing
of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
All **Amen.**



Oliver Steele



Corporal Oliver Steele, 5th New Zealand Contingent of the New Zealand Rhodesian Field Force Artillery.



Captain Oliver Steele.



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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