



A Rededication Service for

2nd Lieutenant James Ferris
16th Battalion, The Highland Light Infantry
(attached to the 97th Trench Mortar Battery)

10.30 hours 26 October 2023
Tyne Cot Cemetery, Belgium

Service conducted by Reverend (Captain) David Jeal
Chaplain to The Royal Highland Fusiliers,
2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland

The Cemetery

Tyne Cot Cemetery, the largest Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in the world, is now the resting place of more than 11,900 servicemen from the First World War.

The Cross of Sacrifice stands on a German pillbox captured by the 3rd Australian Division on 4 October 1917. After the Armistice, graves were brought in from small burial grounds and the battlefields of Passchendaele and Langemarck, including that of Second Lieutenant Ferris, which could not be identified at the time.



2nd Lieutenant James Ferris

12th October 1888 – 2nd December 1917

James Ferris was born on 12th October 1888 in Glasgow to William John Ferris, a grain storeman, and his wife Euphemia. James was the 4th of 5 children, having two older brothers, an older sister, and one younger brother.

Little survives of his military service record, but we know he joined 2nd Glasgow Battalion, Highland Light Infantry on 11th September 1914, having previously been a fruit salesman. He arrived in France a little over a year later in November 1915, and was wounded by a gunshot wound to his left leg and foot in Albert in early 1916 which resulted in him being sent back to the UK for hospital treatment. Following this treatment he joined 3rd Battalion The Highland Light Infantry (a training battalion), before being posted to 16th Battalion on 27th May 1917, a few months after receiving his commission.

At the time of his death, 2nd Lieutenant Ferris and his unit were undertaking an action to drive the enemy from the Passchendaele Ridge. Being attached to the 97th Trench Mortar Battery, he and several others were operating from a pill box towards the rear of the line. The pill box is recorded as having taken a direct shell hit at around 4.15pm on 2nd December 1917, killing 2nd Lieutenant Ferris, another Officer and seven men of other ranks.

As far as we can tell, 2nd Lieutenant Ferris didn't receive a formal burial at the time of his death, and because his resting place was unknown his name was carved onto the memorial to the missing at Tyne Cot. In 1920 his then-unidentified remains were buried nearby in the cemetery at Tyne Cot, at which time he was recorded only as a 2nd Lieutenant of the 16th Battalion, and was buried as an Unknown British Officer. Recently, his identity was re-established, and so today we are able to rededicate his grave and place a new headstone giving him back his name.

Welcome

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

We remember with thanksgiving 2nd Lieutenant James Ferris of the 16th Battalion The Highland Light Infantry, who was killed in action on 2nd December 1917. He, alongside so many others, answered the call of his country, served with honour and gave his life in the service of his nation, counting service to others greater than service of self.

His sacrifice is summed up in Jesus' words to His disciples:

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.

John 15, 12-13

Prayer

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we remember with thanksgiving all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for us in time of war. We thank you that the offering of these soldiers' lives was not in vain. By your grace, enable us this day to dedicate ourselves anew to the causes of justice, freedom and peace; and give us the wisdom and strength to build a better world, for the honour and glory of your name. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Moment of Reflection

I went to see the soldiers

– by Kenny Martin

*Read by Colonel Campbell Close,
Commander Field Army Liaison Officer, France
representing the Colonel of The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

I went to see the soldiers, row on row on row,
And wondered about each so still, their badges all on show.
What brought them here, what life before
Was like for each of them?
What made them angry, laugh, or cry,
These soldiers, boys and men.

Some so young, some older still, a bond more close than brothers
These men have earned and shared a love, that's not like any
others
They trained as one, they fought as one
They shared their last together
That bond endures, that love is true
And will be, now and ever.

I could not know, how could I guess, what choices each had made,
Of how they came to soldiering, what part each one had played?
But here they are and here they'll stay,
Each one silent and in place,
Their headstones line up row on row
They guard this hallowed place.

Scripture Reading: Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:

a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

Epitaph

– by Black Watch Poet Joseph Johnston Lee

*Read by Lance Corporal Jadon Docherty,
2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

Where the long trench twines snake-like
To keep the foe at bay,
There be the place to lay me,
And this be what you say:
Here lieth the one who loved all life,
Sunshine and song, and sword and strife;
Sea and storm, and wind and rain,
Breaking bud, and bursting grain,
Pulsing pleasure, and stabbing pain -
Who would, an he could, live all over again!

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 2nd Lieutenant James Ferris. 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 Collect of The Highland Light Infantry

*Read by Warrant Officer Class Two James McKenna
2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

O God, who measurest the seas in thy hand and weighest the mountains, hear us, we pray thee, thy servants of The Highland Light Infantry, that we may ever be ready to be offered in sacrifice, and when we come into deep waters and the floods run over us, set us up upon the rock of thy strength, even Jesus Christ our Saviour
Amen.

The Exhortation

*Read by Warrant Officer Class Two John Haveron,
2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

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

*Played by Corporal William Crawford,
2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

Silence**Flowers of the Forest**

*Played by Piper Sergeant Joe Davies
2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.*

Silence**Reveille****Kohima Epitaph**

*Read by Fusilier Johnny Blairford,
2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

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

Laying of Wreaths

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

The Blessing

Go forth in 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,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

Amazing Grace *played by Piper Sergeant Joe Davies*



The Ministry of Defence, through the Joint Casualty & 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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