

# News story: Graves of 2 soldiers killed 4 years apart during the Great War are rededicated a century later

The resting places of Lieutenant (Lt) John Gillis Butt MB and Lance Corporal (LCpl) Leonard Thomas Courtney, were honoured yesterday (Tuesday 9 October) during separate rededication services at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Hoge Crater Cemetery and Stasegem Communal Cemetery, both in Belgium.

The services, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, were conducted by the Reverend Tim Flowers CF, Chaplain 4th Battalion The Mercian Regiment.

Rosie Barron, JCCC said:

With the centenary of the armistice which ended the First World War now only a month away, it has been a privilege to organise these services and to reflect on the bravery of these 2 men.

Lt Butt was killed at the start of the great war, LCpl Courtney at the end. Their deaths represent 2 very different phases of the war: 1 of optimism and excitement, the other of weariness and relief that it would soon be over. Today we honour their commitment to duty and join with their families in honouring their sacrifice.

## **Lieutenant John Gillis Butt MB**

The rededication service at Hoge Crater Cemetery was attended by Lt Butt's great nephew, Nicolas Previt , as well as representatives from the 16 Medical Regiment, Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC).

Nicolas Previt , great nephew of Lt Butt said:

This was a wonderful service and I am thrilled to know that John has finally been put to rest. The service was made extra special by the presence of so many people. It has brought closure to all the family.



Nicolas Previt  at the graveside of his great uncle, Lieutenant Butt, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Lt Butt was commissioned as a newly qualified doctor into the RAMC on 31 July 1914, aged 24 and just 4 days before the outbreak of the First World War. He was attached to 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards and disembarked in Belgium on 7 October 1914. Within a few weeks he found himself on the frontline of the First Battle of Ypres.

On the morning of 29 October 1914, the Germans attacked the positions of 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards near the village of Gheluvelt. Lt Butt and his orderly were tending to a wounded senior officer when they were shot and killed by the enemy. Now behind German lines, his body was not recovered until after the war, and he was listed as missing until his death was presumed in 1916. He is commemorated on the Menin Gate and was buried as an unknown Lieutenant of the RAMC.



Reverend Tim Flowers conducted the rededication service for Lieutenant Butt, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The Reverend Tim Flowers said:

As we approach the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War, it is a great testament to the work that continues to be done to identify and honour those who fell all those years ago. For the family of Lt John Gillis Butt, it brings to an end a story that began at the very beginning of the war. Although the family have known that he had fallen, it is fitting that they now know his final resting place and that we are able to give him the service that his service so richly deserved. Now known to the family as well as known unto God.

### **Lance Corporal (LCpl) Leonard Thomas Courtney**

LCpl Courtney was serving with 4th Battalion The Worcestershire Regiment when he was killed near Stasegem on 20 October 1918, he was 23 years old. Just 3 weeks before the end of the Great War the German Army was all but defeated as the stalemate had been broken and the Allies were advancing eastwards.



Representatives from the Mercian Regiment and the British Embassy attended the rededication service for Lance Corporal Courtney, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

LCpl Courtney was buried in Stasegem Communal Cemetery as an unknown Lance Corporal of The Worcestershire Regiment and commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

The service at Stasegem Communal service was attended by his great niece, Jan Courtney, and nephew, Doug Courtney, as well as representatives from the Mercian Regiment.



Douglas and Jan Courtney at the graveside of their great uncle, Lance Corporal Courtney, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The Reverend Tim Flowers said:

In a few weeks' time we will commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the end of the Great War. Somehow when we remember those who lost their lives so close to the Armistice it seems even more poignant. For the family of Thomas Courtney, the heartbreak must have been even harder to take. Today it is a real privilege as Padre to 4 Mercian that I can acknowledge the life and sacrifice of Thomas Courtney who was a member of one of our antecedents The Worcestershire Regiment. Now known to the family as well as known unto God.

Research and confirmation by the JCCC

The final resting places of the 2 soldiers came to light after a researcher submitted evidence regarding their whereabouts. Further investigations were undertaken by the JCCC and the National Army Museum to corroborate the submitted evidence and the identification of the 'Unknown Soldier' graves were finally confirmed by the JCCC.

Mel Donnelly, CWGC said:

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission remembers the grief and loss

felt by the families of Lieutenant Butt and Lance Corporal Courtney a century ago. We are privileged that their descendants are here today in the CWGC's Hooge Crater Cemetery and Stasegem Communal Cemetery to rededicate their graves. Each is now marked with a named headstone bearing a personal inscription chosen by their family. The CWGC will care for their graves on their behalf, in perpetuity.

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## [News story: Defence Minister calls on 'unsung heroes' to help military respond to new threats](#)

Opening the Ministry of Defence's LOGNET conference on military logistics, he said the UK would need the industry to stay ahead of the game for the country to retain its ability to respond quickly to threats from the likes of extreme terrorists and rogue states.

Today's event, the fifth of its kind, brought together 250 leading industry and military figures from the defence logistics community. New technologies from 14 companies and departments were showcased including autonomous resupply robots and pioneering logistics software.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Our world-class Armed Forces are able to rapidly respond to unpredictable threats like terrorists and rogue states, and even humanitarian disasters like the recent tsunami in Indonesia.

We've got to move quickly when crisis strikes, and the logisticians are the unsung heroes behind those on the frontline, ensuring everything runs smoothly so they are there and ready to respond. This conference brings together some of the brightest minds in the sector as we look to spur them on to ensure we remain a world-leading military.

The UK is currently running around 30 logistics operations worldwide, with 15,000 people in the UK, in Africa, and in South East Asia delivering humanitarian aid and disaster relief as well as taking part in major Operations and Exercises. Just last week the MOD deployed an A400M transport aircraft and a team of military experts to Indonesia to help with the aftermath of the earthquake tsunami.

The Armed Forces are continually put through their paces in huge exercises such as the recently launched Saif Sareea in Oman to identify logistical best practice and uncover challenges faced on the modern battlefield. This ensures UK logistics systems are tested in the toughest of operational environments. These exercises help inform and steer the agenda for LOGNET events.



Defence Minister Stuart Andrew opens the LOGNET conference. Crown copyright.

Main areas of interest in the fifth LOGNET conference included:

- Defence's innovation agenda
- Autonomy and robotics
- Accelerating logistic innovation
- Routes to market
- Modernising defence support

LOGNET is the MOD's support engagement and future development event for the defence support network. It is designed to improve the understanding of UK defence's support requirements, pursue knowledge of developments in academic and commercial capability, whilst reinforcing partnerships through continued engagement. Its outcome is to assist defence in arguing the case for the UK to maintain a credible, highly capable and value for money support capability.

Also speaking at LOGNET was the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Gordon Messenger who focussed on the importance of logistics support to our Armed Forces and how it ensures the UK maintains its military edge over adversaries.

General Sir Gordon Messenger said:

The ability to meet any threat in the shortest amount of time with the necessary volume of personnel and military hardware is critical to our deterrent posture. This can only be achieved with robust and proven logistics support. LOGNET helps build crucial closer links between academia, industry and defence which ensures our Armed Forces have the support network they need.

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## [News story: Defence Secretary announces Devonport will home all new Type 26 frigates](#)

The eight Type 26 warships will start being delivered to the Royal Navy from the mid-2020s, heralding yet another new era in the role of a base which has played a central role in the defence of the UK for hundreds of years – from the Napoleonic wars to the Falklands Conflict.

The 6,900-tonne frigates will be world-class anti-submarine warships and will provide cutting-edge protection for the likes of the UK's nuclear deterrent and the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, with the ability to conduct a whole range of other operations anywhere in the world.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The largest Naval Base in western Europe, Devonport is the lifeblood of Plymouth and is as synonymous with this city as it is with our famous Royal Navy.

Ships have set sail from Devonport's dock to defend our great nation for hundreds of years, and I can reveal that the truly world-class Type 26 frigates will follow in their wake.

We are living in increasingly dangerous times, with threats intensifying both on and beneath the water. Plymouth should be in no doubt that it will be right at the heart of Britain's fight for a safer world by homing these formidable warships.

Devonport has been supporting the Royal Navy since 1691, with the vast site covering more than 650 acres with four miles of waterfront. Alongside frigates, it is home to Britain's survey vessels and amphibious ships. Recently the Defence Secretary put to bed any speculation about the future of

amphibious assault ships HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion by announcing he is protecting them.

The Base employs 2,500 people, supporting around 400 local firms and generating around 10% of Plymouth's income. It is a key part of defence's huge footprint in the South West, where the MOD spends £5.1bn with industry – more than in any other part of the country.

The eight Type 26s will replace the current anti-submarine warfare Type 23 frigates. They will make up the next-generation of the Navy's fleet, along with a first batch of five Type 31e frigates. The decision on where the Type 31e frigates will be based is still to be made.

The first Type 26 ships have already been ordered for £3.7 billion from BAE Systems' yards on the Clyde. The first four have already been named as HMS Glasgow, HMS Cardiff, HMS Belfast and HMS Birmingham. The flexible design of the frigates will also enable these capabilities to be adapted to counter future threats, and the ships will benefit from the latest advances in digital technology.

The formidable anti-submarine warship will include an embarked helicopter, powerful sonar detection systems, ship and helicopter-launched torpedoes and a design which makes the Type 26 extremely difficult for enemy submarines to detect.

The move follows the announcement last year that the eight Type 23 ships fitted with a towed array sonar tail would all be based in Devonport, making the site a centre of excellence in anti-submarine warfare. The five general purpose Type 23 frigates are now based in Portsmouth, which is also the home of the UK's Type 45 Destroyers and new aircraft carriers.

Australia recently decided to build nine of the British-designed Type 26 warships, confirming the world-leading capability they will offer. The deal, which could be worth up to £20 billion, has been hailed as the biggest Naval ship deal for a decade.

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## **News story: New £1bn deal to support Navy operations will support over 700 British jobs for a decade, Defence Minister announces**

The contracts, which will secure over 700 jobs at shipyards across the country, will support the UK's Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships and the Royal Navy's Survey and Hydrographic Fleet. The deal covers 17 ships and will

improve how spares, repairs and maintenance work are carried out.

The successful companies will work on the ships at dockyards around the UK to ensure they are serviced and fitted with the latest equipment and systems, whether they are undergoing a refit, undertaking training or on operations.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

This £1bn deal secures work for some of our world-leading shipyards into the next decade, supporting over 700 jobs for workers to ensure our ships remain at sea to defend the nation. This vital work is not only great news for our Navy, but also underlines the importance of defence to our national skills and prosperity.

Agreements following a competition include expected to be worth:

- £357 million with Cammell Laird in Birkenhead to support the RFA's Fort and Wave class tankers
- £262 million also with Cammell Laird in Birkenhead, to support the RFA's new fleet of four 39,000-tonne Tide class tankers
- £239 million with A&P in Falmouth to support the RFA's Bay class landing ships as well as the casualty ship RFA Argus and Royal Navy ocean survey vessel HMS Scott
- A £150 million contract with UK Docks Ltd on Tyneside to support the survey ships HMS Echo and Enterprise and the ice patrol ship HMS Protector.

The deal is expected to deliver savings worth over £100M for defence, with agreements including delivering improved support and greater efficiency in ways such as new support solutions and improved performance targets. The whole contract is underpinned by a robust set of performance measures to ensure continued value-for-money.



HMS Protector. Crown copyright

In addition to the four already signed, a further three contracts under the Future In Service Support (FISS) project are expected to be signed within the next year. The news is the latest development in supporting the nation's military ships, after the MOD unveiled a new model worth around £1 billion to support the Royal Navy fleet and sustain over a thousand British jobs.

Defence Equipment and Support acting Chief of Materiel Ships, Neal Lawson said:

Through the placing of these contracts and making changes to the way we provide support under this agreement, we will be able to deliver significant financial benefits.

These include savings expected to be more than £100 million over the course of ten years, as well as improvements in the performance, reliability, safety and sustainability of the RFA and hydrographic fleets.



RFA Tidespring. Crown copyright

Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels supply all Royal Navy ships from the Queen Elizabeth class carriers to destroyers, frigates and patrol vessels with fuel, ammunition, food and spares, wherever they are in the world. They also undertake disaster relief, counter-piracy, counter-narcotics and humanitarian operations around the world.

Hydrographic vessels conduct oceanographic survey duties and safeguard the integrity of the UK's territorial waters, while the Ice Patrol Ship, HMS Protector, is the MOD's sole capability in the ice.

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## [Press release: UK deepens defence cooperation with Germany](#)

Gavin Williamson, alongside his German counterpart Ursula von der Leyen, signed a Joint Vision Statement today deepening the already strong UK-German relationship and increasing defence cooperation across a range of areas, from tackling violent extremism to building new military capabilities.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Although we are preparing to leave the EU, our commitment to European security is resolute.

The statement signed today strengthens UK-German ties and bolsters the defence of two key NATO partners. This is an alliance we both hold dear.

The Defence Secretary also attended a demonstration from UK and German personnel who form part of the combined river crossing capability in Minden – a capability vital to NATO operations. The visit comes after the announcement that the British Army will be permanently based in the country beyond 2020.

The events in Germany followed a meeting of NATO Defence Ministers in Brussels, in which Mr. Williamson stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Allies in condemnation of reckless and indiscriminate Russian cyber-attacks.

At NATO HQ, he discussed the importance of the alliance being ready to respond not only to the threats from the East but also from the South. He announced that the British Army would be deepening cooperation with partners through linking 1 Div HQ, which leads overseas military capacity building, to NATO's emerging Defence Capacity Building initiatives.

He also attended NATO's Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), consulting with counterparts to ensure the alliance has the necessary tools and procedures in place to respond to a nuclear crisis.