

[News story: Durham Light Infantry and Bedfordshire Regiment Soldiers who fought in world war 1 are laid to rest a century later](#)

The remains of 2 unknown British soldiers were given a dignified burial service earlier today (Thursday 15 March), over 100 years after their deaths. The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, was conducted by The Reverend John Swanston CF, Chaplain to the 1st Battalion The Rifles.



The Reverend John Swanston CF, 1st Battalion, The Rifles, leads the service for the two unknown British soldiers, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Both of these men were laid to rest today in a ceremonial burial with full military honours at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Orchard Dump Cemetery in France.



Members of the 3 Rifles Regiment standing by the coffin of the unknown Durham Light Infantry soldier, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Louise Dorr, JCCC said:

It is always a source of great personal sadness when we have to accept that we have been unable to identify a soldier who made the greatest sacrifice and paid the ultimate price.

We might not know who they are, but they were loved by somebody. It is fitting that members of their military family from the Royal Anglian Regiment and The Rifles are here today to pay tribute and to see them laid to rest with honour and dignity.



Members of the 3 Rifles Regiment prepare to lower the coffin of the unknown Durham Light Infantry soldier, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The 2 soldiers were both found at Gavrelle near Arras. The first was found in July 2016. Based on the artefacts also found at the time which included a Durham Light Infantry shoulder title and cap badge, plus a T7 (7th Battalion) badge, it was thought that he died in September 1918 from when only 2 soldiers from the 7th Battalion are still missing. DNA testing has proved that it is neither of these soldiers.



Members of the 3 Rifles Regiment lower the coffin of the unknown Durham Light Infantry soldier, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The second soldier was found in September 2016. In his uniform pocket was a Bedfordshire Regiment cap badge. It is thought that he died in the Battle of Gavrelle in April 1917, but there are still too many Bedfordshire soldiers missing from that time for an identification to be made.



Royal Anglians Regiment folding the flag for the unknown Bedfordshire soldier, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Brigadier Rob Thomson, Defence Attaché, Paris said:

It is a privilege as both a serving Rifleman and UK Defence Attaché to France to participate in this solemn ceremony, as we rebury with full honours these courageous men who paid the ultimate price whilst serving their country alongside their comrades in arms to protect the liberty of Europe 100 years ago.

Mel Donnelly, CWGC said:

Today these soldiers, unknown but not forgotten, will be laid to rest alongside their comrades at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Orchard Dump Cemetery. They have been buried with the honour and dignity their sacrifice deserves and the CWGC will care for their grave, and the graves and memorials to all those who died, with that same honour and dignity forever. We will remember them all.

Captain Patrick Keating, Adjutant 3 Rifles, successor regiment to the Durham Light Infantry, said:

It is an immense honour for Riflemen of 3 RIFLES to be involved in the burial of this unknown soldier of the Durham Light, who faithfully served his country over 100 years ago. It is humbling to think of this sacrifice and the debt which the country owes him and we are proud that we in the RIFLES carry on the traditions of the Durham Light Infantry and our other antecedents to this day.

Headstones for the unknown soldiers have been provided by the CWGC, who will now care for their final resting place in perpetuity.

Press release: Defence Secretary announces innovative threat detection system for the Army's newest armoured vehicle

Updated: Tagged Defence Equipment and Support as a supporting organisation.

The Defence Secretary has today announced a £3.7 million deal to equip the Army's next generation armoured vehicle with the latest in automated threat warning systems.

Thales UK has signed a contract with General Dynamics Land Systems-UK for the installation of its Acusonic sensor, a vehicle-mounted acoustic shot detection system, on the £4.5 billion Ajax family of armoured fighting vehicles.

The Ajax Shot Detection System will be manufactured at Thales in Templecombe in Somerset, which employs more than 700 people in highly-skilled manufacturing and technical roles.

Designed to accurately sense and report the direction of incoming enemy fire, the system will give the vehicle's crew the critical situational awareness to react to the threat. Its innovative sensing system is based on Thales's world-class sonar technology that provides the 'ears' for ships and submarines around the world.

Each Ajax will be fitted with three Acusonic sensors, giving the crew a 360-degree threat-detection capability.

Defence Secretary, Gavin Williamson, said:

> I am pleased to announce today that we will be spending almost £4million with Thales and General Dynamics Land Systems-UK to deliver the Ajax Shot

Detection System, which can sense enemy gunfire and protect troops using our next generation armoured vehicles.

Under the terms of the contract, 735 Acusonic systems are now on order for integration onto Ajax. Thales is already on contract to supply the primary and secondary sighting systems on the vehicle.

The six variants in the Ajax programme – Athena, Ajax, Ares, Apollo, Atlas and Argus – are due to come into service in 2020, providing a full suite of medium armoured vehicles and capabilities.

They will be the ‘eyes and ears’ of the British Army on the battlefields of the future.

The new vehicle will give the army enhanced intelligence, surveillance, protection, target acquisition and reconnaissance capabilities.

Major General Colin McLean, Director Land Equipment for Defence, Equipment and Support, the government’s procurement agency, said:

Ajax will deliver a step-change in versatility, agility and protection for our soldiers. Integrating this new sensor on to our family of Ajax vehicles, which will provide critical situational awareness, is another innovation we are investing in to ensure that British soldiers have the very best equipment to maintain their competitive advantage on the battlefields of today and the future.

Ends

Notes for editors

- General Dynamics Land Systems–UK, as the prime contractor for Ajax, was awarded the contract to provide the Ajax family of armoured vehicles in 2014.
- Thales UK has already been selected by General Dynamics Land Systems–UK to supply the primary sighting system for Ajax, and by Lockheed Martin UK, the sub-contractor responsible for the design and manufacture of Ajax turret, for the secondary sighting system.
- For more information contact the MOD News Desk on 0207 218 7907 or the Defence Equipment & Support Press Office on 01179130537.
- For the latest news follow us on Twitter at [@DefenceES](#) and [@DefenceHQ](#).

[News story: Defence Secretary boosts](#)

Britain's chemical capability as threat intensifies

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has announced measures to maintain the UK's world-leading chemical analysis and defence capability, as he warned of the intensifying threats the country faces in his first keynote speech in the role.

Whilst outlining his vision for the ongoing Modernising Defence Programme on a Policy Exchange platform at Rolls-Royce's Bristol factory, the Defence Secretary claimed that the 'reckless attack in Salisbury' should leave the country in no doubt of the threat which Russia poses to our citizens, in addition to other dangers from across the globe.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The choice before us as a nation is simple – to sit back and let events overtake us or step forward. Our Modernising Defence Programme will make sure our country can respond to the changing nature of warfare and the new threats we face to British interests. Russia, in particular, is ripping up the rulebook – we only have to look at the reckless attack in Salisbury.

Today I can announce we are investing £48 million in a new Chemical Weapons Defence Centre to maintain our cutting-edge in chemical analysis and defence. I've also made the decision to offer the anthrax vaccine to our forces at the highest readiness, providing them with vital protection against a deadly danger. By using all our power, hard and soft, Britain will continue bringing light to a darkening world.

The Defence Secretary praised the bravery and professionalism of the Armed Forces in their role supporting the police in their investigation into the poisoning of Sergei Skripal, as well as commending the expertise of Britain's world-renowned scientists from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) at Porton Down.

In light of the response to the attempted murder, he has announced that DSTL will receive £48 million of extra funding to invest in a brand new 'Chemical Weapons Defence Centre' at Porton Down to ensure the UK retains its world leading capability in chemical analysis and defence.

With main construction on the Centre set to begin next month, it will go on to contain cutting-edge chemical analysis laboratories with the capability to identify any chemical agent through forensic analysis.

With the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threat growing from a range of state actors, the Defence Secretary also announced that

thousands of troops held at high readiness will be vaccinated against anthrax. This will ensure that troops are both protected and are ready to deploy to areas where the risk of an anthrax attack exists.

In the face of intensifying global threats, the Defence Secretary launched the Modernising Defence Programme earlier this year, which will ensure the UK Armed Forces can meet the complex and evolving challenges that Britain and its allies are confronted with.

With headline conclusions expected in the Summer, the Defence Secretary today outlined how the programme will see 'a more productive, harder-hitting Joint Force able to counter conventional threats and deal with new challenges'.

He spoke about 'taking our intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability to the next level' and further developing the ability to 'create and counter the narratives so central to modern conflict', adding that investment will be needed in the likes of 'autonomous systems', 'game-changing technology' and 'more advanced and more capable armoured vehicles, more drones as well as stealth fighters and state-of-the-art anti-submarine ships.'

Ahead of the speech he also toured the Rolls-Royce factory meeting workers and apprentices. The site supports engines for the likes of the Typhoon and A400M aircraft, the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers and the Type 26 frigate programme, and makes the lift system for the F-35 fighters jets which will allow them to vertically take-off from the carriers.

The Defence Secretary used the opportunity to praise the role of Rolls-Royce and emphasised that working with industry and boosting and protecting jobs in the defence sector would also be a key part of the Modernising Defence Programme.

He also announced that the department will be spending almost £4million with Thales and General Dynamics Land Systems-UK to deliver a Shot Detection System for the new Ajax armoured vehicles, which can sense enemy gunfire and protect troops.

You can read the full speech here [Link](#)

[Speech: Hard as well as soft power: the case for modern defence](#)

1. BRITAIN'S PROUD HISTORY

The United Kingdom has a proud history on the world stage. We helped defeat tyranny in two world wars and communism in the Cold War. We have shielded the

most vulnerable from Kosovo to Sierra Leone. We helped liberate millions from the shackles of oppression and exported democracy, tolerance and justice around the world. In the process, Britain alongside our allies ushered in a period of peace and prosperity across our continent unparalleled in its history

2. OUR ARMED FORCES ARE STILL DELIVERING FOR US TODAY

Today, our Armed Forces continue to uphold this proud British tradition. They are keeping us safe across the world. Our pilots are destroying terrorist targets in Iraq and Syria and policing Eastern European skies against an increasing threat from Russia.

Our soldiers stand sentinel with our NATO Allies in Estonia and Poland to deter this threat. We are strengthening the security of Afghanistan and, in South Sudan, helping establish stability and giving democracy the chance to grow and flourish.

Our sailors are countering international piracy, policing our waters and securing safe passage for the ships that support our global trade.

Beneath the waves our nuclear submarines go undetected, our submariners on patrol every day of every year providing our ultimate defence against the most deadly dangers to our way of life

In the last few weeks alone our forces have provided vital assistance in the wake of Storm Emma and are using their expertise to assist the ongoing criminal investigation following the horrific attack in Salisbury.

I want to thank each and every one of them for the dedication and commitment they have shown our nation.

3. THREATS INCREASING

Continuing to deliver for the Armed Forces is imperative – especially in a world where the threats are growing.

When it comes to non-state actors we're seeing a generational shift with terrorist organisations able to access increasingly sophisticated weapons.

And state-based dangers are increasing. Back in 2010 we did not believe they posed us a credible threat. With the benefit of hindsight, this can, at best, be described as naive.

China is pushing for superpower status, restructuring the People's Liberation Army, pushing towards the Indian Ocean and employing "sharp power" including military, media and economic pressure against any challenger.

Iran's proxy military presence in Iraq, Syria and Yemen is well known.

North Korea has demonstrated an active global cyber capability while its

nuclear actions are destabilising the international order, flouting decades' worth of non-proliferation treaties.

And then there is Russia.

At a time when its economy is under pressure, it is still prioritising military expenditure, investing in highly capable equipment across all domains including long-range surface to air missiles, T-90 tanks, new advanced submarines, long-range precision strike systems and ISKANDER ballistic missiles, a new range of BLACKJACK strategic bombers and the new nuclear systems President Putin recently boasted about in his state of the nation address.

What is also clear is that the Kremlin is ripping up the international rule book. Using its growing hybrid capabilities to subvert, undermine, and influence countries around the world. Its cyber operations are active and brazen. It uses social media to muddy the waters and spread confusion.

Last year Russia's military intelligence organisation directed the NotPetya ransomware activity. Overwhelming systems in Ukraine from its power grid to its postal service and causing hundreds of millions of pounds of damage to companies around the world including here in the UK

But Russia is capable of much more. It is already increasingly using proxies to undermine sovereign states. Its involvement in the Ukraine conflict has cost tens of thousands of lives.

In Syria, we're seeing a humanitarian crisis where Russia is using private military companies such as the Wagner Group to reduce their liability and limit criticism on the world stage.

Meanwhile, Russia is also using its operatives insidiously to interfere in the political processes of other nations.

Security authorities have compelling evidence to show Russia was involved in the attempted 2016 coup in Montenegro, just prior to that country's joining NATO.

And, if we doubted the threat Russia poses to our citizens, we only have to look at the shocking example of their reckless attack in Salisbury.

4. WE MUST HAVE THE CAPABILITY

But against this backdrop of threats, we shouldn't forget that our Armed Forces remain truly world class and we are giving them the capabilities to respond

For example, we know the chemical threat doesn't just come from Russia but from other actors so we're evolving the capability to meet that danger.

I made the decision to offer the anthrax vaccine to our forces at the highest readiness providing them with vital protection against a deadly danger

And today I can announce we are building on our world class expertise at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory in Porton Down.

We are investing £48 million in a new Chemical Weapons Defence Centre to maintain our cutting edge in chemical analysis and defence.

We've brought together Defence's world-renowned explosive ordnance expertise with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear specialists.

And we are continuing to invest and explore new ways and new capabilities to deal with this threat.

More broadly, our Armed Forces are internationally recognised as having an almost matchless combination of capability and experience, able to field a well-equipped Army division, with armoured brigades, strike brigades, and an air assault brigade, able to project power at distance through an expeditionary air group, based on the state-of-the-art Typhoon and the new F35 Lightning II that will soon embark on our new aircraft carriers.

Those carriers, in turn, will form part of a hard-hitting maritime task group including modern destroyers, frigates, submarines and commando forces.

All this plus the world's best Special Forces and some of the most advanced intelligence gathering and analytical capabilities in the Alliance.

These are all the hallmarks of a serious military nation:

able to conduct first night, first strike attacks with the technology to go into contested air, sea or land space to project power at range from the UK and make a major contribution to deterring threats not just in the Euro-Atlantic area but across the globe.

Many of these forces are on operations and missions today, we are making a major contribution to the campaign that has crippled Daesh, where we have helped to train over 60,000 Iraqi Security Forces, seen the first UK use of offensive cyber in combat and our airforce is operating at an intensity not seen in more than 25 years

We're training the Afghan and Nigerian security forces and even the US Marine Corps.

And this month we have deployed HMS Trenchant to the Arctic with the US Navy on ICEX 2018 – confirming our ability to operate under the ice.

Our operational experience and prowess is the reason the UK has played an important leadership role in NATO since its formation.

The reason we lead a range of international divisions and operations right around the globe.

And the reason we're the preferred operational partner for other top tier Western militaries, particularly the US and France who also acknowledge they too must modernise to stay ahead of our adversaries

5. THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

But, after a long period of relative peace, threats are increasing again.

So we have arrived at a profound moment in our history.

A crossroads where the choice before us as a nation is simple.

To sit back and let events overtake us.

Or step forward.

Seizing the moment, as we leave the European Union, to shape our vision for a bolder, more prosperous Britain.

A Britain proud of its past and confident of its future.

A Britain ready to reassert its right to do global good in a dangerous and unpredictable world.

A Britain able to protect our security and prosperity at home and abroad

After all, our Armed Forces are the face of Global Britain, enhancing our international reputation, epitomising everything that is great about our nation.

We talk about soft power and we must acknowledge the amazing work of the Foreign Office and DFID, but also of business and organisations like the British Council, in promoting Britain's values around the world.

Our Armed Forces work with them delivering aid in the wake of Hurricane Irma minesweeping in the Gulf and bringing medical support to fight Ebola in West Africa.

But let's be clear soft power only works because hard power stands behind it.

And that's what our Armed Forces deliver and why they are so important to our future.

That's why this is our moment to retain our competitive advantage and invest in hard power capabilities

6. MODERNISING DEFENCE PROGRAMME

And that is why we have launched our Modernising Defence Programme.

It will make sure our country can respond to the changing character of warfare and can deter and, if necessary, contest the new threats we face to British interests demonstrating to potential adversaries that their efforts to harm the UK are futile and not worth the costs they will incur.

So our Modernising Defence Programme will give us a more productive, more lethal, harder-hitting Joint Force able to counter conventional threats and

deal with the new challenges of asymmetric conflict. Building on our existing plans for the future of our Armed Forces.

It will balance routine every day capabilities vital to fulfilling day-to-day tasks with highly sophisticated new equipment, using technology and different approaches to counter the full range of threats to our security and to be able to operate freely in all five domains, land, sea, air, space and cyber

It will prioritise game-changing technologies giving our service personnel the edge in combat.

In practice this will mean taking our intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability to the next level, hoovering up information from beneath the waves, from space, from across the increasingly important electro-magnetic spectrum finding out what our enemies are doing in high-definition and providing artificial intelligence – enabling analysis that can stay ahead in a fast-moving world

It will mean accelerating the development of our innovative 77 Brigade – those reservists and regulars who give us the ability to win the information war – so we create and counter the narratives so central to modern conflict

It will mean investing in new more advanced and more capable armoured vehicles, more drones as well as stealth fighters and state-of-the-art anti-submarine ships in new autonomous systems – in areas like mine hunting – to enhance the protection we can provide to the Royal Navy and our NATO allies and in offensive cyber developing our capability, working in partnership with GCHQ.

Today I can announce we will be spending almost £4million with Thales and General Dynamics Land Systems-UK to deliver the Ajax Shot Detection System which can sense enemy gunfire and protect troops using our next generation armoured vehicles.

But we'll be going further developing and embedding new approaches to warfighting protecting and enhancing our information networks to give our commanders the edge over our adversaries and pursuing technological 'big bets' in big data, artificial intelligence and novel weapons.

All the while building innovation and risk tolerance into our thinking, planning and operating.

So that's my vision:

A modernised force.

Fit for the future.

Delivering the hard power to complement Britain's soft power.

Strong, balanced and innovative Armed Forces, equipped with cutting edge capabilities.

Operating confidently in the new domains of warfare.

Preparing us for the unpredictable.

Keeping British citizens safe wherever they are.

Fulfilling our global ambitions and defending Britain's national interests.

Our Modernising Defence Programme will make sure we continue leading in NATO.

Continue to be a capable and reliable contributor to missions led by close allies and partners but just as importantly continue to act independently or, lead multinational missions when the need arises.

And this weekend I will be attending a major exercise of the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force – bringing together the capabilities of nine nations that allow us to respond more rapidly and pack a more powerful punch in times of crisis.

7. STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDUSTRY

Our Modernising Defence Programme is also about our prosperity.

You cannot have prosperity without security.

What better illustration of that fact than our iconic hosts in Filton today – Rolls Royce.

The very embodiment of cutting edge, world leading technology, one of our largest suppliers of defence aerospace engines, and a driver of local economic growth, as an employer of more than 22,000 people across the UK.

Together with thousands of other brilliant British businesses they form an industry supporting one in every two hundred jobs in the UK and providing high-quality training and apprenticeships that in just over a decade generated more than £73 billion in exports.

Our Modernising Defence Programme will support the growth and competitiveness of the defence sector, helping to create and sustain jobs by transforming our partnership with industry.

It will allow us to deliver cutting-edge capability more effectively bring more small and medium sized enterprises into the supply chain encourage greater innovation and deliver long-term value whilst we drive a harder bargain for the goods and services we buy.

Since strong defence underpins our nation's prosperity, I have invited Philip Dunne to conduct a review to help demonstrate it is far more than an insurance policy, it's an investment in jobs at home and exports abroad.

He understands this sector extremely well and also brings an important independent perspective.

8. SUMMARY ON MDP

This work on the Modernising Defence Programme, delivering the right capabilities for our Armed Forces, making sure we remain a leading voice on the world stage, supporting economic growth and creating a stronger and more strategic partnership with industry will be substantially completed by the time of the NATO Summit in July, at which point we will be in a position to share some headline conclusions

I will be saying more in the weeks ahead about my vision for the Armed Forces we want to create.

I hope to engage with many of you between now and then, and would encourage you to take part in our public consultation.

9. CONCLUSION

But let's be clear – after 1990, we believed the world was going to become a safer and better place with every year that passed.

Just as we have believed there would be only one superpower.

But, as we have seen increasingly clearly over the last few years, the reality is rapidly changing.

In every continent of the world there are not just extremists but states willing to undermine our values, ideas, and everything we stand for.

To deal with this challenge we need to ensure that soft power has the hard power to back it up.

As we take a new approach to Defence in a post-Brexit world we must work harder to explain why it matters to the nation.

When I visited the Parachute Regiment recently I was told something that's stuck with me:

“Knowledge dispels fear”

So let's not give into the demons of doubt

Instead let us be confident.

Let us be determined.

And let us be resolute in our belief that, by using all our power, hard and soft, Britain will continue bringing light to a darkening world.

[News story: World war one Durham Light infantry soldier finally given military burial a century after his death](#)

Private (Pte) Thomas Telford Edmundson has been laid to rest over 100 years after he died on 26 April 1915 fighting during the Great War. Since his death aged just 20 years old, he has remained in a shallow grave in a field near the town of Zonnebeke, Belgium and today (Wednesday 14 March) he was given a ceremonial burial with full military honours at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Perth (China Wall) Cemetery in Belgium.



Sergeant Gareth Forrest, 3rd Battalion, the Rifles, reads a passage from the Order of Service, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, was conducted by The Reverend John Swanston, CF, Chaplain to the 1st Battalion the Rifles.



Riflemen from the 3rd Battalion, the Rifles, prepare to lower the coffin of Private Edmundson, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

It followed the discovery, in November 2014, of remains of a British world war 1 casualty were discovered in Zonnebeke. Artefacts discovered included a single Durham shoulder title. Following forensic samples being taken from the remains in December 2016, extensive research was undertaken by the JCCC and the Durham Light Infantry Museum/Durham County Council had narrowed the number of potential candidates to 8. Further work including genealogy was conducted by JCCC who successfully traced descendants for all 8 soldiers, all of whom provided DNA samples for comparison.

A positive match with a second cousin once removed of Pte Thomas Edmundson confirmed the identification.

Louise Dorr, JCCC said:

Pte Edmundson was one of only 8 Durham Light Infantry soldiers still missing from the Second Battle of Ypres, which is why it has been possible to identify him by means of DNA.

I'm delighted that Thomas' family have been very involved in the planning of today's service. It's been a huge pleasure to get to meet them, some of whom have travelled from Canada. Thomas Edmundson made the greatest sacrifice for his country and it's humbling to be here today with his biological and military family

to honour him.

Pte Edmundson was born in Sunderland in 1894 to George and Mary Edmundson. He enlisted into his local regiment, the Durham Light Infantry.



Riflemen from the 3rd Battalion, the Rifles, carefully fold the ceremonial Union Flag in honour of Private Edmundson, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The 1st/7th Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry was involved in the second Battle of Ypres which was fought from 22 April to 25 May 1915 for control of the strategic Flemish town of Ypres in western Belgium. The Battalion's war diary records them as camping beside the Ypres-Zonnebeke road on 25 April 1915 before advancing over open fields towards Zevenkote and Gravenstafel in the afternoon of 26 April, taking up a position north of Zonnebeke. The Battalion lost 8 soldiers in action on 26 April 1915. None of them have a known grave and their names are recorded on the Menin Gate Memorial in Ypres.



Riflemen from the 3rd Battalion, the Rifles, stand alongside dignitaries, officials, family members and members of the public during the burial service of Private Edmundson, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Family members who paid their respects to Pte Edmundson included several second cousins twice removed, some of whom had travelled from Vancouver, Canada for the ceremony. Current members of the 3rd Battalion, the Rifles paid tribute to their former colleague by providing a bearer party for his coffin.

David Hall, a cousin of Pte Edmundson on behalf of the Edmundson family said:

There was fascination and great interest at the news that human remains found in Zonnebeke, Belgium, had been positively identified as a relative of ours, Thomas Telford Edmundson. He died in the First World War, but had no known grave. We were unaware of this branch of the family, and sadly this part of Edmundson line died out, as Thomas had been the sole surviving son, a younger brother of Thomas' died in infancy. There was also a sister, but we have no information about her. Our branch of the Edmundson family is widely scattered, with some still living in Sunderland, and others living in Canada and Australia.

We have been greatly impressed by the painstaking work organised by the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) of the Ministry of Defence. They had to identify descendants of 8 Durham Light

Infantry soldiers who were killed in fighting around Zonnebeke on 26 April 1915 and had no known grave. Then they had to arrange the collection of samples for DNA testing, and this led to the identification.

Sub Lieutenant Harry Lewis, British Embassy said:

It is an honour to be involved in this service. After so much time, Pte Edmundson has been given the military funeral that he deserves. It is important that he receives a final and proper resting place, after having made the ultimate sacrifice during the first world war. This occasion is especially poignant as his family has joined us here today to remember him.

It is important that we continue to commemorate these soldiers, who 100 years ago gave their lives for freedom. Although we may not know everything about who they were, we honour their immense courage, conviction, and service. We give thanks for these extraordinary acts made by ordinary people.

Mel Donnelly, CWGC said:

More than 100 years after his death, Private Thomas Edmundson has been laid to rest at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Perth (China Wall) Cemetery with the honour and dignity his sacrifice deserves. Today's ceremony is an opportunity for us to give thanks for this brave man's service, to understand the effect his loss had on his family and his community, and to renew our determination to remember him and his fallen comrades forever.

Captain Patrick Keating, Adjutant 3 Rifles, successor regiment to the Durham Light Infantry, said:

It is an immense honour for the Riflemen of 3 RIFLES to be involved in the burial of Pte Edmundson of the Durham Light Infantry who faithfully served his country over 100 years ago. It is humbling to think of this sacrifice and the debt which the country owes him and we are proud that we in the RIFLES carry on the traditions of the Durham Light Infantry and our other antecedents to this day.

A new headstone bearing Pte Edmundson's name has been provided by the CWGC, who will now care for his final resting place in perpetuity.