

## News story: British army officer killed during WW1 is honoured as he is laid to rest

2nd Lieutenant (Lt) Eric Henderson who served with the 8th (City of London) London Regiment 'Post Office Rifles', has finally been laid to rest after he was killed on the first day of the Battle of Messines during WW1. 2nd Lt Henderson was buried during a moving ceremony at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Oak Dump Cemetery, near Ypres in Belgium.



The Royal Artillery Regiment bearer party carry the coffin of 2nd Lt. Henderson (Crown Copyright), all rights reserved

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, was held on Wednesday 16 May 2018 and was conducted by the Reverend Thomas Hiney CF, Chaplain to the 19 Royal Artillery Regiment.



The Royal Artillery Regiment bearer party take 2nd Lt. Henderson to his final resting place (Crown Copyright), all rights reserved

Nicola Nash, JCCC said:

It's a great honour to be here today to lay this brave man to rest, who fought so courageously alongside his comrades. I am particularly grateful that Eric's family were able to be here to witness him being finally laid to rest after so many years.

Although over 100 years have passed since Eric's death, we passionately believe in continuing to honour his sacrifice and the sacrifice of all members of the Armed Forces who are lost in battle.



The Royal Artillery Regiment bearer party ceremonially fold the Union Flag during the service (Crown Copyright), all rights reserved

2nd Lt Henderson initially joined the 28th Battalion London Regiment in July 1915 as a Private. He was soon commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and eventually joined the 8th Battalion London Regiment, also known as the Post Office Rifles.

2nd Lt Henderson was killed in action on 7 June 1917 aged 21 years old, near the village of Messines in West Flanders, Belgium. He was found a century later during road works in the area of Eekhofstraat, near Voormezele in Belgium. He was found with several artefacts including a silver coin that was engraved with '2nd Lt. Eric Henderson, London Regiment'. Further research, conducted by the JCCC, showed that the location of the soldier was exactly where the Oak Reserve Line was during the Battle of Messines, which corresponded with the location of Eric's regiment on the day of his death.

The beginning of the Battle of Messines was signalled by the explosion of 19 mines that had been laid under German lines. The shock of the explosion was overwhelming and devastating to the enemy. The objectives of the Post Office Rifles on the day were to capture portions of the four lines known as Oak Trench, Oak Support, Oak Reserve and Oak Switch as well as a formidable strongpoint known as the 'Dammstrasse'. Many of the casualties of the Battalion were due to machine-gun fire from the White Chateau, one of the objectives of the 7th Battalion. Some of the 1/8th took part in the attack on this Chateau, and materially assisted in its capture.



2nd Lt. Henderson's great nieces (l to r) Judith Leyman, Sarah Foot and Lucy Cocup stand with the Royal Artillery Regiment and military representatives (Crown Copyright), all rights reserved

Family members who paid their respects to 2nd Lt Henderson included his three great nieces, Lucy Cocup, Sarah Foot and Judith Leyman, as well as members of their own families.

Mrs Judith Leyman, Eric's great niece, said on behalf of the family:

Being here in Ypres, and knowing Eric's resting place, means an awful lot to us. He wasn't a dusty memory in our family, but part of our mental landscape.

Reverend Thomas Hiney CF said:

These war cemeteries of northern France and Belgium are one of the wonders of the modern world. To add to one is of course poignant. These stories still feel very alive to our national memory.

Sub Lieutenant Harry Lewis from the British Embassy in The Hague was also in attendance. Current members of the Royal Artillery Regiment paid their own tribute by providing the bearer and firing party.

Mel Donnelly, CWGC Commemorations Manager said:

For almost a century, 2nd Lieutenant Eric Henderson was remembered with honour on the CWGC's Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial to the Missing – one of tens of thousands of young men whom the fortune of war denied a known grave. When the memorial was unveiled in 1927, the assembled mourners were told 'He is not missing. He is here'. Today, thanks to the efforts of many, that statement has new meaning for Eric and his family.



2nd Lt. Henderson's headstone bearing a poignant message (Crown Copyright), all rights reserved

A new headstone bearing 2nd Lt Henderson's name has been provided by the CWGC, who will now care for his final resting place in perpetuity.

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## [News story: New stealth jets set to arrive home in Britain](#)

*Updated:* Fixed broken link

Gavin Williamson confirmed the imminent arrival of the F-35 Lightning stealth

jets to RAF Marham in Norfolk during an event at RAF Coningsby to mark the 75th anniversary of the famous Dambusters raid of World War II.

The aircraft are due to fly across the Atlantic Ocean from the United States with several air-to-air refuelling serials. They will be flown by members of the newly reformed 617 Squadron which flew, and was immortalised by, the Dambusters mission in 1943.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

75 years ago the Dambusters pushed the boundaries of what was possible. That same spirit of innovation continues today as the Dambusters of today prepare to fly the world's most advanced fighter jet in the skies over the UK.

Just like those Lancasters which played such a vital role in the Second World War, the F-35B Lightning is based on great British design, operating with futuristic technology to adapt to an increasingly dangerous world.

Today's 617 Squadron is currently training with the UK's F-35 Lightning jets in America before they start flying to the UK two months ahead of schedule. This provides a good opportunity for support staff to do extra training on the road to the jets being ready for operational service by the end of the year.



617 Squadron's Commanding Officer, Wing Commander John Butcher

617 Squadron's Commanding Officer, Wing Commander John Butcher, said:

I have the great privilege of leading a jointly manned Squadron made up of the best engineers, mission support personnel and pilots from the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy.

The original Dambuster Squadron did not know what their mission was going to be until the last moment. Yet they had to make sure they were ready and that is as true for us today. The spectrum of missions we can undertake in the F-35 will be huge and we have to make sure we are ready to do whatever is asked of us.

Read the full interview with Wing Commander Butcher which compares today's 617 Squadron with the Dambusters of 1943 [here](#)

The F-35B Lightning, multi-role fighter jet is the first to combine radar evading stealth technology with supersonic speeds and short take-off and vertical landing capability. It will be jointly manned by the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy and can operate from land and sea, forming a vital part of Carrier Strike when operating from the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers.



Wing Commander Guy Gibson, while Commanding Officer of No 617 Squadron RAF, wearing flying kit.

617 Squadron, commonly referred to as the 'Dambusters', were originally set up for the highly-specialised mission to knock out dams and disrupt

industrial production in the Ruhr Valley of Germany.

Wing Commander Guy Gibson hand-picked his bomber crews for the original 617 Squadron, who then went on to deploy the iconic 'bouncing bomb' which had to be dropped above the water at an exact height of 60 feet and a speed of 220mph. The crews successfully managed to breach the Mohne and Eder dams.

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## [News story: Team UK unveiled for the Invictus Games Sydney 2018](#)

The team of wounded, injured and sick (WIS) serving military personnel and veterans came together for the first time at Horse Guards Parade, London, this morning. They were joined by Prime Minister Theresa May who posed with the competitors for the first official team photograph and wished them luck for the Games in October.

The competitors, 64% of whom are new to Invictus, were also joined by Defence Ministers Gavin Williamson and Tobias Ellwood and former Team UK captains, including Paralympic Bronze medallist Dave Henson.

Defence Secretary, Gavin Williamson said:

I am delighted that competitors have been chosen to represent the UK at the next Invictus Games and look forward to following their journey from training camps to Sydney. The Invictus Games serve as a powerful reminder of the ability of sport to inspire and support the recovery of wounded and injured troops and veterans.

More than 451 WIS personnel and veterans applied for one of 72 places available on Team UK. The trials were attended by His Royal Highness Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, in one of their last joint appearances before the Royal Wedding.

The rigorous selection process for Team UK was based on the benefit the Invictus Games will give an individual as part of their recovery, combined with performance and commitment to training.

The 2018 UK Team Captain was also named this morning as Mark "Dot" Perkins, the former Royal Signals Corporal was discharged in 2005 and now works as a civil servant rehabilitating injured soldiers. He will compete in cycling and rowing. He said:

There are few moments in one's life when an event occurs that truly transforms your life, the Invictus Games is it. They are all about



empowerment, they empower us all to fight the chains of physical disability, to fight the intangible burden of mental illness and they empower us to focus on being the best we can be despite the scars that we all now wear.

Whilst participating in the games our scars are like Medals that we can proudly display rather than hide in shame or embarrassment. Invictus allows us to be judged on what we can achieve, rather than what we can't. To simply be selected for Team UK was an amazing achievement. To then be further selected as the Captain and to represent these incredibly brave men and women is extremely humbling, it is a huge privilege to be given this honour.

The team will compete in 11 sports: Athletics, Archery, Wheelchair Basketball, Cycling, Powerlifting, Indoor Rowing, Wheelchair Rugby, Swimming, Sitting Volleyball, Wheelchair Tennis and a new sport for 2018, Sailing.

The Royal British Legion will be supporting the friends and family, including carers, of Team UK as part of its work to recognise the vital and valuable contribution that they make to the recovery of WIS Service personnel and veterans.

The UK delegation to the Invictus Games Sydney 2018 is being delivered by a partnership comprising the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Help for Heroes, and the Royal British Legion.

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## **[News story: MOD launches biggest ever mental health awareness week with new confidential support for personnel on operations](#)**

This comes as the MOD announces a series of new joint projects with leading mental health charity Samaritans.

The initiatives, backed by £3.5 million in LIBOR funding, will build on the charity's digital technology to offer military personnel at home and on operations abroad access to confidential support. Online and face to face training in listening skills will also be offered to serving personnel and families, in order to give them confidence and expertise in encouraging others to not suffer in silence.

As part of the partnership with Samaritans, a confidential webchat service is being developed allowing military personnel, who often live in shared living

quarters, particularly when serving on operations abroad, the ability to talk in confidence with a trained staff. Pocket guides are also being produced which will provide information and emotional support for when people are in isolated locations, particularly on operations.

Samaritan volunteers with military experience will also be trained in how to address mental health issues in a military environment, based on cutting-edge research from King's College London.

**Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:**

We are absolutely committed to making sure that no one in our military suffers in silence.

I've stepped up our support for mental health in the Armed Forces, with an extra £2 million of funding a year and a new 24-hour mental health hotline.

I'm delighted to announce that personnel serving abroad will be able to access a new confidential system to help them in their time of need.

A range of events and activities will take place across the military and the MOD to mark Mental Health Awareness Week.

Civilian and military teams are being encouraged to use the week to hold conversations on mental health issues. Managers, using the recently launched Mental Health Guide for Managers, will also outline the support which is available across the MOD, including the recently launched Combat Stress 24-hour mental health hotline. Discussions on stress and resilience will be held on the MOD's internal Defence Blog, the Land Warfare Centre will hold a wellbeing symposium and Joint Forces Command will also promote an online self-help programme available to personnel.

**Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:**

We have long recognised the importance of treating the physical effects of battle but any invisible scars experienced by our brave service personnel were given less attention.

We are determined to change this and encourage a more open culture in talking about mental health. With our comprehensive mental health and wellbeing strategy, 20 specialist military mental health sites around the country, a 24/7 helpline and a partnership with the Royal Foundation, we are now far better placed to provide the comprehensive support our armed forces deserve.

As we mark Mental Health Awareness Week, I want everyone in the military to adopt the mindset that mental wellbeing matters just as much as physical health.

The Defence Secretary in February increased funding for Armed Forces mental health services to £220 million over the next decade and launched the new 24/7 Military Mental Health Helpline, in conjunction with Combat Stress. The new number – 0800 323 4444 – has already received over 350 calls.

The MOD currently has a network of 20 'hub and spoke' mental health centres, comprising of 11 hubs and a further nine teams. Regular visiting clinics are also held at other military centres across the country.

Last year the MOD launched its Defence People Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy focusing on preventative measures to protect our personnel. MOD also partnered with the Royal Foundation, a charity set up by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry, to improve training and education alongside the strategy to promote mental fitness.

There are a range of services provided by partners working with MOD and through the Armed Forces Covenant, including the NHS, other Government departments and charities, which serving personnel, veterans, and their families can access.

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## [News story: Defence Secretary announces massive £2.5bn investment in UK nuclear submarines](#)

*Updated:* Attached photos from Ministerial visits

- £1.5 billion will go on building the Royal Navy's seventh Astute hunter-killer submarine
- the Defence Secretary named that new attack boat Agincourt
- another £960m will go to the second phase of construction for the UK's four nuclear-armed Dreadnought submarines
- the work will sustain around 8,000 jobs in BAE Systems' Submarine business
- the Defence Secretary also officially opened a new £100 million sub-construction building.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson today announced the Ministry of Defence is investing a massive £2.5 billion in boosting Britain's submarine building projects.

Speaking at BAE Systems' shipyard in Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria, the home of British submarine construction, he announced £960 million worth of contracts have been signed to ramp up the next phase of construction for the UK's four nuclear-armed Dreadnought submarines.

He also announced that the Ministry of Defence has signed a £1.5 billion contract to build a seventh Astute hunter-killer submarine for the Royal Navy, before revealing that the attack boat will be called Agincourt. It will be the sixth vessel in the Royal Navy to be named after the Battle of Agincourt of 1415.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This multi-billion-pound investment in our nuclear submarines shows our unwavering commitment to keeping the UK safe and secure from intensifying threats. Agincourt will complete the Royal Navy's seven-strong fleet of hunter-killer attack subs, the most powerful to ever enter British service, whilst our nuclear deterrent is the ultimate defence against the most extreme dangers we could possibly face.

Not only is this a massive boost for our armed forces, but it's huge for Barrow, the heart of sub-building in this country. Today's news supports 8,000 BAE Systems' submarine jobs, as well as thousands more in the supply chain, protecting prosperity and providing opportunity right across the country.



Britain's third £1 billion Astute Class nuclear submarine, HMS Artful. Crown copyright.

The multi-billion pound announcements will help sustain around 8,000 jobs in BAE Systems' submarine business, as well as thousands more across the UK

submarine supply chain.

The Defence Secretary made the announcements during a ceremony, in which also opened a new £100 million submarine construction building in the Cumbria factory. In front of a gathered workforce of employees and apprentices, he unveiled a plaque to mark the opening of the state-of-the-art Central Yard Facility building which, at 26,700 metres squared, is equivalent in size to 21 Olympic-sized swimming pools and, at 45 metres high, is as tall as ten double-decker buses.

It will be used to outfit and test each section of the new Dreadnought submarines. The Dreadnought Submarine Programme will now move into its second phase. This will continue the design and build of the first Dreadnought submarine and commence the build of the second, including furthering the design and manufacture of the nuclear propulsion power plant. This phase has commenced with contracts signed for £900 million and £60 million with BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce respectively.



Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson visits BAE Systems, Barrow-in-Furness. Crown Copyright

Elsewhere, Defence Minister Guto Bebb will be in Derby today – with the Rolls-Royce contract seeing over 700 jobs sustained at their factory in the city.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

The Dreadnought Programme is a true national endeavour, furthering

our world-class nuclear capability. Today's announcement includes a £60m contract for Rolls-Royce, supporting over 700 jobs here in Derby as the factory continues to make the reactors that will power our state-of-the-art Dreadnought subs into the 2060s. I'd like to thank everyone at Rolls-Royce in Derby for their contribution to maintaining our Continuous at Sea Deterrent, protecting us against the most serious threats to our way of life, every hour of every day.

The Submarine Delivery Agency, which was established last month, will project manage the construction of future Royal Navy submarines, and support those in-service, working with Navy Command and the newly established Defence Nuclear Organisation.



Guto Bebb MP Minister for Defence Procurement meeting with Steve Dearden President – Submarines (right) during a visit to Rolls-Royce Raynesway Derby. Crown Copyright.

Chief Executive Officer of the Submarine Delivery Agency, Ian Booth said:

The incredibly complex Astute and Dreadnought programmes maximise the tremendously skilled and experienced workforce we have across the UK submarine business.

Both programmes require commitment and close collaboration with our industrial partners across the supply chain and in the newly formed Dreadnought Alliance, which will deliver a step change in how we

will work together to efficiently and effectively deliver nuclear submarines for the Royal Navy.

Cliff Robson, BAE Systems Submarines Managing Director, said:

Securing this latest funding for our submarines programmes is excellent news for BAE Systems and the 8,700 employees in our Submarines business, as well as our local community in Barrow and the thousands of people across our UK supply chain who help deliver these nationally important programmes for the Royal Navy.

We continue to make progress on these highly complex and technical programmes and today's announcements will allow us to move forward with greater certainty and stability.

Steve Dearden, President-Submarines for Rolls-Royce said:

The Dreadnought class programme is a vital, national endeavour and we are immensely proud of the role that we play as custodian of the naval nuclear propulsion capability in the UK. Dreadnought will be powered by the next generation Naval Pressurised Water Reactor technology, which will be simpler, require 30% less maintenance and have reduced in-service costs. Today's delivery phase II announcement allows us to move from design through to manufacture and the delivery of major components that are essential for the submarine build timeline.