

News story: Unknown World War 1 soldiers graves rededicated

A funeral service was held for three unknown soldiers who enlisted into The Lancashire Fusiliers, the New Zealand (NZ) Infantry and of an unknown regiment on Tuesday 7 March 2017 at Perth Cemetery (China Wall) near Ypres, Belgium.

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services was conducted by Reverend Chris Kellock, Chaplain 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

The service was supported by The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and by staff from the New Zealand Embassy. In attendance were delegates from both British and New Zealand Defence, regimental representatives and local dignitaries.

Three sets of remains were discovered near Zonnebeke in December 2012 and accompanying military insignia indicated the casualties were World War 1 soldiers of The Lancashire Fusiliers and NZ Infantry; no identifying insignia accompanied the third soldier. Despite extensive research, the JCCC was unable to identify the casualties and they will be buried as 'Soldiers of the Great War known unto God'.

Beverley Simon, JCCC said:

We owe a huge debt to those who fought in the Great War and we at JCCC take immense pride in ensuring all those who died in the service of their country are laid to rest with the appropriate dignity, ceremony and respect.

Reverend Chris Kellock QCVS RACHD, Chaplain 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers said:

It is always an immense privilege to be involved on such occasions as this. As the current Chaplain to the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers it is an honour to join with other Fusiliers, past and present, alongside our friends from New Zealand to ensure a fitting remembrance to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

The memory of these unknown soldiers, in particular the Lancashire Fusilier, is part of our history but more importantly provides the motivation for our young Fusiliers as they follow in the proud traditions of wearing the hackle.

Headstones for the unknown soldiers have been provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), who will now care for their final resting place

in perpetuity.