

## News story: World War 1 soldiers finally honoured after over a century

In a moving ceremony at Hebuterne Military Cemetery in France, new headstones were dedicated to Lance Corporal (L/Cpl) James Thomas Spencer, Private (Pte) Joseph Turton Cleaver, Pte Walter Jennings and Pte Reuben Kimberley at a service arranged by the MOD's Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre (JCCC) and led by the Reverend Justin Bradbury, Regimental Chaplain of The Queen's Royal Hussars.



Bob Bristow relative of of Pte Cleaver with Rev Justin Bradbury, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

All 4 soldiers were killed on 1 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme but their final burial location has until now been unknown. War Diaries from the Warwickshire Regiment provide evidence that 14 soldiers of the 1/7 Battalion were killed that day and whilst it was believed all were buried in Hebuterne Military Cemetery, it wasn't possible to confirm this positively for each individual.

However, a more recent review of the evidence, including historical records, has allowed JCCC to be able to say there is now firm evidence the 4 soldiers are indeed buried at Hebuterne. Although it still hasn't been possible to confirm in which of the many unknown soldier's graves they are buried, the new headstones, provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC),

mean there is now a permanent memorial to them within the cemetery.



New headstones at Hebuterne Cemetery, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

All 4 men were from Coventry. Two of them, Pte Kimberley and Pte Cleaver, had been friends from childhood, joined the Royal Warwickshire Regiment together, served and later died together.





Rev Justin Bradbury conducting the service, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Rev Justin Bradbury said:

It has been a privilege to conduct this rededication ceremony in such a beautiful cemetery and finally recognising their final resting place.

Nicola Nash, from the Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre (JCCC), said:

We feel very lucky to have been able to attend such a moving ceremony for these four Warwickshire soldiers, made even more poignant that two were very close friends and died together on the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

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**[News story: Defence minister meets](#)**

# teenagers taking part in pilot Army supercamp

The 60 teenagers mainly from local communities in Yorkshire were taking part in a pilot scheme to allow teenagers to learn about Army life by participating in a variety of fun but challenging tasks, including camouflage techniques and assault courses.

Defence Minister Earl Howe, who met students from Keighley University Academy and Bradford Youth Services Group, said:

These camps will educate young people and help the Army build close and long lasting ties with local communities.

An incredible amount of work is being done to ensure these 'Supercamps' are a success and I look forward to seeing more of them taking place across the country.



The teenagers from local communities in Yorkshire were taking part in a pilot scheme to allow teenagers to learn about Army life. Crown Copyright

The two week pilot, which includes 290 students, is being run by 4th Infantry Brigade, the regional brigade for Yorkshire and the North East.



Lt Col Mark Hunter, who is overseeing the camp, said:

This supercamp brings together people from all communities around Yorkshire, providing them with positive skills to take home leadership and team working skills.

It also provides them with an opportunity to learn about the different things that the Army does, and to know more about the Armed Forces.

Towards the end of his visit Lord Howe presented special certificates to students who took part in the supercamp and also met many of the course instructors.

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## [News story: World War 2 Royal Warwickshire 2nd Lieutenant's grave identified after almost 77 years](#)

The grave of 2nd Lieutenant Lawrence Paul Strawson was rededicated at a moving ceremony today at Calonne Communal Cemetery, Belgium. The service was arranged by the MOD's Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre (JCCC) and led by the Reverend Justin Bradbury, Regimental Chaplain, The Queen's Royal Hussars.

2nd Lieutenant Strawson was killed on 21 May 1940 fighting a desperate rear-guard action in Calonne, Belgium. They had spent the night being relentlessly and heavily shelled by German forces, who threatened to envelop their reserve companies, when their Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Baker, decided to lead a daring but risky counter-attack. He assembled around 50 men from HQ, which included the signals officer, 2nd Lieutenant Strawson. The force set off for the ridge that lay between Calonne and HQ at Warnaffles Farm. Even before they reached this point, they came under heavy artillery fire and suffered many casualties. The survivors continued firing until their ammunition ran out. It was only when night fell many hours later, that these few remaining survivors were able to crawl back to HQ. This attack was the last time Lawrence was seen alive.

2nd Lieutenant Strawson was born on 3 December 1915 in Nice, France but grew up in Surrey. He enlisted in the Territorial Army in January 1937 and joined the Artists' Rifles as a Private. He was granted an emergency commission as 2nd Lieutenant on October 1939 and was posted to the 8th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment and sent to France on 11 January 1940. Tragically, on 21 May 1940, he was listed as "missing presumed killed".

Lawrence's burial place had remained unknown, until the grave of an unknown 2nd Lieutenant buried in Calonne Cemetery, Belgium was brought to the attention of the MOD. After extensive historical research into this unknown grave, it has been agreed by the MOD's JCCC that this grave is that of 2nd Lieutenant Lawrence Strawson.



Gt Niece, Julia Cottam and family with those conducting the service, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The great niece of 2nd Lieutenant Strawson, Julia Cottam, was able to attend the service with her family, and said:

It was an honour to be able to represent my family here today and finally put a name on my great uncle's headstone.

Nicola Nash, from the Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre (JCCC), said:

It has been a privilege to commemorate this brave officer who gave his life for his country. Today has been made even more special by having members of his family attend.

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# News story: Royal Marines to be restructured in line with growing Royal Navy

With billions being invested into a growing Royal Navy, the Royal Marines have decided to restructure to better balance skills across the force.

The move comes as part of the Navy's regular review of its structure to ensure that it suits the operational demands of the 21st century, and is appropriately balanced for the future with 400 more personnel, more ships, new aircraft carriers and submarines entering front line service.

Around half of the 200 roles being repurposed are backroom function roles, like drivers and administrative staff. Freeing these up to be carried out by Reservists and civilians will enable skills to be used more appropriately across the Navy.

The other half of the restructure comes as part of plans developed by 3 Commando Brigade, who are responsible for the deployment of the Marines, who decided it would be beneficial to the Corps to make 42 Commando a specialised Maritime Operations unit.

A Royal Marines Commando performs roles ranging from maritime operations like countering piracy and protecting our trade routes across the globe, to land-based operations like warfighting and peace-keeping. Under this re-balancing, 42 Commando will become the specialised, go-to unit for maritime operations – meaning some of their posts, like heavy weapons specialists, can be reallocated across the Navy.

No Royal Marines will be made redundant as a result of today's news – when those in the roles which have been identified for repurposing leave, their position will simply transfer to a different area of the Navy.

The First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones, said:

As someone who has worked with Royal Marines at every stage of my career, most notably when commanding the Amphibious Task Group from RM Stonehouse, I know how vital their role is as the UK's premier high readiness contingency force. However, as First Sea Lord, I also know we must adapt to meet the challenges of a dangerous and uncertain world.

The Government is investing in a new generation of ships, submarines and aircraft. As we introduce these capabilities into Service, we must ensure we have the right mix of skills across each of the Navy's Fighting Arms to optimise how we use them, and the Commandant General and I have sought to find the right balance between sailors and marines in responding to this challenge.



The Royal Marines remain bound in to every part of the Royal Navy's future, from conducting sophisticated operations from the sea, at a variety of scales and against a range of threats, using our new aircraft carriers as a base, to leading the Service's development of information warfare. They will continue to be as vital to the Defence of the Realm in the years ahead as they have been for the past 350.

Commandant General Royal Marines, Major Robert Magowan, said:

As Royal Marines, we pride ourselves in being the first to understand, the first to adapt and the first to overcome. So as we confront a changing and unstable security environment, we are defining an exciting future for our Corps, which will ensure that we remain as relevant tomorrow as we do today.

With a £178 billion equipment plan backed by a rising defence budget, this year sees the first of two giant 65,000-tonne Queen Elizabeth Class Aircraft Carriers arrive in Portsmouth, the first of the Navy's five next generation patrol ships begin her sea trials and the fourth Astute Class submarine enter the water.



A computer generated image (CGI) of one of the two new Royal Navy aircraft carriers. Crown Copyright.



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## News story: Prince Harry meets Invictus Games hopefuls at UK trials

His Royal Highness Prince Harry attended the UK team trials at the University of Bath Sports Training Village today, ahead of the third Invictus Games being held in Toronto, Canada this September.

More people than ever before have applied to take part in the Games, which is a multi-sport event showcasing wounded, injured and sick serving personnel and veterans. Of the 306 trying out, 212 have never taken part in the Games before but are using sport as part of their recovery and hope to be selected to represent the 90-strong UK team that will head out to Toronto.

The Invictus Games, first held in London in 2014, set out to harness the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding and respect for our servicemen and women who have suffered mental or physical injury.

The UK team is selected based on the benefit the Games will give an individual as part of their recovery, combined with performance and commitment to training. Getting involved in sport helps with self-confidence and feeling psychologically empowered. These significant health benefits can be translated outside of sport and into everyday life.

The UK delegation to the 2017 Invictus Games is once again being delivered by a partnership comprising the Ministry of Defence, Help for Heroes and The Royal British Legion.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

The Invictus Games promote the importance of sport in the recovery process, and provide inspiration and opportunity to our injured Servicemen and women. I saw first-hand the strength and determination of competitors at the previous Games and I wish all those taking part in this year's trials the best of luck as they take on this challenge.

Between Thursday 6 April and Sunday 9 April, competitors are taking part in 11 sports at the trials: athletics, archery, wheelchair basketball, road cycling, golf, powerlifting, indoor rowing, wheelchair rugby, swimming, sitting volleyball and wheelchair tennis.

The MOD is a partner in the [Defence Recovery Capability](#), a programme which helps wounded, injured and sick Service personnel either return to duty from injury or provides a mechanism to help them back into civilian life – [link](#). A

key activity of the Defence Recovery Capability is the Battle Back programme, an MOD initiative that delivers an adaptive sport and adventurous training programme.

The [Invictus Games Toronto 2017](#) will take place from 23 – 30 September.