

# Engraved spoon helps identify WW1 casualty

Two British soldiers killed on 26 September 1915 (during the Battle of Loos) were laid to rest with full military honours earlier today (Thursday 5 May), a century after their deaths. The service was organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (MOD JCCC), also known as the "MOD War Detectives", and was held at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) Loos British Cemetery, Loos-en-Gohelle in northern France.

Members of the Royal Regiment of Scotland carry Pte Johnston to his final resting place. Crown copyright.

One set of remains was recovered in January 2018 during a WW1 ordnance search near Lens. Also found was a pocket watch and a spoon with the number 13228 stamped on the back. MOD JCCC and the CWGC confirmed it to be the regimental number of Private (Pte) William Johnston (aged 39) of 7th battalion, Royal Scots Fusiliers, having cross referenced it with war records that also confirmed he was the only casualty with this number who did not have a known burial place.

Soldiers of the Yorkshire Regiment carry an unknown East Yorkshire Regiment soldier to his final resting place. Crown copyright.

The MOD JCCC traced a great-great-niece who provided a DNA sample to compare with DNA taken from the remains. The results were conclusive. Pte Johnston's service records no longer exist, so not much personal information is known about him.

Sharon Williamson, of Portadown, County Armagh, is Pte Johnston's great-great-niece and DNA donor, she said:

"I was sent an email by a relative in America who had been contacted by the MOD War Detectives to say that they had found remains from the Great War. They asked for my DNA, that was the start of our journey. Later, once it was confirmed that William was our relative, we couldn't miss the opportunity to be here and pay our respects to a family member that, though we didn't know, we did not want him to be alone on his final journey."

Phil Aldridge, great great nephew of Pte Johnston lays a wreath. Crown copyright.

The remains of another British soldier were found separately in the same area. Although it was not possible to identify him by name, MOD JCCC did

confirm he served with the East Yorkshire Regiment due to two East Yorkshire shoulder titles being found with the remains.

Louise Dorr, MOD JCCC Caseworker said:

“I’m both pleased and saddened that although I have been able to identify one of these soldiers by name, there are just too many casualties missing from the 8th East Yorkshire Regiment for us to be able to name their casualty.

“I’m delighted to see them both laid to rest in front of their military family and, in Pte Johnston’s case, his biological family. May they both rest in peace.”

The service was conducted by the Reverend Dave Jeal, Chaplain to 2nd Battalion, Royal Regiment of Scotland. Two bearer parties were provided by the Yorkshire Regiment and the Royal Regiment of Scotland respectively.

Rev Dave Jeal leads the service. Crown copyright.

Rev Dave Jeal, who’s own grandfather Frederick Nichols served with the East Yorkshire Regiment during the Second World War, said:

“To be involved today is a real privilege for me. When these two men died they did so in the service of our country: they gave everything. That’s so important to remember and to honour, because by bearing their remains to their final rest, our young soldiers of today can see they walk in the footsteps of those giants who went before them.”

The graves will now be marked by headstones provided by the CWGC, who will care for their final resting place in perpetuity.

CWGC Horticulture Manager, Steve Arnold said:

“As the Recovery Officer I was honoured to be able to retrieve these two British soldiers from where they had fallen over 100 years ago, together with the personal items that have enabled Private Johnston to be named. It is deeply moving to see them laid to rest today alongside their comrades; each time we engrave a new headstone we renew our commitment to caring for all the graves in our care in perpetuity.”

---

## **Speech by Defence Procurement Minister at DPRTE Conference 2022**

It’s a pleasure to be here in Farnborough this morning and I want to start by thanking all of you for everything you do for our forces.

In my view the Defence sector is the jewel in the crown of our country's economy – maintaining hundreds of thousands of jobs, developing rich skills bases and boosting our global influence.

And while your immense contribution often goes unsung, the world has been reminded of that value in recent months as a result of Putin's illegal and unprovoked war.

The UK, as you all know, has been at the forefront of efforts to support Ukraine and, as the Prime Minister announced to the Ukrainian parliament on Monday, we will be delivering £300m more in military aid in the coming days, making us the biggest supplier in Europe.

But delivering and maintaining this equipment has been a huge logistical feat and it wouldn't be possible without an agile and resilient supply chain.

Which is where all of you come in.

Firms like yours have helped build, maintain and transport the thousands of anti-tank and anti-air missiles which have helped protect Ukrainian towns and cities.

Of course, this is just one of a number of recent supply chain successes.

You came to the fore during Op PITTING, providing the logistical backbone and equipment for the largest ever peacetime airlift.

And you showed your mettle throughout the pandemic, from manufacturing ventilators to helping establish Nightingale hospitals.

But you will be aware that the challenges we face in Defence procurement are growing quickly in this new era of constant competition and rapid technological advancement.

The current cost of living crisis has placed the emphasis on value for money for the taxpayer as never before.

And those reminders of the failures of Russian kit – tanks stuck in the mud for days, soldiers' cheap handheld radios discarded – have underlined the need for resilience.

That doesn't just mean building equipment to last but ensuring we have access to the specialist parts required to maintain and repair those platforms at all times.

More than anything though, we need to make the whole acquisition process simpler and quicker, so that we can spend less time hacking our way through red tape and more time delivering on what counts.

So how can we respond to these multiple challenges?

Well, a year ago we published DSIS, the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy, which set out to transform the way we do business while also

attracting the best suppliers into our supply chains, including non-traditional and smaller firms.

Today I want to take the opportunity to remind you of those key pillars of DSIS that we believe will help transform procurement.

First, in this age of rapid technological advance, we are injecting pace and clarity into our processes so we can deliver capability at the speed of relevance.

We are reforming the Single Source Contracts Regulations and the Defence and Security procurement rules – making them more flexible and more agile for buying the right capability.

And we are giving industry more notice about the kit we're going to need, so you have the time to upskill and invest in the right areas.

Shipbuilding is a case in point – we've just announced a new strategy which will create jobs and boost skills with a 30-year pipeline of 150 government vessel procurements, backed by £1.7 billion a year specifically for Royal Navy shipbuilding.

Meanwhile, we are rolling out a Category Management system which will take a pan-Defence approach to buying goods and services instead of MOD organisations operating on an individual level – cutting costs and delivery times.

But we recognise the best way to improve procurement is by improving our relationships with those with whom we do business.

That's why we have also strengthened the Defence Suppliers Forum by broadening and deepening the industry membership.

That's why we are using our National Security Technology and Innovation Exchange to give industry and academia the world-class facilities they need to succeed.

And that's why we are making it easier for you to export, developing our government-to-government frameworks to better support Defence exports while unplugging bottlenecks in our own system.

The second pillar of DSIS, a critical pillar, is innovation.

This government is determined to reverse the long-term decline in R&D in this country.

So we're ring-fencing £6.6bn for Defence R&D to produce game-changing capabilities that help the UK become a global science superpower. We're already seeing successes across every domain and in all corners of the UK.

The Army BattleLab in Dorset is enabling Defence personnel to work with academic institutions and private sector companies to trial cutting-edge tech.

The new AI centre in Newcastle – which I had the pleasure of opening a couple of months ago – has a team of scientists exploiting the latest developments in the use of Defence AI.

While the National Cyber Force in Lancashire will strengthen our already significant capability in the digital domain.

But to really succeed, we need to be tapping into the talents of our SMEs – the backbone of our economy. Last month's inaugural report from the Joint Economic Data Hub showed that more than a fifth of Defence procurement spending is with SMEs.

We believe we must up that contribution further if they are to help spearhead our innovation revolution.

That's why in January we published the SME Action Plan, which sets out plans to improve engagement with SMEs in the defence supply chain by speeding up technology pull-through and providing focused investment to support innovation.

We've also created a specific SME working group within the Defence Suppliers Forum, which is increasing access to opportunities and improving how we measure and report SME engagement.

And our Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) is helping turn private sector innovation into military capability, with Defence Innovation Loans to SMEs to help commercialise their products.

These relationships are being further strengthened at a local level through our new network of Regional Defence and Security Clusters which allow industry and government to share ideas and work together, thus promoting collaboration and commercialisation into the supply chain.

And the pilot cluster in the Southwest is already proving a hit, with 140 organisations signed up, including 90 SMEs, 45 of which have never previously worked with Defence.

Critically, getting innovation right will also help strengthen great British companies in the export markets, where the clamour for Defence services in an ever more competitive world is growing louder.

The third pillar for DSIS that is critical to our procurement approach is social value.

At the start of this speech, I mentioned the enormous benefits Defence brings to every part of the country.

We need to ensure that with every Defence procurement we are asking the wider strategic question of what else we can gain as a country alongside excellent kit.

We recognise that our onshore Defence industry has a strategic value in its own right.

To ensure we get the most from our new model we have established a Social Value Centre of Expertise, which will drive added value for Defence and the wider economy by embedding social value in acquisition.

So those are three DSIS pillars that are designed to make our procurement and supply chains faster, more innovative and more socially valuable. But given that today's theme is about building back better together, let me finish by turning the tables on you.

After all, I'm sure many of you in the room have enterprising and innovative solutions to some of the challenges I set out. And perhaps even more answers to those I have not.

So, as you go off and make the most of today's conference, please do consider how you would get more out of your partnership with government.

What more can you do to collaborate on research and development with us?

How can we encourage companies with niche skills who might not be part of the existing Defence supply chain to come on board?

How could you contribute to a Defence and Security Cluster in your area?

What more support would you like to see from government on exports?

How do we keep manufacturing lines open through the lifespan of a platform so we can ramp up production when called upon?

Those are just a few questions that we're going to be grappling with in the coming years and I'd love to hear from you your answers.

If recent events have taught us anything, it's that success from battlefield to boardroom rests on us working together.

So thank you for coming and listening today and I look forward to working together with you and to continue to keep together our country safe and secure.

---

## **Head of OSCE Mission in Kosovo: UK response, 5 May 2022**

Thank you, Mr Chair. Welcome Ambassador Davenport and thank you to you and your team for the comprehensive report, and its thorough summary of developments over the reporting period. This report sets out a number of notable achievements over the past period.

I would like, in particular, to highlight the work of the Mission's regional

centres in Kosovo, which continue to provide such comprehensive coverage on the ground, especially in areas outside the capital, Pristina. Furthermore, I would like to express our gratitude for the Mission's spot reports during the reporting period, which have continued to be both timely and informative.

As your report notes, Russia's pre-meditated and unjustified invasion of Ukraine will have caused anxiety among residents of all communities in Kosovo – an invasion we condemn in the strongest terms

Mr Chair, the United Kingdom is a long-standing and strong supporter of Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state. Our commitment to Kosovo, forged in the worst of times, remains firm and steadfast. In this context, we value and appreciate the Mission's renewed commitment to its work to strengthen Kosovo's institutions, many of which – as this report notes – it played a role in establishing. In particular, strengthening inclusive, transparent local governance, in a way which takes into account the needs and views of all communities, remains a very important aspect of this work. We join others here in condemning the attacks against the Kosovo police in the northern municipalities in Kosovo.

I would like to underline the UK's appreciation for the willingness and preparedness of the Mission to facilitate a solution that would have enabled Serbian citizens living in Kosovo to vote in Kosovo, in the Serbian referendum of 16 January and in the Serbian elections of 3 April. We have spoken previously on this issue in this forum. On protecting cultural heritage, your report also describes recent developments related to the Serbian Orthodox Monastery of Visoki Dečani. We welcome the Mission's continued monitoring of these issues, including the Special Protective Zones, and its tireless work to ensure the rule of law is upheld in relation to these difficult issues. We refer to the Quint statement on this matter, which is noted in the report.

Lastly, we – alongside our international partners – continue to support strongly the EU-facilitated Dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, working towards a comprehensive and sustainable normalisation agreement that will be to the benefit of the people of both countries. It is vital that both sides refrain from any rhetoric or activity which may reduce the chances of constructive progress in the Dialogue, and an eventual permanent agreement. We value the continued work of EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajcak, which this report sets out in detail. It is incumbent on both Kosovo and Serbia to seize the opportunity for renewed, good-faith engagement in the Dialogue, honouring the Dialogue commitments they have made so far, and holding regular talks at all levels in a spirit of compromise, and openness to positive, imaginative solutions.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you, Ambassador Davenport, for your leadership of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo during the reporting period, and your team for their commitment, hard work and expertise.

---

# RE:ACT to provide 500 Games Responders for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

The RE:ACT Games Responders will be drawn from its member community, which consists predominantly of military veterans and emergency services personnel. They will bring their skills in public engagement to support the security workforce at four venues, helping to make Birmingham 2022 a safe and memorable experience for everyone attending.

Birmingham 2022 will take place across the West Midlands from 28 July to 8 August 2022 and will be the largest sporting and cultural event ever held in the area. The Games is expected to welcome over one million spectators and attract a global audience of over 1.5 billion.

RE:ACT has been assisting the NHS to help relieve pressure on critical services. During the height of the pandemic, RE:ACT maintained its rapid response for 449 consecutive days, supporting frontline organisations and vulnerable communities. It continues to give its support to UK resilience, whilst also preparing to return to international disaster response after two years focusing on supporting the UK through the pandemic.

Toby Wicks, RE:ACT Chief Executive, said:

This is a super opportunity for RE:ACT to demonstrate the capability of our outstanding community at a high-profile event. We're used to operating under pressure in harsh environments, so this is well within our expertise and comes at an exciting time as we're learning and growing as an organisation. "We're always looking to welcome new team members into our organisation, and we'd encourage people to sign-up through our website.

This is a serious task and it's great that our teams will be able to show their strengths in a different context. We're thrilled to play our part in helping make Birmingham 2022 a great success and I know our Games Responders are excited to be involved.

General Sir Nick Parker, RE:ACT Chair, said:

We are delighted to be supporting Birmingham 2022. After my experience providing military support to security at London 2012, it will be a great privilege for RE:ACT Responders, who include highly committed veterans and members of the emergency services, to play a part in making this a sporting event to remember.

Nick Knight, Birmingham 2022 Director of Security, said:

Being a veteran myself, and understanding the hardships our military personnel endure upon leaving the military, any opportunity to showcase veterans' skills, mindset and discipline is an opportunity we cannot miss. This partnership with RE:ACT is innovative and groundbreaking as it has never been considered in previous Commonwealth Games.

Birmingham 2022 have signed up to the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and have achieved the Bronze award so this initiative demonstrates our commitment to those who have loyally served our country and now seek future opportunities.

RE:ACT members will receive training and recognised qualifications, enabling them to deploy during the Games to recognised Security Industry standards. The qualifications, and more importantly the operational experience of deploying during the Games, gives them as individuals and as a team, huge legacy employment opportunities, enabling them to make that transition from military to civilian life with greater ease.

I am excited to welcome RE:ACT on board and cannot wait for them to get involved in the delivery of the games and truly showcasing their talents in what will be a safe and successful Games.

Darren Hall, Chief Operating Officer of the Commonwealth Games Federation, said:

We are proud to be partnering with RE:ACT as they become an Official Military Veteran Provider for Birmingham 2022. Their wealth of experience and refined skills in public engagement and security will be invaluable in ensuring the safety and enjoyment of our spectators at four venues during game time.

## **About RE:ACT**

RE:ACT is a humanitarian response organisation, operating in the UK and overseas. RE:ACT specialises in high tempo, dynamic and complex environments, rapidly deploying to provide urgent assistance to people in need.

During Covid, RE:ACT provided critical support to frontline organisations and vulnerable communities, including with PPE and emergency food distribution, mortuary assistance, support to critical care staff in NHS hospitals and

community testing and mass vaccination centres.

RE:ACT has deployed teams in response to complex disasters in Nepal, Indonesia, The Bahamas and Mozambique, working closely with affected communities, as well as regional and international humanitarian actors, including the UN.

Visit [re-act.org.uk](https://re-act.org.uk) to find out more.

---

## **Becoming a planning inspector: What's stopping you?**

The survey is aimed at individuals from a range of professions that are most typically aligned to the role of planning inspector including (but not limited to) town planners, legal professionals, surveyors, architects and civil engineers.

In particular, we would most like to hear from anyone who has previously considered a career as a planning inspector (band 1), for example during a previous recruitment campaign, but decided not to apply.

The research will provide valuable data to help us refine our recruitment strategy so that it is suited to a diverse range of potential candidates.

### **Take part in the research**

[Complete the online survey](#) (it takes less than 5 minutes). Survey closes on 20 May 2022.

Your response will be anonymous and will not be used for any other purposes than to inform our attraction and recruitment strategy.

### **About the planning inspector role**

The band 1 planning inspector role is an entry level role, which is a busy and varied one dealing with planning appeals – typically around 3 cases per week.

A planning inspector considers evidence for each appeal and decides whether the proposal is allowed or not. The role involves travel across England to undertake site visits with most of our work in London and the South East. After training, planning inspectors may also undertake more complex casework and hear evidence via hearings and inquiries.

It is predominantly a home-based role which offers a considerable amount of flexibility in how work is scheduled and how you manage your work. Chartered

or full membership of a relevant professional body is a mandatory pre-requisite for applying as is willingness to travel frequently.

Starting salary is £41,015 rising to £47,664 after completion of a 12 to 18 month training programme.

For further information about the role:

[Read more about the work we do](#)