

News story: Bravery of 3 World War 2 soldiers shot for escaping from a POW camp finally recognised after nearly 75 years

A rededication service for Private (Pte) Lionel Brown, 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment and Ptes Daniel Hollingsworth and Thomas White, 1st Battalion The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) has taken place almost 75 years after they were shot near Ponte Del Diavolo, Italy after escaping from a prisoner of war (POW) camp.

They were given a dignified service on Tuesday 28 March 2017 at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Ancona War Cemetery in Italy. The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services was conducted by The Reverend Jonathon Daniel CF (UB) Royal Army Chaplain's Branch.

Sue Raftree, JCCC said:

These brave men were prisoners of war and being transported by the Germans when they were killed. The service today was to honour all 3 and to enable their families to have closure after over 70 years.

It has been a privilege for the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre to organise this service.

Reverend Jonathon Daniel CF(UB) said:

In our act of rededication we finally, after many years, complete our duty to correctly mark the place where our brothers in arms are buried. Today we honour and remember our 3 comrades whose lives were taken so cruelly and so unnecessarily. May their story serve to harden our resolve to cherish human life and do all that we can to live peacefully with one another.

The Reverend Jonathon Daniel CF (UB) Royal Army Chaplain's Branch delivers the rededication service, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Some 6 months after escaping Camp 53 at the time of the Italian Armistice in September 1943, Pte Brown was joined by Ptes Hollingsworth and White on 5 March 1944 who were hiding in a nearby farm. En-route to Perchia they were accompanied by another man who they met known only to them as Adriano,

thought also to be an escaped prisoner of war. Arriving at Perchia they made enquiries concerning the next expedition through enemy lines but no information was available so they went to a nearby farm for the night. Adriano left them stating he was going to sleep at another farm nearby but it later transpired Adriano was a German soldier.

At approximately 5am the next morning a party of German soldiers raided the farm where they were hiding and all 3 were arrested. Immediately afterwards a neighbouring farm was raided and Sergeant Mario Mottes from a Belgian parachute regiment, was also arrested. The prisoners were then marched to a German post where they were questioned and finally placed under guard. On 10 March 1944 all 4 were being transported when their lorry was stopped at Ponte Del Diavolo and they were shot.

Family members who paid their respects included Alan Austin, nephew of Pte Brown. He said:

The uncertainty over the final resting place of our uncle Lionel is something that has troubled our family for many years.

It is comforting to know that his sacrifice for our country has been recognised with a full and moving military ceremony, and that we now have a point of focus for our remembrance.

Commander Neil Thompson OBE RN the Naval and Air Attaché from the British Embassy and representatives of the Parachute Regiment, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and the Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) also attended and paid their respects.

Commander (Cdr) Neil Thompson, Naval and Air Attaché British Embassy said:

I am proud and honoured to be representing the British Embassy at the rededication ceremony of 3 soldiers who lost their lives during the Italian Campaign under such tragic and dramatic circumstances in 1944. These 3 soldiers' dedication to duty by escaping from POW camps and trying to make their way back to fight again is indicative of the kind of war-winning spirit and courage found right across our great nation in the dark days of the Second World War.

It was really good to meet the families represented here today and I hope that we have given some comfort and closure to them. But above all, we have been able to give the soldiers themselves an identity and a lasting memory as they lie here in their final resting place just outside Ancona.

Three new headstones bearing each of the soldier's names have been provided by the CWGC, who will now care for their final resting place in perpetuity.

[Henry Hill: Brokenshire threatens direct rule if no deal reached in Ulster](#)

Government gives Ulster parties more time to reach a deal

Today will mark the first day that senior civil servants in Northern Ireland will take direct control of provincial budgets, [according to the News Letter](#).

[The Belfast Telegraph reports](#) that James Brokenshire, the Northern Irish Secretary, has warned that there is only a small window to salvage devolved government after Monday's deadline for forming an Executive passed without agreement.

Under the devolution model in Northern Ireland, the largest party from each of the two principal communities must agree to form a coalition to share the Executive, along with any other party of sufficient size which chooses to take part.

As Sam McBride points out, the road from civil service auto-pilot to 'direct rule' – effectively administration by the Northern Ireland Office – is a short one, for all that Sinn Fein posture that it is 'not an option'.

Michelle O'Neill, their 'northern leader', insists that Brokenshire's only recourse [is another election](#). It's hard to judge the extent to which this is a bluff: the last election certainly went very well for them, but it's not clear how financially equipped any of the parties are for another go.

Yet despite that fact Brokenshire seems to be playing down the prospect of another poll, whilst making clear that the Government is willing [to reintroduce direct rule](#) if required. After all, there must be somebody politically accountable for the Northern Irish civil service.

If that happens the long-term future of the current arrangements is unclear. The DUP are warning that Sinn Fein have [run out of patience with devolution](#), focusing instead on bolstering their position in the Republic and trying to exploit Brexit. It certainly seems as if the death of Martin McGuinness has coincided with a change in the party's strategy regarding Stormont – although it bears remembering that he did collapse the last administration.

One final option the Secretary of State might consider has been floated by the *News Letter*: should MLAs [stop being paid](#) if the legislature collapses? It

would certainly incentivise them to strike a deal.

Meanwhile the Ulster Unionists have crowned Robin Swann [their new leader](#). Mike Nesbitt, his predecessor, had to step down after a very disappointing set of election results. Swann seems likely to be a more traditional figure than his predecessor, which will probably help the party to stabilise.

May stalls Sturgeon as unionists start trying to build campaign

The Prime Minister has declined to open negotiations with the Scottish Government on a second independence referendum after the Scottish Parliament voted to ask for one, [the Scotsman reports](#).

This sort of boldness is a marked change from the typical unionist strategy of the previous two decades – giving in – but the Prime Minister has at several reasons to play for time.

First, the Government won't want the distraction of an existential struggle for the territorial integrity of the nation in the midst of the Brexit negotiations. The Government only has so much bandwidth.

Second, as [James Forsyth points out](#), neither Theresa May nor the Scottish Conservatives seem to believe that a second independence is inevitable. This absence of unionism's usual fatalism likely explains the unexpectedly bold strategy: they believe that if a referendum can be pushed back beyond the next Scottish elections in 2021, it may not happen at all.

After all, pressure on the SNP's domestic agenda is already mounting, and both [Ruth Davidson](#) and [David Mundell](#) have

Indeed with the exception of a finance bill needed to keep the lights on it's now been more than a year since the Scottish Parliament actually passed a law.

Third, should such optimism be misplaced then unionists need space to build and road-test the next pro-Britain campaign. Because one of the few things veterans of Better Together seem to agree on is that it should be nothing like Better Together.

The [Spectator](#) has some news on this front, although it isn't heartening: apparently the skeletal campaign has the interim name 'New Direction', and is considering hiring Andrew Cooper as its pollster.

With Labour determined not to get involved in the main cross-party campaign (they'll probably float around on the fringes advocating whatever split-the-difference panacea is calling itself 'federalism' that year), it's almost a certainty that the net campaign will be dominated by Tories.

That's not the handicap it was – both May and Davidson poll well in Scotland – but it will [take time to build a campaign](#) around such new and unexpected foundations as a large and relatively popular Conservative opposition in Holyrood.

It would be a fatal error, however, simply to recreate an ersatz *Stronger In*. All the Scottish unionist leaders may have campaigned for it, but that's still no reason to copy a loser.

Welsh Labour MP renounces devolution

Ann Clwyd, the long-serving MP for Cynon Valley, has declared that her long-standing support for devolution to Wales "was wrong", [according to ITV](#).

In her new autobiography, *Rebel with a Cause*, she claims to have been "bitterly disappointed" by the Welsh Assembly's record – despite Labour having run it either alone or in coalition since its inception.

Clwyd points out something that we have previously [highlighted in this column](#): how the devolved government is so thin-skinned that it tries to present criticism of its record as an insult against Wales, thereby preventing the spread of good ideas that was meant to be one of devolution's boons.

Her complaints about the Welsh party's dismissive treatment of critical MPs also sheds a new light on Carwyn Jones' comments of last week about [how little UK Labour 'interferes' with him](#).

[Calling Conservatives: New public appointments announced. Housing Ombudsman – and more](#)

Four years ago, the TaxPayers' Alliance reported that "in the last year, five times more Labour people were appointed to public bodies than Tories".

Since then, the figures have varied, and some Conservative members or supporters have been selected to fill important posts.

Nonetheless, it remains the case that, since it took office in 2010, our Party has punched beneath its weight when it comes to public appointments. One of the reasons seems to be that Tories simply don't apply in the same number as Labour supporters.

To help remedy this, every fortnight we put up links to some of the main public appointments vacancies, so that qualified Conservatives might be aware of the opportunities presented.

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Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy – [Small Business Commissioner](#)

"We are seeking to appoint the UK's first Small Business Commissioner. This is a new statutory role covering the UK and established under provisions within the Enterprise Act 2016. The Small Business Commissioner will enable small businesses to resolve payment disputes with their larger customers and avoid future issues by encouraging a culture change in how businesses deal with each other. They will provide general advice and guidance to small businesses to prevent disputes occurring in the first place, direct them to existing support and help them resolve their complaints about payment issues."

Time: Full-time.

Remuneration: £120,000-£130,000 per annum.

Closes: 27 March

UK Research & Innovation – [Board Members](#)

"The UKRI Board will be expected to support the set-up of the organisation, providing clear strategic direction and oversight, promoting the importance of UK Research and Innovation and supporting the senior leadership team of the organisation to embed new ways of working across UKRI... As well as the above requirements which would be expected for all UKRI Board Members, there are specific roles on the Board that will require additional expertise, and a larger time commitment to UKRI."

Time: 20 days per annum.

Remuneration: £9,180 per annum, plus £459 per diem for extra days.

Closes: 31 March

Intellectual Property Office – [Chair of the Steering Board](#)

"The Intellectual Property Office Steering Board is responsible for advising the CEO and Minister on the overall direction and policies of the IPO. It ensures the IPO delivers on its strategic priorities and that resources are allocated effectively for their delivery. The Steering Board also regularly reviews the management and performance of the IPO and ensures high standards of corporate governance are maintained at all times. The role of Chair is an important one and demands effective strategic leadership of the Board and the ability to speak on its behalf. The Chair will work closely with the full-time Chief Executive, who is the IPO's Accounting Officer."

Time: 22 days per annum.

Remuneration: £450 per diem up to £10,000 per annum, plus "reasonable expenses".

Closes: 31 March

UK Hydrographics Office – [Independent Non-Executive Director \(Digital\)](#)

“The UKHO Board meets regularly to review business performance and progress, ensure good governance and to consider the strategy to move the business forward. Fellow non-executive board members bring a variety of experiences and this appointment complements that range of skills. You will provide expertise to consider and challenge the technological information and knowledge management aspects of our complex, challenging and niche business. The navigation market is undergoing major changes to its international regulatory model, the global maritime economy and the level of competition in provision of data is escalating.”

Time: 30 days per annum.

Remuneration: £18,000 per annum plus expenses.

Closes: 31 March

Independent Monitoring Board – [National Chair](#)

“We are looking for an outstanding individual to lead the IMB operation through a period of internal reform and change; and at a time when strengthened independent scrutiny is an important part of the Government’s prison safety and reform programme.

The recent White Paper on Prison Safety and Reform set out plans to ‘strengthen the governance arrangements and accountability for IMBs, to support them in providing high quality scrutiny’ and the successful candidate will work closely with the Deputy Director IMB Secretariat lead to put the new governance arrangements and processes in place.”

Time: Eight days per month.

Remuneration: £400 per diem plus expenses.

Closes: 03 April

Central Arbitration Committee – [Chair](#)

“The CAC is an independent statutory authority with specific functions relating to trade unions and employers. The most significant function of the CAC is adjudicating on the recognition and de-recognition of trade unions for collective bargaining in the workplace. This is carried out by applying the underpinning UK trade union recognition legislation when considering a union’s application for collective bargaining in a workplace, whilst seeking agreement between a union and the employer where possible. The incoming Chair

will also set the strategic direction of the CAC by monitoring developments in employment law, reviewing the CAC's case work and its performance, and identifying risks and succession planning."

Time: One day per week.

Remuneration: £25,357 per annum (full-time equivalent), annual increases.

Closes: 10 April

Marine Management Organisation – [Chair](#)

"The non-executive Chair of the MMO will lead the Board, set the overall strategic operational direction of the MMO, ensure good governance and with the Board, hold the Executive to account. The Chair will be responsible for: providing effective leadership and strategic direction to develop a cohesive and focused Board which recognises the need to work collaboratively with the Defra group, wider Government, other delivery bodies and stakeholders to deliver Government objectives effectively and efficiently..."

Time: Eight days per month.

Remuneration: £40,459 per annum.

Closes: 18 April

Department for Communities and Local Government – [Housing Ombudsman](#)

"The Housing Ombudsman has responsibility for investigating complaints against social landlords in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. Housing is an important part of everyone's lives and issues relating to our homes can have a huge emotional impact. The Housing Ombudsman plays an important role in ensuring the fair resolution of disputes, aiming to resolve problems quickly and efficiently. Rented housing plays a vital role in the nation's housing and we are keen to see that tenants experience good standards of service regardless of whether their landlord is a local authority, housing association or private landlord."

Time: Full time.

Remuneration: Up to £120,000 per annum.

Closes: 23 April

Press release: New charity investigation: Child Survival Fund

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into [Child Survival Fund, registered charity number 1116070](#).

The charity's objects include to relieve poverty, distress and suffering amongst children and young persons throughout the world.

The inquiry, which was opened on 9 February 2017, will look at the administration, governance and management of the charity by the trustees, in particular the extent to which the trustees have:

- complied with an action plan issued by the Commission in January 2016, which set out certain steps required to be taken by the trustees to resolve issues of concern about the charity's management and administration
- acted in the charity's best interests and acted in accordance with their legal duties
- responsibly managed the charity's resources and financial affairs, particularly with regard to the charity's significant debts, fundraising costs and the proportion of fundraising income applied directly for charitable purposes
- acted with reasonable care and skill in respect of its fundraising agreement with a US based direct mailing agency and associated risks to the charity's property
- adequately managed risks to the charity and protected the charity's reputation, especially with regards to the conduct and transparency of fundraising activities conducted by the charity or on its behalf

The Commission has a history of regulatory engagement with the charity regarding concerns over high fundraising costs and a significant debt owed to the direct mailing agency. The Commission undertook proactive monitoring of the charity amid further concerns about the charity's fragile financial position and the trustees' apparent failure and inability to address ongoing issues within the charity. Further, the trustees have failed to provide reassurance to the Commission with respect to an action plan issued to the charity in January 2016, which was designed to address these concerns.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of [previous inquiries](#) by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.

The charity's details can be viewed on the Commission's [online charity search tool](#).

Ends

Notes to editors

1. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
 2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
 3. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
 4. The Commission's decision to announce the opening of a statutory inquiry is based on whether it is in the public interest to do so and with consideration of our objective to increase public trust and confidence in charities.
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[The SNP isn't listening to teachers or parents on education](#)

John Swinney made a big speech on schools last week.

The SNP Education Secretary said the "data" told him that "the status quo was not an option", and then expressed his disappointment that "there is a strong body of opinion that does not accept the need for change and what is perhaps most worrying is that body of opinion is from within Scottish education." Most coverage described this as an attack on the "complacent educational establishment".

In doing so, commentators fell into a double trap. To oppose Mr Swinney's proposed changes to schools is not to oppose any change at all. The overwhelming response to his "Governance review" is that they are the wrong changes.

Secondly, this analysis accepts that the status quo is something John Swinney has stumbled upon. In fact, today's status quo in schools is the legacy of ten years of SNP government.

That status quo is declining budgets, 4,000 fewer teachers, 1,000 fewer support staff, a teacher recruitment crisis, and dysfunctional government

bodies (Education Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority). Yes, change is needed alright. Just not John Swinney's changes. For example, the SNP plans to centralise the setting of school budgets, and create unaccountable "regional boards" for a purpose which it cannot explain, except to say it wants to "strengthen the middle", whatever that means.

In Dunbar, in my constituency, the local primary has over 1,000 pupils, while a few miles away, Stenton school has 19. The idea that a civil servant with a formula knows enough about such diverse schools and the communities they serve to get their budget right is simply laughable. That decision has to be taken locally. What is more, if a head teacher or parent council think the budget is wrong, they can argue their case locally, and they do. Good luck trying that with a faceless bureaucrat in the Scottish Government's offices in Victoria Quay.

When Kezia Dugdale raised this at First Minister's Questions, Nicola Sturgeon was outraged. After all she is devolving £120m of Pupil Equity funding direct to schools. That is true. But the core budget for schools is over £4billion. Only in the world of the SNP could centralising £4bn and devolving £120m be presented as "all power to the head teachers".

This is not the only "through the looking glass" aspect of the position into which John Swinney has manoeuvred himself. He described his Governance review as "...a vision of empowerment and devolution." It is full of declarations about teachers and parents "knowing best".

Mr Swinney's problem is that the responses to his review from head teachers, teachers, parents and communities almost all reject his reforms, and tell him that what is needed is more resource, along with reform of Education Scotland and the SQA. John Swinney's speech was clear – he intends to ignore them. They will be empowered, against their better judgement if need be. The Education Secretary is telling head teachers, teachers, and parents that they do not know best – he does.

We should not be surprised. When the Scottish Parliament's education committee gathered evidence from hundreds of teachers that they had lost any faith in Education Scotland and the SQA, Mr Swinney simply rubbished the committee's work as statistically invalid. Instead, he said, he would base his views on the teachers he spoke to when he visited schools. Happily, this "balanced sample" seemed very happy with everything he is doing. It is presumably only "bad" teachers and parents who have responded to his governance review with malice aforethought, and he intends to ignore them.

John Swinney loves to talk about how much he respects teachers. As well he might. They are the only thing keeping our schools going through the SNP's ten years of incompetence and budget cutting. If he won't listen to them his

respect is just empty talk.

The status quo for teachers in Scotland is ten years of under-resourced curricular reform, lower salaries than colleagues in other countries, less preparation time, and the largest classes anywhere in the developed world. Nothing John Swinney is currently proposing will change that status quo, fashioned by him himself over his eight years as finance secretary.

All of this was laid bare in a recent parliamentary debate, where Holyrood defeated the government and passed a motion roundly condemning their handling of education. Last week's speech tells us that John Swinney is not just ignoring parents and teachers, but parliament too.

That will of parliament, so sacred when it comes to an independence referendum, would seem of no import with regard to our children's future.

Iain Gray is Scottish Labour's Education spokesperson. This article originally appeared in the Herald on March 29th 2017