

Grave of soldier missing since 1940 identified in France

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The previously un-named grave of a Yorkshire man who served with the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards has been identified and rededicated in his name more than 85 years after his death.

A rededication service for Trooper (Tpr) Fred Tingle was organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), also known as the 'War Detectives'. The service was held at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) Heverlee War Cemetery, Belgium, this morning (25 March 2026).

JCCC Caseworker, Alexia Clark, said:

I am grateful to the two researchers who put such a lot of effort into searching in local archives for the evidence to identify Tpr Tingle, and who ultimately submitted this case. Their work has led us to recognise the final resting place of Tpr Tingle, to restore his name to him and to allow his family to honour his sacrifice. It has been a privilege for me to have contributed to this case and to have organised the service for the rededication of this grave today.

The military party stand at the graveside with the local researchers and standard bearers (Crown Copyright)

Fred was a soldier with the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards, which had operated since just before the outbreak of war as part of the newly formed Royal Armoured Corps. The Regiment was part of the British Expeditionary Force which was deployed to mainland Europe in a reconnaissance role shortly after the war broke out. When the Germans launched their invasion of the low-countries on 10 May 1940 they forced a retreat of the British forces, and the 5th fought a fierce rearguard action as they made their way back towards Dunkirk - which they reached on 29 May 1940.

Fred was killed in action on the 19 May 1940 during the retreat. His body was initially recovered and buried in Sint Antelinks by local people who documented the items found with him and sent his identification disc to Brussels for recording. Although those same people continued to care for Fred's grave throughout the war, unfortunately, when his body was recovered by the British army in 1946 it proved impossible to reconcile all the records, and he was buried as an unknown soldier.

Recently, research by two Belgian nationals found the key documents which proved that the location that the unknown soldier had been recovered from (Hulgeveldestraat in Sint Antelinks) was identical to the original burial location of a soldier who had been carrying a disc marked

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Further research revealed more details of the unknown soldier including a physical description, and information about letters and papers he was carrying which bore addresses in the West Yorkshire area. Ultimately, all of this information taken together, proved that the unnamed grave at Heverlee was that of Trooper Fred Tingle, leading us to the point where today the grave has been blessed in

his name.

The service today was supported by serving soldiers from the Royal Dragoon Guards.

The headstone was replaced by CWGC. Director of the Commemorations at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Richard Hills said:

We are honoured to have been involved in the rededication of the grave of a previously unknown soldier of the Second World War, Trooper Fred Tingle. Decades after he was laid to rest as an unknown British soldier, his newly engraved named headstone ensures he is appropriately commemorated today, and for generations to come.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/grave-of-soldier-missing-since-1940-identified-in-france>