

PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES



NSW Parliamentary Research Service

**Index of
Victoria Cross Recipients
by New South Wales
State Electorate**

Compiled by Yvonne Wilcox



**INDEX OF VICTORIA CROSS RECIPIENTS
BY NEW SOUTH WALES STATE ELECTORATE**

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YVONNE WILCOX

Index of Victoria Cross recipients by New South Wales electorate

(includes recipients who were born in the electorate or resided in the electorate on date of enlistment)

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INTRODUCTION

The contribution of Australians in armed conflicts from the Boer War (1899 -1902) to the war in Afghanistan has resulted in many stories of heroism and devotion to duty.

Each of the 33 stories in this publication recounts the outstanding acts of valour of the men concerned, resulting in the award of the Victoria Cross.

In August this year the Federal Parliamentary Library published a paper, *Index of Victoria Cross recipients by electorate* by Dr Nathan Church. This paper looked at the 100 recipients of the Victoria Cross, categorising each one by their connection to a Federal electorate by virtue of birth, residence at the time of enlistment, at the time of death or where buried.

As a companion to that paper, this publication presents the stories of Victoria Cross winners who were born in New South Wales, or were residing in New South Wales at the time of their enlistment.

The paper's purpose is to enable members of the New South Wales Parliament to identify Victoria Cross (VC) winners with ties to New South Wales State electorates.

All images are from the [Australian War Memorial, People profiles and biographies, Australian Victoria Cross recipients](#).

THE VICTORIA CROSS

The Victoria Cross is the pre-eminent award for acts of bravery in wartime and Australia's highest military honour.

It is awarded to persons who, in the presence of the enemy, display the most conspicuous gallantry; a daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice; or extreme devotion to duty.

The Victoria Cross was created by Queen Victoria in 1856 and made retrospective to 1854 to cover the period of the Crimean War.

The Victoria Cross is a Maltese Cross, cast in bronze from cannons captured during the Crimean War (1854-1856). They are each handmade by Hancocks and Company (Jewellers) of London.



The obverse of the Victoria Cross bears a crowned lion standing on a royal crown. The words 'FOR VALOUR' are inscribed on a semi-circular scroll beneath the crown.

The reverse of the cross is engraved with the date of the act of bravery and the name, rank and unit of the recipient.

The suspension bar is decorated with laurel leaves and bears a 'V' from which the cross hangs.

The medal ribbon of the Victoria Cross is crimson.

Australians were eligible for the Victoria Cross and other awards under the Imperial system of honours, until the Victoria Cross was instituted in the Australian honours system by Letters Patent on 15 January 1991.

The Victoria Cross has been awarded to 100 Australians, including five Australians serving with South African and British units. [1]

Of these, 33 have been awarded to Australians who were born in New South Wales, or resided in New South Wales on enlistment, in the following conflicts:

2 in the Boer War 1899-1902

18 in World War I 1914-1918

9 in World War II 1939-1945

3 in Vietnam 1962-1972

1 in Afghanistan 2001-2013

[1] Australian Government, [Victoria Cross](#), *It's an honour: Australia celebrating Australians*.

John Bernard (Jack) Mackey

Born: 16 May 1922, Leichhardt, New South Wales [electorate of Balmain].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Portland, New South Wales [electorate of Bathurst].

Enlistment date: 4 June 1940.



Victoria Cross citation

Corporal Mackey was in charge of a section of the 2/3rd Australian Pioneer Battalion in the attack on the feature known as Helen, East of Tarakan town. Led by Corporal Mackey the section moved along a narrow spur with scarcely width for more than one man when it came under fire from three well-sited positions near the top of a very steep, razor-backed ridge. The ground fell away almost sheer on each side of the track making it almost impossible to move to a flank so Corporal Mackey led his men forward. He charged the first Light Machine-Gun position but slipped and after wrestling with one enemy, bayoneted him, and charged straight on to the Heavy Machine-Gun which was firing from a bunker position six yards to his right. He rushed this post and killed the crew with grenades. He then jumped back and changing his rifle for a sub-machine-gun he attacked further up the steep slope another Light Machine-Gun position which was firing on his platoon. Whilst charging, he fired his gun and reached within a few feet of the enemy position when he was killed by Light Machine-Gun fire but not before he had killed two more enemy. By his exceptional bravery and complete disregard for his own life, Corporal Mackey was largely responsible for the killing of seven Japanese and the elimination of two machine-gun posts, which enabled his platoon to gain its

objective, from which the Company continued to engage the enemy. His fearless action and outstanding courage were an inspiration to the whole battalion.[1]

Unit at time of action: 2/3rd Pioneer Battalion, Australian Military Forces.

Early Life

Jack Mackey was the only son and eldest of four children of Australian-born parents Stanislaus Mackey, baker, and his wife Bridget Catherine, née Smyth. After attending St Columba's School, Leichhardt, and Christian Brothers' High School, Lewisham, Jack moved with his family to Portland in 1936. Aged 14, he finished his formal education at St Joseph's Convent School that year. Because jobs were scarce, young Mackey was apprenticed in his father's bakery. Of average height, stockily built and weighing about 13 stone (83 kg), he had blue eyes, reddish hair, and a humorous and exuberant nature. He played Rugby League football for the local junior team (and later for his battalion) and proved an excellent swimmer, but he disliked working in the bakery and living in the country. His relationship with his father became strained, particularly after his mother died in 1939. Defying his father, Jack overstated his age and enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 4 June 1940. [2]

Service in WWII

Posted to the 2nd/3rd Pioneer Battalion, Mackey served in Darwin in 1941 before being sent to the Middle East where he saw action in the battle of El Alamein, Egypt (October-November 1942). He returned to Australia in February 1943, then sailed for Papua in August. During operations around Finschhafen, New Guinea, he was promoted acting corporal in October (substantive June 1944). His company commander described him as an outstanding junior leader who exhibited moral and physical courage. Mackey was hospitalized with malaria in November 1943-January 1944, and again in May-June and August-September 1944. With his battalion, he embarked for the invasion of Tarakan Island, Borneo, in April 1945 and landed on 1 May. On 12 May 1945 Mackey led his section in an attack on a place code-named 'Helen'. His actions, described in the citation, during this attack led to his being awarded the Victoria Cross.[3]

Died: 12 May 1945, during VC action, Tarakan Island off the coast of North Borneo.

Place of burial or cremation: Labuan War Cemetery, Borneo.

Mackey's name is commemorated by an individual plaque on the front of the Leichhardt War Memorial in Pioneers Park, Leichhardt, New South Wales.

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 37340, 6 November 1945, p. 5431

[2] H Taplin, 'Mackey, John Bernard (Jack) (1922–1945)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

Joseph Maxwell

Born: 10 February 1896, Forrest Lodge, Annandale, New South Wales [electorate of Balmain].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: West Maitland, New South Wales [electorate of Maitland].

Enlistment date: 6 February 1915.



Victoria Cross citation

For most conspicuous bravery and leadership in attack on the Beurevoir–Fonsomme line, near Estrees, north of St Quentin, on the 3rd October, 1918. His company commander was severely wounded early in the advance and Lt. Maxwell at once took charge. The enemy wire when reached under intense fire was found to be exceptionally strong, and closely supported by machine guns, whereupon Lt. Maxwell pushed forward single handed through the wire and captured the most dangerous gun, killing three and capturing four enemy. He thus enabled his company to penetrate the wire and reach the objective. Later, he again dashed forward and silenced, single handed, a gun which was holding up a flank company. Subsequently, when with two men only he attempted to capture a strong party of the enemy, he handled a most involved situation very skilfully, and it was due to his resource that he and his comrades escaped. Throughout the day Lt. Maxwell set a high example of personal bravery, coupled with excellent judgement and quick decision. [1]

Unit at time of action: 18th Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

Joseph Maxwell was the son of John Maxwell, labourer, and his wife Elizabeth, née Stokes. He was one of six children. Employed as an apprentice boilermaker in Newcastle, he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 8 February 1915. By then he had served for three years in the senior cadets and for two years in the militia. [2]

Service in WWI

He was posted to the 18th Battalion and served at Gallipoli before proceeding with his battalion to France in March 1916. Promoted sergeant in October, he went to a training battalion in England, briefly returning to France in May 1917 before being sent back to attend an officer training school. Involved in a brawl with civil and military police in London, he was fined and returned to his unit. Despite this incident he was promoted warrant officer in August and appointed company sergeant major.

In September, during the 3rd battle of Ypres, Maxwell took command of a platoon after its officer had been killed and led it in the attack. Later he safely extricated men from a newly captured position under intense enemy fire. For this action he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and a few days later was commissioned in the field as second lieutenant; he was promoted lieutenant in January 1918. In March he led a scouting patrol east of Ploegsteert and after obtaining the required information ordered his men to withdraw. He was covering them when he saw a large party of Germans nearby. Recalling the patrol, he organized and led a successful attack, an action for which he was awarded the Military Cross.

In August, during the offensive near Rainecourt, Maxwell, the only officer in his company who was not a casualty, took command and, preceded by a tank, led his men into the attack on time. The tank received a direct hit and Maxwell, although shaken by the explosion, rescued the crew before the tank burst into flames. He continued the attack and the company reached its objective. He was awarded a Bar to his Military Cross.

Maxwell was awarded the Victoria Cross after an attack on the Beaufort-Fonsomme line near Estrées on 3 October.

In just over twelve months Maxwell was awarded the DCM, the MC and Bar and the VC, and he was only 22 when the war ended. [3]

Later Life

After returning to Australia in 1919 he worked in a variety of occupations in Sydney, Canberra and New South Wales country towns. On 14 February 1921, describing himself as a reporter, he married a 19-year-old tailoress, Mabel Maxwell at Bellevue Hill, Sydney, with Catholic rites. There was a daughter of the marriage which was dissolved in 1926 with his wife as petitioner. In 1932, helped by Hugh Buggy, Maxwell published the very successful *Hell's Bells and Mademoiselles*, an account of the war as he saw it; at the time he was working as a gardener with the Department of the Interior in Canberra. His health was often very unstable. He attempted, unsuccessfully because of his age, to enlist in the 2nd AIF, but eventually succeeded in enlisting in Queensland under a false name; his identity was discovered and he was discharged. On 6 March 1956, stating that he was a

journalist of Bondi, he married a widow Anne Martin, née Burton, in Sydney. In 1964, with his wife, he attended the opening of VC Corner in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. He was adamant that his VC would not end up there, as he took the view that 'lumping' all the VCs together cheapened the award. On 6 July 1967 Maxwell collapsed and died of a heart attack in a street in his home suburb of Matraville; he had for some time been an invalid pensioner. After a service with military honours at St Matthias Anglican Church, Paddington, he was cremated. His widow donated his medals to the Army Museum, Victoria Barracks, Paddington. [4] Died: 6 July 1967, Matraville, New South Wales [electorate of Maroubra]. Place of burial or cremation: Cremated at Eastern Suburbs Crematorium, Matraville, [electorate of Maroubra].

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 31108, 3 January 1919, p. 307

[2] E.J.H. Howard, 'Maxwell, Joseph (1896–1967)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

Alexander Henry Buckley

Born: 22 July 1891, Warren, New South Wales [electorate of Barwon].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: "Homebush", via Armatree, New South Wales [electorate of Barwon].

Enlistment date: 3 February 1916.



Victoria Cross citation

For most conspicuous bravery and self-sacrifice at Peronne during the operations on 1/2nd September, 1918. After passing the first objective his half-company and part of the company on the flank were held up by an enemy machinegun nest. With one man he rushed the post, shooting four of the occupants and taking 22 prisoners. Later on, reaching a moat, it was found that another machine-gun nest commanded the only available foot-bridge. Whilst this was being engaged from a flank Corporal Buckley endeavoured to cross the bridge and rush the post, but was killed in the attempt. Throughout the advance he had displayed great initiative, resource and courage, and by his effort to save his comrades from casualties, he set a fine example of self-sacrificing devotion to duty. [1]

Unit at time of action: 54th Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

Alexander Henry Buckley was the fourth child of James Buckley, selector, and his wife Julia, née Falkanhagan, both of whom were Victorian born. He was educated at home by his parents and later farmed with his father on *Homebush*, a property near Gulargambone.[2]

Service in WWI

After leaving Australia on 23 June 1916, Buckley arrived in England two months later where he completed training before disembarking for France on 20 October. He served on the Somme during the bitter winter of 1916/17, and fought during 1917 in his battalion's various battles at Bullecourt, Polygon Wood and Broodseinde.

On 1 November 1917 he was promoted to the rank of temporary corporal, and continued to fight with his battalion in the Villiers-Bretonneux and Ameins sector. He was still with the 54th when it was given the ultimate objective of Peronne, a medieval walled town surrounded by a moat.

The battalion commenced its advance on 1 September 1918 in drizzling rain, but found its way barred by dense barbed wire which screened the first German trench. The men ran to the wire, under heavy fire, and whilst their Lewis gunners placed their guns on the knife rests and blazed away at the enemy, they tore up the pickets and crawled under the wire. The Germans, only thirty yards away, fled at the sight of their determination.

Proceeding on to the second line of trenches the Australian advance was held up by an enemy machine-gun nest. Accompanied by another soldier, Buckley rushed the post, shooting four men and taking twenty-two prisoners. The Germans retreated to Péronne, entering the city by a large bridge which they destroyed. The only remaining bridge on the battalion's front was a foot-bridge defended by machine-guns. With three other members of his company, Buckley tried to force his way across under heavy fire but was killed in the attempt.

His mother was to write to Charles Bean, the Official War Historian, on 6 January 1941: "He lived at home all his life before enlisting...he was always a good son, tall (six feet one and a half inches) and well built." [3]

Died: 1 September 1918, Peronne, France.

Place of burial or cremation: Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension . Originally buried in an isolated grave, St Radegonde, near Peronne.

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 31067, 13 December 1918, p. 14778,

[2] L Wigmore, 'Buckley, Alexander Henry (1891–1918)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] G.L. Maitland, *Tales of Valour from the Royal New South Wales Regiment*, Playbill Pty Ltd, Pymble, NSW, 1992

Blair Anderson Wark

Born: 27 July 1894, Bathurst, New South Wales [electorate of Bathurst].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: McMahon's Point, New South Wales [electorate of North Shore].

Enlistment date: 15 September 1915.



Victoria Cross citation

For most conspicuous bravery, initiative, and control during the period 29th Sept. to 1st Oct., 1918, in the operations against the Hindenburg Line at Bellicourt and the advance through Nauroy, Etricourt, Magny La Fosse and Joncourt. On 29th Sept., after personal reconnaissance, under heavy fire, [Major Wark] led his command forward at a critical period, and restored the situation. Moving fearlessly at the head of, and at times far in advance of, his troops, he cheered his men on through Nauroy, thence towards Etricourt. Still leading his assaulting companies, he observed a battery of 77mm guns firing on his rear companies, and causing heavy casualties. Collecting a few of his men, he rushed the battery, capturing four guns and then of the crew [sic]. Then moving rapidly forward, with only two NCOs he surprised and captured fifty Germans near Magny La Fosse. On 1st Oct., 1918, he again showed fearless leading and gallantry in attack, and without hesitation, and regardless of personal risk, dashed forward and silenced machine guns which were causing heavy casualties. Throughout he displayed the greatest courage, skilful leading, and devotion to duty, and his work was invaluable.[1]

Unit at time of action: 32nd Infantry Battalion (South Australia and Western Australia), AIF.

Early Life

Blair Anderson Wark was the fourth child of Alexander Wark, a gas engineer from Scotland, and his Australian-born wife Blanche Adelaide Maria, née Forde. Educated at Fairleigh Grammar, Bathurst, St Leonards Superior Public School (North Sydney High) and Sydney Technical College, Blair worked as a quantity surveyor while pursuing his military interests. A senior cadet in 1911–12, he enlisted in the 18th (North Sydney) Infantry, Australian Military Forces, and was provisionally commissioned in 1913.[2]

Service in WWI

On 5 August 1915 Wark was appointed to the Australian Imperial Force and embarked for Egypt with the 30th Battalion in November. A captain from 20 February 1916 and a company commander, he reached the Western Front in June. He was wounded in the battle of Fromelles. On his return to duty in November, he joined the 32nd Battalion. His conduct at Fromelles and in action at Sunray Trench in March 1917 led to his recommendation for the Distinguished Service Order. Though no award was made, he was promoted major on 27 April. In late September and early October, while in command of the front line east of Ypres, his vigorous patrolling and personal reconnaissance kept his sector secure and enabled him to repulse one counter-attack and to thwart another. He won the D.S.O. for this achievement and for his previous courage and devotion to duty. In May 1918 he was Mentioned in Despatches.

Experienced and self-reliant, careless of his own safety, yet solicitous for his men, at the age of 24 Wark was given temporary command of the 32nd Battalion in operations against the Hindenburg line that began on 29 September. Often moving ahead of his troops in the face of heavy fire, he secured the help of a passing tank near Bellicourt and attached two hundred leaderless Americans to his command before rushing a battery of 77mm guns which were firing at his rear companies: he captured four guns and ten of their crews. With two non-commissioned officers, he surprised and captured fifty Germans near Magny-la-Fosse. On 1 October he 'dashed forward and silenced machine-guns which were causing heavy casualties'. For his bravery he was awarded the Victoria Cross. His brothers Alexander and Keith also served in the A.I.F.; Keith won the Distinguished Conduct Medal. [3]

Later Life

On 31 May 1919 at the parish church, Worthing, Sussex, Wark married Phyllis Marquiss Munro and returned to Australia where his AIF appointment was terminated in September. He became a principal of Thompson & Wark, quantity surveyors, a director of several companies, a councillor of the National Roads and Motorists' Association, a committee-member of the Hawkesbury Race Club and a life governor of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales. Divorced in 1922, Wark married Catherine Mary Davis on 10 December 1927 at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Sydney. In April 1940 he was appointed to the 1st Battalion, AMF, and assumed command on 26 July with the rank of temporary lieutenant-

colonel. While bivouacked at Puckapunyal, Victoria, he died suddenly of coronary heart disease on 13 June 1941. Wark was cremated after a military funeral at which it was said that he 'liked the wind in his face and lived the life of three men'. His wife, their son and two daughters survived him.[4]

Died: 13 June 1941, Puckapunyal, Victoria

Place of burial or cremation: Cremated at Eastern Suburbs Crematorium, Matraville [electorate of Maroubra]

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 31082, 24 December 1918, pp. 15117–15118

[2] R Gorrell, 'Wark, Blair Anderson (1894–1941)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

Frank John Partridge

Born: 29 November 1924, Grafton, New South Wales [electorate of Clarence].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Upper Newee Creek, near Macksville, New South Wales [electorate of Oxley].

Enlistment date: 26 March 1943.



Victoria Cross citation

In New Guinea, on 24th July, 1945, two fighting patrols, 8th Australian Infantry Battalion, were given the task of eliminating an enemy outpost in Bougainville which denied any forward movement to our troops. The preliminary artillery concentration caused the enemy bunkers to be screened by a litter of felled banana plants, and from these well concealed positions to their front and left, one of our Platoons came under extremely fierce machine-gun, grenade and rifle fire. The forward section at once suffered casualties and was pinned down together with two other sections. Private Partridge was a rifleman in a section which, in carrying out an encircling movement, immediately came under heavy medium machine-gun fire. He was hit twice in the left arm and again in the left thigh, whilst the Bren gunner was killed and two others seriously wounded, leaving only the section leader unwounded, but another soldier began to move up from another position. Private Partridge quickly appreciated the extreme gravity of the situation and decided that the only possible solution was personal action by himself.

Despite wounds and with complete disregard to his own safety, Private Partridge rushed forward under a terrific burst of enemy fire and retrieved the Bren gun from alongside the dead gunner, when he challenged the enemy to come out and fight. He handed the Bren gun to the newly arrived man to provide covering fire while he rushed this bunker, into which he threw a grenade and silenced the medium machine-gun. Under cover of the grenade burst, he dived into the bunker and, in a fierce hand-to-hand fight, he killed the only living occupant with his knife. Private Partridge then cleared the enemy dead from the entrance to the bunker and attacked another bunker in the rear; but weakness from loss of blood compelled him to halt, when he shouted to his section commander that he was unable to continue. With the way clear by the silencing of the enemy medium machine-gun by Private Partridge, the Platoon moved forward and established a defence perimeter in the vicinity of the spot where Private Partridge lay wounded. Heavy enemy medium machine-gun and rifle fire both direct and enfilade from other bunkers soon created an untenable situation for the Platoon, which withdrew under its own covering fire. Despite his wounds and weakness due to loss of blood, Private Partridge joined in this fight and remained in action until the Platoon had withdrawn after recovering their casualties.

The information gained by both patrols, and particularly from Private Partridge, enabled an attack to be mounted later. This led to the capture of a vital position sited on strong defensive ground and strengthened by 43 bunkers and other dug in positions from which the enemy fled in panic. The serious situation during the fight of the two patrols was retrieved only by the outstanding gallantry and devotion to duty displayed by Private Partridge, which inspired his comrades to heroic action, leading to a successful withdrawal which saved the small force from complete annihilation. The subsequent successful capture of the position was due entirely to the incentive derived by his comrades from the outstanding heroism and fortitude displayed by Private Partridge.[1]

Unit at time of action: 8th Infantry Battalion (Victoria), Australian Military Forces.

Early Life

Frank John Partridge was the third of five children of Patrick (Paddy) James Partridge, an Australian-born farmer, and his wife Mary, née Saggs, who came from England. Frank left Tewinga Public School at the age of 13 and worked on the family farm—dairying and growing bananas at Upper Newee Creek, near Macksville. While serving in the Volunteer Defence Corps, he was called up for full-time duty in the Australian Military Forces on 26 March 1943.[2]

Service in WWII

Partridge became a member of the 8th Infantry Battalion on 26 March 1943 whilst they were training for jungle warfare on the Atherton Tableland in Queensland. The battalion embarked for Lae, New Guinea, in May 1944 and to Emirau Island in September.

From June 1945 the 8th Battalion operated in northern Bougainville, containing Japanese forces on the Bonis Peninsula. On 24 July Partridge was a member of a patrol ordered to destroy an enemy post, known as Base 5, near Ratsua. The Australians came under heavy machine-gun fire. Despite wounds to his arm and

thigh, Partridge rushed the nearest bunker, killing its occupants with grenade and knife, then began to attack a second bunker until loss of blood forced him to stop. His actions on that day won him the Victoria Cross.

Of the Australians who won the V.C. in World War II, he was the youngest and the last, and the only militiaman. After visiting London in 1946 for the Victory march, he was discharged from the AMF on 17 October in New South Wales. [3]

Later Life

Partridge travelled to England in 1953 for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and in 1956 for the Victoria Cross centenary celebrations. Returning to Upper Newee Creek, Partridge lived with his father in a dirt-floored farmhouse. He devoted himself to self-education, reading the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* by kerosene lamp and developing an extraordinarily retentive memory. In 1962–63 he appeared as a contestant on the television quiz show, 'Pick-a-Box', compered by Bob Dyer; his laconic manner appealed strongly to viewers. Partridge was one of only three contestants to win all forty boxes; his prizes were valued at more than £12,000. At St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Sydney, on 23 February 1963 he married Barbara Mavis Vyvienne Jenniffer Wylie Dunlop, a 31-year-old nursing sister who lived at Turramurra. The wedding received extensive media coverage. Barbara remained at Turramurra while Frank built a new home at the farm. He drove to Sydney every weekend to see her.

Partridge was an honorary member of the Returned Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia, a life member and patron of the Macksville Ex-Servicemen's Club, and vice-president of the Nambucca district council of the Banana Growers' Federation Co-operative Ltd. Harboursing deep political ambitions, he confidently sought Country Party pre-selection for the House of Representatives seat of Cowper in 1963. His views were regarded as rather extreme, and he lost to Ian Robinson. Partridge agreed to be Robinson's campaign-manager for the election that year. To supplement the income from his farm, Partridge travelled around the district selling life assurance. He was killed in a motorcar accident on 23 March 1964 near Bellingen and was buried with full military honours in Macksville cemetery. His wife and three-month-old son survived him.[4]

Died: 23 March 1964, near Bellingen, New South Wales [electorate of Oxley].

Place of burial or cremation: Macksville Cemetery, New South Wales [electorate of Oxley].

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 37439, 18 January 1946, p. 571

[2] BO Jones, 'Partridge, Frank John (1924–1964)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

Rawdon Hume Middleton

Born: 22 July 1916, Waverley, New South Wales [electorate of Coogee].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Yarrabandi (near Parkes), New South Wales [electorate of Orange].

Enlistment date: 14 October 1940.



Victoria Cross citation

Flight Sergeant Middleton was captain and first pilot of a Stirling aircraft detailed to attack the Fiat Works at Turin [28–9] November, 1942. Great difficulty was experienced in climbing to 12,000 feet to cross the Alps, which led to excessive consumption of fuel. So dark was the night that the mountain peaks were almost invisible. During the crossing Flight Sergeant Middleton had to decide whether to proceed or turn back, there being barely sufficient fuel for the return journey. Flares were sighted ahead and he continued the mission and even dived to 2,000 feet to identify the target, despite the difficulty of regaining height. Three flights were made over Turin at this low altitude before the target was identified. The aircraft was then subjected to fire from light anti-aircraft guns. A large hole appeared in the port main plane which made it difficult to maintain lateral control. A shell then burst in the cockpit, shattering the windscreen and wounding both pilots. A piece of shell splinter tore into the side of Flight Sergeant Middleton's face, destroying his right eye and exposing the bone over the eye. He was probably wounded also in the body or legs. The second pilot received wounds in the head and both legs which bled profusely. The wireless operator was also wounded in the leg. Flight Sergeant Middleton

became unconscious and the aircraft dived to 800 feet before control was regained by the second pilot, who took the aircraft up to 1500 feet and released the bombs. There was still light flak, some very intense, and the aircraft was hit many times. The three gunners replied continuously until the rear turret was put out of action. Flight Sergeant Middleton had now recovered consciousness and, when clear of the target, ordered the second pilot back to receive first aid. Before this was completed the latter insisted on returning to the cockpit, as the captain could see very little and could only speak with loss of blood and great pain.

Course was set for base and the crew now faced an Alpine crossing and a homeward flight in a damaged aircraft, with insufficient fuel. The possibilities of abandoning the aircraft or landing in Northern France were discussed but Flight Sergeant Middleton expressed the intention of trying to make the English coast, so that his crew could leave the aircraft by parachute. Owing to his wounds and diminishing strength, he knew that, by then, he would have little or no chance of saving himself. After four hours, the French coast was reached and here the aircraft, flying at 6,000 feet, was once more engaged and hit by intense light anti-aircraft fire. Flight Sergeant Middleton was still at the controls and mustered sufficient strength to take evasive action. After crossing the Channel there was only sufficient fuel for 5 minutes flying. Flight Sergeant Middleton ordered the crew to abandon the aircraft while he flew parallel with the coast for a few miles, after which he intended to head out to sea. Five of the crew left the aircraft safely, while two remained to assist Flight Sergeant Middleton. The aircraft crashed in the sea and the bodies of the front gunner and flight engineer were recovered the following day. Their gallant captain was apparently unable to leave the aircraft and his body has not been traced. Flight Sergeant Middleton was determined to attack the target regardless of the consequences and not to allow his crew to fall into enemy hands. While all the crew displayed heroism of a high order, the urge to do so came from Flight Sergeant Middleton, whose fortitude and strength of will made possible the completion of the mission. His devotion to duty in the face of overwhelming odds is unsurpassed in the annals of the Royal Air Force.[1]

Unit at time of action: RAAF, attached 149 Squadron, RAF.

Early Life

Rawdon Hume Middleton was the son of Australian-born parents Francis Rawdon Hamilton Middleton, station-manager, and his wife Faith Lillian, née Millar. Rawdon was educated at Dubbo High School and worked as a jackeroo on Leewong, a station at Yarrabandi, near Parkes, managed by his father. Nicknamed 'Ron', he was a keen cricketer and footballer, despite being slightly built. He was a good-looking young man, very quiet and a little moody, with a strong 'streak of honest determination'.

On 14 October 1940 Middleton enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force under the Empire Air Training Scheme. [2]

Service in WWII

He learned to fly at Narromine and received further instruction in Canada. Arriving in Britain in September 1941, he was promoted flight sergeant in December and posted to No.149 Squadron, Royal Air Force, in February 1942. After gaining experience as second pilot in Stirling bombers, he became first pilot and captain in July. Next

month he was posted to No.7 Squadron, R.A.F. He returned to No.149 in September.

By 28 November 1942 Middleton had completed twenty-eight operational flights. Three of his crew had already flown their quota of thirty and could have left, but decided to stay through loyalty to Middleton. Their sortie that night was to Turin, Italy. Over the target they were hit by flak. One shell exploded in the cockpit wounding Middleton. His right eye was destroyed and the bone above it exposed; he was probably also wounded in the body and legs.

With his aeroplane severely damaged, Middleton rejected the options of flying to Africa or bailing out over German-occupied France and insisted on returning to England for the sake of the crew. The flight lasted more than four hours, during which he was in constant agony. He could barely see and suffered further pain when he spoke. On reaching the English coast, he flew over land so that his comrades could parachute safely. Five of them reached the ground and survived. He then turned back towards the English Channel to avoid crashing in a populated area. Two of the crew remained with their captain, parachuted into the sea and drowned. Middleton was too weak to leave the Stirling which crashed into the sea on the morning of 29 November 1942, killing him. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross and promoted pilot officer (with effect from 15 November).

Middleton's body was washed ashore at Shakespeare Beach, Dover, in February 1943 and buried in St John's churchyard, Beck Row, Suffolk, with full air force honours. He was 26 and unmarried. He had won the first V.C. awarded to a member of the R.A.A.F. in World War II. His father said, 'My son did his duty'. In 1978 Middleton's V.C. was presented to the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, which holds his portraits, painted by Harold Freedman and Norman Carter after his death. [3]

Died: 29 November 1942, during VC action, near Dymchurch, Kent, United Kingdom.
Place of burial or cremation: St John's Churchyard, Mildenhall, Suffolk, United Kingdom.

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 35864, 12 January 1943, pp. 329–330

[2] L Edmonds, 'Middleton, Rawdon Hume (1916–1942)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

Charles Groves Wright Anderson

Born: 12 February 1897, Cape Town, South Africa.

Place of residence at time of enlistment: 'Fernhill', Crowther, New South Wales [electorate of Cootamundra].

Enlistment date: 1 July 1940.



Victoria Cross citation

During the operations in Malaya from the 18th to 22nd Jan. 1942, Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson, in command of a small force, was sent to restore a vital position and to assist a Brigade. His Force destroyed ten enemy tanks. When later cut off, he defeated persistent attacks on his position from air and ground forces, and forced his way through the enemy lines to a depth of fifteen miles. He was again surrounded and subjected to very heavy and frequent attacks resulting in severe casualties to his Force. He personally led an attack with great gallantry on the enemy who were holding a bridge, and succeeded in destroying four guns. Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson throughout all this fighting, protected his wounded and refused to leave them. He obtained news by wireless of the enemy position and attempted to fight his way back through eight miles of enemy occupied country. This proved to be impossible and the enemy were holding too strong a position for any attempt to be made to relieve him. On the 19th January Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson was ordered to destroy his equipment and make his way back as best he could round the enemy position. Throughout the fighting, which lasted for four days, he set a magnificent example of brave leadership, determination and outstanding

courage. He not only showed fighting qualities of a very high order but throughout exposed himself to danger without any regard to his own personal safety. [1]

Unit at time of action: 2/19th Battalion (New South Wales), Australian Military Forces.

Early Life

Charles Grove Wright Anderson was the third of five children of Alfred Gerald Wright Anderson, an English-born auditor and later newspaper editor, and his Belgian-born wife Emma (Maïa) Louise Antoinette, née Trossaert. In 1900 the family moved to the East Africa Protectorate (Kenya) and settled on a farm near Nairobi called Mount Margaret. After beginning his education at a government school in Nairobi, Charles was sent in 1907 to England, where he lived with an uncle and aunt before entering St Brendan's College, Bristol, in 1910. On his return to Africa, Anderson enlisted in the local volunteers in November 1914, following the start of World War I. Next year he joined the Calcutta Volunteer Battery. On 13 October 1916 he was commissioned temporary lieutenant in the King's African Rifles. Serving with the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Regiment, he displayed outstanding leadership during fighting at Nhamacurra, Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique), in July 1918 and was awarded the Military Cross (1919). Before he was demobilised in February 1919, he was promoted to temporary captain.

Turning to farming, Anderson served as chairman of the Kenya Settlers' Association in the Rift Valley district. At the Anglican Cathedral of the Highlands, Nairobi, on 21 February 1931 he married Edith Marian Tout, who came from Young, New South Wales. During a subsequent visit to Australia, Anderson was impressed by his wife's home country. In 1935 they migrated to Australia with their daughter and twin sons. He purchased a 2200-acre (890 ha) grazing property, Fernhill, at Crowther, near Young. On 3 March 1939 Anderson was appointed a captain in the 56th Battalion (Riverina Regiment), Militia. Promoted to major in October, he transferred to the Australian Imperial Force on 1 July 1940 as second-in-command of the 2/19th Battalion.[2]

Service in WWII

Seven months later the battalion embarked for Singapore. On 1 August 1941 Anderson was promoted to command the battalion as a lieutenant colonel. Of medium height and slender build, softly spoken and bespectacled, he did not look the forceful and incisive commander he was about to prove himself. One of the few officers with experience of jungle fighting, he trained his men in bayonet use and snap shooting.

Following the Japanese invasion of Malaya in December, the 2/19th was sent to the Muar area on 17 January 1942. The unit arrived at Bakri next morning and by that evening was under fire from the guns of the Japanese Guards Division which, supported by tanks, was decimating the inexperienced 45th Indian Brigade and causing heavy casualties to the 2/29th Battalion already sent to reinforce it. When the brigade headquarters was bombed on the 19th, Anderson took command. After waiting to gather survivors into his perimeter, he decided on a fighting withdrawal to Parit Sulong. Joining his forward company the next morning, he destroyed two

machine-gun posts with grenades and shot two enemy soldiers with his revolver, then personally led the assault that broke through the encircling Japanese.

Despite sustained air and ground attacks which caused further heavy casualties, the withdrawing troops covered 11 miles (18 km) carrying their numerous wounded. Nearing Parit Sulong, they learned that the Japanese had already arrived in strength and seized the bridge there, cutting off the retreat. Anderson resolved to fight on and mounted further attacks on 21 January, but his weakened force was unable to achieve a breakthrough. At 9 a.m. next day, realising that relief was equally impossible, he ordered all personnel still capable of walking to destroy heavy equipment, including vehicles and guns, then slip away around the blocking enemy posts.

About five hundred Australians and four hundred Indian troops—a fifth of the force originally involved—reached British positions at Yong Peng on 23 January. Anderson was sent back to Johore Bahru to reconstitute his shattered unit from recently arrived reinforcements, but was hospitalised with dysentery on 8 February. He did not rejoin the 2/19th until 13 February, the day before it was announced that he had been awarded the Victoria Cross—the only Australian commander in World War II to be so honoured. On the 15th, despite his heroic efforts at Muar River (later considered a minor epic in an otherwise disastrous campaign), Anderson joined the rest of the Singapore garrison in captivity following the British surrender.

Appointed second-in-command of 'A' Force, the first group of 3000 Australians employed on the Burma-Thailand Railway, Anderson left Singapore in May. He took charge of a group of Allied prisoners working on the northern section of the railway. In negotiating to reduce the privations of his men, he frequently risked (and on at least one occasion received) a beating from Japanese guards. His personal conduct became legendary and helped to sustain prisoners' morale. [3]

Later Life

Freed after Japan's surrender, Anderson was repatriated in November 1945 and next month placed on the Reserve of Officers. He returned to farming near Young and later took over a property, Springfield, that his wife had inherited. At the 1949 Federal election Anderson won the House of Representatives seat of Hume for the Country Party. He became an advocate for rural issues and for improving the rehabilitation of service personnel. Defeated in 1951, he stood unsuccessfully in 1954 before regaining Hume next year; re-elected in 1958, he served until again defeated in 1961. During his second term, he was a member of the joint committees on the Australian Capital Territory (1957–61) and Foreign Affairs (1961). In 1955 Anderson had revisited Kenya and Britain; in 1959 he returned to Thailand as special Australian representative during wreath-layings on war graves at the River Kwai. He retained his military links, becoming honorary colonel of the 56th Battalion (1956–57) and the 4th Battalion (1957–60), Citizen Military Forces. In 1968 he again visited Malaya as the guest of the British 17th Division, which was conducting a study tour of the Muar battle. On 11 November 1988 he died in his home at Red Hill, Canberra, and was cremated with full military honours. He was survived by two daughters and a son; his wife and their other son predeceased him. [4]

Died: 11 November 1988 in Red Hill, Canberra

Place of burial or cremation: Cremated at Norwood Crematorium, Canberra

[1] [‘Supplement to the London Gazette’](#), *London Gazette*, no. 35456, 13 February 1942, p. 749

[2] [‘Anderson, Charles Groves Wright \(1897–1985\)’](#), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

Reginald Roy Rattey

Born: 28 March 1918, Barmedman, New South Wales [electorate of Cootamundra].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Barmedman, New South Wales [electorate of Cootamundra].

Enlistment date: 24 September 1941.



Victoria Cross citation

In the South West Pacific, on 22nd March 1945 a company of an Australian Infantry Battalion was ordered to capture a strongly held enemy position astride Buin Road, South Bougainville. The attack was met by extremely heavy fire and all forward movement was stopped with casualties mounting. Corporal Rattey quickly appreciated the serious situation delaying the advance could only be averted by silencing enemy fire from automatic weapons in bunkers, which dominated all the lines of approach. He determined that a bold push by himself alone would surprise the enemy and offered the best chance of success. With amazing courage he rushed forward firing his Bren gun and hurling grenades. This completely neutralised enemy fire. Corporal Rattey, now without grenades, raced back to his section under extremely heavy fire and obtained two grenades with which he again rushed the remaining bunkers, effectively silencing all opposition and enabling his company to continue its advance. A little later the advance of his company was again held up by a heavy machine gun firing across the front. Without hesitation Corporal Rattey rushed the gun and silenced it. The company again continued its advance and gained its objective, which was consolidated. The serious situation

was turned into a brilliant success, entirely by the courage, cool planning and stern determination of Corporal Rattey. His bravery was an incentive to the entire company, who fought with inspiration derived from the gallantry of Corporal Rattey, despite the stubborn opposition to which they were subjected.[1]

Unit at time of action: 25th Infantry Battalion, Australian Military Forces.

Early Life

Reginald Roy Rattey was born on 28 March 1917 at Barmedman, New South Wales, third of seven children of Lutheran parents Johannes Albert Rattey, a South Australian-born farmer, and his wife Elizabeth Annie, née Damschke, who was born in New South Wales. Educated at Bellarwi Public School, Rattey enjoyed playing cricket, football and tennis. He worked on his father's farm and as a miner, and served with a part-time Militia unit, the 21st Light Horse Regiment. Mobilised for full-time service on 24 September 1941, the regiment was later designated the 21st Reconnaissance Battalion.[2]

Service in WWII

On 10 July 1942 Rattey volunteered for the Australian Imperial Force, joining the Queensland Lines of Communication Area. A year later he transferred to the 3rd Division Carrier Company and in September 1943 was sent to New Guinea, where he became an acting corporal. When he returned to Australia in April 1944, his rank of corporal was confirmed and in June he joined the 25th Infantry Battalion that was posted to New Guinea in July.

In Bougainville from November, the battalion saw action at several locations and from 19 March to 5 April 1945 was involved in bitter fighting for Slater's Knoll, adjacent to the Puriata River. On 22 March, supported by air strikes and artillery fire, the battalion attacked entrenched Japanese positions but enemy fire halted the advance. Rattey, having decided that a bold rush offered the best prospect of success, led his section forward firing a Bren gun from the hip until he was on top of the nearest Japanese weapon-pit. He flung in a grenade and silenced the position. Then, using the same tactics, he silenced two more weapon-pits. A short time later the advance was once more held up and Rattey, still carrying his Bren gun, again ran straight towards the Japanese machine-gun post killing one man, wounding another and putting the rest to flight. Two days later he was promoted to acting sergeant and in July was awarded the Victoria Cross. Following hospitalisation with malaria, he arrived back in Australia in October. He was discharged at the end of the month on compassionate grounds.[3]

Later Life

After touring New South Wales promoting the Australian Comforts Fund 'Salute to Valour' drive for donations, Rattey was granted a 2400-acre (971-ha) lease fronting Lake Cowal, near West Wyalong, where he established a sheep, cattle and wheat property. In 1946 King George VI presented him with his VC at Buckingham Palace when, as a member of the Australian contingent for the Victory March, Rattey visited

London. He again travelled to London in 1953 as part of the Australian contingent for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

On 13 March 1948 at the Presbyterian Pioneer Memorial Church, West Wyalong, he had married Emily Joyce Café (d.1954). He married Aileen Theresa Delaney at St Mary's Catholic Church, West Wyalong, on 11 January 1955. In 1956 the people of West Wyalong raised money for airfares for him and his wife, so that they could attend the VC centenary celebrations in London.

Hard-working, cheerful and modest, Rattey was regarded as a hero by the local community and a street was named after him. Ill health eventually forced him to sell his farm and he moved into town. Survived by his wife, their son and three daughters and the daughter of his first marriage, he died of chronic obstructive airways disease on 10 January 1986 at West Wyalong and was buried in the local cemetery. His portrait by Harold Abbott is held by the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. [4]

Died: 10 January 1986, West Wyalong, New South Wales [electorate of Cootamundra].

Place of burial or cremation: West Wyalong Lawn Cemetery, New South Wales [electorate of Cootamundra].

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 37194, 24 July 1945, p. 3857

[2] A Staunton, 'Rattey, Reginald Roy (1890–1971)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

Arthur Charles Hall

Born: 11 August 1896, Granville, New South Wales [electorate of Granville].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Nyngan, New South Wales [electorate of Barwon].

Enlistment date: 3 April 1916.



Victoria Cross citation (for action 1-2 September 1918 – Peronne, France)

For most conspicuous bravery, brilliant leadership, and devotion to duty during the operations at Peronne on 1st and 2nd September, 1918. During the attack on the 1st September a machine gun post was checking the advance. Single handed [Corporal Hall] rushed the position, shot four of the occupants, and captured nine others, and two machine guns. Then crossing the objective with a small party, he afforded excellent covering support to the remainder of the company. Continuously in advance of the main party, he located enemy posts of resistance and personally led parties to the assault. In this way he captured many small parties of prisoners and machine guns. On the morning of the 2nd September, during a heavy barrage, he carried to safety a comrade who had been dangerously wounded and was urgently in need of medical attention, and immediately returned to his post. The energy and personal courage of this gallant non-commissioned officer contributed largely to the success of the operations, throughout which he showed utter disregard of danger and inspired confidence in all.[1]

Unit at time of action: 54th Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

Arthur Charles Hall was the eldest son of Charles Hall, grazier, owner of “Glenelg” and “Willeroon” stations near Nyngan, and his wife Emma Jane, née King. He attended All Saints’ College, Bathurst, in 1909–12 and became an overseer on his father’s properties. With two years’ experience in the cadets and having become an expert shot, at eighteen he tried to join the Australian Imperial Force but was rejected as medically unfit. On 3 April 1916 he succeeded in enlisting at Dubbo, New South Wales. [2]

Service in WWI

Hall embarked for England on 7 October 1916 where, after further training, he joined his unit at Montauban in France on 8 February 1917.

He was wounded in the leg on 30 March but returned to his battalion on 21 April in time for the Second Battle of Bullecourt in May.

He was made a lance-corporal on 12 June and a corporal on 4 October. He fought with his battalion at Villers-Bretonneux in April 1918, in July at Morlancourt and in August in the general offensive.

During the attack on Perrone on the 1 September a machine gun post was preventing the advance. The Official War History describes Hall’s actions: “Hall, son of a Nyngan pastoralist and a good shot at kangaroo, worked through the entanglement, shot 4 men and captured 15 others and 2 machine guns...”

After the successful operation at Peronne, on 11 October 1918 he was transferred with the brigade to the 56th Australian Infantry Battalion where, on 6 March 1919, he was made a temporary sergeant. [3]

Later Life

After demobilization Hall returned to the Nyngan district where he bought a pastoral property, Gundooee station, near Coolabah. On 26 April 1927 he married Catherine Jessie Hemington Harris at the Union Church, Lahey’s Creek. In 1942 he served as a lieutenant in the 7th Garrison Battalion and on returning to Gundooee carried on his pastoral activities, running sheep and building up a fine herd of Poll Devon cattle. He was president of the Nyngan Picnic Race Club for twenty years and was a foundation member and keen competitor in the Coolabah District Rifle Club; he was also active in the Nyngan District Historical Society. Survived by his wife, a daughter and three sons, Hall died in Nyngan District Hospital on 25 February 1978. He was buried at the tiny Anglican Church of St Matthew’s, West Bogan, which had been built from timber cut and milled on his property. He left his Victoria Cross to the Australian War Memorial. [4]

Died: 25 February 1978, Nyngan, New South Wales [electorate of Barwon].Place of burial or cremation: St Matthew's Church of England Church Cemetery, West Bogan, Coolabah, New South Wales [electorate of Barwon].

[1] '[Supplement to the London Gazette](#)', *London Gazette*, no. 31067, 13 December 1918, p. 14778

[2] G.L. Maitland, *Tales of Valour from the Royal New South Wales Regiment*, Playbill Pty Ltd, Pymble, NSW, 1992

[3] *ibid*

[4] G Hall, '[Hall, Arthur Charles \(1896–1978\)](#)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

Peter John Badcoe

(also recorded as Peter John Badcock and Peter James Badcock)

Born: 11 January 1934 in Malvern, Adelaide, South Australia.

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Hammondville, New South Wales [electorate of Holsworthy].

Enlistment date: 10 June 1950.



Victoria Cross citation

Major Peter John Badcoe was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Australian Staff Corps in December 1952. He was allotted to the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery in which he served in a number of Regimental and Staff postings until August 1965. He then transferred to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps and joined the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam in August 1966. He was posted as Sector Operations Office in Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

On 23rd February 1967 he was acting as an Adviser to a Regional Force Company in support of a Sector operation in Thu Thu district. He monitored a radio transmission which stated that the Subsector Advisor, a United States Army officer, had been killed and that his body was within 50 metres of an enemy machine-gun position; further, the United States Medical Advisor had been wounded and was in immediate danger from the enemy. Major Badcoe with complete disregard for his

own safety moved alone across 600 metres of fire-swept ground and reached the wounded advisor, attended to him and ensured his future safety. He then organised a force of one platoon and led them towards the enemy post. His personal leadership, words of encouragement, and actions in the face of hostile enemy fire forced the platoon to successfully assault the enemy position and capture it, where he personally killed the machine gunners directly in front of him. He then picked up the body of the dead officer and ran back to the Command Post over open ground still covered by enemy fire.

On 7 March 1967 at approximately 0645 hours, the Sector Reaction Company was deployed to Quang Dien Subsector to counter an attack by the Viet Cong on the Headquarters. Major Badcoe left the Command group after their vehicle broke down and a United States officer was killed; he joined the Company Headquarters and personally led the company in an attack over open terrain to assault and capture a heavily defended enemy position. In the face of certain death and heavy loss his personal courage and leadership turned certain defeat into victory and prevented the enemy from capturing the District Headquarters.

On 7th April 1967, on an operation in Huong Tra District, Major Badcoe was with the 1st ARVN Division Reaction Company and some armoured personnel carriers. During the move forward to an objective the company came under heavy small arms fire and withdrew to a cemetery for cover, this left Major Badcoe and his radio operator about 50 metres in front of the leading elements, under heavy mortar fire. Seeing this withdrawal, Major Badcoe ran back to them, moved amongst them and by encouragement and example got them moving forward again. He then set out in front of the company to lead them on; the company stopped again under heavy fire but Major Badcoe continued on to cover and prepared to throw grenades, when he rose to throw, his radio operator pulled him down as heavy small arms fire was being brought to bear on them: he later got up again to throw a grenade and was hit and killed by a burst of machine gun fire. Soon after, friendly artillery fire was called in and the position was assaulted and captured. Major Badcoe's conspicuous gallantry and leadership on all these occasions was an inspiration to all, each action, ultimately, was successful, due entirely to his efforts, the final one ending in his death. His valour and leadership were in the highest traditions of the military profession and the Australian Regular Army.[1]

Unit at time of action: Australian Army Training Team Vietnam.

Early Life

Peter John Badcoe (or Badock) was the son of Leslie Allen Badcock, public servant, and his wife Gladys Mary Ann May, née Overton. Educated at Adelaide Technical High School, in 1950 Peter entered the South Australian Public Service as a clerk. He enlisted in the Australian Regular Army on 10 June 1950. Graduating from the Officer Cadet School, Portsea, Victoria, on 13 December 1952, he was allocated to the Royal Australian Artillery. Postings to the 14th National Service Training Battalion (1953 and 1955–57) and the 1st Field Regiment (1953–55 and 1957–58) followed. On 26 May 1956 he married 17-year-old Denise Maureen MacMahon in the Methodist Church, Manly, Sydney.

Promoted temporary captain, in December 1958 Badcock was sent to Army Headquarters as a staff officer. In 1961 he changed his surname to Badcoe. While serving in Malaya with the 103rd Field Battery from September 1961 to November

1963, he spent a week (7–14 November 1962) in the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). He saw the conditions under which the South resisted communist insurgency which was led by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). Back in Australia, Badcoe returned to the 1st Field Regiment, but in 1965 transferred to the infantry; in June 1966 he was promoted provisional major.[2]

Service during the Vietnam War

He arrived in Saigon on 6 August to join the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam. Short, round and stocky, with horn-rimmed spectacles, Badcoe did not look a hero. He was a quiet, gentle and retiring man, with a dry sense of humour. His wife was his confidante. Badcoe neither drank alcohol nor smoked; bored by boisterous mess activities, he preferred the company of a book on military history. To his colleagues he was an enigma, yet many humoured his boundless enthusiasm in field exercises and his off-duty discourses on martial matters.

Serving in Thua Thien province, in December 1966 Badcoe became operations adviser at provincial headquarters, Hue. On 23 February 1967, during a small operation in the Phu Thu district, he ran across almost 650 yards (594 m) of fire-swept ground to assist a platoon of the South Vietnamese Popular Forces. Taking charge of the unit, Badcoe led it in a frontal attack, averting defeat and inflicting heavy casualties. He collected the corpse of an American adviser and braved further volleys to rescue one who was wounded. Commanding the province's reaction company on 7 March, Badcoe conducted a series of fierce assaults which put to flight a strong People's Liberation Armed Forces (Viet Cong) formation and saved the district headquarters of Quang Dien and its defenders.

On 7 April 1967 he wrote his last letter to his wife: 'It's time I came home. I'm getting bitter and cynical . . . I can see more and more good about the Vietnamese and less and less about the US advisers'. That day he learned that the 1st Division Reaction Company was in difficulty near the hamlet of An Thuan. Knowing that the company would be denied air support unless advisers were present, he drove there by jeep with a United States Army sergeant. On arrival, Badcoe found that the force had fallen back. He took charge and rallied the men in the face of withering fire. Crawling ahead, he made several attempts to silence a machine-gun with grenades. His sergeant at one stage pulled him out of the line of fire. Rising again to throw another grenade, Badcoe was shot and killed.

For his feats of gallantry and leadership, he won the Victoria Cross and the United States Silver Star; the Republic of Vietnam awarded him its National Order, three Crosses for Gallantry and the Armed Forces Honour Medal. Badcoe had been highly respected by his Vietnamese and American comrades-in-arms. [3]

Died: 7 April 1967, during VC action, near An Thuan village, north-west of Hue, South Vietnam.

Place of burial or cremation: Terendak Garrison Camp Cemetery, Malaysia. In November 1967 an Australian and New Zealand soldiers' club in Vietnam was officially opened as the Peter Badcoe Club. A training block at the Officer Cadet School, Portsea, was also named Badcoe Hall in his honour.

- [1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 44431, 13 October 1967, p. 11273
[2] I McNeill, 'Badcoe, Peter John (1934–1967)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*
[3] *ibid*

Reginald Roy Inwood

Born: 14 July 1890, Renmark, South Australia

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Broken Hill, New South Wales [electorate of Barwon].

Enlistment date: 24 August 1914.



Victoria Cross citation (for action 19–22 September 1917 — Polygon Wood, Belgium)

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during the advance to the second objective. He moved forward through our barrage alone to an enemy strong post and captured it, together with nine prisoners, killing several of the enemy. During the evening he volunteered for a special all night patrol, which went out 600 yards in front of our line, and there—by his coolness and sound judgement—obtained and sent back very valuable information as to the enemy's movements. In the early morning of the 21st September, Pte. Inwood located a machine gun which was causing several casualties. He went out alone and bombed the gun and team, killing all but one, whom he brought in as a prisoner with the gun.[1]

Unit at time of action: 10th Infantry Battalion (South Australia), AIF.

Early Life

Reginald Roy Inwood was the eldest son of Edward Inwood, labourer, and his wife Mary Ann, née Minney. He was educated at North Adelaide Public School and Broken Hill Model School. Inwood worked as a miner at Broken Hill. In August 1914 he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force.[2]

Service in WWI

Allotted to the 10th Battalion, Inwood embarked in October 1914. He served at Gallipoli until November 1915. He was promoted lance corporal in August. By April 1916 the battalion was in France. Inwood, who had been promoted temporary corporal in August was in October reduced to private, owing to absence without leave.

In the battle of Menin Road in September 1917 the 10th Battalion attacked at Polygon Wood. 'During the advance to the second objective, [Inwood] passed through our barrage, and alone captured a strong post, killing several and capturing nine. He volunteered for a special night-long patrol. He went out 600 yards [549 m] and sent back the most valuable information. Early on the morning of 21 September Inwood went out alone and located and bombed a machine-gun. He killed the crew and brought in the one survivor with the gun'. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for 'most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty'. Although the citation states that Inwood went out alone on this attack, the Official History, the unit history and Inwood's own statement confirm that he was assisted, however briefly, by another man. Promoted corporal in October 1917, and later sergeant, Inwood served with the 10th Battalion until May 1918. He embarked for Australia on 24 August and was demobilized in Adelaide in December. [3]

Later Life

Returning to a hero's welcome at Broken Hill in October Inwood contrasted, in a public speech, his departure when he was, he claimed, "stoned by mongrels at the train", with his return when "those mongrels were the first to ... shake me by the hand ... If the boys stick together like they did in France there will be no Bolshevism in this town ... I would like to be at one end of the street with a machine-gun and have them at the other end". Departing recruits had been hooted and jeered by militant socialists at Broken Hill but there is no evidence of stone-throwing. MP Considine, member for Barrier in the House of Representatives, accused Inwood of trying "to incite trouble between returned soldiers and the working classes". Broken Hill was not a comfortable place for Inwood. He soon moved to Adelaide and on 31 December 1918 married a widow Mabel Alice Collins, née Weber. Inwood had difficulty in finding work. After an assault charge by police, which resulted in a fine in 1919, and his divorce in 1921, he spent a short time mining at Queenstown, Tasmania, and at a eucalyptus distillery on Kangaroo Island. He returned to Adelaide and was employed by the city council as a labourer in 1928–55. During World War II he served as a warrant officer with the Australian Military Forces.

Inwood married Evelyn Owens in 1927 and after her death married Louise Elizabeth Gates in 1942. He had no children. A rugged, independent, well-built man, “with the rough corners still on him”, the years after his third marriage were spent happily and quietly. This loyal labourer, perhaps exploited by some at Broken Hill, gave the impression that “his VC had not done him much good”. He never lost his pride in the 10th Battalion and always marched with them on Anzac Day. The Other Ranks Mess, 10th Battalion, Torrens Parade Ground, Adelaide, is called the Roy Inwood Club. His Victoria Cross hangs in the council chambers of the Adelaide City Council. He died on 23 October 1971, was given a military funeral and was buried in West Terrace cemetery. Two brothers, Harold and Robert, also served with the AIF; the latter was killed in action at Pozières. [4]

Died: 23 October 1971, St Peter’s, Adelaide

Place of burial or cremation: AIF Cemetery, West Terrace, Adelaide

[1] ‘Supplement to the London Gazette’, *London Gazette*, no. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 12330

[2] J Gibberd, ‘Inwood, Reginald Roy (1890–1971)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

Patrick Joseph Bugden

Born: 17 March 1897, South Gundurimba, New South Wales [electorate of Lismore].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Alstonville, New South Wales [electorate of Ballina].

Enlistment date: 25 May 1916.



Victoria Cross citation (for action 26–28 September 1917 — Polygon Wood, Belgium)

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when on two occasions our advance was temporarily held up by strongly-defended 'pill-boxes.' Pte. Bugden, in the face of devastating fire from machine guns, gallantly led small parties to attack these strong points and, successfully silencing the machine guns with bombs, captured the garrison at the point of the bayonet. On another occasion, when a corporal, who had become detached from his company, had been captured and was being taken to the rear by the enemy, Pte. Bugden, single-handed, rushed to the rescue of his comrade, shot one enemy and bayoneted the remaining two, thus releasing the Corporal. On five occasions he rescued wounded men under intense shell and machine-gun fire, showing an utter contempt and disregard for danger. Always foremost in volunteering for any dangerous mission, it was during the execution of one of these missions that this gallant soldier was killed.[1]

Unit at time of action: 31st Infantry Battalion (Queensland and Victoria), AIF.

Early Life

Patrick Joseph Bugden was the eldest child of Thomas Bugden, farmer, and his wife Annie, née Connolly, both native-born. His father died when Bugden was 6, leaving four children; and his mother remarried. Educated at Gundurimba Public School and the convent school at Tatham, he later worked for his stepfather as a barman at the Federal Hotel, Alstonville; outgoing and popular, he excelled at football, cricket and shot-putting. Before joining the Australian Imperial Force he completed twelve months military training under the compulsory scheme introduced in 1911. [2]

Service in WWI

Bugden enlisted in the A.I.F. as a private on 25 May 1916, trained at Enoggera in Queensland. In September he embarked for England for further training, before proceeding to the Western Front with the 31st Battalion reinforcements. In a letter to his mother, he describes the monotony of the training camp:

Dear Mother

... "I will tell you a day's work. Get up 6.30 (dark) breakfast 7 consisting of tea porridge and bread and drippen. Fall in at eight o'clock, practice bomb throwing. Physical exercises, squad drill. Dinner 1 o'clock soup, meat, potatoes, one piece bread. Fall in 2 o'clock. Trench digging and go for a route march. Tea 5 o'clock (dark). Tea some kind of a pudding and bread and drippen. We sleep in huts 25 in each and good coal stove in the middle. So you can guess we have plenty of tea and toast every night. After we come home from the pictures which are about half a mile away."

He joined the unit on 19 March 1917 at Bapaume.

Not long afterwards, he wrote to his mother about his involvement in the Battle of Bullecourt. Fought between 3 and 17 May 1917, this battle was extremely costly with 7482 AIF casualties from three Australian Divisions. He refers to this battle in his letter dated 11th June, where his efforts to minimise the horror of the experience fails to prevail over the facts he relates:

I am back from the trenches for a short time. We had ten days in taking it all through. It wasn't so bad. The worst thing is the stink for the trenches that we were in is surrounded by dead bodies. A stiff fight taking place there about a month ago so the smell is just nice. It is impossible to bury all of them for Fritz is too lively in that sector.

Bullecourt probably also explains the macabre sense of humour he shows in writing to his sister Rose on 1 June about a football match which didn't turn out as expected:

I had a funny game of football yesterday. Two of the players got wounded and were carried to hospital. Just as we started one chap happened to kick a bomb which exploded giving the two I mentioned some nasty wounds. We won the game. I was a picture by the time we had finished. [3]

On 26 September the battalion took part in the second phase of the battle of Polygon Wood. As it advanced towards its objective the leading platoons were swept by

fierce machine-gun fire from a group of pillboxes. Bugden was in a small party sent forward to attack the first strong point: successfully 'silencing the machine-gun with bombs', he 'captured the garrison at the point of the bayonet'. In the next two days he performed several similar acts of gallantry, each of which contributed to the battalion's advance. Once, single-handed, he rescued a corporal who was being taken to the German lines, and at least five times he dashed out into intense shell and machine-gun fire to bring in wounded. 'Always foremost in volunteering for any dangerous mission', he was killed on 28 September. For his bravery during the preceding two days Bugden was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. [4]

Died: 28 September 1917, Polygon Wood, Belgium.

Place of burial or cremation: Hooge Crater Cemetery (Plot VIII, Row C, Grave No. 5), Zillebeke, Belgium

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 30400, 23 November 1917, pp. 12329–12330

[2] NS Foldi, 'Bugden, Patrick Joseph (1897–1917)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] Bugden Papers, Queensland Museum

[4] NS Foldi, 'Bugden, Patrick Joseph (1897–1917)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

Arthur Roden Cutler

Born: 24 May 1916, Manly, New South Wales [electorate of Manly].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Manly, New South Wales [electorate of Manly].

Enlistment date: 13 April 1940.



Victoria Cross citation (for action 19 June–6 July 1941 — Syria)

For most conspicuous and sustained gallantry during the Syrian Campaign and for outstanding bravery during the bitter fighting at Merdjayoun when this Artillery Officer became a byword amongst forward troops with which he worked. At Merdjayoun on June 19th, 1941, our Infantry attack was checked after suffering heavy casualties from an enemy counter attack with tanks. Enemy machine gun fire swept the ground, but Lieutenant Cutler pressed a continuation of the attack. With another Artillery Officer and a small party he pushed on ahead of the Infantry and established an outpost in a house. The telephone line was cut and he went out and mended this line under machine gun fire and returned to the house from which the enemy post and battery were successfully engaged.

The enemy then attacked this outpost with Infantry and tanks, killing Bren gunners and mortally wounding other Officers. Lieutenant Cutler and another manned an anti-tank rifle and Bren gun and fought back driving the enemy infantry away. The tank continued to attack but under constant fire from the anti-tank rifle and Bren gun eventually withdrew. Lieutenant Cutler then personally supervised the evacuation of

wounded members of his party. Undaunted he pressed for a further advance. He had been ordered to establish an outpost from which he could register the only road by which enemy transport could enter the town. With a small party of volunteers he pressed on until finally with one other he succeeded in establishing an outpost right in the town which was occupied by the Foreign Legion, despite enemy machine gun fire which prevented our Infantry from advancing. At this time Lieutenant Cutler knew that the enemy were massing on his left for counter attack and that he was in danger of being cut off. Nevertheless, he carried out his task of registering the battery on the road and engaging the enemy post. The enemy counter attacked with Infantry and tanks and he was cut off. He was forced to go to ground, but after dark succeeded in making his way back through enemy lines. His work on registering the only road by which enemy transport could enter the town was of vital importance and a big factor in the enemy's subsequent retreat.

On the night of June 23rd-24th he was in charge of a 25-pounder sent forward into our forward defended locality to silence an enemy anti-tank gun and post which had held up our attack. This he did and next morning the recapture of Merdjayoun was complete. Later at Damour on 6th July when our forward Infantry were pinned to the ground by heavy hostile machine gun fire, Lieutenant Cutler, regardless of all danger, went to bring a line to his outpost when he was seriously wounded. Twenty-six hours elapsed before it was possible to rescue this Officer, whose wound by this time had become septic, necessitating the amputation of his leg. Throughout the Campaign this Officer's courage was unparalleled and his work was a big factor in the capturing of Merdjayoun.[1]

Unit at time of action: 2/5th Field Artillery, Australian Military Forces.

Early Life

Arthur Roden Cutler was born to Arthur William Cutler, a commercial traveller, and his wife Ruby Daphne (nee Pope). Growing up he was a keen sportsman who enjoyed swimming, sailing, cycling and cricket. He was educated at Manly Public School and Sydney Boys' High School where he captained the school's rifle team. He studied economics at Sydney University at night and later joined the public service. In March 1936, he joined the Sydney University Regiment. On 10 November 1939, he was commissioned as a lieutenant in the militia and was selected, in April 1940 as an officer in 2/5th Field Regiment. [2]

Service in WWII

The 2/5th Field Regiment embarked for the Middle East on 20 October 1940. After initial encampment in Palestine, in mid April 1941 the regiment moved to Egypt. Soon after the decision was made to move against the Vichy French and the regiment quickly returned to Palestine. It entered its first campaign in Syria and Lebanon in June 1941 where Cutler's actions resulted in him being awarded the Victoria Cross.

On 6 July Cutler was with the left forward company of the 2/16th Australian Infantry Battalion as an artillery observation officer, when an attack was launched against the 6th French Foreign Legion Regiment at El Atiqua. There was much hard fighting and the battalion suffered heavy casualties. Cutler became involved in the infantry fight and captured eight Frenchmen from three machine-gun posts. Notwithstanding, the battalion was held up by yet another line of enemy machine-guns and unable to

obtain accurate artillery support. Cutler volunteered to go back and arrange that support and, as he ran back a burst of machine-gun fire caught him in the leg severing the main arteries and smashing the bones in several places. After being stranded, with no medical help, for twenty six hours Cutler was finally evacuated to the main dressing station, but it was too late to save his leg as the wound had turned gangrenous. He was invalided home in December 1941. [3]

Later Life

Having been discharged, Cutler became secretary of the New South Wales branch of the RSL before being employed with the National Security Service; this was followed with a position in the Repatriation Department.

After the war he was appointed as High Commissioner to New Zealand. He married Helen Morris on 28 May 1946. While in New Zealand they had two sons, Roden and Anthony. Cutler then became ambassador to Ceylon where a third son, Richard, was born. When the Ceylon posting finished, Cutler was appointed head of Australia's legation to Egypt where he and Helen had another son, Mark. He was appointed secretary-general of the SEATO [South-East Asian Treaty Organisation] Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Canberra in January 1957. Cutler's next diplomatic posting was as Australia's high commissioner to Pakistan. In 1961 he became Australia's Consul-General in New York, and in 1965 became ambassador to the Netherlands but returned early to take up the Governorship of New South Wales. He was then knighted by Queen Elizabeth. Cutler retired from the Governorship in 1981; during his career he had been created a Knight of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order and a Knight in the Order of Australia as well as being the recipient of many honorary degrees and holding positions on numerous boards. His wife died in November 1990 and he remarried in April 1993. Cutler was regarded with affection by many Australians and in 2000 he was honoured as one of three Australian living Victoria Cross winners to be commemorated on a stamp and coin issue. He died in February 2002. [4]

Died: 21 February 2002, Rose Bay, New South Wales [electorate of Vaucluse].
Place of burial or cremation: South Head Cemetery, Vaucluse, New South Wales [electorate of Vaucluse]. Having served as Governor of New South Wales from 1966-1981, he was given a State Funeral.

[1] '[Supplement to the London Gazette](#)', *London Gazette*, no. 35360, 25 November 1941, p. 6825

[2] G.L. Maitland, *Tales of Valour from the Royal New South Wales Regiment*, Playbill Pty Ltd, Pymble, NSW, 1992

[3] *ibid*

[4] Australian War Memorial, '[People Profiles: Lieutenant Arthur Roden Cutler](#)', Australian War Memorial website

Albert Chalmers Borella

(surname changed to Chalmers-Borella in 1939)

Born: 7 August 1881, Borung, Victoria

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Thyra, New South Wales (electorate of Murray)

Enlistment date: 15 March 1915



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P01938.092

Victoria Cross citation (for action on 17–18 July 1918 — Villers-Bretonneux, France)

For most conspicuous bravery in attack. Whilst leading his platoon with the first wave Lt. Borella marked an enemy machine gun firing through our barrage. He ran out ahead of his men into the barrage, shot two German machine-gunners with his revolver, and captured the gun. He then led his party, now reduced to ten men and two Lewis guns, against a very strongly held trench, using his revolver and later a rifle, with great effect, causing many enemy casualties. His leading and splendid example resulted in the garrison being quickly shot or captured. Two large dug-outs

were also bombed and thirty prisoners taken. Subsequently the enemy twice counterattacked in strong force, on the second occasion outnumbering Lt. Borella's platoon by ten to one, but his cool determination inspired his men to resist heroically, and the enemy were repulsed with very heavy loss. [1]

Unit at time of action: 26th Infantry Battalion (Queensland and Tasmania), AIF.

Early Life

Albert Chalmers Borella was the son of Louis Borella, farmer, and his wife Annie, née Chalmers of Thyra, New South Wales. Educated at Borung and Wychitella state schools, he later farmed in the Borung and Echuca districts; he also served for eighteen months with a volunteer infantry regiment, the Victorian Rangers.

From April 1910 Borella was employed by the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, Melbourne. He resigned in January 1913 and took up a pastoral lease, drawn by ballot, on the Daly River, Northern Territory. [2]

Service in WWI

On 15 March 1915 he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force as a private and was posted to 'B' Company, 26th Battalion, on 24 May. After training in Egypt his unit landed at Gallipoli on 12 September and Borella, who was promoted corporal later that month, served there until November.

The 26th Battalion sailed for the Western Front in March 1916; Borella was wounded in the battle of Pozières Heights on 29 July and was evacuated for four months. He was promoted sergeant in January 1917, and in March was awarded the Military Medal for conspicuous bravery at Malt Trench, Warlencourt. Commissioned second lieutenant on 7 April, he was Mentioned in Despatches soon afterwards and in August was sent to England for officer training and promoted lieutenant. In the early months of 1918 the 26th Battalion held the line at Dernancourt, where Borella was mainly engaged in patrolling and raids. He fought at Morlancourt and Hamel and on 17 July, for 'most conspicuous bravery in attack' at Villers-Bretonneux, won the Victoria Cross. While leading his platoon in an assault on an enemy support-trench, he noticed a machine-gun firing through the Australian barrage; he ran out ahead of his men into the barrage, shot the gunners with his revolver and captured the gun. He then led a small party against the strongly held trench, bombed two dug-outs and took thirty prisoners. Only weeks after this incident he was invalided to Australia owing to wounds and illness. Three of his brothers also served in the A.I.F [3]

Later Life

In 1920–39 Borella farmed on a soldier-settlement block near Hamilton, Victoria. On the outbreak of World War II Borella was appointed lieutenant in the 12th Australian Garrison Battalion with which he served until 1941 when he was attached to the Prisoner of War Group at Rushworth. Promoted captain on 1 September 1942, he served with the 51st Garrison Company at Myrtleford until discharged in 1945. He then moved to Albury, New South Wales, joined the Commonwealth Department of Supply and Shipping, and was an inspector of dangerous cargoes until his retirement

in 1956. 'A big tough-looking bloke, the image we conjure up of the digger', Borella was yet a humane, quietly spoken and an unostentatious man, ever ready to assist a worthy cause. [4]

Died: 7 February 1968, Albury, New South Wales (electorate of Albury)

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 30903, 13 September 1918, p. 11075,

[2] Jean P. Fielding, 'Borella, Albert Chalmers (1881–1968)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

James Rogers

Born: 4 July 1873, at Woodside Farm, Moama, New South Wales [electorate of Murray].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Heywood, Victoria

(Enlistment date not known)



Victoria Cross citation

On the 15th June, 1901, during a skirmish near Thaba 'Nchu, a party of the rearguard of Captain Sitwell's column, consisting of Lieutenant F. Dickinson, Sergeant James Rogers, and 6 men of the South African Constabulary, was suddenly attacked by about 60 Boers. Lieutenant Dickinson's horse having been shot, that Officer was compelled to follow his men on foot. Sergeant Rogers seeing this, rode back, firing as he did so, took Lieutenant Dickinson up behind him, and carried him for half-a-mile on his horse. The Sergeant then returned to within 400 yards of the enemy and carried away, one after the other, two men who had lost their horses, after which he caught the horses of two other men, and helped the men to mount. All this was done under a very heavy rifle fire. The Boers were near enough to Sergeant Rogers to call upon him to surrender; his only answer was to continue firing.[1]

Unit at time of action: South African Constabulary.

Early Life

James Rogers was born on 4 July 1873, at Woodside Farm, Moama, New South Wales, son of Welsh-born John Rogers, farmer, and his wife Sarah Louisa, née Johnstone, from Sydney. Rogers was educated locally at public schools. In 1886 his family moved to Heywood, Victoria, where he later worked on his father's farm and joined the local company of the Victorian Mounted Rifles in 1898. He was 6 ft 2 ins (188 cm) tall, 12 stone (76 kg) and a superb horseman, tough bushman and crack rifle-shot.[2]

Service during the Boer War

Rogers enlisted in the First Victorian Mounted Infantry Company. Arriving in South Africa in 1899 the contingent was allotted to a composite Australian regiment. After twelve months service in the Cape Colony and Orange River areas, the contingent returned to Australia, but Rogers remained behind to join the South African Constabulary. Rogers was the only Australian in a party consisting of 500 Royal Irish Rifles disposing of small groups of enemy known to have infiltrated back into territory from which they had earlier been drive. He was acting as scout when the action, described in the citation, occurred that won him the Victoria Cross.

In January 1902 he arrived back in Australia and in March was commissioned as a lieutenant in the 6th Battalion, Australian Commonwealth Horse. His contingent embarked on 19 May 1902, but had scarcely arrived in South Africa when fighting ceased. On 7 August its members returned to Melbourne. [3]

Later Life

Rogers tried to obtain a commission in the Australian Military Forces but was unsuccessful. After buying and then selling a farm at Yea, Victoria, he returned to South Africa where he served as a special detective with the Cape Police until February 1904.

On 25 April 1907, describing himself as a mounted trooper, he married Ethel Maud Seldon at Portland, Victoria; they had two sons. By 1912 Rogers was a marker at Williamstown rifle range and by the outbreak of World War I he was an assistant ranger there.

On 6 December 1914 he was commissioned in the 3rd Light Horse Brigade Train, Australian Army Service Corps, Australian Imperial Force. He was seriously wounded at Gallipoli on 4 August 1915 and evacuated to Egypt. He then served with the Anzac Provost Corps before returning to Australia on 18 July 1916. Rogers resumed work at Williamstown as a range assistant, then in 1921 became an assistant storeman, Ordnance Branch, AMF, Victoria. He resigned in 1922 and resumed farming. He lived at Kew, Melbourne, for over thirty years; then, after his wife died, with his one surviving son at Roseville, Sydney.[4]

Died: 28 October 1961, Concord, New South Wales [electorate of Drummoyne].
Place of burial or cremation: Cremated at Springvale Crematorium, Melbourne.

- [1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 27426, 18 April 1902, p. 2600
- [2] A Staunton, 'Rogers, James (1873–1961)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*
- [3] L Wigmore (ed), *They Dared Mightily*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, ACT, 1963
- [4] A Staunton, 'Rogers, James (1873–1961)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

John William Alexander Jackson

Born: 13 September 1897, Gunbar, via Hay, New South Wales [electorate of Murray].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Gunbar via Hay, New South Wales [electorate of Murray].

Enlistment date: 15 February 1915.



Victoria Cross citation (for action 25–26 June 1916 — Armentières, France)

For most conspicuous bravery. On the return from a successful raid, several members of the raiding party were seriously wounded in 'No Man's Land' by shell fire. Pte. Jackson got back safely and, after handing over a prisoner whom he had brought in, immediately went out again under very heavy shell fire and assisted in bringing in a wounded man. He then went out again, and with a sergeant was bringing another wounded man when his arm was blown off by a shell and the sergeant was rendered unconscious. He then returned to our trenches, obtained assistance, and went out again to look for his two wounded comrades. He set a splendid example of pluck and determination. His work has always been marked by the greatest coolness and bravery.[1]

Unit at time of action: 17th Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

John William Alexander Jackson was the son of John Gale Jackson, a Sydney born labourer, and Adelaide Ann (née McFarlane). Jackson was one of eight children. His mother died in 1905. Jackson was working as a labourer on a property at Merriwa when he enlisted.[2]

Service in WWI

Jackson was posted to the 17th Australian Infantry Battalion, embarking on 12 May 1915 for Egypt. After training outside Cairo, the battalion sailed first to Lemnos and then to Gallipoli where it landed on 20 August. On 27 August the battalion was launched into battle for Hill 60 – the allies' last significant assault of that campaign. On 3 October Jackson was evacuated with dysentery and rejoined his unit on 8 March 1916 in Egypt. Shortly afterwards the battalion left for France where Lord Kitchener welcomed them saying: "If you uphold your reputation gained on Gallipoli you will be liked by everyone but the Germans."

The battalion took over from the Northumberland Fusiliers at Bois Grenier, near Armentières, France, on 10 April.

The raid that was carried out on the night of 25/26 June was under cover of artillery fire and against the forward trenches of the 231st Prussian Reserve Infantry Regiment. It was his actions during this raid, as described in the citation, that won him the Victoria Cross.

Aged just eighteen, Jackson was the youngest Australian to be awarded the Victoria Cross in World War I.

After a long hospitalisation, Jackson was repatriated home 4 May 1917 and invalided out of the army on 15 September 1917. [3]

Later Life

After returning to Australia he spoke at recruiting rallies and spent a short while as a hotel keeper at Wollongong before returning to Merriwa where he took up a property. After almost seven years of drought he left the land and moved to Sydney for employment. He had several jobs, including clerical work with the Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board. On 12 January 1932 he married a dressmaker, Ivy Muriel Alma Morris, at St Paul's Anglican Church, Kogarah. They lived at Hurstville, NSW where, despite his disability, he maintained an outstanding flower and vegetable garden. There was one daughter of the marriage which was dissolved in 1955. During World War II he served as an acting sergeant in Eastern Command Provost Company, 1941–42. In 1953 he moved to Melbourne and became commissionaire and inquiry attendant at the Melbourne Town Hall. In 1956 Jackson visited England to attend Victoria Cross centenary celebrations. Survived by his daughter, he died of arteriosclerotic heart disease on 4 August 1959 at the Austin Hospital, Heidelberg, Melbourne, and was cremated. [4]

Died: 4 August 1959, Heidelberg, Victoria

Place of burial or cremation: Cremated at Springvale Crematorium, Melbourne.

[1] [‘Supplement to the London Gazette’](#), *London Gazette*, no. 29 740, 8 September 1916, pp. 8870–8871

[2] [2] G.L. Maitland, *Tales of Valour from The Royal New South Wales Regiment*, Playbill Pty Ltd, Pymble, NSW, 1992

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

Mark Gregor Strang Donaldson

Born: 2 April 1979, Waratah, Newcastle, New South Wales [electorate of Wallsend or Newcastle].

Enlistment date: 18 June 2002.



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Victoria Cross citation

For most conspicuous acts of gallantry in action in a circumstance of great peril in Afghanistan, as part of the Special Operations Task Group during Operations SLIPPER, Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan.

On 2 September 2008 Trooper Donaldson was outstanding in the manner in which he fought during a prolonged and effective enemy ambush. On numerous occasions, he deliberately drew the enemy's fire in order to allow wounded soldiers to be moved to safety. As the battle raged around him he saw that a coalition interpreter was lying motionless on exposed ground. With complete disregard for his own safety, on his own initiative and alone, Trooper Donaldson ran back eighty metres across exposed ground to rescue the interpreter and carry him back to a vehicle. Trooper Donaldson then rejoined his patrol and continued to engage the enemy while remaining exposed to heavy enemy fire. [1]

Unit at time of action: Special Operations Task Group.

Early Life

The son of a Vietnam War veteran, Mark Donaldson spent his formative years in Dorrigo, NSW. He attended Dorrigo High School, graduating in 1996. His father died suddenly of a heart attack aged 47. His mother was tragically murdered three years later. [2]

Military Service

He enlisted into the Australian Army on 18 June 2002 and entered recruit training at the Army Recruit Training Centre, Kapooka, NSW. He demonstrated an early aptitude for soldiering and was awarded the prizes for best shot and best at physical training in his platoon. Subsequently he was allocated to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps and posted to the school of infantry at Singleton, NSW, where he excelled in his initial employment training. At the completion of this training he was again awarded best shot and best at physical training, as well as the award for the most outstanding soldier in his platoon. He was posted to 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, Townsville, QLD in November 2002. It was during this time that Trooper Donaldson decided to pursue his ambition to join the Special Air Service Regiment. In February 2004, he successfully completed the Special Air Service Regiment selection course and was posted to the regiment in May 2004. He was then posted to I Troop, 3 Special Air Service Squadron. Since that time he has been deployed on operations to East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq.

On 12 August 2008, Trooper Donaldson was wounded in action whilst conducting nighttime operations in Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan. He recovered from his minor wounds and continued on the deployment. Trooper Donaldson was involved in an incident on 2 September 2008 in Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan that resulted in him being awarded the Victoria Cross for Australia. He was invested by her Excellency the Governor-General of Australia at Government House, Canberra on 16 January 2009.

[1] Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, No. S 10, Tuesday 20th January, 2009.

[2] Buchanan, Matt (24 January 2009). "The private pain of a national hero". Sydney Morning Herald.

[3] Department of Defence, 'Trooper Mark Gregor Strang Donaldson, VC', op. cit.

Walter Ernest Brown

Born: 3 July 1885, New Norfolk, Tasmania

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Petersham, New South Wales (electorate of Newtown or Summer Hill)

Enlistment date: 11 July 1915.



Victoria Cross citation (for action 6 July 1918 — Villers-Bretonneux, France)

For most conspicuous bravery and determination when with an advanced party from his battalion which was going into the line in relief. The company to which he was attached carried out during the night a minor operation resulting in the capture of a small system of enemy trench. Early on the following morning an enemy strong post about seventy yards distant caused the occupants of the newly captured trench great inconvenience by persistent sniping. Hearing that it had been decided to rush this post, Corporal Brown, on his own initiative, crept out along the shallow trench and made a dash towards the post. An enemy machine gun opened fire from another trench and forced him to take cover. Later he again dashed forward and reached his objective. With a Mills grenade in his hand he stood at the door of a dug-out and called on the occupants to surrender. One of the enemy rushed out, a scuffle ensued, and Corporal Brown knocked him down with his fist. Loud cries of 'Kamerad' were then heard, and from the dug-out an officer and eleven other ranks appeared. This party Corporal Brown brought back as prisoners to our line, the enemy meanwhile from other positions bringing heavy machine-gun fire to bear on the party. [1]

Unit at time of action: 20th Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

Walter Ernest Brown was the son of Sidney Francis Brown, miller, and his wife Agnes Mary, née Carney. He was brought up at New Norfolk, Tasmania and on leaving school worked as a grocer in Hobart. In 1911 he moved to New South Wales and at the time of his enlistment he was a grocer in the Sydney suburb of Petersham.

Service in WWI

On 26 July 1915 Brown enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force as an infantryman, then hoping to see action more quickly transferred to the light horse. He embarked for Egypt in October and joined the 1st Light Horse Regiment on 14 January 1916; he later transferred to the Imperial Camel Corps. In July, having determined to reach the infantry in France, he contrived (on a plea of having lost his false teeth) to be sent to Cairo where he obtained a transfer to the 20th Battalion reinforcements. He sailed for France in October and after serving for a month with the 55th Battalion and for six months with the 1st and 2nd Australian Field Butcheries, joined the 20th Battalion at St Omer in July 1917. In September and October he fought at Passchendaele and was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for attending wounded under heavy fire, and later, after his sergeant had been disabled, taking charge of the section, giving 'a fine example of courage and leadership'. He was promoted lance corporal on 19 October and was wounded in November.

Early in 1918 the 20th Battalion fought at Morlancourt and then moved into the Villers-Bretonneux sector; Brown was promoted corporal on 7 April. On 6 July he was with an advance party which took over some newly captured trenches near Accroche Wood and, on being told that a sniper's post was causing trouble, he located the spot, picked up two Mills bombs and ran towards it under fire. His first bomb fell short, but on reaching the post he knocked one German down with his fist and threatened the others with his remaining grenade; when they surrendered, Brown ordered them back to the Australian lines. He had captured thirteen men, including one officer. He was awarded the Victoria Cross. [2]

Later Life

Brown was discharged from the AIF in February 1920. In 1920–30 he worked in Sydney as a brass-finisher and in 1931–40 at Leeton as a water-bailiff with the New South Wales Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission. He married Maude Dillon, an Irishwoman, in Christ Church, Bexley, on 4 June 1932. In June 1940, by giving his age as 40 instead of 54, Brown enlisted in the 2nd AIF. His real age and record were soon discovered, and he was promoted lance sergeant and posted to the 2/15th Field Regiment, but he reverted to gunner at his own request. The regiment, part of the ill-fated 8th Division, reached Malaya in August 1941. Brown was last seen on 14 February 1942, the night before the Allied surrender at Singapore. Picking up some grenades he said to his comrades, "No surrender for me", and walked towards the enemy lines. He was presumed to have died while trying to escape on 28 February. He was survived by his wife, a son and a

daughter. Brown was regarded by those who served with him as “a born soldier, quiet, friendly and loyal beyond measure”. [3]

Died: 28 February 1942, Singapore.

Place of burial or cremation: No known grave. His name is commemorated on the Singapore Memorial.

[1] ‘[Supplement to the London Gazette](#)’, *London Gazette*, no. 30849, 16 August 1918, pp. 9659–9660

[2] K R White, ‘[Brown, Walter Ernest \(1885–1942\)](#)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

Alfred John Shout

Born: 7 August 1881, Wellington, New Zealand. War record states that he was born on 8 August 1882.

Place of residence at time of enlistment: 131 Darlington Road, Darlington, New South Wales [electorate of Newtown].

Enlistment date: 27 August 1914.



Victoria Cross citation

For most conspicuous bravery at Lone Pine trenches, in the Gallipoli Peninsula. On the morning of the 9th August, 1915, with a very small party, Captain Shout charged down trenches strongly occupied by the enemy, and personally threw four bombs among them, killing eight and routing the remainder. In the afternoon of the same day, from the position gained in the morning he captured a further length of trench under similar conditions, and continued personally to bomb the enemy at close range under very heavy fire, until he was severely wounded, losing his right hand and left eye. This most gallant officer has since succumbed to his injuries.[1]

Unit at time of action: 1st Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

Alfred John Shout was the son of London-born John Shout, cook, and his Irish wife Agnes, née McGovern. In 1900 he joined the New Zealand contingent to the South African War, serving as a sergeant in the Border Horse; he was wounded at least once. In 1903 Shout became a sergeant in the Cape Field Artillery. With his wife and daughter Shout moved to Australia in 1905, settled at Darlington, Sydney, and worked as a carpenter and joiner. He joined the 29th Infantry Regiment (militia) in 1907 and obtained his commission on 16 June 1914. He was well-known in rifle-shooting circles.[2]

Service in WWI

Shout was appointed to the 1st Australian Infantry Battalion as a 2nd lieutenant on 27th August 1914. He embarked with his unit for Egypt where, on 1 February 1915, he was promoted to lieutenant.

He landed with his battalion at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, and on that day and subsequently, he displayed outstanding bravery and leadership. He was awarded the Military Cross for action on 27 April 1915, during operations near Kaba Tepe, “for showing conspicuous courage and ability in organizing and leading his men in a thick, bushy country, under very heavy fire. He frequently had to expose himself to locate the enemy, and led a bayonet charge at a critical moment.” [3]

On 29 July he was promoted captain, 12 days before his death in the trenches at Lone Pine.

On the morning of the 9th August Shout, with a small party, decided to clear an enemy trench. They advanced in short stages, building a barricade of sandbags at each stop. In the morning, in one section of the trench, Shout killed eight of the enemy and routed the remainder. In the afternoon, gathering another party of eight, he captured a further section of trench in similar fashion. They had just determined a suitable position for the final barricade when Shout lit three bombs for the final dash. The third bomb went off in his hand blowing it off and shattering one side of his face and body.

The Official Commonwealth Press Representative wrote: “Shout was one of the gamest officers that ever lived. From the very first day he was ready for adventure and plunged into the thick of it, light hearted and laughing.”

For his wife Rose Alice, Shout’s death was made the more traumatic by army clerical errors. She was first informed he had died, then that he was wounded and returning to Australia, then, finally, that he had died of wounds. In August 1916 the Returned Soldiers’ Association launched a fund-raising appeal to purchase a home for her and her 11-year-old daughter; housing assistance was also offered by the New South Wales Government. In November 1915 a memorial plaque commemorating Shout was unveiled at Darlington Town Hall by the Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson. It is now displayed at Victoria Barracks Museum, Paddington. [4]

Died: 11 August 1915, Lone Pine, Gallipoli, Turkey.

Place of burial or cremation: At sea. Commemorated at the Lone Pine Memorial (Panel 12), Gallipoli.

[1] [‘Supplement to the London Gazette’](#), *London Gazette*, no. 29328, 15 October 1915, p. 10153

[2] M Higgins, [‘Shout, Alfred John \(1881–1915\)’](#), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] [‘Supplement to the London Gazette’](#), *London Gazette*, no. 29215, 3 July 1915, p. 6541

[4] G.L. Maitland, *Tales of Valour from the Royal New South Wales Regiment*, Playbill Pty Ltd, Pymble, NSW, 1992

Rayene Stewart Simpson

Born: 16 February 1926, Chippendale, New South Wales [electorate of Newtown].

Enlistment date: January 1951.



© Australian War Memorial

Victoria Cross citation

On 6th May 1969, Warrant Officer Simpson was serving as Commander of 232nd Mobile Strike Force of 5th Special Forces Group on a search and clear operation in Kontum Province, near the Laotian border. When one of his platoons became heavily engaged with the enemy, he led the remainder of his company to its assistance. As the company moved forward, an Australian Warrant Officer commanding one of the platoons was seriously wounded and the assault began to falter. Warrant Officer Simpson, at great personal risk carried the Warrant Officer to safety. He then returned to his company where, with complete disregard for his safety, he crawled forward to within ten metres of the enemy and threw grenades into their positions.

On 11 May 1969, in the same operation, Warrant Officer Simpson's Battalion Commander was killed and an Australian Warrant Officer and several others wounded. Warrant Officer Simpson quickly organised two platoons and led them to the position of the contact. Warrant Officer Simpson came under heavy fire. Disregarding his own safety, he moved forward in the face of accurate enemy machine gun fire, in order to cover the initial evacuation of casualties. At the risk of almost certain death he made several attempts to move further forward towards his

Battalion Commander's body but on each occasion he was stopped by heavy fire. Realising the position was becoming untenable, Warrant Officer Simpson alone and still under enemy fire covered the withdrawal until the wounded were removed from the immediate vicinity. Warrant Officer Simpson's repeated acts of personal bravery in this operation were an inspiration to all Vietnamese, United States and Australian soldiers who served with him. His conspicuous gallantry was in the highest tradition of the Australian Army. [1]

Unit at time of action: Australian Army Training Team Vietnam.

Early Life

Rayene Stewart Simpson was the third child of New South Wales-born parents Robert William Simpson, labourer, and his wife Olga Maude, née Montgomery. Olga deserted her husband and children about 1931. Ray was separated from his siblings and placed in the Church of England Home for Boys, Carlingford. Educated at a local school and at Dumaresq Island Public School, Taree, he worked as a labourer. On 15 March 1944 Simpson enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force. He served on Morotai, and at Tarakan, Borneo, and Rabaul, New Guinea, and was demobilized on 20 January 1947 in Sydney. After taking various jobs, he joined the Australian Regular Army in January 1951. Five months later he was sent to Korea as reinforcement for the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. On 16 January 1953 at Kure, Japan, he married Shoko Sakai, a divorcee. Next month he was promoted temporary sergeant. Returning to Australia in April 1954, he served with the 2nd Battalion, RAR, in Malaya (1955–57), then with the 1st Special Air Service Company, near Perth. [2]

Service in the Vietnam War

In July 1962, promoted warrant officer, class two, he flew to Saigon for duty with the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam.

Home again from July 1963, Simpson left for a second tour with the A.A.T.T.V. twelve months later. Based at Tako, he accompanied South Vietnamese patrols in the country's north-west. On 16 September 1964 his patrol was ambushed by soldiers of the People's Liberation Armed Forces (Viet Cong). Although severely wounded in the right leg, he rallied his men and led them in repelling repeated assaults until help arrived. For this action he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. After recovering in a military hospital in Tokyo, he came back to Australia in June 1965. He was posted to the 1st Commando Regiment, Sydney, in January 1966, but was discharged from the army (at his own request) in May. Deciding to rejoin the A.R.A., he made his way to Saigon where, in May 1967, he enlisted and was reappointed to the A.A.T.T.V.

On 6 May 1969 Simpson commanded a Montagnard company during an operation near the Laos-Cambodia border. When the leading platoon came under heavy fire, he led the remainder of the company to its assistance. He dashed forward, reached a fellow-Australian adviser who had been wounded, and carried him to safety. Having tried unsuccessfully to subdue the enemy position with grenades, he covered the withdrawal of his company while still carrying his wounded colleague. In further fighting on 11 May he organized the rescue of wounded men trapped by enemy fire,

placing himself between them and the enemy until the withdrawal was completed. For his bravery in both actions he was awarded the Victoria Cross. [3]

Later Life

Simpson's character was complex. At times he was diffident in company, at others direct and blunt. He was tough, fit and dependable, but also rude, mischievous and exasperating. A proud, moral and compassionate man who was devoted to his wife, he was completely free of pretension and had simple material needs. He was well read in tactics and military history, as indicated by his infantry skills. His colourful language was legendary. After being discharged from the army on 4 May 1970, he obtained an administrative post in the Australian Embassy, Tokyo. [4]

Died: 18 October 1978, Tokyo, Japan.

Place of burial or cremation: Yokohama War Cemetery, Japan.

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 44925, 26 August 2010, p. 8873

[2] B Kelly, 'Simpson, Rayene Stewart (1926–1978)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

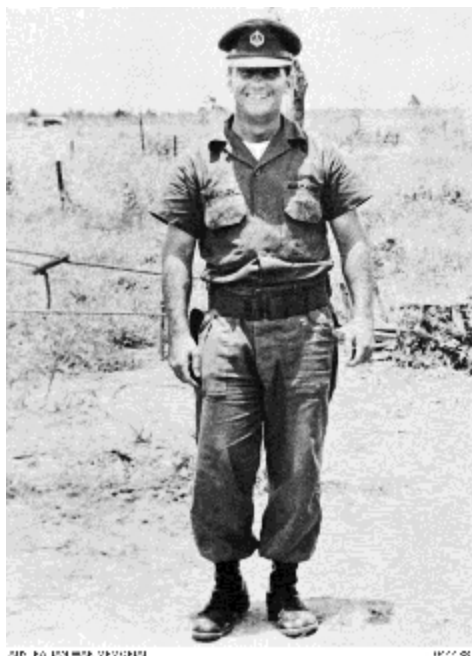
[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

Kevin Arthur Wheatley

Born: 13 March 1937, Surry Hills, New South Wales [electorates of Newtown or Sydney].

Enlistment date: 12 June 1956.



Victoria Cross citation

On 13th November 1965 at approximately 1300 hours, a Vietnamese Civil Irregular Defence Group company commenced a search and destroy operation in the Tra Bong valley, 15 kilometres East of Tra Bong Special Forces Camp in Quang Ngai Province. Accompanying the force were Captain F Fazekas, senior Australian Advisor, with the centre platoon, and Warrant Officers KA Wheatley and RJ Swanton with the right hand platoon. At about 1340 hours, Warrant Officer Wheatley reported contact with Viet Cong elements. The Viet Cong resistance increased in strength until finally Warrant Officer Wheatley asked for assistance. Captain Fazekas immediately organised the centre platoon to help and personally led and fought it towards the action area. While moving towards this area he received another radio message from Warrant Officer Wheatley to say that Warrant Officer Swanton had been hit in the chest, and requested an air strike and an aircraft, for the evacuation of casualties.

At about this time the right platoon broke in the face of heavy Viet Cong fire and began to scatter. Although told by the Civil Irregular Defence Group medical assistant that Warrant Officer Swanton was dying, Warrant Officer Wheatley refused to abandon him. He discarded his radio to enable him to half drag, half carry Warrant Officer Swanton, under heavy machine gun and automatic rifle fire, out of the open rice paddies into the comparative safety of a wooded area, some 200 metres away. He was assisted by a Civil Irregular Defence Group member, Private Dinh Do who, when the Viet Cong were only some ten metres away, urged him to leave his dying comrade. Again he refused, and was seen to pull the pins from two grenades and calmly awaited the Viet Cong, holding one grenade in each hand.

Shortly afterwards, two grenade explosions were heard, followed by several bursts of fire. The two bodies were found at first light next morning after the fighting had ceased, with Warrant Officer Wheatley lying beside Warrant Officer Swanton. Both had died of gunshot wounds. Warrant Officer Wheatley displayed magnificent courage in the face of an overwhelming Viet Cong force which was later estimated at more than a company. He had the clear choice of abandoning a wounded comrade and saving himself by escaping through the dense timber or of staying with Warrant Officer Swanton and thereby facing certain death. He deliberately chose the latter course. His acts of heroism, determination and unflinching loyalty in the face of the enemy will always stand as examples of the true meaning of valour.[1]

Unit at time of action: Australian Army Training Team, Vietnam.

Early Life

Kevin Arthur Wheatley was the third child of Raymond George Wheatley, labourer, and his wife Ivy Sarah Ann, née Newman, both born in Sydney. Educated at Maroubra Junction Junior Technical School, Kevin worked as a milk carter, food sterilizer, machine operator and brick burner. At the registrar-general's office, Sydney, on 20 July 1954 he married Edna Aileen Davis. On 12 June 1956 Wheatley enlisted in the Australian Regular Army. Following recruit training he joined the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, in September 1956 and transferred to the 3rd Battalion in March 1957. He served in the Malayan Emergency from September that year to July 1959, before transferring in August to the 2nd Battalion and in June 1961 to the 1st Battalion. In January 1964 he was promoted sergeant and in August, temporary warrant officer, class two. Short and stocky, he was a highly respected and well-liked non-commissioned officer with a reputation as a rough, wild man who was a good soldier. He was known as 'Dasher' for his Rugby Union football prowess.[2]

Service in the Vietnam War

Arriving in the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) in March 1965, Wheatley joined the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam. He distinguished himself on 28 May by risking heavy fire to rescue a 3-year-old girl. On 18 August, when South Vietnamese troops ceased advancing during an assault, he took the lead and inspired them to continue charging up a hill. His men routed some fifty People's Liberation Armed Forces (Viet Cong) soldiers.

Wheatley and another Australian, Warrant Officer R. J. Swanton, were on a search and destroy mission in the Tra Bong valley, Quang Ngai province, with a platoon of the Civil Irregular Defence Group on 13 November 1965 when it was attacked by the Viet Cong.

For refusing to abandon a wounded comrade in the face of overwhelming odds Wheatley was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. It was the first VC to be awarded to an Australian in the Vietnam War. He had also been awarded the United States of America's Silver Star. The Republic of Vietnam had appointed him a knight of its National Order and awarded him its Military Merit Medal and Cross of Gallantry with Palm. [3]

Died: 13 November 1965, during VC action, Tra Bong Valley, Quang Ngai, Republic of (South) Vietnam.

Place of burial or cremation: Lawn Cemetery, Pine Grove Memorial Park, Minchinbury, New South Wales [electorate of Mount Druitt]. His name is commemorated in the New South Wales Garden of Remembrance at Rookwood War Cemetery.

The Australian policy at the time was to bury war dead overseas but Wheatley's body was returned to Australia after funds were raised privately. Survived by his wife, and their son and three daughters, he was buried with full military honours. A public outcry resulted in the government announcing on 21 January 1966 that the remains of service personnel who died overseas would in future be returned to Australia at public expense if their families desired. [4]

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 44198, 13 December 1966

[2] A Staunton, 'Wheatley, Kevin Arthur (1937–1965)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

George Cartwright

Born: 9 December 1894, South Kensington, London, United Kingdom.

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Elsmore via Inverell, New South Wales [electorate of Northern Tablelands].

Enlistment date: 9 December 1915 (19 December 1915 on Nominal Roll)



Victoria Cross citation

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty on the morning of the 31st August, 1918, during the attack on Road Wood, south west of Bouchavenes, near Peronne. When two companies were held up by machine gun fire, from the south western edge of the wood, without hesitation, Private Cartwright moved against the gun in a most deliberate manner under intense fire. He shot three of the team, and, having bombed the post, captured the gun and nine enemy. This gallant deed had a most inspiring effect on the whole line, which immediately rushed forward. Throughout the operation Private Cartwright displayed wonderful dash, grim determination, and courage of the highest order.[1]

Unit at time of action: 33rd Infantry Battalion (New South Wales).

Early Life

George Cartwright was the son of William Edward Cartwright, coach trimmer, and his wife Elizabeth, née Stracey. Migrating alone to Australia in 1912, George took a job as a labourer on a sheep station in the Elsmore district, near Inverell, New South Wales.[2]

Service in WWI

On 16 December 1915 Cartwright enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force and became an original member of the 33rd Battalion, formed in February 1916 as part of the new 3rd Division. In May he embarked for England where the division trained before moving to France in November. Cartwright was wounded in action on 9 June 1917 at Messines, Belgium, but remained on duty. He was one of 271 officers and soldiers from the battalion who were victims of the Germans' concentrated gas-attack at Villers-Bretonneux, France, on 17 April 1918. After being hospitalized, he rejoined his unit in June.

On 31 August 1918 the Australian Corps assaulted the enemy's formidable position at Mont St Quentin, overlooking Péronne. The 33rd Battalion attacked south-west of Bouchavesnes at 5.40 a.m. Lacking adequate artillery support at the outset, the leading troops were stopped by machine-gun fire from a post at the corner of Road Wood. Without hesitation, Private Cartwright stood up and walked towards the gun, firing his rifle from the shoulder: he shot the gunner and two who tried to replace him. Cartwright then threw a bomb at the post and, covered by the explosion, rushed forward, capturing the gun and nine German soldiers. Cheering loudly, the Australians renewed their advance. Cartwright's actions during this attack won him the Victoria Cross.

On 30 September, during the attack on the Hindenburg line, he was wounded in the head and left arm, and evacuated to England. Having received his V.C. from King George V, he returned to Australia and was discharged from the A.I.F. on 16 May 1919. [3]

Later Life

Cartwright lived in Sydney and worked as a motor mechanic. On 25 June 1921 he married Elsie Broker at St Stephen's Anglican Church, Chatswood; they were to have two children before being divorced. He served in the Militia's 4th-3rd Battalion and was commissioned on 25 February 1932. Mobilized for full-time service on 5 March 1940, he was promoted captain in September 1942 and performed training and amenities duties in Australia. Cartwright was placed on the Retired List on 11 May 1946. After the war he found employment as an assistant-cashier and married Evelyn Mary Short on 4 September 1948 in the Congregational Church, Pitt Street, Sydney.

In 1956 Cartwright visited London for the VC centenary celebrations; he returned there for biennial reunions of the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association. He was a quiet, unassuming man, 5 ft 7 ins (170 cm) tall, with black hair and a dark complexion. Survived by his wife, and by the son of his first marriage, he died on 2

February 1978 at Gordon and was cremated. His widow presented his VC and other medals to the Imperial War Museum, London.[4]

Died: 2 February 1978, Gordon, Sydney [electorate of Davidson or Ku-ring-gai]. Place of burial or cremation: Cremated at Northern Suburbs Crematorium, Sydney [electorate of Lane Cove]. Commemorated at the Garden of Remembrance at Rookwood Cemetery.

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 31067, 13 December 1918

[2] A Staunton, 'Cartwright, George (1894–1978)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

John Patrick Hamilton

Born: 24 January 1896, Orange, New South Wales [electorate of Orange]. War record states that he was born in Penshurst, New South Wales

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Penshurst, Sydney, New South Wales [electorate of Oatley].

Enlistment date: 15 September 1914.



Victoria Cross citation

For most conspicuous bravery on 9th August, 1915, in the Gallipoli Peninsula. During a heavy bomb attack by the enemy on the newly captured position at Lone Pine, Private Hamilton, with utter disregard to personal safety, exposed himself under heavy fire on the parapets, in order to secure a better fire position against the enemy's bomb throwers. His coolness and daring example had an immediate effect. The defence was encouraged, and the enemy driven off with heavy loss.[1]

Unit at time of action: 3rd Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

John Patrick Hamilton was the oldest child of William Hamilton, butcher, and his wife Catherine, née Fox. He attended school at Oakey Park, Lithgow, New South Wales. After school he went to work at his father's butcher shop.

When his mother died at an early age it was necessary to split up the children (four boys and two girls); the youngest went to stay with grandparents at Newtown and John moved with his father to Penshurst.

He joined the militia, from which on September 1914 he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force. [2]

Service in WWI

Posted to the 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, Hamilton embarked from Sydney in October. Disembarking in Egypt on 3 December, the battalion trained outside Cairo before embarking, first for the island of Lemnos, and finally for Gallipoli where it landed on 25 April 1915.

A month later Hamilton was evacuated with influenza. He returned to duty on 2 June and was with his battalion when, together with the other battalions of the 1st Australian Infantry Brigade, it attacked the Turkish Lone Pine trenches. It was his actions in the Battle of Lone Pine, as described in the citation, that earned Hamilton his Victoria Cross.

Like the other battalions that attacked Lone Pine, the 3rd suffered heavy losses. Only 14 out of 27 officers, and 277 out of 856 other ranks survived.

Hamilton, together with some other Australian Victoria Cross winners on Gallipoli, was sent by ship to London for King George V to confer on him his Victoria Cross at Buckingham Palace on 4 December 1915.

Hamilton was with his battalion again when it left for France in March 1916 and went into the line near Armentieres. On 3 May 1916 Hamilton was promoted to corporal and subsequently participated in his battalion's heavy fighting in July at Poziers, in August at Mouquet Farm, and in November at Flers.

On 13 May 1917 he was promoted to sergeant and after further heavy fighting at Bullecourt, Menin Road, and Broodseinde he was posted, on 5 July 1918, to No.5 Officer Cadet Battalion at Cambridge, England. Commissioned second lieutenant on 2 January 1919, he was promoted lieutenant on 2 April 1919 and rejoined his battalion in France on the 22nd of that month. He returned to Australia on 6 July 1919.

He considered that he was 'holding the V.C. as a trustee in a way for the 3rd Battalion'. He said:-"I didn't deserve it any more than hundreds of other diggers whose efforts were just not recorded." [3]

Later Life

After demobilization he lived at Tempe, Sydney, and was a wharf labourer for over thirty years; he also worked as a shipping clerk, storeman and packer. He was an active member of the Waterside Workers' Federation and was Labor nominee for the position of Sydney branch secretary in 1952. During World War II he served as a lieutenant with the 16th Garrison Battalion and several training battalions. In 1942 he went to New Guinea with the 3rd Pioneer Battalion, then served with Australian

Labour Employment Companies until 1944 when he transferred to the Australian Army Labour Service. Promoted to captain in October 1944, he embarked on 14 July 1945 and served in Bougainville with 5th Australian Works Company until he returned to Sydney in April 1946. [4]

Died: 27 February 1961, Repatriation General Hospital, Concord, New South Wales [electorate of Drummoyne].

Place of burial or cremation: Woronora Cemetery, Sydney [electorates of Heathcote and Miranda]. Hurstville Council erected a plaque in his memory at the Penshurst RSL Club in 1987.

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette,' *London Gazette*, no. 29328, 15 October 1915, p. 10154

[2] G.L. Maitland, *Tales of Valour from The Royal New South Wales Regiment*, Playbill Pty Ltd, Pymble, NSW, 1992

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

Neville Reginald Howse

Born: 26 October 1863 in Stogursey, Somerset, United Kingdom.

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Orange, New South Wales [electorate of Orange].

Enlistment date: 17 January 1900.



Victoria Cross citation

During the action at Vredfort on the 24th July, 1900, Captain House went out under a heavy cross fire and picked up a wounded man, and carried him to a place of shelter.[1]

Unit at time of action: New South Wales Medical Staff Corps, Australian Forces.

Early Life

Neville Reginald Howse was born on 26 October 1863 at Stogursey, Somerset, England, son of Alfred Howse, surgeon, and his wife Lucy Elizabeth, née Conroy. He was educated at Fullard's House School, Taunton, and studied medicine at London Hospital. Howse was a demonstrator in anatomy at the University of Durham when declining health caused him to migrate to New South Wales. Registered to practise on 11 December 1889 he set up at Newcastle but soon

moved to Taree. In 1895 he visited England for postgraduate work in surgery and became FRCS in 1897. On his return to Australia, after initially returning to work again in Taree, he bought a practice at Orange. On 17 January 1900 he was commissioned lieutenant in the New South Wales Medical Corps.[2]

Service in the Boer War

Lieutenant Howse sailed for South Africa on 17 January 1900. Soon after his arrival, Howse was taken ill with typhoid and confined to a hospital bed for eight weeks. Typhoid fever accounted for 8,277 deaths amongst British troops alone and affected a further 60,000 during the campaign.

Upon recovering, Howse joined General Ian Hamilton's force in its advance to Pretoria during May and June 1900. House was involved in a number of engagements in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, including some major battles. At the battle of Doornkop, Howse and another medical officer tended to almost ninety wounded men where they lay, working throughout a bitterly cold night. Howse was Mentioned in Despatches for his work in this part of the campaign.

On 24 July Howse was with a mounted infantry brigade, caring for the wounded in a kraal near the village of Vredefort. Suddenly a Boer bullet found its mark in a young trumpeter who was riding near the road. He slumped from his horse, writhing in agony from what appeared to be a stomach wound. Howse leapt into the saddle and galloped to the wounded man through 'a perfect hail of bullets'. As he dismounted to collect his casualty his horse was killed by rifle shot. There was no let-up of fire as he dressed the trumpeter's wound and carried him back to the kraal. He dealt with what turned out to be a perforated bladder. His patient survived, and Howse was recommended for the Victoria Cross.. To this day, Howse is the only Australian medical officer ever to have been awarded the Victoria Cross.

Howse was promoted captain in October 1900. Later he was captured by the Boers but released as a non-combatant. After returning to Australia, he went back to South Africa as an honorary major in the Australian Army Medical Corps in February 1902, just as the war ended.

House was the first soldier to be awarded the Victoria Cross while serving with an Australian Unit. [3]

Later Life

Howse became widely known in Orange for his skill as a surgeon and was twice mayor. On 31 January 1905 he married Evelyn Gertrude Northcote Pilcher at Bathurst. He remained a major in the AAMC Reserve and in August 1914 was appointed principal medical officer to the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force to German New Guinea, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. On his own initiative drugs and medical equipment (including a unique dental arrangement) suitable for a tropical campaign were obtained and the troops were protected against typhoid and smallpox. The brief action in New Britain was completed without a single case of serious illness up to 15 October as a result of his thoroughness. The ambitious Howse returned alone just in time to join the Australian Imperial

Force and sail with the first convoy as staff officer to Surgeon General (Sir) WCD Williams, director of medical services. During the voyage he won the confidence of the commander of the AIF Major General (Sir) WT Bridges and the friendship of Colonel (Sir) Brudenell White.

In December Howse was appointed assistant director of medical services, 1st Australian Division, with the rank of colonel. He was gravely perturbed by the inadequacy and confusion of the Imperial forces' medical plan for the Gallipoli landing and obtained improvements in the arrangements for the evacuation of Australian wounded. When the perilous situation of the 1st Division at the landing made his plans impossible Howse took personal charge of the evacuation of the wounded men crowding the beach under increasing shell-fire, 'giving and disregarding orders in a manner quite shocking but strangely productive of results. Shells and bullets he completely disregarded', wrote White. 'To the wounded he was gentleness itself'. By 3 am on 26 April the beach was clear but Howse continued to superintend evacuation to the ships for two more days. To Howse the medical service was no mere humane amenity for soldiers but a fundamental of fighting efficiency. So he strove to improve sanitation and food, to expedite the return of the wounded to units and, after Gallipoli, to combat venereal disease and to resist every attempt to lower the physical standard of the AIF. On Gallipoli he established the Anzac Medical Society which met regularly to disseminate knowledge among his officers. In July 1915 he was appointed CB and in September was given command of the medical services, Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, as deputy director; from November he was director of medical services of the AIF. In this appointment, which he had been strongly urging, Howse could ensure the independence of the AAMC from the British medical authorities and give it the cohesion and leadership which it had lacked.

When the infantry divisions went to France in 1916 Howse set up his headquarters with AIF administrative headquarters in London. He retained control of the AAMC in Egypt and Palestine, made frequent visits to the AIF in France and reported each month to the director general of medical services in Melbourne. If he had much to learn about the vast, complex organism of the army at war, he revealed a capacity to learn and grow with the magnitude of his task. Mistakes were made but Howse never lost the confidence of the commander of the AIF, Lieutenant-General Sir William Birdwood, nor of Brudenell White. Among his achievements were recognition by the army of the need for direct access by the director of medical services to the general officer commanding the AIF, and his acceptance by the War Office as chief medical officer of the AIF. He established clear policies for the AAMC in line with those of the Royal Army Medical Corps and preserved the independence of his corps. When Major General (Sir) John Monash ordered AAMC officers on his headquarters to wear the 3rd Division colour patch instead of their own, Howse forced Monash to withdraw the order; he won the same battle against Major General (Sir) Talbot Hobbs. In January 1917 he was promoted major general and appointed KCB. Howse gave evidence before the Dardanelles Commission in 1917. The arrangements for the wounded at the landing he characterized as 'so inadequate that they amounted to criminal negligence' on the part of the Imperial authorities.

In the field, Howse had introduced surgical teams and had supported the work of Major AW Holmes à Court in developing resuscitation teams with each division. His reorganization of the field ambulances in two sections, rejected by the War Office in 1916, was readopted in the AIF in September 1918. In October Howse went briefly to Australia to advise the minister of defence on AIF affairs and on crippled returned soldiers. He returned to London in February 1919 to assist on the medical side of repatriation. He was mentioned in dispatches, and was appointed KCMG and Knight of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in 1919. Howse returned home in January 1920 but his resumption of private practice was short lived. He had been appointed chairman of a committee on the reorganization of the Army Medical Service which began work in 1921 but in July 1921 he was made DGMS as a regular major general stationed in Melbourne. From the day of his return he had spoken out in public on the achievement of the AAMC in maintaining the health of the AIF and had insisted that the same must be done for all Australians in peacetime. As a regular officer could not campaign in public he resigned in November 1922 and was elected to the House of Representatives for the seat of Calare, which included Orange, as a member of the National Party.

He was a member of the Australian delegation to the fourth assembly of the League of Nations in 1923 and commissioned by the government to inquire into the medical examination of migrants to Australia and into the Spahlinger treatment of tuberculosis. From January 1925 to April 1927 Howse was minister for defence and health and minister in charge of repatriation. He accompanied the Prime Minister, SM (Viscount) Bruce to the Imperial Conference in 1926 but was taken ill and returned to Australia. He relinquished defence and health but remained in the cabinet as assistant minister without portfolio. Nevertheless he continued to administer repatriation and even acted as secretary to the cabinet. In February 1928 he again became minister for health and repatriation and also for home and territories. He was campaign manager for the 1929 election in which he lost his seat. In his brief parliamentary career he was recognized as champion of the returned servicemen and as a pioneer in public health. He spoke on the need for the Commonwealth to improve public health, on the treatment of cancer and venereal disease, maternity allowances and the welfare of returned servicemen. With the purchase of £100,000 worth of radium in 1928 Howse set up one of the world's first radium banks. The first conference of cancer organizations in Australia was inspired by him and he was responsible for the transfer of the Institute of Anatomy to Canberra. He helped to found the Federal Health Council in 1925 and the College of Surgeons of Australasia in 1928.

Howse went to England for medical treatment in 1930. He died of cancer on 19 September 1930 and was buried in Kensal Green cemetery, London, survived by his wife, two sons and three daughters. Neville Howse was an Englishman who expressed the nascent Australian nationalism vigorously and directly. He was a pragmatist who nevertheless saw far ahead, a surgeon who had a flair for soldiering, an organizer who had deep insight into the essential relationship between the medical service and the force it served and who had the courage and persistence to establish policies not always understood by combatant officers. His confidence, good humour and diplomacy were matched by his shrewd appreciation of character. If his ambition carried him far, it was motivated by his recognition of human need in war and peace and sustained by confidence in his own capacity to

help. His successes, in the words of another great DGMS, Colonel RM Downes, 'made him one of the outstanding Australians of the Great War ... one of the most remarkable and self-sacrificing medical administrators any military force has ever known'. [4]

Died: 19 September 1930, London. Place of burial or cremation: Kensal Green Cemetery, London. Memorials to Howse are at the Orange sub-branch of the Returned Servicemen's League of Australia, in the Orange Base Hospital and in the Australian Institute of Anatomy.

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette,' *London Gazette*, no. 27320, 4 June 1901, p. 3769

[2] AJ Hill, 'Howse, Sir Neville Reginald (1863–1930)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*,

[3] M. Tyquin, *Neville Howse: Australia's First Victoria Cross Winner*, Oxford University Press, 1999.

[4] *ibid*

George Julian Howell

Born: 19 November 1893, Enfield, New South Wales [electorate of Strathfield].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Enfield, Sydney, New South Wales [electorate of Strathfield].

Enlistment date: 3 June 1915.



Victoria Cross citation (for action 6 May 1917—Bullecourt, France)

For most conspicuous bravery. Seeing a party of the enemy were likely to outflank his battalion, Cpl. Howell, on his own initiative, single handed and exposed to heavy bomb and rifle fire, climbed on to the top of the parapet, and proceeded to bomb the enemy, pressing them back along the trench. Having exhausted his stock of bombs, he continued to attack the enemy with his bayonet. He was then severely wounded. The prompt action and gallant conduct of this NCO in the face of superior numbers was witnessed by the whole battalion, and greatly inspired them in the subsequent counter attack.[1]

Unit at time of action: 1st Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

George Julian Howell was the fourth son of Francis John Howell, a carpenter from Brighton, England, and his Sydney-born wife Martha, née Sweeny. He was

educated at Croydon Park and Burwood public schools, served an apprenticeship in bricklaying and was working as a builder when he enlisted as a private in the Australian Imperial Force on 3 June 1915.[2]

Service in WWI

He sailed for Egypt on 14 July with the 7th Reinforcements for the 1st Battalion, joined his unit at Gallipoli on 1 November and served there until the evacuation.

Howell accompanied his battalion to France in March 1916, was wounded in the battle of Pozières in July and evacuated to England. Before returning to the front he attended a training school and was promoted corporal on 6 February 1917. For 'courage and devotion to duty while leading a rifle bombing section' during the capture of Demicourt in April, he was awarded the Military Medal .

On 6 May, near Bullecourt Howell, on his own initiative, single handed and exposed to heavy bomb and rifle fire, climbed on to the top of the parapet, and proceeded to bomb the enemy, pressing them back along the trench. Having exhausted his stock of bombs, he continued to attack the enemy with his bayonet. His actions that day won him a Victoria Cross. Severely wounded, he was hospitalised for some months before being returned to Sydney in November 1917 and was discharged there on 5 June 1918. [3]

Later Life

'Snowy' Howell came from a fighting family. His father and two brothers, one of whom was killed in action, served in France with the AIF. On 1 March 1919 he married a nurse, Sadie Lillian Yates, at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Sydney. They settled at Coogee and Howell worked on the advertising staffs of Smith's Newspapers Ltd and later the Bulletin Newspaper Co. Pty Ltd. By 1933 he was New South Wales representative for the *Standard*, Brisbane, and the *Queensland Worker*. In World War II he served with the 2nd AIF as a staff sergeant with Eastern Command, New South Wales, but found this work 'too unexciting' so in August 1944 joined the United States Army Sea Transport Service and took part in the landing at Leyte during the invasion of the Philippines. In December 1953 he retired to Perth to join his married daughter and later lived at Gunyidi, Western Australia. Survived by one daughter, he died on 23 December 1964 in the Repatriation General Hospital, Hollywood, and was cremated with military honours after an Anglican service. [4]

Died: 23 December 1964, Hollywood, Perth, Western Australia
Place of burial or cremation: Karrakatta Crematorium, Hollywood, Perth, Western Australia

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 30154, 26 June 1917, p. 6832

[2] WH Connell, 'Howell, George Julian (1893–1964)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

Thomas James Bede Kenny

Born: 29 September 1896, Paddington, New South Wales [electorate of Sydney].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Drynane, Park Parade, Bondi, New South Wales [electorate of Coogee].

Enlistment date: 23 August 1915.



PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY PHOTOGRAPHIC UNIT

1915/16

Victoria Cross citation (for action 9 April 1917—Hermies, France):

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty, when his platoon was held up by an enemy strong point, and severe casualties prevented progress. Private Kenny, under very heavy fire at close range, dashed alone towards the enemy's position, killed one man in advance of the strong point who endeavoured to bar his way. He then bombed the position, captured the gun crew, all of whom he had wounded, killed an officer who showed fight, and seized the gun. Pte. Kenny's gallant action enabled his platoon to occupy the position, which was of great local importance.[1]

Unit at time of action: 2nd Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

Thomas James Bede Kenny was the son of Austin James Kenny, butcher, from Auckland, New Zealand, and his wife Mary Christina, née Connolly, of New South

Wales. Bede Kenny was educated at the Christian Brothers' College, Waverley. He began to train as a chemist's assistant at Bondi but after three months he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 23 August 1915. [2]

Service in WWI

On 20 December he embarked with the 13th Reinforcements, 2nd Battalion, and, after arriving in Egypt, served with the 54th Battalion before joining the 2nd on 27 February 1916. In March he went to France and in the second phase of the battle of Pozières fought in the battalion bombing platoon.

In spring 1917, as British and Australian forces captured the 'outpost villages' of the Hindenburg line, Kenny won the Victoria Cross. In the attack on Hermies, mounted by the 2nd and 3rd battalions on 9 April, his platoon came under heavy fire from a machine-gun post which caused severe casualties. Kenny, single-handed, rushed the enemy, hurling three bombs, the last of which knocked out the post. He then made prisoners of the surviving Germans and his action contributed significantly to the success of the operation.

Kenny was immediately promoted lance corporal and soon afterwards was evacuated to England with trench feet. He rejoined the battalion at Hazebrouck and on 26 June 1918 was wounded during fighting in the Merris sector. Though he described his injuries as 'nothing to write home about' he was invalided to Australia in August, having become a corporal that month. He arrived in Sydney on 9 October to a tumultuous welcome. He rejected an offer to join the military police, whom he disliked intensely, and was discharged on 12 December.[3]

Later Life

Though he described his injuries as 'nothing to write home about' he was invalided to Australia in August 1918, having become a corporal that month. He arrived in Sydney on 9 October to a tumultuous welcome. He rejected an offer to join the military police, whom he disliked intensely, and was discharged on 12 December. Returning to civilian life, Kenny first worked for Clifford Love & Co., manufacturers, importers and merchants, as their northern New South Wales traveller. He then joined the *Sunday Times* newspaper in Sydney, and shortly after became a traveller for Penfolds Wines Ltd. He married Kathleen Dorothy Buckley, a florist, at St Mary's Cathedral, on 29 September 1927; they had three children and their home is remembered as a happy one. Kenny repeatedly suffered the effects of trench feet; the war had also made him partially deaf. He never recovered from the deaths of his elder daughter in 1943 and his only son in 1948 (both from rheumatic fever). Survived by his wife and one daughter, he died in Concord Repatriation Hospital, Sydney, on 15 April 1953 and was buried in Botany cemetery. It was a bitter irony that the pall bearers at his funeral were military policemen. Kenny was a staunch Catholic, a vital man of immense character and physical stature. He had no shortage of friends and was often involved in good-natured pranks. Though he never talked openly of his wartime experiences, he always led the V.C. winners in the Sydney Anzac Day march. In 1957 the Bede Kenny Memorial Ward was opened at Wentworth Private Hospital, Randwick, to provide beds for ex-servicemen ineligible for repatriation hospital treatment. [4]

Died: 15 April 1953, Concord, New South Wales [electorate of Drummoyne].
Place of burial or cremation: Botany Cemetery, Matraville, New South Wales
[electorate of Maroubra].

- [1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 30112, 8 June 1917, p. 5705
[2] M Higgins, 'Kenny, Thomas James Bede (1896–1953)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*
[3] *ibid*
[4] *ibid*

Leonard Maurice Keysor

Born: 3 November 1885, Maida Vale, London.

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Darling Point, New South Wales [electorate of Vaucluse].

Enlistment date: 18 August 1914.



Victoria Cross citation

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty at Lone Pine trenches, in the Gallipoli Peninsula. On 7th August, 1915, he was in a trench which was being heavily bombed by the enemy. He picked up two live bombs and threw them back at the enemy at great risk to his own life, and continued throwing bombs, although himself wounded, thereby saving a portion of the trench which it was most important to hold. On 8th August, at the same place, Private Keysor successfully bombed the enemy out of a position, from which a temporary mastery over his own trench had been obtained, and was again wounded. Although marked for hospital, he declined to leave, and volunteered to throw bombs for another company which had lost its bomb throwers. He continued to bomb the enemy till the situation was relieved. [1]

Unit at time of action: 1st Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

Leonard Maurice Keysor was the son of Benjamin Keysor, a Jewish clock importer. The name was sometimes spelt Keyzor. After education at Tonnleigh Castle, Ramsgate, Keysor spent ten years in Canada. He migrated to Sydney, where he found employment as a clerk, about three months before the outbreak of World War I. On 18 August 1914 he enlisted in the 1st Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. [2]

Service in WWI

Keysor embarked with the 1st Battalion for Egypt on 18 October. Landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, he was promoted lance corporal on 20 June. His deeds during the second (and last) great effort to take the peninsula are among the most spectacular individual feats of the war.

At 5.30 p.m. on 6 August the 1st Australian Infantry Brigade launched a diversionary attack at Lone Pine and by nightfall had seized the Turkish trenches; but bitter fighting with bayonets and bombs continued for three days and nights as the Turks retaliated. Keysor, a master of bomb-throwing, scorned danger. As Turkish bombs lobbed into his trench he would leap forward and smother the explosions with sandbags or coat. If time allowed he would throw a bomb back; he caught several in flight and smartly returned them as though playing cricket. Twice wounded, he nevertheless maintained his efforts for fifty hours. His bravery saved his trench and removed the enemy from a temporarily commanding position. Charles Bean recorded that 'the battalions of the 1st Brigade lost so heavily that few witnesses of its efforts remained. Consequently of the seven Victoria Crosses awarded after this fight, four went to a reinforcing battalion'. Of the other three, one was awarded to Keysor.

After Lone Pine Keysor went to England suffering from enteric fever. Rejoining his battalion in France in March 1916, he took part in the fighting at Pozières. On 17 November he was transferred to the 42nd Battalion and promoted sergeant on 1 December. Commissioned second lieutenant on 13 January 1917, he was promoted lieutenant in July. He was wounded on 28 March 1918 while fighting on the defensive Méricourt-Sailly-Le-Sec line and evacuated. Back with his unit, he was again wounded on 26 May in a gas bombardment near Villers-Bretonneux. [3]

Later Life

In October 1918 Keysor, an uncompromising advocate of conscription, returned to Australia with other veterans and assisted in the recruiting campaign. Discharged from the army as medically unfit on 12 December, he resumed clerical work but in 1920 he entered business in London. There, on 8 July at the Hill Street Synagogue, he married Gladys Benjamin. Keysor was persuaded to re-enact his bomb-throwing exploits in a film, *For Valour*, in 1927, but he was essentially a shy man who shunned publicity. White-haired and deaf when interviewed in the 1940s, he described himself as 'a common-or-garden clock importer' and remarked that 'the war was the only adventure I ever had'. Keysor was rejected for military service in 1939 on medical grounds. He died in London of cancer on 12 October 1951, survived by his wife and daughter, and was cremated after a memorial service at

the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, St John's Wood. His Victoria Cross is held at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. [4]

Died: 12 October 1951, Paddington, London.

Place of burial or cremation: Golders Green Crematorium, London. Plaque at Rookwood Cemetery Garden of Remembrance, New South Wales.

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 29328, 15 October 1915, p. 10154.

[2] D McCarthy, 'Keysor, Leonard Maurice (1885–1951)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

Percy Valentine Storkey

Born: 9 September 1893, Napier, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand.

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Vaucluse, New South Wales [electorate of Vaucluse].

Enlistment date: 10 May 1915.



Victoria Cross citation (for action 7 April 1918—Bois de Hangard, France)

For most conspicuous bravery, leadership, and devotion to duty when in charge of a platoon in attack. On emerging from the wood, the enemy trench line was encountered, and Lt. Storkey found himself with six men. While continuing his move forward, a large party—about 80 to 100 strong—armed with several machine guns, was noticed to be holding up the advance of the troops on the right. Lt. Storkey immediately decided to attack this party from the flank and rear, and, while moving forward in the attack was joined by Lt. Lipscomb and four men. Under the leadership of Lt. Storkey, this small party of two officers and ten other ranks charged the enemy position with fixed bayonets, driving the enemy out, killing and wounding about thirty, and capturing three officers and fifty men, also one machine gun. The splendid courage shown by this officer in quickly deciding his course of action, and his skilful method of attacking against such great odds, removed a dangerous obstacle to the advance of the troops on the right, and inspired the remainder of our small party with the utmost confidence when advancing to the objective line.[1]

Unit at time of action: 19th Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

Percy Valentine Storkey was the son of English-born Samuel James Storkey, printer, and his wife Sarah Edith, née Dean, from Auckland. Educated at Napier Boys' Grammar School and Victoria College, Wellington, he reached Sydney in 1911 where he worked as a clerk for the Orient Steamship Co. and then for the Blackfriars Teachers' College. In 1912 he joined the administrative staff of the University of Sydney and next year enrolled as a law student. Having had five years' service with the Wellington Infantry, he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force as a private on 10 May 1915 and was commissioned second lieutenant in September.[2]

Service in WWI

A 'well-knit figure [5 ft 7½ ins (171 cm) tall] with dark hair and eyes ... a laughing face and dare-devil, happy-go-lucky ways', he embarked for England in December 1915 with reinforcements for the 19th Battalion. On 14 November 1916 he joined his unit in France; five days later, while the 19th was attacking Gird Trenches north of Flers, he was wounded. Promoted lieutenant in January 1917, he was again wounded on 10 October during the 3rd battle of Ypres.

On 7 April 1918 the 5th Brigade, of which the 19th Battalion formed part, was assigned to clear the area north of Hangard Wood, near Villers-Bretonneux. Intelligence had inaccurately reported that the wood was 'lightly held'. The attacking company of the 19th, whose men were tired, lay down at the starting line at dawn. Storkey, who was second-in-command, fell asleep and his company left without him; it had advanced about eighty yards (73 m) when he woke. He caught up with his men only to go through heavy machine-gun fire which had hit 25 per cent of them even before the company's leading groups reached the edge of the wood. Captain Wallach, the company commander, was shot in both knees and Storkey took over, leading six men through head-high saplings to get behind the German machine-gun force. Together with another officer and four men, they broke into a clearing behind several trenches from where the Germans were firing at the rest of Storkey's company. One of the Australians yelled when he saw the enemy, some of whom looked around. For both sides it was attack or perish. Storkey instantly headed the charge, engaging the nearest Germans before they had fully reacted. His party killed or wounded thirty of them and the survivors—comprising over fifty men—surrendered. Storkey's confident and determined leadership had given the impression that he led a larger force than the handful visible to the Germans. He was awarded the Victoria Cross. He was later again wounded in action and in May promoted captain; he returned to Australia in November and his A.I.F. appointment ended in January 1919. [3]

Later Life

Resuming his studies at the university, he graduated LLB in 1921 (while holding an appointment as associate to Justice Sir Charles Wade). Admitted to the Bar on 8 June, Storkey practised in common law before being appointed to the New South Wales Department of Justice as crown prosecutor for the south-western circuit. He

held this post for eighteen years. On 15 April 1922 he married an English-born divorcee Minnie Mary Gordon, née Burnett, at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Sydney; they made their home at Vaucluse. At the Bar Storkey was 'practical and realistic', his outlook being tempered by humour and compassion. In May 1939 he became district court judge and chairman of quarter sessions in the northern district of New South Wales. There he became an identity, making many friends and being recognized for his quick assessment of character and for his sound common sense. He was 'good looking, with dark hair and a shortish, well-built figure, always well dressed'. In 1955 he retired and went to England with his wife to live at Teddington, Middlesex, where he died without issue on 3 October 1969. His wife survived him. Storkey bequeathed his Victoria Cross to his old school at Napier. His portrait by Max Meldrum hangs in the Archives Building, Wellington. [4]

Died: 3 October 1969, Teddington, London.

Place of burial or cremation: Cremated at South-West Middlesex Crematorium, Hanworth.

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 30733, 4 June 1918, p. 6775

[2] W Derkenne, 'Storkey, Percy Valentine (1893–1969)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

John (Jack) Hurst Edmondson

Born: 8 October 1914 at Wagga Wagga, New South Wales [electorate of Wagga Wagga)

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Liverpool, New South Wales [electorate of Liverpool].

Enlistment date: 20th May 1940.



Victoria Cross citation (for action 13–14 April 1941 — Tobruk, Libya)

On the night of the 13-14th April, 1941, a party of German infantry broke through the wire defences at Tobruk and established themselves with at least six machine guns, mortars and two small field pieces. It was decided to attack them with bayonets, and a party consisting of one officer, Corporal Edmondson and five privates, took part in the charge. During the counter-attack Corporal Edmondson was wounded in the neck and stomach but continued to advance under heavy fire and killed one enemy with his bayonet. Later, his officer had his bayonet in one of the enemy and was grasped about the legs by him, when another attacked him from behind. He called for help, and Corporal Edmondson, who was some yards away, immediately came to his assistance and in spite of his wounds, killed both of the enemy. This action undoubtedly saved his officer's life. Shortly after returning from this successful counter-attack, Corporal Edmondson died of his wounds. His actions throughout the operations were outstanding for resolution, leadership and conspicuous bravery. [1]

Unit at time of action: 2/17th Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), Australian Military Forces.

Early Life

Jack Edmondson was the only child of Australian-born parents Joseph William Edmondson, farmer, and his wife Maude Elizabeth, née Hurst. The family moved to a 600 acre farm near Liverpool when Jack was a child. Educated at home until age eight when he commenced schooling at Austral Public School. In 1928 he went on to Hurlstone Agricultural High School at Glenfield, being the first boy enrolled on the first day of the first term. He passed his Intermediate Certificate examination in 1930 and left school to work on the family property. He attended Sydney Technical College to take a wool-classing course; he also became a well reputed cattle judge. In 1930 he had joined the Liverpool-Cabra Rifle Club, subsequently winning the 1931-32 National Rifle Association Club Championship. He was a council-member of the Liverpool Agricultural Society and acted as a steward at its shows. Having served (from March 1939) in the 4th Battalion, Militia, he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 20 May 1940 and was posted to the 2nd/17th Battalion. [2]

Service in WWII

In May 1940 he was promoted acting corporal. Completing training in Australia, the battalion embarked on 19 October 1940 for Palestine. On 22 November Edmondson was confirmed in his rank of corporal.

As a result of the 7th Australian Division being split, his battalion was integrated into the 9th Australian Division, with whom it advanced and retreated across Libya, before taking up its defensive position at Tobruk. On April 13 1941 Edmondson's section was taken out for a bayonet attack against the forty-odd strong party of Germans who had succeeded in penetrating the defences. His actions during this attack, described in the citation, led to him being awarded the Victoria Cross. One of his comrades latter wrote to his own father:

He kept on asking if I had got out of it alright and seemed more concerned about everyone else but himself. This was characteristic of him, he was a very unselfish chap and would do anything for you.

His Victoria Cross, gazetted on 4 July 1941, was the first awarded to a member of Australia's armed forces in World War II. [3]

Died: 14 April 1941, during VC action, Tobruk, Libya.

Place of burial or cremation: Tobruk War Cemetery. Edmondson's name is commemorated by a clock which stands in the main business section of Liverpool, New South Wales. The clubrooms used by the sub-branch of the Returned Services League of Australia also commemorate Edmondson.

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 35207, 1 July 1941, pp. 3807–3808

[2] G.L. Maitland, *Tales of Valour from The Royal New South Wales Regiment*, Playbill Pty Ltd, Pymble, NSW, 1992.

[3] *ibid*

Edward John Francis Ryan

Born: 9 February 1890, Tumut, New South Wales [electorate of Wagga Wagga].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Tumut, New South Wales [electorate of Wagga Wagga].

Enlistment date: 1 December 1915.



PHOTOGRAPH BY THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Victoria Cross citation

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during an attack against the Hindenburg defences on 30th September 1918. In the initial assault on the enemy's positions Pte. Ryan went forward with great dash and determination, and was one of the first to reach the enemy trench. His exceptional skill and daring inspired his comrades, and, despite heavy fire, the hostile garrison was soon overcome and the trench occupied. The enemy then counter-attacked, and succeeded in establishing a bombing party in the rear of the position. Under fire from front and rear, the position was critical, and necessitated prompt action. Quickly appreciating the situation, he organised and led the men near him with bomb and bayonet against the enemy bombers, finally reaching the position with only three men. By skilful bayonet work, his small party succeeded in killing the first three Germans on the enemy's flank, then, moving along the embankment, Pte. Ryan alone rushed the remainder with bombs. He fell wounded after he had driven back the enemy, who suffered heavily as they retired across 'No Man's Land'. A particularly dangerous situation had been saved by this gallant soldier, whose example of determination, bravery and initiative was an inspiration to all.[1]

Unit at time of action: 55th Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

Edward John Francis Ryan was the second son of Michael Ryan, a Sydney-born labourer, and his wife Eugenia, née Newman, from Gunning. Educated locally, he worked as a labourer before enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force at Wagga Wagga on 1 December 1915. He marched the 500 kilometres to Sydney with a group called the “Kangaroos”, picking up recruits on the way. [2]

Service in WWI

Ryan was allotted to the 2nd Reinforcements for the 55th Australian Infantry Battalion, embarking on 14 April 1916. He joined his battalion in France on 23 September. Except for the period 8 January to 12 June 1917 when he was detached to the Anzac Light Railways Unit, he served with his battalion in its engagements on the Western Front. He was with it at 6am on 30 September 1918 when it moved against the Hindenburg Line, near Bellicourt.

Artillery support was insufficient and failed to neutralise the enemy machine-guns in the area. Accordingly there was intense fighting from the outset, with officers rallying scattered troops to attack each strong post and force the enemy back. The enemy resisted with great ferocity, launching counter-attacks that drove the Australians into a trench system – the le Catelet Line – fronting Caberet Wood. Extremely bitter fighting ensued there as elsewhere on the front. It was this fighting that Ryan earned the citation that was to win him the Victoria Cross.

Ryan was wounded in the assault but recovered sufficiently to rejoin his battalion on 7 December. On 22 May 1919 he received his VC from King George V at Buckingham Palace. He was welcomed back to Sydney on 24 October 1919 by the Premier of New South Wales, WA Holman. Of his homecoming, the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 25 October 1919 wrote:

Ryan was seized by a number of soldiers, hoisted shoulder high and carried amid a scene of great enthusiasm to the Premier's car. In this he was whisked off to the Anzac Buffet to join a proud and anxious mother, Mrs E. Ryan of Tumut and an equally proud brother, Trooper Malcolm Ryan, a light horseman, who recently returned from the campaign in Palestine. [3]

Later Life

The subsequent years were not kind to John Ryan who, like so many returned servicemen, found it hard to adjust to civilian life and to keep a job. His circumstances worsened during the Depression when he was on the road for four years. Destitute, in August 1935 he walked from Balranald, New South Wales, to Mildura, Victoria, where he was given temporary work by the local council and shortly after found employment in a Melbourne insurance office where he remained for several years. By May 1941, in poor health, he was again tramping the streets looking for work and was taken to hospital the day he was to have started yet another job. He died of pneumonia in Royal Melbourne Hospital on 3 June 1941

and was buried with military honours in the Catholic section of Springvale cemetery where eight VC winners formed a guard of honour. Unmarried, he was survived by two brothers and a sister Mrs PG Grant of Yass, New South Wales, who presented his VC to the Australian War Memorial in November 1967. [4]

Died: 3 June 1941, Melbourne, Victoria

Place of burial or cremation: Springvale Cemetery, Springvale, Victoria

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 31082, 24 December 1918, p. 15119

[2] G.L. Maitland, *Tales of Valour from the Royal New South Wales Regiment*, Playbill Pty Ltd, Pymble, NSW, 1992

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

William Matthew Currey

Born: 19 September 1895, Wallsend, New South Wales [electorate of Wallsend].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Leichhardt, New South Wales [electorate of Balmain].

Enlistment date: 9 October 1916.



Victoria Cross citation

For most conspicuous bravery and daring in the attack on Peronne on the morning of 1st September, 1918. When the battalion was suffering heavy casualties from a 77mm field gun at very close range, Private Currey, without hesitation, rushed forward under intense machine gun fire and succeeded in capturing the gun single handed after killing the entire crew. Later, when the advance of the left flank was checked by an enemy strong point, Private Currey crept around the flank and engaged the post with a Lewis gun. Finally, he rushed the post single handed, causing many casualties. It was entirely owing to his gallant conduct that the situation was relieved and the advance enabled to continue. Subsequently, he volunteered to carry orders for the withdrawal of an isolated company, and this he succeeded in doing despite shell and rifle fire, returning later with valuable information. Throughout the operations his striking example of coolness, determination, and utter disregard of danger had a most inspiring effect on his comrades, and his gallant work contributed largely to the success of the operations.[1]

Unit at time of action: 53rd Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

William Mathew Currey was the son of William Robert Currey, labourer and later miner, and his wife Mary Ellen, née Lang. Educated at Dudley and Plattsburg Public schools, he moved to Leichhardt, Sydney, and found employment as a wireworker. After the outbreak of World War I he twice attempted to enlist without his parents' consent, giving a false age, but was discovered and discharged.[2]

Service in WWI

Currey was accepted for the Australian Imperial Force on 9 October 1916 and posted to the 4th Light Trench-Mortar Battery, embarking for France in November. On 1 July 1917 he was transferred to the 53rd Battalion; later that year he fought at Polygon Wood and then returned to the Somme.

Private Currey was awarded the Victoria Cross for his part in the Australian attack at Péronne on 1 September 1918. The 53rd Battalion began taking heavy casualties early in the day, Currey's company in particular suffering from a 77 mm field-gun firing at very close range. Currey rushed forward under machine-gun fire, killed the whole crew and captured the weapon. When in mid-afternoon the battalion encountered intense fire from a strong point, he worked round the flank of the position and opened fire with a Lewis-gun before rushing the post, inflicting many casualties and dispersing the survivors. His courageous action enabled the battalion attack to proceed. At 3 a.m. next morning he volunteered to warn a company which had become isolated to withdraw: moving out into no man's land he stood up and called out to the company, the sound of his voice attracting a torrent of enemy fire. After three attempts, during which his respirator was struck and he was gassed, he finally contacted the exposed company which then safely retired. [3]

Later Life

Despite his gas wound, Currey saw out the war with the 53rd Battalion, arriving back in Australia in March 1919. In September he joined the New South Wales railways as a storeman and next year, on 10 April, married Emma Davies at St Saviour's Anglican Church, Punchbowl. While employed with the railways he became active in the Australian Labor Party and on 16 May 1941 he resigned his post to stand as Labor candidate for Kogarah in the Legislative Assembly. He won the seat, thereby becoming the first VC winner to enter the New South Wales Parliament. He was twice re-elected—in 1944 and 1947—and made the interests of ex-servicemen his particular concern. In 1930–32 he had served with the 45th Battalion in the citizen forces, rising to warrant officer rank, and in 1940–41 with the Australian Instructional Corps. Currey collapsed suddenly in Parliament House on 27 April 1948 and, survived by his wife and two daughters, died three days later of coronary-vascular disease. [4]

The Premier of New South Wales, James McGirr, addressed Parliament on 12 May 1948:

It is with the deepest sense of sorrow that I have to place on record the loss, within a very short period, of another of the most esteemed members of this Parliament. The State mourns the passing of yet another of its most sincere and respected public men. Australia has lost one of its most notable soldiers and heroes of the 1914-18 war. In recent years public life has taken a great toll of the people's representatives. The demands made on public men are unceasing and impose a continual and severe drain upon the mental and physical energies of those who devote their efforts to the business of the State.

Mr Currey was only a comparatively young man; he was barely 53. If the fires of his enthusiasm for service – both on grim battlefields in war and on many fronts in peace – had burned less fiercely he might still be with us to-day. But Mr Currey was just as ready to make in peacetime the great sacrifice that he made in wartime. He was indefatigable. He never weighed the cost. The late member came into this Chamber as the Labour representative of an important city electorate seven years ago. Because of his enthusiasm, his charm and his unassuming manner, he made everyone his friend. He served in this Parliament as loyally and effectively as he served his country on the battlefields of France and Belgium. His magnificent army record in World War I is well-known, but this country has never known a warrior more unobtrusive, and with fewer pretensions to fame than he.

Mr Currey was a speaker of distinction and his contributions to the debates in this House were always notable and useful. He was well-informed on many subjects, and his over-riding concern was always the well-being of the people of the nation of which he was so proud to be a member. He was painstaking to the last degree in his attention to all matters affecting his electorate. He was active in many important spheres, and no electorate has ever had a more popular representative in this Parliament. He had many diversified interests, yet none which transcended his keen participation in the affairs of ex-servicemen.

Mr Currey was the only winner of the world's greatest decoration for valour in battle, the Victoria Cross, ever to become a member of the New South Wales Legislature...[5]

Died: 30 April 1948, Bexley, New South Wales [electorates of Kogarah and Rockdale].

Place of burial or cremation: Cremated at Woronora Crematorium, Sydney [electorates of Heathcote and Miranda]. His name is commemorated on plaques at the Garden of Remembrance Rookwood Cemetery, and on the Leichhardt War Memorial. He is also commemorated in the Jeffries-Currey Memorial Library installed at the Dudley School in 1941 and at a memorial park at Abermain, New South Wales.

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 31067, 13 December 1918, p. 14779

[2] D Coulthard-Clark, 'Currey, William Matthew (1895–1948)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

[3] *ibid*

[4] *ibid*

[5] NSWPD, 12 May, 1948, p.3129

Clarence Smith Jeffries

Born: 26 October 1894, Wallsend, New South Wales [electorate of Wallsend]

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Abermain, New South Wales [electorate of Cessnock].

Enlistment date: 1 February 1916.



Victoria Cross citation (for action on 12 October 1917—Passchendaele, Belgium)

For most conspicuous bravery in attack, when his company was held up by enemy machine gun fire from concrete emplacements. Organising a party, [Captain Jeffries] rushed one emplacement, capturing four machine guns and 35 prisoners. He then led his company forward under extremely heavy enemy artillery barrage and enfilade machine gun fire to the objective. Later, he again organised a successful attack on a machine gun emplacement, capturing two machine guns and thirty more prisoners. This gallant officer was killed during the attack, but it was entirely due to his bravery and initiative that the centre of the attack was not held up for a lengthy period. His example had a most inspiring influence.[1]

Unit at time of action: 34th Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), AIF.

Early Life

Clarence Smith Jeffries was the only child of Joshua Jeffries, colliery manager, and his wife Barbara, née Steel, both born at Wallsend. After attending Dudley Primary School, where he excelled at cricket, and the Newcastle Collegiate and High schools, he was apprenticed a mining engineer at the Abermain Collieries, where his father was general manager. A young man of high standards and ideals, he strove to excel in all he did. Jeffries had a particular interest in the study of breeding thoroughbreds, although not in racing them, and always kept fine horses. His military service began in the militia when he was 14. He joined the 14th (Hunter River) Infantry Regiment as a private in July 1912 under the compulsory training scheme, and was promoted sergeant a year later. Commissioned second lieutenant on 22 August 1914, he was mobilized for home defence duties and instructed volunteers for the Australian Imperial Force at Newcastle and Liverpool camps.[2]

Service in WWI

On 1 February 1916 Jeffries enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force and was posted to the 34th Australian Infantry Battalion which embarked for training in England on 2 May. On 1 August he was promoted to lieutenant.

The battalion moved to the Western Front in November and Jeffries quickly earned high respect from his superiors and his troops. On 9 June 1917 he was severely wounded in the thigh while leading a reconnaissance patrol during the Battle of Messines. On recovering, and having become a captain on 26 June, he returned to his battalion on 2 September and went into the Battle of Passchendaele as a company commander. Jeffries' valour during this action culminated in his being awarded the Victoria Cross.

Corporal J. Hunter, in a letter to his wife, said of Jeffries:

The Abermain boys have lost one of their greatest friends. He was a hero, for he feared no foe, and all his thoughts were for his men and their comfort. Wherever his men went, he was always at the head of them, to lead them on. Our sorrow is great for the loss of him, who was a great and good officer. He proved himself a true officer to his men and to his country.

In June 1919 a full-sized portrait of Jeffries was unveiled during a ceremony at the Abermain Collieries. Lieutenant Colonel Nash (a Member of the NSW Legislative Council and serving officer), who unveiled the portrait said:

It was with extreme sorrow that I first learnt of our brave comrade's end. I was not surprised later on hearing that he had won the V.C. Anyone knowing him as I did would expect him to gain some such distinction. Straight, upright and manly he stood from boyhood to manhood. In short, he possessed all the fine qualities that go to make a man and a gentleman. Kind, courteous and considerate for others, yet withal punctual and diligent in the performance of all duties entrusted to him. [3]

Died: 12 October 1917, during VC action, Hillside Farm, Passchendaele, Belgium.
Place of burial or cremation: Tyne Cot Cemetery, Passchendaele, Belgium.

He is commemorated by a memorial park in Abermain and by the Jeffries-Currey Memorial Library at Dudley Public School.

[1] '[Supplement to the London Gazette](#)', *London Gazette*, no. 30433, 14 December 1917, p. 13222

[2] JB Hopley, '[Jeffries, Clarence Smith \(1894–1917\)](#)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] G.L. Maitland, *Tales of Valour from the Royal New South Wales Regiment*, Playbill Pty Ltd, Pymble, NSW, 1992

Albert Edward Chowne

Born: 19 July 1920, Willoughby, New South Wales [electorate of Willoughby].

Place of residence at time of enlistment: Willoughby, New South Wales [electorate of Willoughby].

Enlistment date: 27 May 1940.



Victoria Cross citation

For most conspicuous bravery, brilliant leadership and devotion to duty during an attack on an enemy position on a narrow ridge near Dagua, New Guinea, on 25th March, 1945. After the capture of Dagua, the main enemy force withdrew southwards from the beach to previously prepared positions on the flank of the Division. Further movement towards Wewak was impossible while this threat to the flank existed and the Battalion was ordered to destroy the enemy force. 'A' Company, after making contact with the enemy on a narrow ridge, was ordered to attack the position. The leading Platoon in the attack came under heavy fire from concealed enemy machine guns site on a small rise dominating the approach. In the initial approach one member of this Platoon was killed and nine wounded, including the Platoon Commander, and the enemy continued to inflict casualties on our troops. Without awaiting orders, Lieutenant Chowne, whose Platoon was in reserve, instantly appreciated the plight of the leading Platoon and rushed the enemy's position. Running up a steep, narrow track, he hurled grenades which knocked out two enemy Light-Machine Guns. Then, calling on his men to follow him and firing his submachine gun from the hip, he charged the enemy's position. Although he sustained two serious wounds in the chest, the impetus of his charge carried him 50

yards forward under the most intense machine gun and rifle fire. Lieutenant Chowne accounted for two more Japanese before he was killed standing over three foxholes occupied by the enemy. The superb heroism and self-sacrifice of this officer, culminating in his death, resulted in the capture of this strongly-held enemy position, ensured the further immediate success of his Company in this area and paved the way directly for the continuance of the Division's advance to Wewak.[1]

Unit at time of action: 2/2nd Infantry Battalion (New South Wales), Australian Military Forces.

Early Life

Albert (popularly known as 'Bert') Chowne was the youngest of five children of Balmain-born parents Arthur James Chowne, grocer, and his wife Frances Ellen, née Dalziel. The Chowne and Dalziel families were well known in the Willoughby district where Bert grew up. Educated at Chatswood Boys' Intermediate High and Naremburn Junior Technical schools, he started work in 1935 as a shirt-cutter at David Jones Ltd. Chowne played for Gordon Rugby Union Football Club, and also enjoyed scouting and tennis. He was 5 ft 9 ins (175 cm) tall, with brown hair, a fair complexion and hazel eyes. Having served briefly in the Militia's 36th Battalion, on 27 May 1940 he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force; he described himself as a salesman, probably to avoid reserved-occupation status.[2]

Service in WWII

After an unsuccessful attempt to join the 6th Division, Chowne was posted as a private to the 2/13th Battalion on the day of his enlistment. The battalion embarked in October and arrived in the Middle East on 26th November. At El Alamein his talents for original thought and initiative were soon demonstrated when his carrier played a notable part in repelling the German attack in September 1942.

In July 1943 the battalion embarked for New Guinea with Chowne now mortar platoon sergeant. At Finschhafen he gained the Military Medal while in command of detachments of mortars with a forward company. Nominated for officer training, Chowne was gazetted lieutenant in January 1944. He joined the 2/2nd and arrived at Aitape (New Guinea) in December 1944 where he quickly established a reputation for outstanding courage and leadership. On 8th March he carried out a one-man patrol forward of the battalion patrol limits to the Ninahu River, and brought back valuable information on the river, tracks and enemy. He was out in daylight for five hours, probing Japanese bivouacs and searching for papers.

The 2/2nd Battalion encountered only moderate opposition when it pushed through to But, which fell on 17 March. The enemy retired towards Dagua, hotly pursued by the 2/2nd, and Dagua fell three days later. On 25 March 1945 in the hills south-west of Dagua, Chowne rushed a Japanese-held knoll, afterwards designated "Chowne Knoll. Ascending a steep, narrow track, he hurled grenades and silenced two machine-guns. Although mortally wounded, he reached the enemy's fox-holes and killed two more soldiers before he died.

A history of the 2/2nd Battalion records that those who knew Chowne best believed that he would receive a Victoria Cross or a white wooden one. To their lasting regret he received both.

Chowne's Victoria Cross was the first awarded during this phase of the New Guinea campaign, and also the first gained by a member of the veteran 6th Division, formed five and a half years previously. [3]

Died: 25 March 1945, during VC action, between Dagua and Wewak, New Guinea.
Place of burial or cremation: Lae War Cemetery, New Guinea. The Lieutenant Albert Chowne, VC, MM, Memorial Hall at Willoughby commemorates him.

[1] 'Supplement to the London Gazette', *London Gazette*, no. 37253, 4 September 1945, p. 4467

[2] M Barter, 'Chowne, Albert Edward (1920–1945)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

[3] L. Wigmore (ed), *They Dared Mightily*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1963