



THIRD SUPPLEMENT

TO

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THURSDAY, 8 NOVEMBER, 1917.

*War Office,  
8th November, 1917.*

His Majesty The KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the Victoria Cross to the undermentioned Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and Men:—

Capt. (actg. Maj.) Okill Massey Learmouth, M.C., late Can. Inf.

For most conspicuous bravery and exceptional devotion to duty. During a determined counter-attack on our new positions, this officer, when his company was momentarily surprised, instantly charged and personally disposed of the attackers. Later, he carried on a tremendous fight with the advancing enemy. Although under intense barrage fire and mortally wounded, he stood on the parapet of the trench, bombed the enemy continuously and directed the defence in such a manner as to infuse a spirit of utmost resistance into his men.

On several occasions this very brave officer actually caught bombs thrown at him by the enemy and threw them back. When he was unable by reason of his wounds to carry on

the fight he still refused to be carried out of the line, and continued to give instructions and invaluable advice to his junior officers, finally handing over all his duties before he was evacuated from the front line to the hospital where he died.

T./Capt. Henry Reynolds, M.C., R. Scots.

For most conspicuous bravery when his company in attack and approaching their final objective, suffered heavy casualties from enemy machine guns and from an enemy "Pill-box" which has been passed by the first wave. Capt. Reynolds reorganised his men who were scattered, and then proceeded alone by rushes from shell hole to shell hole, all the time being under heavy machine gun fire. When near the "Pill-box" he threw a grenade intending that it should go inside, but the enemy had blocked the entrance. He then crawled to the entrance and forced a phosphorous grenade inside. This set the place on fire and caused the death of three of the enemy while the remainder, seven or eight, surrendered with two machine guns.

Afterwards, though wounded, he continued

to lead his company against another objective, and captured it taking seventy prisoners and two more machine guns.

During the whole attack the company was under heavy machine gun fire from the flanks, but despite this Capt. Reynolds kept complete control of his men.

2nd Lt. Frederick Birks, late Aus. Imp. Force.

For most conspicuous bravery in attack when accompanied by only a corporal, he rushed a strong point which was holding up the advance. The corporal was wounded by a bomb, but 2nd Lt. Birks went on by himself killed the remainder of the enemy occupying the position, and captured a machine gun.

Shortly afterwards he organised a small party and attacked another strong point which was occupied by about twenty-five of the enemy, of whom many were killed and an officer and fifteen men captured.

During the consolidation this officer did magnificent work in reorganising parties of other units which had been disorganised during the operations.

By his wonderful coolness and personal bravery 2nd Lt. Birks kept his men in splendid spirits throughout.

He was killed at his post by a shell whilst endeavouring to extricate some of his men who had been buried by a shell.

2nd Lt. Hugh Colvin, Ches. R.

For most conspicuous bravery in attack.

When all the officers of his company except himself—and all but one in the leading company—had become casualties and losses were heavy, he assumed command of both companies and led them forward under heavy machine gun fire with great dash and success. He saw the battalion on his right held up by machine gun fire, and led a platoon to their assistance.

2nd Lt. Colvin then went on with only two men to a dug-out. Leaving the men on top, he entered it alone and brought up fourteen prisoners.

He then proceeded with his two men to another dug-out which had been holding up the attack by rifle and machine gun fire and bombs. This he reached and, killing or making prisoners of the crew, captured the machine gun. Being then attacked from another dug-out by fifteen of the enemy under an officer, one of his men was killed and the other wounded. Seizing a rifle he shot five of the enemy, and, using another as a shield, he forced most of the survivors to surrender. This officer cleared several other dug-outs alone or with one man, taking about fifty prisoners in all.

Later, he consolidated his position with great skill, and personally wired his front under heavy close range sniping in broad daylight, when all others had failed to do so.

The complete success of the attack in this part of the line was mainly due to 2nd Lt. Colvin's leadership and courage.

2nd Lt. Montagu Shadworth Seymour Moore, Hamp. R.

For most conspicuous bravery in operations necessitating a fresh attack on a final objective which had not been captured.

2nd Lt. Moore at once volunteered for this duty and dashed forward at the head of some 70 men. They were met with heavy machine gun fire from a flank which caused severe casualties, with the result that he arrived at his objective—some 500 yards on—with only a Serjeant and four men. Nothing daunted, he at once bombed a large dug-out and took twenty-eight prisoners, two machine guns and a light field gun.

Gradually more officers and men arrived, to the number of about 60. His position was entirely isolated as the troops on the right had not advanced, but he dug a trench and repelled bombing attacks throughout the night. The next morning he was forced to retire a short distance. When opportunity offered he at once reoccupied his position, re-armed his men with enemy rifles and bombs, most of theirs being smashed, and beat off more than one counter-attack.

2nd Lt. Moore held this post under continual shell fire for thirty-six hours until his force was reduced to ten men, out of six officers and 130 men who had started the operation. He eventually got away his wounded, and withdrew under cover of a thick mist.

As an example of dashing gallantry and cool determination this young officer's exploit would be difficult to surpass.

No. 75361 C.S./M. Robert Hanna, Can. Inf.

For most conspicuous bravery in attack, when his company met with most severe enemy resistance and all the company officers became casualties. A strong point, heavily protected by wire and held by a machine gun, had beaten off three assaults of the company with heavy casualties. This Warrant Officer under heavy machine gun and rifle fire, coolly collected a party of men, and leading them against this strong point, rushed through the wire and personally bayoneted three of the enemy and brained the fourth, capturing the position and silencing the machine gun.

This most courageous action, displayed courage and personal bravery of the highest order at this most critical moment of the attack, was responsible for the capture of a most important tactical point, and but for his daring action and determined handling of a desperate situation the attack would not have succeeded.

C.S./M. Hanna's outstanding gallantry; personal courage and determined leading of his company is deserving of the highest possible reward.

No. 370995 Sjt. Alfred Joseph Knight, Lond. R. (Nottingham).

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during the operations against the enemy positions.

Sjt. Knight did extraordinary good work, and showed exceptional bravery and initiative when his platoon was attacking an enemy strong point, and came under very heavy fire from an enemy machine gun. He rushed through our own barrage, bayoneted the enemy gunner, and captured the position single-handed.

Later, twelve of the enemy with a machine gun were encountered in a shell-hole. He again rushed forward by himself.

bayoneted two and shot a third and caused the remainder to scatter.

Subsequently, during the attack on a fortified farm, when entangled up to his waist in mud, and seeing a number of the enemy firing on our troops, he immediately opened fire on them without waiting to extricate himself from the mud, killing six of the enemy.

Again, noticing the company on his right flank being held up in their attack on another farm, Sjt. Knight collected some men and took up a position on the flank of this farm, from where he brought a heavy fire to bear on the farm as a result of which the farm was captured.

All the platoon officers of the company had become casualties before the first objective was reached, and this gallant N.C.O. took command of all the men of his own platoon and of the platoons without officers. His energy in consolidating and reorganising was untiring.

His several single-handed actions showed exceptional bravery, and saved a great number of casualties in the company. They were performed under heavy machine gun and rifle fire, and without regard to personal risk, and were the direct cause of the objectives being captured.

No. 10605 Sjt. James Ockenden, R. Dub. Fus. (Southsea).

For most conspicuous bravery in attack. When acting as Company Serjeant-Major and seeing the platoon on the right held up by an enemy machine gun he immediately rushed the machine gun, regardless of his personal safety, and captured it. He killed the crew with the exception of one man, who made his escape. Sjt. Ockenden however, followed him, and when well in front of the whole line killed him and returned to his company.

He then led a section to the attack on a farm. Under very heavy fire he rushed forward and called upon the garrison to surrender. As the enemy continued to fire on him, he opened fire killing four, whereupon the remaining sixteen surrendered.

No. 428545 Pte. Michael James O'Rourke, Can. Inf.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during prolonged operations.

For three days and nights Pte. O'Rourke, who is a stretcher-bearer, worked unceasingly in bringing the wounded into safety, dressing them, and getting them food and water.

During the whole of this period the area in which he worked was subjected to very severe shelling and swept by heavy machine gun and rifle fire. On several occasions he was knocked down and partially buried by enemy shells. Seeing a comrade who had been blinded stumbling around ahead of our trench, in full view of the enemy who were sniping him, Pte. O'Rourke jumped out of his trench and brought the man back, being himself heavily sniped at while doing so. Again he went forward about 50 yards in front of our barrage under very heavy and accurate fire from enemy machine guns and snipers, and brought in a comrade. On a subsequent occasion, when the line of advanced posts was retired to the line to be consolidated, he went forward under very heavy enemy fire of every description and brought back a wounded man who had been left behind.

He showed throughout an absolute disregard for his own safety, going wherever there were wounded to succour, and his magnificent courage and devotion in continuing his rescue work, in spite of exhaustion and the incessant heavy enemy fire of every description, inspired all ranks and undoubtedly saved many lives.

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