



SECOND SUPPLEMENT

TO

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WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY, 1918.

War Office,

8th May, 1918

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

Major (A/Lt-Col) Oliver Cyril Spencer Watson, D S O (R. of O), late K O Yorks L I

For most conspicuous bravery, self-sacrificing devotion to duty, and exceptionally gallant leading during a critical period of operations

His command was at a point where continual attacks were made by the enemy in order to pierce the line, and an intricate system of old trenches in front, coupled with the fact that his position was under constant rifle and machine-gun fire, rendered the situation still more dangerous

A counter-attack had been made against the enemy position, which at first achieved its object, but as they were holding out in two improvised strong points, Lt-Col Watson saw that immediate action was necessary,

and he led his remaining small reserve to the attack, organising bombing parties and leading attacks under intense rifle and machine-gun fire

Outnumbered, he finally ordered his men to retire, remaining himself in a communication trench to cover the retirement, though he faced almost certain death by so doing

The assault he led was at a critical moment, and without doubt saved the line. Both in the assault and in covering his men's retirement, he held his life as nothing, and his splendid bravery inspired all troops in the vicinity to rise to the occasion and save a breach being made in a hardly tried and attenuated line

Lt-Col Watson was killed while covering the withdrawal

Capt (A/Lt-Col) Frank Crowther Roberts, D S O, M C, Wore R

During continuous operations which covered over twelve days Lt-Col Roberts showed most conspicuous bravery, exceptional military skill in dealing with the many very difficult situations of the retirement,

and amazing endurance and energy in encouraging and inspiring all ranks under his command.

On one occasion the enemy attacked a village and had practically cleared it of our troops, when this officer got together an improvised party and led a counter-attack which temporarily drove the enemy out of the village, thus covering the retirement of troops on their flanks who would otherwise have been cut off.

The success of this action was entirely due to his personal valour and skill.

2nd Lt. (A./Capt.) Alfred Maurice Toye, M.C., Midd'x R.

For most conspicuous bravery and fine leadership displayed in extremely critical circumstances.

When the enemy captured the trench at a bridge-head, he three times re-established the post, which was eventually recaptured by fresh enemy attacks.

After ascertaining that his three other posts were cut off, he fought his way through the enemy with one officer and six men of his company.

Finding 70 men of the battalion on his left retiring, he collected them, counter-attacked, and took up a line which he maintained until reinforcements arrived. Without this action, the defence of the bridge must have been turned.

In two subsequent operations, when in command of a composite company, he covered the retirement of his battalion with skill and courage.

Later, with a party of battalion headquarters, he pressed through the enemy in the village, firing at them in the streets, thus covering the left flank of the battalion retirement. Finally, on a still later occasion, when in command of a mixed force of the brigade, he re-established, after hard fighting, a line that had been abandoned before his arrival. He was twice wounded within ten days, but remained at duty. His valour and skilful leading throughout this prolonged period of intense operations was most conspicuous.

No. 18474 Sjt. Harold Jackson, E. Yorks. R. (Kirton, nr. Boston, Lincs.).

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. Sjt. Jackson volunteered and went out through the hostile barrage and brought back valuable information regarding the enemy's movements. Later, when the enemy had established themselves in

our line, this N.C.O. rushed at them and, single-handed, bombed them out into the open. Shortly afterwards, again single-handed, he stalked an enemy machine-gun, threw Mills bombs at the detachment, and put the gun out of action.

On a subsequent occasion, when all his officers had become casualties, this very gallant N.C.O. led his company in the attack, and, when ordered to retire, he withdrew the company successfully under heavy fire. He then went out repeatedly under heavy fire and carried in wounded.

No. M2/048544 Pte. Richard George Masters, A.S.C. (Southport).

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. Owing to an enemy attack, communications were cut off and wounded could not be evacuated. The road was reported impassable, but Pte. Masters volunteered to try to get through, and after the greatest difficulty succeeded, although he had to clear the road of all sorts of debris.

He made journey after journey throughout the afternoon, over a road consistently shelled and swept by machine-gun fire, and was on one occasion bombed by an aeroplane.

The greater part of the wounded cleared from this area were evacuated by Pte. Masters, as his was the only car that got through during this particular time.

No. 230199 Pte. Harold Whitfield, K. Shrops. L.I. (Oswestry, Salop).

For most conspicuous bravery, initiative, and absolute disregard of personal safety.

During the first and heaviest of three counter-attacks made by the enemy on the position which had just been captured by his battalion, Pte. Whitfield, single-handed, charged and captured a Lewis gun which was harassing his company at short range. He bayoneted or shot the whole gun team, and, turning the gun on the enemy, drove them back with heavy casualties, thereby completely restoring the whole situation in his part of the line. Later, he organised and led a bombing attack on the enemy who had established themselves in an advanced position close to our line, and from which they were enfilading his company. He drove the enemy back with great loss, and by establishing his party in their position, saved many lives, and materially assisted in the defeat of the counter-attack.

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