



THIRD SUPPLEMENT

TO

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WEDNESDAY, 22 MAY, 1918.

War Office,  
22nd 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:—

Captain (A./Lt.-Col.) James Forbes-Robertson, D.S.O., M.C., Bord. R.

For most conspicuous bravery whilst commanding his battalion during the heavy fighting.

Through his quick judgment, resource, untiring energy and magnificent example, Lt.-Col. Forbes-Robertson on four separate occasions saved the line from breaking and averted a situation which might have had the most serious and far-reaching results.

On the first occasion, when troops in front were falling back, he made a rapid reconnaissance on horse-back, in full view of the enemy, under heavy machine-gun and close range shell fire. He then organised and, still mounted, led a counter-attack which was completely successful in re-establishing our line. When his horse was shot under him he continued on foot.

Later on the same day, when troops to the left of his line were giving way, he went to that flank and checked and steadied the line, inspiring confidence by his splendid coolness and disregard of personal danger. His horse was wounded three times and he was thrown five times.

The following day, when the troops on both his flanks were forced to retire, he formed a post at battalion headquarters and with his battalion still held his ground, thereby covering the retreat of troops on his flanks. Under the heaviest fire this gallant officer fearlessly exposed himself when collecting parties, organising and encouraging.

On a subsequent occasion, when troops were retiring on his left and the condition of things on his right were obscure, he again saved the situation by his magnificent example and cool judgment. Losing a second horse, he continued alone on foot until he had established a line to which his own troops could withdraw and so conform to the general situation.

Lt. (A./Capt.) Thomas Tannatt Pryce, M.C., G. Gds.

For most conspicuous bravery, devotion to duty, and self-sacrifice when in command of

a flank on the left of the Grenadier Guards.

Having been ordered to attack a village, he personally led forward two platoons, working from house to house, killing some thirty of the enemy, seven of whom he killed himself.

The next day he was occupying a position with some thirty to forty men, the remainder of his company having become casualties. As early as 8.15 a.m. his left flank was surrounded and the enemy was enfilading him.

He was attacked no less than four times during the day, and each time beat off the hostile attack, killing many of the enemy.

Meanwhile, the enemy brought up three field guns to within 300 yards of his line, and were firing over open sights and knocking his trench in. At 6.15 p.m. the enemy had worked to within sixty yards of his trench. He then called on his men, telling them to cheer and charge the enemy and fight to the last. Led by Captain Pryce, they left their trench and drove back the enemy, with the bayonet, some 100 yards. Half an hour later the enemy had again approached in stronger force. By this time Captain Pryce had only 17 men left, and every round of his ammunition had been fired. Determined that there should be no surrender, he once again led his men forward in a bayonet charge, and was last seen engaged in a fierce hand-to-hand struggle with overwhelming numbers of the enemy.

With some forty men he had held back at least one enemy battalion for over ten hours. His company undoubtedly stopped the advance through the British line, and thus had great influence on the battle.

2nd Lt. Basil Arthur Horsfall, late E. Lanc. R.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. 2nd Lt. Horsfall was in command of the centre platoon during an attack on our positions.

When the enemy first attacked his three forward sections were driven back and he was wounded in the head. Nevertheless, he immediately organised the remainder of his men and made a counter-attack, which recovered his original positions. On hearing that out of the remaining three officers of his company two were killed and one wounded, he refused to go to the dressing station, although his wound was severe. Later his platoon had to be withdrawn to escape very heavy shell fire, but immediately the shelling lifted he made a second counter-attack and again recovered his positions. When the order to withdraw was given he was the last to leave his position, and, although exhausted, said he could have held on if it had been necessary.

His conduct was a splendid example to his men, and he showed throughout the utmost disregard of danger.

This very gallant officer was killed when retiring to the positions in rear.

2nd Lt. John Crawford Buchan, Arg. & Suth'd Highrs.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. When fighting with his platoon in the forward position of the battle zone, 2nd Lt. Buchan, although wounded early in the day, insisted on remaining with his men, and continually visited all his posts, encouraging and cheering his men in spite

of most severe shell fire, from which his platoon was suffering heavy casualties.

Later, when the enemy were creeping closer, and heavy machine-gun fire was raking his position, 2nd Lt. Buchan, with utter disregard of his personal safety, continued to visit his posts, and though still further injured accidentally, he continued to encourage his men and visit his posts. Eventually, when he saw the enemy had practically surrounded his command, he collected his platoon and prepared to fight his way back to the supporting line. At this point the enemy, who had crept round his right flank, rushed towards him, shouting out "Surrender." "To hell with surrender," he replied, and shooting the foremost of the enemy, he finally repelled this advance with his platoon. He then fought his way back to the supporting line of the forward position, where he held out till dusk.

At dusk he fell back as ordered, but in spite of his injuries again refused to go to the aid post, saying his place was beside his men. Owing to the unexpected withdrawal of troops on the left flank it was impossible to send orders to 2nd Lt. Buchan to withdraw, as he was already cut off, and he was last seen holding out against overwhelming odds.

The gallantry, self-sacrifice, and utter disregard of personal safety displayed by this officer during these two days of most severe fighting is in keeping with the highest traditions of the British Army.

No. 20765 Cpl. John Thomas Davies, S. Lanc. R. (St. Helens).

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire.

When his company—outflanked on both sides—received orders to withdraw, Corporal Davies knew that the only line of withdrawal lay through a deep stream lined with a belt of barbed wire, and that it was imperative to hold up the enemy as long as possible. He mounted the parapet, fully exposing himself, in order to get a more effective field of fire, and kept his Lewis gun in action to the last, causing the enemy many casualties and checking their advance.

By his very great devotion to duty he enabled part of his company to get across the river, which they would otherwise have been unable to do, thus undoubtedly saving the lives of many of his comrades.

When last seen this gallant N.C.O. was still firing his gun, with the enemy close on the top of him, and was in all probability killed at his gun.

No. 34328 Gnr. Charles Edwin Stone, M.M., R.F.A. (Sutton-in-Ashfield).

For most conspicuous bravery, initiative and devotion to duty.

After working hard at his gun for six hours under heavy gas and shell fire, Gunner Stone was sent back to the rear section with an order. He delivered the order, and voluntarily, under a very heavy barrage, returned with a rifle to the forward position to assist in holding up the enemy on a sunken road. Lying in the open about 100 yards from the enemy under very heavy

machine-gun fire, he calmly and effectively shot the enemy until ordered to retire. He then took up a position on the right flank of the two rear guns and held the enemy at bay, though they again and again attempted to outflank the guns. During this period one of the enemy managed to break through, and, regardless of fierce machine-gun fire raging at the time, Gunner Stone rushed after him and killed him, thereby saving the flank of the guns. Later he was one of the party which captured the machine-gun and four prisoners who, in the dusk, had got round to the rear of the gun position. This most gallant act undoubtedly saved the detachment serving the guns.

Gunner Stone's behaviour throughout the whole day was beyond all praise, and his magnificent example and fine work through these critical periods undoubtedly kept the guns in action, thereby holding up the enemy on the battle zone at the most crucial moment.

No. 94081 Pte. Jack Thomas Counter, King's L'pool R. (Blandford, Dorset).

For most conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty.

It was necessary for information to be obtained from the front line, in which the enemy had effected a lodgment. The only way was from the support line along a sunken road, and thence down a forward

slope for about 250 yards with no cover, in full view of the enemy, and swept by their machine-gun and rifle fire. After a small party had tried unsuccessfully (the leader having been killed and another wounded before leaving the sunken road) it was thought that a single man had more chance of getting through. This was attempted five times, but on each occasion the runner was killed in full view of the position from which he had started.

Private Counter, who was near his officer at the time, and had seen the five runners killed one after the other, then volunteered to carry the message. He went out under terrific fire and succeeded in getting through. He then returned, carrying with him the vital information with regard to the estimated number of enemy in our line, the exact position of our flank, and the remaining strength of our troops. This information enabled his commanding officer to organise and launch the final counter-attack, which succeeded in regaining the whole of our position.

Subsequently this man carried back five messages across the open under a heavy artillery barrage to company headquarters.

Private Counter's extraordinary courage in facing almost certain death because he knew that it was vital that the message should be carried produced a most excellent impression on his young and untried companions.

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