



SIXTH SUPPLEMENT

TO

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FRIDAY, 28 JUNE, 1918.

War Office,
28th June, 1918.

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:—

Lt. (T./Capt.) Julian Royds Gribble, R. War. R.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. Capt. Gribble was in command of the right company of the battalion when the enemy attacked, and his orders were to "hold on to the last." His company was eventually entirely isolated though he could easily have withdrawn them at one period when the rest of the battalion on his left were driven back to a secondary position. His right flank was "in the air" owing to the withdrawal of all troops of a neighbouring division. By means of a runner to the company on his left rear he intimated his determination to hold on until other orders were received from battalion headquarters—and

this he inspired his command to accomplish. His company was eventually surrounded by the enemy at close range, and he was seen fighting to the last. His subsequent fate is unknown.

By his splendid example of grit Capt. Gribble was materially instrumental in preventing for some hours the enemy obtaining a complete mastery of the crest of ridge, and by his magnificent self-sacrifice he enabled the remainder of his own brigade to be withdrawn, as well as another garrison and three batteries of field artillery.

T./Capt. Manley Angell James, M.C., Glouc. R.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty in attack. Capt. James led his company forward with magnificent determination and courage, inflicting severe losses on the enemy and capturing twenty-seven prisoners and two machine guns.

He was wounded, but refused to leave his

company, and repulsed three hostile onslaughts the next day.

Two days later, although the enemy had broken through on his right flank, he refused to withdraw and made a most determined stand, inflicting very heavy losses on the enemy and gaining valuable time for the withdrawal of guns. He was ordered by the senior officer on the spot to hold on "to the last" in order to enable the brigade to be extricated. He then led his company forward in a local counter-attack on his own initiative, and was again wounded. He was last seen working a machine gun single-handed, after having been wounded a third time.

No praise can be too high for the gallant stand made by this company, and Capt. James, by his dauntless courage and magnificent example, undoubtedly enabled the battalion to be withdrawn before being completely cut off.

Lt. George Burdon McKean, Can. Inf.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during a raid on the enemy's trenches.

Lt. McKean's party, which was operating on the right flank, was held up at a block in the communication trench by most intense fire from hand grenades and machine guns. This block, which was too close to our trenches to have been engaged by the preliminary bombardment, was well protected by wire and covered by a well protected machine gun 30 yards behind it. Realising that if this block were not destroyed, the success of the whole operation might be marred, he ran into the open to the right flank of the block, and with utter disregard of danger, leaped over the block head first on top of the enemy. Whilst lying on the ground on top of one of the enemy, another rushed at him with fixed bayonet; Lt. McKean shot him through the body and then shot the enemy underneath him, who was struggling violently. This very gallant action enabled this position to be captured. Lt. McKean's supply of bombs ran out at this time, and he sent back to our front line for a fresh supply. Whilst waiting for them he engaged the enemy single-handed.

When the bombs arrived, he fearlessly rushed the second block, killing two of the enemy, captured four others and drove the remaining garrison, including a hostile machine-gun section, into a dug-out. The dug-out, with its occupants and machine gun, was destroyed.

This officer's splendid bravery and dash undoubtedly saved many lives, for had not this position been captured, the whole of the raiding party would have been exposed to dangerous enfilading fire during the withdrawal. His leadership at all times has been beyond praise.

2nd Lt. Joseph Henry Collin, late R. Lanc. R.

For most conspicuous bravery, devotion to duty and self-sacrifice in action.

After offering a long and gallant resistance against heavy odds in the Keep held by his platoon, this officer, with only five of his men remaining, slowly withdrew in the face of superior numbers, contesting every inch of the ground. The enemy were pressing him

hard with bombs and machine-gun fire from close range. Single-handed 2nd Lt. Collin attacked the machine gun and team. After firing his revolver into the enemy, he seized a Mills grenade and threw it into the hostile team, putting the gun out of action, killing four of the team and wounding two others. Observing a second hostile machine gun firing, he took a Lewis gun, and selecting a high point of vantage on the parapet whence he could engage the gun, he, unaided, kept the enemy at bay until he fell mortally wounded.

The heroic self-sacrifice of 2nd Lt. Collin was a magnificent example to all.

T./2nd Lt. John Schofield, late Lancs. Fus.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty in operations.

2nd Lt. Schofield led a party of nine men against a strong point which was reported strongly held by the enemy, and was attacked by about 100 of the enemy with bombs.

He disposed his men so skilfully, and made such good use of rifle and Lewis gun fire, that the enemy took cover in dug-outs. This officer himself then held up and captured a party of twenty.

With the help of other parties this position was then cleared of the enemy, who were all killed or captured. He then collected the remainder of his men, made his party up to ten, and proceeded towards the front line, previously informing his Commanding Officer as to the position, and that he was proceeding to retake the front line. He met large numbers of the enemy in a communication trench in front of him and in a drain on his right and left. His party opened rapid rifle fire, and he climbed out on to the parapet under point blank machine-gun fire, and, by his fearless demeanour and bravery, forced the enemy to surrender. As a result, 123 of the enemy, including several officers, were captured by 2nd Lt. Schofield and his party.

This very gallant officer was killed a few minutes later.

2nd Lt. John Cröwe, Worc. R.

For most conspicuous bravery, determination, and skilful leading when the enemy, for the third time having attacked a post in a village, broke past on to the high ground and established a machine gun and snipers in the broken ground at the back of the village. 2nd Lt. Cröwe twice went forward with two N.C.Os. and seven men to engage the enemy, both times in face of active machine-gun fire and sniping. His action was so daring that on each occasion the enemy withdrew from the high ground into the village, where 2nd Lt. Cröwe followed them and himself opened fire upon the enemy as they collected in the doorways of the houses.

On the second occasion, taking with him only two men of his party, he attacked two enemy machine guns which were sweeping the post, killed both the gunners with his rifle, and prevented any others from reaching the guns and bringing them in action again. He then turned upon a party of the enemy who were lined up in front of him, killed several, and the remainder withdrew at once. He captured both the guns, one of

which was the battalion Lewis gun which had been captured by the enemy on the previous day.

Throughout the seven days of operations 2nd Lt. Crowe showed an utter disregard of danger and was recklessly brave. His personal example and cheerfulness contributed largely to the determination of the garrison of the post to hold out. It may safely be said that but for his coolness and skill at the last moment, when he personally placed the covering party in close proximity to the enemy, who were again closing round, and were also forming up in fours near by, the garrison of the post could never have effected its escape. The valour and zeal displayed by 2nd Lt. Crowe were of the highest order.

No. S.6522 Sjt. William Gregg, D.C.M., M.M., Rifle Bde. (Derby).

For most conspicuous bravery and brilliant leadership in action.

Two companies of his unit attacked the enemy's outpost position without artillery preparation. Serjeant Gregg was with the right company, which came under heavy fire from the right flank as it advanced. All the officers with the company were hit. He at once took command of the attack. He rushed an enemy post and personally killed an entire machine-gun team and captured the gun and four men in a dug-out near by. He then rushed another post, killed two men and captured another. In spite of heavy casualties he reached his objective, and started consolidating the position. By this prompt and effective action this gallant N.C.O. saved the situation at a critical time and ensured the success of the attack.

Later, Sjt. Gregg's party were driven back by an enemy counter-attack, but, reinforcements coming up, he led a charge, personally bombed a hostile machine gun, killed the crew, and captured the gun. Once again he was driven back. He led another successful attack, and hung on to the position until ordered by his company commander to withdraw.

Although under very heavy rifle and machine-gun fire for several hours, Sjt. Gregg displayed throughout the greatest coolness and contempt of danger, walking about encouraging his men and setting a magnificent example.

No. Z.1030 Cpl. (L./Sjt.) Joseph Edward Woodall, Rifle Bde. (Salford).

For most conspicuous bravery and fine leadership during an attack.

Sjt. Woodall was in command of a platoon which, during the advance, was held up by a machine gun. On his own initiative he rushed forward and, single-handed, captured the gun and eight men.

After the objective had been gained, heavy fire was encountered from a farmhouse some 200 yards in front. Sjt. Woodall collected ten men and, with great dash and gallantry, rushed the farm and took thirty prisoners.

Shortly afterwards, when the officer in charge was killed, he took entire command, reorganised the two platoons, and disposed them most skilfully.

Throughout the day, in spite of intense shelling and machine-gun fire, this gallant

N.C.O. was constantly on the move, encouraging the men and finding out and sending back invaluable information.

The example set by Sjt. Woodall was simply magnificent, and had a marked effect on the troops. The success of the operation on this portion of the front is attributed almost entirely to his coolness, courage and utter disregard for his own personal safety.

No. 15883 L./Cpl. James Hewitson, R. Lanc. R. (Coniston).

For most conspicuous bravery, initiative and daring in action.

In a daylight attack on a series of crater posts, L./Cpl. Hewitson led his party to their objective with dash and vigour, clearing the enemy from both trench and dug-outs, killing in one dug-out six of the enemy who would not surrender. After capturing the final objective, he observed a hostile machine-gun team coming into action against his men. Working his way round the edge of the crater he attacked the team, killing four and capturing one. Shortly afterwards he engaged a hostile bombing party, which was attacking a Lewis-gun post. He routed the party, killing six of them.

The extraordinary feats of daring performed by this gallant N.C.O. crushed the hostile opposition at this point.

No. B.203174 Pte. William Beesley, Rifle Bde. (Nuneaton).

For most conspicuous bravery.

The enemy's outpost position was attacked by two companies of his unit without artillery preparation. Pte. Beesley was in the leading wave of the left company, which came under heavy fire as it approached the enemy's front line. His platoon serjeant and all the section commanders were killed. This young soldier, realising the situation at once, took command and led the assault. Single-handed he rushed a post, and with his revolver killed two of the enemy at a machine gun. He then shot dead an officer who ran across from a dug-out to take their place at the machine gun. Three more officers appeared from the dug-out. These he called on to surrender; seeing one of them trying to get rid of a map he shot him and obtained the map. He took four more prisoners from a dug-out and two others from a shelter close by, disarmed them and sent them back to our lines. At this moment his Lewis gun was brought up by a comrade, who was acting as a carrier. Pte. Beesley at once brought it into action, and used it with great effect against the enemy as they bolted towards their support line, inflicting many casualties.

For four hours Pte. Beesley and his comrade held on to the position under very heavy machine-gun and rifle fire. The enemy then advanced to counter-attack, and the other soldier was wounded. Pte. Beesley carried on by himself, and actually maintained his position until 10 p.m., long after the posts on his right and left had been practically wiped out and the survivors had fallen back.

It was mainly due to his action that the enemy were prevented from rushing the position, and that the remnants of his company, when compelled to withdraw, were able to do so without further loss.

When darkness set in Pte. Beesley made his way back to the original line from which

the attack had started, bringing with him the wounded carrier and the Lewis gun. He at once mounted the Lewis gun in the trench and remained in action until things quietened down.

The indomitable pluck, skilful shooting and good judgment in economising ammunition displayed by Pte. Beesley stamp the incident as one of the most brilliant actions in recent operations.

No. 24066 Pte. Arthur Poulter, W. Rid. R. (Wortley, Leeds).

For most conspicuous bravery when acting as a stretcher-bearer.

On ten occasions Pte. Poulter carried badly wounded men on his back to a safer locality, through a particularly heavy artillery and machine-gun barrage. Two of these were hit a second time whilst on his back. Again, after a withdrawal over the river had been ordered, Pte. Poulter returned in full view of the enemy who were advancing, and carried back another man who had been left behind wounded. He bandaged up over forty men under fire, and his conduct throughout the whole day was a magnificent example to all ranks.

This very gallant soldier was subsequently seriously wounded when attempting another rescue in the face of the enemy.

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