

The background features a stylized, pixelated representation of the South African flag. It consists of a red upper triangle, a green lower triangle, and a central white band. A diagonal yellow band with a black border runs from the bottom left towards the top right, crossing the other colors.

Victoria Cross Online

South Africa and the Victoria Cross

Issue 33 July 2025

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Welcome to the 33rd edition of Victoria Cross Online Magazine.

The feature article this month is an article on the Victoria Cross and the country of South Africa, looking at some of the great stories of recipients from that part of the world.

There will also be the next two recipients in my new series on the Worcestershire Regiment VCs. The featured VCs this month will be George Grogan VC and Herbert James VC.

There is also a piece on the recently commissioned painting done of Mir Dast VC which has gone on display in Bradford, Yorkshire.

There is also news of the investiture of the Victoria Cross for Australia posthumously to Richard Norden which was held in Rockhampton, Queensland on 15th July 2025.

There is also news of the auction of Willward Sandys-Clarke's medal group, and the recent unveiling of the memorial to Yeshwant Ghadge VC in Italy.



Contents

3-11 South Africa and the VC – Mark Green

12-16 Worcestershire Regiment VCs Part 4 – George Grogan VC

17-25 Worcestershire Regiment VCs Part 5 – Herbert James VC

26-28 Mir Dast VC Painting

29-31 Norden VC

Investiture

32 – Sandys-Clarke VC Auction

33 – Yeshwant Ghadge VC Memorial

34 – Beatham VC Auction

South African VCs

South Africa's association with the Victoria Cross is a long and illustrious one spanning many conflicts. Of all the awards of the Victoria Cross to date, 28 of the awards were to men who served in the South African forces, 21 of whom were awarded between 1856 and 1914, 4 in World War I and 3 in World War II. Two of these "official" South African awards were posthumous: one to a soldier and one to an airman. Including those awards to men who were born or lived in South Africa but who served in British or Commonwealth Regiments, approximately 44 VC awards may be attributed to South Africans.

One of the first South African awarded the Victoria Cross was Lieutenant Joseph Petrus Hendrik Crowe, serving in the 78th Regiment of Foot (later Seaforth Highlanders) during the Indian Mutiny in 1857. On 12th August 1857, the column came up against the enemy in the village of Boursekee Chowkee about a mile and a half in front of Bashiratguni. The enemy redoubt, on a hill some 400 yards from the main road, was heavily defended by artillery. A deep and wide marsh protected its front and heavy rain had made the area impossible for the moving of guns. Without support from the artillery, the infantry formed up ready to storm the redoubt under heavy fire from the mutineers. Lieutenants Crowe and Campbell stood just ahead of their troops waiting for the order to charge through the thick mud. The order was given and both officers engaged in a race to be first to reach the breastwork.

Crowe reached the redoubt just ahead of Campbell and clambered over the wall, sword swinging and ploughed into a group of mutineers. The troops soon followed and in no time all the rebels were killed. The rest of the column chased the rebels out of the village and then out of Bashiratguni. The only wound Crowe received was the loss of the end of his little finger to a tulwar's stroke. Both Crowe and Campbell were recommended for the VC, but Campbell succumbed to cholera just four days later. Crowe's citation appeared in the London Gazette on 15th January 1858. In 1860, his regiment were posted to the Cape Colony for garrison duty, which gave Crowe the chance to see his family for the first time in 13 years. A further posting to Malaya and Singapore saw his health undermined by tropical disease. He sailed to the UK and, in January 1876, ill-health saw him retire from the Army as a Lieutenant-Colonel. He lodged with his niece in Upper Norwood, South London and soon afterwards, he died in Penge, Surrey on 12th April 1876 aged 50.

South African VCs

His death was attributed to lung congestion which was brought on by a chill he caught whilst shooting snipe in Ireland. He was interred in a non-descript grave in West Norwood Cemetery. In 1957, his overgrown grave was discovered by his great-grand-nephew Professor J.F.V. Phillips , and in August 1976 (just over 100 years after his death) his remains were exhumed. On 5th February 1977, following a military ceremony in St Katherine's Anglican Church, his casket was carried on a gun carriage to the MOTH Garden of Remembrance, Uitenhage, where he was re-interred. Joseph Crowe bequeathed his Victoria Cross to his sister, and the medal returned to the Cape Colony. Sadly, some years later, the medal was destroyed in a house fire.



The first Victoria Cross awarded for an action on South African soil was to Brevet Major Hans Garrett Moore of the 88th Regiment of Foot (later Connaught Rangers), who was seconded to the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police, a South African colonial unit near King William's Town, during the Gaika-Galeka War of 1877. This Victoria Cross was gazetted only after those awarded for the action at Rorke's Drift, although it was the first Victoria Cross actually earned in South Africa.

South African VCs

On 29th December 1877, near Komgha, during a skirmish with the Gaikas, Moore observed that a Private of the Frontier Mounted Police was struggling to re-mount his horse, and was under severe threat from the enemy. Realising the danger, Major Moore rode back alone in the middle of the enemy, and continued to try and save the young Private. Sadly, his efforts were in vain and the young soldier was killed. Major Moore had managed to kill two of the enemy in his efforts, and received an assegai wound to the arm.

Moore was presented with his medal by the Governor of Gibraltar, General Lord Napier on 6th September 1879, and was now serving as a Major in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. He was promoted to Colonel in April 1882. Shortly afterwards, he resigned the command of the Cape Mounted Rifles so that he could rejoin his old commanding officer, Sir Garnet Wolseley in the Egyptian campaign of 1882. He was present at the second action at Kassassin and at the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir where he was mentioned in despatches. He was also created Companion of Bath, as well as receiving the campaign medal and the Khedive's Star.

Soon after this command, Colonel Moore chose to retire from active service, and returned to his native Ireland. He occupied his time in retirement with horse riding, swimming and yachting. Sadly, his favourite pastime of yachting led to his untimely death. On 6th October 1889, Colonel Moore left Portumna Bay in his steam launch, the "Foam", accompanied by his stoker, Patrick Byrne. They both went to shore where Moore had dinner with General Cooper. They both returned to the launch at half past midnight. Colonel Moore then rowed off in a terrible gale to secure the rope of the launch to a buoy. He could not row back against the wind and drifted out into Dromineer Bay. His body was found the following day in fourteen feet of water at Buggaun Island. He was buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery, Dublin with full military honours. His medals are held by the Museum Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa.

South African VCs



Hans Garrett Moore VC CB

South African VCs

Therefore there is no “official” list of South African VC recipients. However, on the basis of the unit in which they served, there are 28 recipients with this connection to South Africa. The list is below (though with an asterisk can also be noted as being born in South Africa as well as serving in a South African unit.

Corporal F.C. Schiess, Natal Native Contingent 22/01/1879 Rorke's Drift
*Trooper P. Brown, Cape Mounted Riflemen 08/04/1879 Moirosi Mountain
Sergeant R.G. Scott, Cape Mounted Riflemen 08/04/1879 Moirosi Mountain
Surgeon-Major E.B. Hartley, Cape Mounted Riflemen 05/06/1879 Moirosi Mt
Captain C. D'Arcy, Frontier Light Horse, 03/07/1879 Ulundi
Sergeant E. O'Toole, Frontier Light Horse, 03/07/1879 Ulundi
Surgeon J.F. O'Crea Cape Mounted Yeomanry, 14/01/1881 Tweefontein
Trooper J. Danaher, Nourse's Horse, 16/01/1881 Elandsfontein Ridge
*Captain C.H. Mullins, Imperial Light Horse, 21/10/1899 Elandslaagte
Captain R. Johnston, Imperial Light Horse, 21/10/1899 Elandslaagte
Captain C. Filtzmaurice, attached Protectorate Regiment, 14 and 27/10/1899
and 26/12/1899 Mafeking
Sergeant H.R. Martineau, The Protectorate Regiment, 26/12/1899 Mafeking
Trooper H.E. Ramsden, The Protectorate Regiment, 26/12/1899 Mafeking
*Trooper H. Albrecht, Imperial Light Horse, 06/01/1900 Waggon Hill
Lieutenant F.A. Maxwell, attached Roberts Light Horse, 31/03/1900 Koorn
Spruit.
*Corporal J.J. Clements, Rimington's Guides, 24/02/1901 Strijdenburg
Sergeant J. Rogers, South African Constabulary, 15/06/1901 Thaba N'chu
Lieutenant W.J.English, 2nd Scottish Horse, 03/07/1901 Vlakfontein
Sergeant Major A. Young, Cape Police, 13/08/1901 Ruiter's Kraal
Surgeon-Captain T.J. Crean, Imperial Light Horse, 18/12/1901
Tygerkloofspruit.
Surgeon-Captain A. Martin-Leake, South African Constabulary, 08/02/1902
Vlakfontein
*Private W.F. Faulds, S.A. Infantry, 18/07/1916, Delville Wood
Captain W.A. Bloomfield, Scout Corps, 24/08/1916 Mlali
Sergeant F.C. Booth, BSA Police 12/02/1917 nr Songea
Lance-Corporal W.H. Hewitt, SA Infantry 20/09/1917 Ypres

South African VCs

*Sergeant Q.G.M. Smythe, 1st Royal Natal Carbineers, 05/06/1942 Alem Hanza

*Lieutenant G.R. Norton, Kaffrarian Rifles, 31/08/1944 Gothic Line, Italy

*Captain E. Swales, South African Air Force, 23/02/1945 near Stuttgart.



South African VCs

Some historians would further lower this 28 men to 26 men due to fact both Charles Fitzclarence VC and Francis Maxwell VC DSO were part of other regiments and attached to South African units. As stated earlier there are 44 men who were either born in South Africa, lived in South Africa, or have a connection to South Africa, but if you truly focus on South African born recipients the number reduces to just 19. Of these, ten were awarded to South African-born men serving as members of the British Defence Force, Five to South Africans serving in South African Units, two to South Africans seconded to the British Defence Force, one to a South African-born officer serving with the Australian Army, and one to a South African serving with the Rhodesian forces.

Earlier in this article, the story was told of one of the first South African born recipients (Joseph Crowe VC) but he was second South African born recipient by date of action. The first South African born VC recipient was in fact Christopher Teesdale, born in Grahamstown, in the Eastern Cape, on the 1 June 1833. He joined the Royal Artillery and served in the Crimean war (1854-1855). During the Siege of Kars, in Armenia, on the 29 September 1855, Teesdale volunteered to take command of the force engaged in the most advanced part of the defences, encouraging the garrison to implement an attack so vigorous that the Russians were driven out. Teesdale was also instrumental in saving the lives of a considerable number of the Russian wounded. Lieutenant Teesdale was personally decorated with the Victoria Cross by Queen Victoria herself, in the quadrangle of Windsor Palace, on the 21 November 1857.

Following on from Teesdale VC and Crowe VC, the other South African born VCs are Randolph Nesbitt VC, Charles Mullins VC, Herman Albrecht VC, John Clements VC, Percy Hansen VC, William Faulds VC, Oswald Reid VC, Clement Robertson VC, John Sherwood-Kelly VC, Reginald Hayward VC, Andrew Beauchamp-Proctor VC, George Gristock VC, Charles G.W.Anderson VC, John Nettleton VC, Quentin Smythe VC, Gerard Norton VC MM, and Edwin Swales VC DFC.

South African VCs

Sergeant (later Captain) Quentin Smythe VC was born at Nottingham Road, Natal, on the 6 August 1916, Smythe was educated at Estcourt High School, in Natal. He then joined the Royal Natal Carbineers, and on the 5 June 1942, participated in the attack on Italian positions at Alem Hamza. Although wounded, he attacked the enemy positions, armed only with rifle, bayonet and grenades. Smythe consolidated the ground won and also managed to forestall any encirclement, before withdrawing to safety.

Lieutenant Gerard Norton VC MM was born at Herschel, in the Cape, on the 7 September 1915. He was educated at Selborne College, in East London, in the Eastern Cape. He joined the Kaffrarian Rifles and was seconded to the Hampshire Regiment of the British Army. It was at Monte Gridolfo, that this intrepid soldier, advancing alone, destroyed machine-gun nests, a self-propelled gun, and additional enemy positions, virtually breaching the formidable Gothic Line single-handedly. After the war, Norton retired to Rhodesia where he took up farming.

Captain Edwin Swales VC DFC was born at Inanda, in Natal, on the 3 July 1915. He attended Durban High School and initially served with the Natal Mounted Rifles before transferring to the South African Air Force. He was seconded to the Royal Air Force, joining No 582 (Pathfinder) Squadron. Swales was master bomber in an attack on Pforzheim, Germany on the 23 February 1945. His aircraft was hit, but he still bombed the target and then attempted to fly back to England. The aircraft became far too difficult to handle and, while over North Holland, Swales ordered his crew to bail out, the bomber then plummeting to earth with the courageous Swales still at the controls.

South African VCs



The VC and DFC Medal Group of Captain Edwin Swales
(courtesy of Derek Walker)

Worcestershire Regiment VCs

George Grogan VC



George William St George Grogan (1875-1962) was born in Stoke Damerel, Devonport, Devon on 1st September 1875, he was the eldest of five sons by Brigadier General E.G. Grogan who commanded the 1st Black Watch in the South African War. He was educated at the United Services College at Westward before being commissioned into the West India Regiment, where he served nine years in Africa. In 1907 he was transferred to the Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and in 1908 to the Worcestershire Regiment.

At the outbreak of war, he returned from service with the 1st Battalion in Egypt and was posted to the 2nd Battalion as a Major, which he then briefly commanded. In March 1915 he took command of the 1st Battalion. In 1916 he fought in the Somme and in March 1917 he won the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). He then took command of 23 Brigade in the 8th Division and led them in the third Ypres and in March 1918 in the Somme where he was awarded a bar to his DSO.

In May 1918 he was moved to the Chermin des Dames front which was the responsibility of the French. When the Germans attacked the 8th Division they took heavy losses. Grogan, at the time Brigadier General, escaped capture and rallied many stragglers organising them into a small force. It was this command that earned him the Victoria Cross.

Worcestershire Regiment VCs

George Grogan
VC



Worcestershire

Regiment VCs

George Grogan

VC

On 27th May 1918, at the River Aisne, France, Brigadier General Grogan was in command of the remnants of the infantry of a division and attached troops. His utter disregard for personal safety combined with sound practical ability helped to stay the onward thrust of the enemy. He rode up and down the front line encouraging his troops under artillery, trench mortar, rifle and machine-gun fire and when one horse was shot under him, he continued encouraging his men on foot until another horse was brought. As a result of his actions the line held. After the Armistices he served in North Russia commanding the 1st Brigade of the relief force under Lord Rawlinson. In the war he was mentioned in dispatches six times, created a Companion of The Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael & St. George (CMG) in 1916 and Companion of The Most Honourable Order of the Bath (CB) in 1919. In 1920 he married Ethel Gladys, and they had two sons.

He commanded the 3rd Battalion for three years after the war before commanding 5th Brigade in Aldershot for a further three years. Grogan retired from the army as an honorary Brigadier-General in 1926. From 1933 to 1945 he was appointed one of His Majesty's Bodyguard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms. He was the Colonel of the Worcestershire Regiment from 1938 to 1945.

George Grogan died at his home in Sunningdale, Berkshire, on the 3rd January 1962 and was cremated in Woking Crematorium. His ashes were scattered. For a number of years after his death, his medal group was held in trust by the Grogan family. In May 2011, the trustees agreed to loan his medal group on a long term loan to the Imperial War Museum, where they are displayed in the Ashcroft Gallery.

Worcestershire

Regiment VCs

George Grogan

VC

War Office,
25th July, 1918.

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

Maj. & Bt. Lt.-Col. (T./Brig.-Gen.) George William St. George Grogan, C.M.G., D.S.O., Worc. R.

For most conspicuous bravery and leadership throughout three days of intense fighting. Brigadier-General Grogan was, except for a few hours, in command of the remnants of the Infantry of a Division and various attached troops. His action during the whole of the battle can only be described as magnificent. The utter disregard for his personal safety, combined with the sound practical ability which he displayed, materially helped to stay the onward thrust of the enemy masses. Throughout the third day of operations, a most critical day, he spent his time under artillery, trench mortar, rifle and machine-gun fire, riding up and down the

front line encouraging his troops, reorganising those who had fallen into disorder, leading back into the line those who were beginning to retire, and setting such a wonderful example that he inspired with his enthusiasm not only his own men but also the Allied troops who were alongside. As a result the line held and repeated enemy attacks were repulsed.

He had one horse shot under him, but nevertheless continued on foot to encourage his men until another horse was brought.

He displayed throughout the highest valour, powers of command and leadership.

Worcestershire Regiment VCs George Grogan VC



George Grogan VC

1918, France, Worcestershire Regiment

Over three days of intense fighting at the River Aisne from 27 May, Brigadier General Grogan inspired his men to resist repeated German attacks. On the third day, he rode in front of his troops under deadly fire to urge them on. His untiring leadership and energy under gruelling conditions ensured the line held.

Lent by the Trustees of the Grogan Trust



Worcestershire Regiment VCs

Herbert James VC



Walter Herbert James (1888-1958), the first member of the Worcestershire Regiment to receive a VC for actions in the Great War, was born on 13th November 1888 in Ladywood, Birmingham, the son of Mr and Mrs Walter James. His father ran a jewellery engraving business in Warstone Lane. Herbert as he preferred to be known, was educated at Smethwick Central School, and appeared destined for the teaching profession. After leaving school he worked as a teacher's assistant and primary teacher at the Bearwood Road and Brasshouse Lane schools, but "being of a roving disposition" and wishing to travel abroad, he decided to join the Army. This was against the wishes of his father.

He enlisted on a short service enlistment as a trooper in the 21st Lancers on 13th April 1909. He joined the Regiment the following month and went with it to Egypt in 1910 for a two-year tour of duty followed by a spell in India.

James was promoted to Lance Corporal on the 14th July 1911, and despite being in the Army, he continued with his studies, and his talent for languages won him many prizes. He intended to make a career in the Civil Service after his Army days were completed, but, like with so many young men's plans, it was overtaken by the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914.

Worcestershire Regiment VCs

Herbert James VC

By the autumn of 1914 the War Office, faced with the task of recruiting a New Army, found it necessary to increase the number of commissions offered to Regular Army NCOs. James was a prime candidate and on 9th November 1914, after having spent five years in the ranks, Lance Corporal James became 2nd Lieutenant James of the 4th Worcestershire Regiment. He returned to England to join his unit largely consisting of men from his home city of Birmingham, and embarked with the Battalion on 22nd March 1915 for the Dardanelles.

The main body of the 4th Worcesters landed at W Beach on 25th April and the unit played a key role in effecting the link-up with the troops on V Beach the following day. It was during this fierce fighting that he was severely wounded in the head. He was evacuated to Malta for treatment. After a short period of recuperation, he returned to his unit on the Gallipoli peninsula.

On 28th June 1915 in the southern zone of Gallipoli, when the advance of part of the regiment had been checked, Second-Lieutenant James, from a neighbouring unit, gathered together a body of men and led them forward under heavy fire. He then returned, organised a second party and again advanced, putting fresh life into the attack. On 3rd July he headed a party of bomb throwers up a Turkish communication trench and when all his party had been killed or wounded, he remained alone, under murderous fire and kept back the enemy until a barrier had been built behind him and the trench secured.

Worcestershire Regiment VCs

Herbert James VC



Worcestershire Regiment VCs

Herbert James VC

James was wounded again, and forced to be evacuated from the peninsula for a second time, in September 1915. He was then transferred to the 1st Worcestershire Regiment where he was given command of B Company. He went to France in March 1916 and served with the battalion on the Somme in July 1916. During the fighting around the village of Contalmaison, Lieutenant James was wounded again. His injuries led him to be evacuated to a hospital on the Isle of Wight and were of such severity that a metal plate had to be inserted in his head. He was then moved to the mainland to continue his recovery, and two months later, on 5th September 1916, he married Gladys Beatrice Lillicrap at Stoke Damerel parish church, Devonport.

Little more is known of his war service. He finally returned to duty on 18th August 1917 as a general staff officer, grade three, with the rank of emergency Captain. On 1st April 1918 he was promoted to the rank of Brigade-Major. He was awarded the French Croix de Guerre on 1st May 1917 and the Military Cross on 15th October 1918 for an action some months earlier, when he rode forward under heavy fire to collect valuable information. He then reorganised the line and led forward parties of men and formed a defensive flank where a gap had occurred, exposing himself for many hours to heavy fire.

Worcestershire Regiment VCs

Herbert James VC

Second Lieutenant Herbert James, 4th Battalion, The Worcestershire Regiment.

For most conspicuous bravery during the operations in the Southern Zone of the Gallipoli Peninsula.

On the 28th June, 1915, when a portion of a Regiment had been checked owing to all the Officers being put out of action, Second Lieutenant James, who belonged to a neighbouring unit, entirely on his own initiative gathered together a body of men and led them forward under heavy shell and rifle fire. He then returned, organised a second party, and again advanced. His gallant example put fresh life into the attack. On the 3rd July, in the same locality, Second Lieutenant James headed a party of bomb throwers up a Turkish communication trench, and, after nearly all his bomb throwers had been killed or wounded, he remained alone at the head of the trench and kept back the enemy single-handed till a barrier had been built behind him and the trench secured. He was throughout exposed to a murderous fire.

Worcestershire Regiment VCs

Herbert James VC

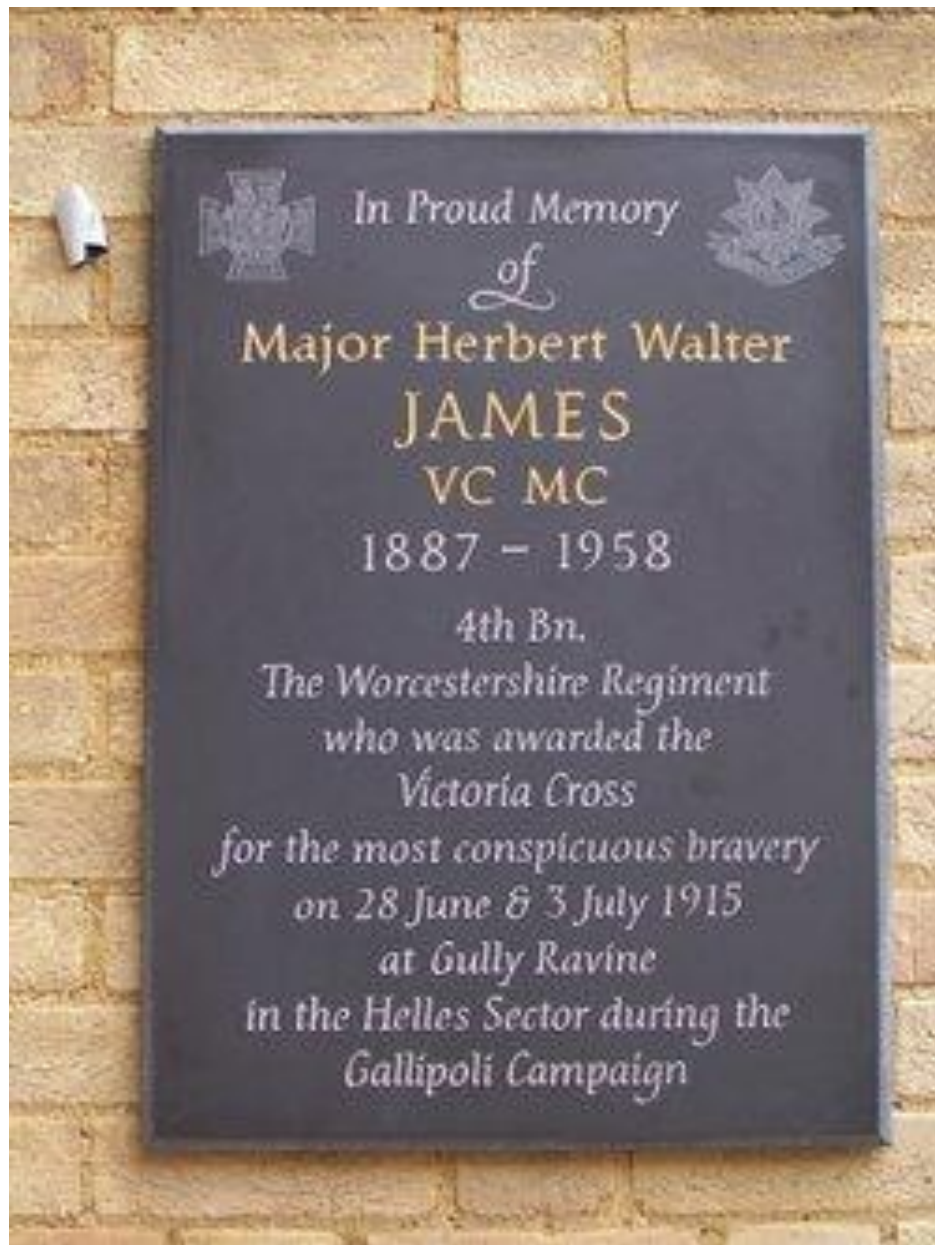
He also received two mentions in despatches, gazetted on 20th May and 20th December 1918, and the honorary award of the Panamanian Medal de la Solidaridad, which was only approved on 17th February 1920. Captain James VC, MC remained in the Army after the war, his Civil Service ambitions apparently forgotten.

On 21st December 1920 he transferred to the East Lancashire Regiment with the rank of Captain and Brevet Major. He served in the West Indies before entering the Staff College. He then took up a post as a staff captain at the War Office. He had a stint as Brigade Major in the Aldershot Command from October 1927 to November 1928 and it was during this spell that he transferred to the York and Lancaster Regiment with the rank of Major.

At this time, he separated from his first wife, and married Jessy Amy England in London on 26th November 1929. The following March, the London Gazette announced that Major James was retiring from the Army due to ill health. This is thought to have been connected to problems with the head wound he had suffered years before on the Somme.

Worcestershire Regiment VCs

Herbert James VC



Worcestershire Regiment VCs

Herbert James
VC

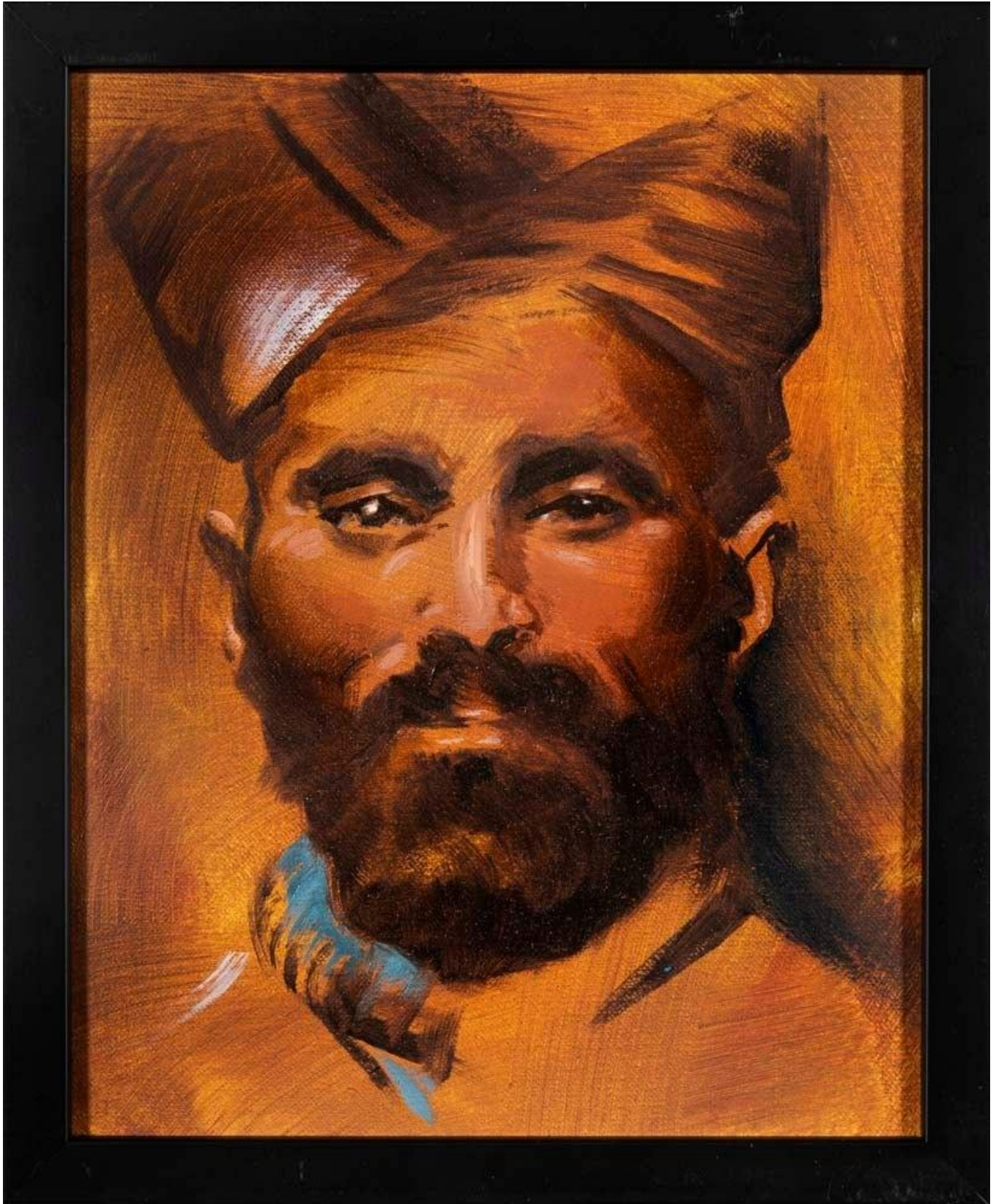


Worcestershire Regiment VCs

Herbert James
VC



Mir Dast VC Painting



Mir Dast VC by Annabelle Dorman

Mir Dast VC Painting

In June 2025, a new exhibition of paintings was shown in Bradford, Yorkshire. The exhibition was produced by renowned war artist Arabella Dorman. One of the subjects of the paintings in the exhibition was Mir Dast VC.

On 26th April 1915 at Wieltje, Belgium, Jemadar Mir Dast led his platoon with great bravery during the attack, and afterwards collected various parties of the regiment (when no British officers were left) and kept them under his command until the retirement was ordered. He also displayed great courage that day when he helped to carry eight British and Indian officers to safety while exposed to heavy fire.

He was the first Indian officer to receive the VC; Indians only became eligible in 1912. He was promoted to Subadar (Captain) on 27th April 1915, the day after his award was gazetted. He was gassed, but continued to perform his duties until wounded in June. He was then evacuated to England where he was admitted to the Royal Pavilion Military Hospital in Brighton, where he was visited personally by Lord Kitchener in July 1915. The VC was presented to Mir Dast by King George V at the Royal Pavilion Military Hospital on 25th August 1915. During his recovery, the effects of the gas became more marked and he was sent back to India on 19th October, where he re-joined his Regiment. He later remarked "The gas has done for me... I had rather not have been gassed than get the Victoria Cross."

On the same day he received his VC, he was awarded the Russian Cross of St George, followed by the Order of British India, 2nd Class (entitling him to the title Bahadur) on 17th December 1915. He never recovered from his gassing and was transferred to the Indian Army Reserve on pension in September 1917. In addition to his VC, he was awarded the Indian Order of Merit, 3rd Class, Order of British India 2nd Class, India Medal 1895-1902 with clasps for Punjab Frontier and Waziristan, India General Service Medal 1908-35 with clasp North West Frontier 1908, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal 1914-20, Victory Medal 1914-19, George VI Coronation Medal 1937 and Russian Order of St George 3rd Class. His medals are believed to be in private ownership.

<https://victoriacrossonline.co.uk/mir-dast-vc/>

Mir Dast VC Painting

Jemadar Mir Dast, I.O.M., 55th Coke's Rifles (Frontier Force), attached 57th Wilde's Rifles (Frontier Force).

For most conspicuous bravery and great ability at Ypres on 26th April, 1915, when he led his platoon with great gallantry during the attack, and afterwards collected various parties of the regiment (when no British Officers were left) and kept them under his command until the retirement was ordered.

Jemadar Mir Dast subsequently on this day displayed remarkable courage in helping to carry eight British and Indian Officers into safety, whilst exposed to very heavy fire.



Norden VC Investiture



Norden VC Investiture



On Tuesday 15th July 2025 in Rockhampton, Queensland, the Governor-General of Australia, Sam Mostyn AC presided over the investiture ceremony for the late Private Richard Norden VC, presenting the insignia of the Victoria Cross for Australia to his widow Robyn, and sons Shane and Scott.

Private Richard Norden VC showed the finest examples of leadership, bravery, selflessness, mental and physical endurance and preeminent valour during the Battle of Fire Support Base Coral in Vietnam in 1968.

When Private Norden's platoon was ambushed and shot, he ran directly into the line of fire to retrieve members of his section who were severely injured or killed in the sudden attack. Private Norden's courage in the face of imminent danger meant the enemy position could be secured, and the lives of other members of the platoon were spared. His memory and legacy lives on.

Rockhampton was chosen as the venue by his widow Robyn (now Freeman) as it is her adopted hometown. The ceremony was attended by the Acting Prime Minister Richard Marles, Matt Canavan, Senator for Queensland, Matt Anderson, the Director of the Australian War Memorial, and Keith Payne VC AM, as well as many other dignitaries.

Norden VC Investiture



Courtesy of Mrs Robyn Freeman (widow of Richard Norden
VC and the Keith Payne VC AM Veterans Benefit Group

Sandys-Clarke VC

Auction



On Thursday 24th July 2025 the VC medal group of World War II Victoria Cross recipient Willward "Peter" Sandys-Clarke VC will be auctioned at Spink and Son in London. The estimate for the medal group is between £300,000 and £500,000.

Sandys-Clarke was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions at Guiriat el Atach, Tunisia, on 23 April 1943. On that day Lieutenant Clarke's company was counter-attacked and almost wiped out, he being the sole remaining officer. Although wounded in the head, he gathered a composite platoon together and advancing to attack the position again met heavy fire from a machine-gun post. He manoeuvred his men to give covering fire and then tackled the post single-handed, killing or capturing the crew and knocking out the gun. He dealt similarly with two other posts and then led his platoon to the objective, but was killed when he later went forward to tackle two sniper posts single-handed.



Yeshwant Ghadge VC Memorial



On Sunday July 6TH 2025, a statue of Naik Yeshwant Ghadge VC was unveiled in Montone, Italy. On 10th July 1944 in the Upper Tiber Valley, Italy, a rifle section commanded by Naik Yeshwant Ghadge came under heavy machine-gun fire at close range which killed or wounded all members of the section except the commander. Without hesitation, and well knowing that none were left to accompany him, Naik Yeshwant Ghadge rushed the machine gun post. He first threw a grenade which knocked out the machine gun and firer, after which he shot one of the gun crew with his Tommy gun. Finally, having no time to change his magazine, he grasped his gun by the barrel and beat to death the remaining two men of the gun crew. Unfortunately, Naik Yeshwant Ghadge was shot in the chest and back by enemy snipers and died in the post which he had captured single handed.

Beatham VC Auction



On Tuesday 29th July 2025, the Victoria Cross of Robert Matthew Beatham VC is to be auctioned at Noble Numismatics in Sydney, Australia. The medal is being sold without the campaign medals. The Victoria Cross was recently displayed at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on a 3 year loan. The estimate set for the auction is between AUS\$300,000 and AUS\$500,000.

Beatham was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions north of Rosieres, France on 9th August 1918.

On approaching this German strong point on 9th August the 8th Battalion, its supporting tanks knocked out by heavy artillery fire, was halted by a line of machine-guns. Private Beatham's company worked its way forward to enfilade the enemy position and, assisted by Lance Corporal W. G. Nottingham, he rushed forward and bombed the crews of four guns, killing ten men and capturing ten others. This action enabled the battalion to renew its advance. On 11th August when nearing its objective on the southern slope of Lihons it was again halted by German reinforcements. Beatham, though wounded, rushed another machine-gun and bombed and silenced it, but was riddled with bullets.

He was buried in Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres, France.

<https://victoriacrossonline.co.uk/robert-matthew-beatham-vc/>

