



Victoria Cross Online
Issue 38 December 2025

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Welcome to the 38th edition of Victoria Cross Online Magazine.

The feature article this month is kindly provided by Ned Malet de Carteret and features the incredible story of Anders Lassen VC MC and Two Bars.

There will also be the next instalments in the countdown of the youngest recipients of the Victoria Cross. After 5 men all with the age of 21, the next two recipients are Albert Ball VC DSO** MC, awarded the VC at the age of 20, and George Stanley Peachment VC, even younger at 19 years of age.

There will also be an auction update on the outcome of the three Victoria Cross medal groups sold in the past month.

There is also news of the new location of the Durham Light Infantry Museum collection.

The final note to finish on this month is to wish all readers and followers of Victoria Cross Online a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2026!



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Anders Lassen VC MC and Two Bars

By Ned Malet de Carteret



Anders Frederick Emil Victor Schau Lassen was born on the 22nd September, 1920 in South Zeeland. He had a younger brother Frants born two years later, and a much younger sister, Bente.

Anders and Frants were both keen hunters with bows and arrows from an early age and dispatched any moving animal on their country estate in South Zeeland, Holland.

The children were imbued with a strong sense of patriotism by their father, Emil, an Army reserve officer. Rather than joining the Army in 1939, Anders joined the M/S Fionia as a cabin boy on a round trip to Bangkok.

His next adventures would be on the M/T Eleonora Maersk in which he sailed around the world. Anders eventually ended up in Scotland on board the British Consul on December 1940.

He was recruited into SOE in Newcastle. He took the full training course including Arisaig in Scotland.

Anders joined the SSRF and their first mission was Operation Postmaster in May, 1941. The mission commander was Captain Gus March-Philipps. This enterprise, on board the ship Maid Honour, engaged the force in the capture of prize ships in the harbour of Spanish controlled Ferdinand Po in what is now Nigeria. It is simply a fantastical story. For this action Anders was awarded his first Military Cross.

Anders Lassen VC MC and Two Bars

By Ned Malet de Carteret

Returning to England, Anders was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant on 20th May, 1942. He was subsequently drafted into the Special Small Raiding Force. He participated in the following SSRF raids:

Operation Barricade 14-15 August 1942
(target German radar station, Cap Barfleur)

Operation Dryad , 2nd September 1842
(Les Casquets Lighthouse, 8 miles west of Alderney)

Operation Basalt, 3-4 October 1942 (Sark).

The famous raid. Anders kills a German sentry with his knife for the first time. Five prisoners were captured in the Dixcart Bay Hotel annexe. Only one would be taken back to England. The prisoners were “handcuffed” with rope. Hitler retaliated subsequently with the Commando Order.



Anders Lassen VC MC and Two Bars

By Ned Malet de Carteret

Anders was promoted Lieutenant on 20th November, 1942 and awarded the MC on the 7th November. His time with the SSRF then came to an end.

In January 1943 Anders was posted to 1 SAS and arrived in Kabrit in Egypt to train George Jellicoe's men and later join the SBS. Jellicoe had been appointed No 2 to David Stirling. Anders joined Jellicoe and transferred to the SBS in May.

Anders was then involved in Operation Albumen on the island of Crete between 23 June-11 July. The operation on Kastelli Pediadas airfield saw the destruction of 8 German aircraft and thousands of gallons of fuel to be destroyed. These figures were disputed by the Germans at the time. The German retaliation for the raids on the airfield was swift and brutal with a 1000 executions. For his actions in the raid, Anders was awarded the Bar to his Military Cross.

Promoted on 13th September to acting Captain, having had two spells in hospital. He was again hospitalised for six weeks from the end of November. Up until late 1943, Anders was in the Aegean island hopping. Anders was now commanded M squadron including the Irish patrol and they moved to the Mediterranean. He was now acting Major in rank.

During this time, on 7 October 1943, the squadron repulsed a German attack on Simi and for this action, Anders was awarded a second Bar to his Military Cross. He is one of only 24 men to be awarded a Military Cross with Two Bars.

It was for his actions on the night of 8th-9th April 1945, at Lake Commacchio, Italy, that he would be awarded the Victoria Cross.

Anders Lassen VC MC and Two Bars

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Anders was ordered to take a patrol of 17 men on a raid on the lake. Under heavy fire, Anders with grenades rushed the first enemy machine gun position killing four Germans with two machine guns. He engaged the second position using covering fire. He silenced this which was overrun by his patrol. His force by this stage was considerably reduced in number. On reaching the third machine gun position, he flung his grenades, which afterwards produced a cry of "kamerad". Advancing within yards of the position to take their surrender Anders was hit by further machine gun fire from another direction. Refusing to be evacuated, mortally wounded, his remaining men withdrew. His and those of his fallen comrades bodies were retrieved by the townsfolk of Commacchio and buried in the old town cemetery.



Anders Lassen VC MC and Two Bars

By Ned Malet de Carteret

FRIDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER, 1945.

War Office, 7th September, 1945.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the posthumous award of the VICTORIA CROSS to:—

Major (temporary) Anders Frederik Emil Victor Schau LASSEN, M.C. (234907), General List.

In Italy, on the night of 8th/9th April, 1945, Major Lassen was ordered to take out a patrol of one officer and seventeen other ranks to raid the north shore of Lake Comacchio.

His tasks were to cause as many casualties and as much confusion as possible, to give the impression of a major landing, and to capture prisoners. No previous reconnaissance was possible, and the party found itself on a narrow road flanked on both sides by water.

Preceded by two scouts, Major Lassen led his men along the road towards the town. They were challenged after approximately 500 yards from a position on the side of the road. An attempt to allay suspicion by answering that they were fishermen returning home failed, for when moving forward again to overpower the sentry, machine-gun fire started from the position, and also from two other blockhouses to the rear.

Major Lassen himself then attacked with grenades, and annihilated the first position containing four Germans and two machine-guns. Ignoring the hail of bullets sweeping the road from three enemy positions, an additional one having come into action from 300 yards down the road, he raced forward to engage the second position under covering fire from the remainder of the force. Throwing in more grenades he silenced this position which was then overrun by his patrol. Two enemy were killed, two captured and two more machine-guns silenced.

By this time the force had suffered casualties and its fire power was very con-

siderably reduced. Still under a heavy cone of fire Major Lassen rallied and reorganised his force and brought his fire to bear on the third position. Moving forward himself he flung in more grenades which produced a cry of "Kamerad". He then went forward to within three or four yards of the position to order the enemy outside, and to take their surrender.

Whilst shouting to them to come out he was hit by a burst of spandau fire from the left of the position and he fell mortally wounded, but even whilst falling he flung a grenade, wounding some of the occupants, and enabling his patrol to dash in and capture this final position.

Major Lassen refused to be evacuated as he said it would impede the withdrawal and endanger further lives, and as ammunition was nearly exhausted the force had to withdraw.

By his magnificent leadership and complete disregard for his personal safety, Major Lassen had, in the face of overwhelming superiority, achieved his objects. Three positions were wiped out, accounting for six machine guns, killing eight and wounding others of the enemy, and two prisoners were taken. The high sense of devotion to duty and the esteem in which he was held by the men he led, added to his own magnificent courage, enabled Major Lassen to carry out all the tasks he had been given with complete success.

War Office, 7th September, 1945.

Colonel (honorary Brigadier) P. J. SLATER, D.F.C., T.D. (2797), is appointed A.D.C. to The King (Additional), 27th March 1945, vice Colonel L. PARTRIDGE, D.S.O., T.D. ret. T.A., who has completed tenure of his appointment.

Colonel (acting Brigadier) T. T. J. SHEFFIELD, O.B.E., T.D. (25731), is appointed A.D.C. to The King (Additional), 5th January 1944, vice Colonel W. ANDERSON, C.B., D.S.O., M.C., T.D., deceased.

Anders Lassen VC MC and Two Bars

By Ned Malet de Carteret

Anders' grave now lies in the Argenta Gap CWGC Cemetery along with that of Thomas Hunter VC killed on 3rd April. Anders was a born killer, incredibly handsome, a ladies man, a leader of men, worshipped by his men both officers and of ordinary rank. He was very generous with entertaining his troops telling them he would be rich from the Operation Postmaster prize money. He was also very shy and quiet, and had huge mood swings, including bouts of depression. He was also accused by his men of taking all the Benzadrine tablets!



Anders Lassen VC MC and Two Bars

By Ned Malet de Carteret



The Youngest VCs –

Albert Ball

VC DSO** MC



Albert Ball (1896-1917) was born at 301 Lenton Boulevard, Lenton, Nottingham on 14th August 1896, the son of a master plumber also called Albert, who in later years, became Mayor of the city and was knighted. His mother was Harriett Mary Page, and they had two other children other than Albert. In his youth, Ball had his own small hut behind the family house where he tinkered with engines and electrical equipment.

He was raised with a knowledge of firearms, and conducted target practice in Sedgley's gardens. Possessed of keen vision, he soon became a crack shot. He was also deeply religious. Ball studied at the Lenton Church School, Grantham Grammar School and Nottingham High School before transferring to Trent College in January 1911, at the age of fourteen.

As a student he displayed only average ability, but was able to develop his curiosity for things mechanical. His best subjects were carpentry, modelling, violin and photography. He also served in the Officers Training Corps. When Albert left school in December 1913 at the age of seventeen, his father helped him start a business called Universal Engineering Works in a building next door to the family home.

The Youngest VCs –

Albert Ball

VC DSO** MC

At the outbreak of war Ball volunteered for service in the Army and enlisted in the 2/7th Battalion of the Notts and Derby Regiment as a Private on 21st September 1914. He was promoted almost immediately to Sergeant, he was soon commissioned as a Second Lieutenant on 29th October 1914. With no apparent hope of being sent to the fighting zone in France, Ball transferred to the North Midlands Divisional Cyclist Company, but continued to be stationed in England throughout 1915. Still determined to see active service, Ball turned to flying as a possible means of achieving his aim, and in June 1915 commenced private tuition as a pilot at Hendon with the Ruffy-Baumann School.

Due to his routine duties his flying progress was relatively slow, but on 15th October 1915 he finally gained his Royal Aero Club Certificate, No 1898, and applied for transfer to the Royal Flying Corps. Further flying instructions were undertaken at Norwich and Upavon, and on 22nd January 1916 he was awarded his RFC “wings” brevet.

Transferred officially to the RFC on 29th January 1916, he was sent to Gosport for a brief period as an instructor with 22 Squadron, but on 18th February he was in France, reporting to his first operational unit, 13 Squadron RFC at Marieux. His squadron was equipped with two-seat BE2c's – slow, stable machines, intended and used for general reconnaissance and bombing roles – and, after a series of moves, became based at Savy Aubigny airfield by mid-March 1916.

Ball was soon in the action over the fighting area and on 20th March had his first close brush with death due to engine failure.

The Youngest VCs –

Albert Ball

VC DSO** MC



The Youngest VCs –

Albert Ball

VC DSO** MC

In the following weeks, he was flying daily; bombing and observing for the artillery, and ever alert to any opportunity to get to grips with German aircraft, despite the unsuitability of his aircraft for any form of air combat. He also became unhappy with having an observer, preferring to fly alone. An occasional flight in one of the squadron's two single-seat Bristol Scouts gave Ball the individual "freedom" he longed for, and on 7th May 1916 he was posted to 11 Squadron RFC and given a single-seat Nieuport Scout in view of his obvious fighting potential.

On 1st June 1916, flying Nieuport 5173, he deliberately circled above the German airfield at Douai, inviting combat, and then forced two aircraft which took up this impudent challenge to hastily land again. After a brief spell of home leave, he returned to action, and on 26th June destroyed an observation balloon with phosphor bombs. This action led to his first gallantry award, a Military Cross, gazetted on 27th July 1916. By mid-July however the effect of almost continuous fighting and flying began to tell on Ball's highly sensitive nervous system, and he requested a brief rest.

Two days later, he was posted to 8 Squadron at Bellevue, flying his hated BE2cs again. Despite disappointment he did his duty and carried out routine sorties, but did pester his Squadron Commander with numerous requests to volunteer for any unusual or dangerous missions. These missions included spy-dropping flights; while on 9th August he attacked a German observation balloon in his cumbersome BE2d and forced its crew to take to their parachutes. His attempts to prove himself paid off, and on 14th August – his 20th birthday – he was posted back to 11 Squadron, where a newly-issued Nieuport Scout was already allotted for his personal use. During the remaining weeks of August Ball began a run of combats and victories.

The Youngest VCs –

Albert Ball

VC DSO** MC



The Youngest VCs –

Albert Ball

VC DSO** MC

On 1st September 1916, 60 Squadron moved base to Savy Aubigny, and Ball returned with delight to the wooden hut which had been his “home” there. He then returned to England for two weeks’ leave, with the added distinction of an award of the DSO. On his return to 60 Squadron he was greeted with the news that he had been promoted to command of his Flight, while on the 13th came the award of a Bar to his DSO. Only two days later he was notified that Russia had awarded him her Order of St George, 4th Class.

Although now a Flight Commander, he seldom led his men into action; preferring to hunt and fight alone; thereby leaving his mind wholly concentrated on his task of fighting. In September 1916 he had a total of at least 23 individual combats, from which he claimed six enemy aircraft destroyed, eight more forced down, and one out of control. A final day of fighting on 1st October brought him three more claims. On 4th October he was sent home to England, for leave and a “rest” posting on instructor duties. His return to Nottingham was heralded with nationwide publicity. On 18th November, he attended Buckingham Palace for the award of his DSO and Bar and MC. On 25th November, the London Gazette cited the further award of a second Bar to his DSO – making him the first “triple DSO” in the British Army.

In February 1917 he was made an Honorary Freeman of the city of Nottingham. He was desperate to return to the front, and he joined 56 Squadron RFC; a newly formed fighter unit and they left for France on 7th April 1917, arriving at Vent Galand airfield, a few miles north of Amiens. On 22nd April, he led the Squadron’s first operational patrol, and the following day, he achieved the unit’s first victory by crashing an Albatross two-seater. On 6th May 1917, he would claim his last victory: an Albatross Scout of Jagdstaffel 20, which he surprised near Sancourt.

The Youngest VCs –

Albert Ball

VC DSO** MC

On 7th May 1917, he took part in a routine patrol for some Sopwith bombers of 70 Squadron RFC in the morning; but at 6pm that evening Ball, in SE5 A4850, spearheaded an eleven-strong fighting patrol hunting for German aircraft. Within an hour, the Squadron were split up and engaged in a sprawling series of furious combats with Albatross D.III's of the notorious Jagdstaffel 11, commanded by Germany's "ace of aces" Rittmeister Manfred von Richthofen, but led on this occasion by his younger brother, Lothar. During the confused fighting, 56 Squadron suffered heavily; having two pilots killed, two wounded, and two others forced to land. One of missing was Ball. Possibly the last to see him alive was Captain Cyril Crowe of B Flight, who joined him at about 8pm in attacking a lone red Albatross D.III piloted by Lothar von Richthofen. After the initial attacks, Ball disappeared into a bank of cloud, and didn't reappear.

The only witnesses to his death were three German army officers who saw Von Richthofen's Albatross crash with a dead engine near Annoeullin village; then a few minutes later, Ball's SE5 emerge from low cloud, inverted and shallow-diving, emitting a thin plume of black smoke. Examination of the wreckage revealed no evidence of it having been brought down by any form of gun fire; while Ball's body had no combat wounds, and his several injuries were all sustained in the crash.

He was buried in Annouellin Cemetery in France, surrounded by Germans, the only Englishman interred there. Following his death, he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross and French Legion d'Honneur. In addition to his VC, DSO with Two Bars and MC, he was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal 1914-20, Victory Medal 1914-19 with Mentioned in Despatches oakleaf, French Legion d'Honneur and the Russian Order of St George, 4th Class. The medals are held by the Sherwood Foresters Museum, Nottingham Castle.

The Youngest VCs –

Albert Ball

VC DSO** MC

Lt. (temp. Capt.) Albert Ball, D.S.O., M.C.,
late Notts. and Derby. R., and R.F.C.

For most conspicuous and consistent
bravery from the 25th of April to the 6th of
May, 1917, during which period Capt. Ball
took part in twenty-six combats in the air
and destroyed eleven hostile aeroplanes,
drove down two out of control, and forced
several others to land.

In these combats Capt. Ball, flying alone,
on one occasion fought six hostile machines,
twice he fought five and once four. When
leading two other British aeroplanes he
attacked an enemy formation of eight. On
each of these occasions he brought down at
least one enemy.

Several times his aeroplane was badly
damaged, once so seriously that but for the
most delicate handling his machine would
have collapsed, as nearly all the control wires
had been shot away. On returning with a
damaged machine he had always to be re-
strained from immediately going out on
another.

In all, Capt. Ball has destroyed forty-three
German aeroplanes and one balloon, and has
always displayed most exceptional courage,
determination and skill.

The Youngest VCs –

Albert Ball

VC DSO** MC



The Youngest VCs –

Albert Ball

VC DSO** MC



The Youngest VCs – George Peachment VC



George Stanley Peachment (1897-1915) was born at Parkhills, Fishpool, Bury, Lancashire on 5th May 1897. His father was George Henry Peachment from Swanton Morley, Norfolk. He was a hairdresser and newsagent. George's mother was Mary nee Barnes, an elementary schoolmistress from Newmarket, Cambridgeshire. George and Mary married in 1893 at Downham, Cambridgeshire. George had three siblings: Charles Henry, David Algernon and Mabel Lois.

George was educated at Parkhills United Methodist Church School, St Chad's Junior School and Bury Technical School, where he studied engineering.

He was an apprentice fitter engineer at Ashworth & Parker of Elton, Bury and later with JH Riley. His first attempt to enlist was unsuccessful as he was underage, but he succeeded on 18th April 1915, giving his age as 19 years and one month. He was posted to A Company, 5th King's Royal Rifles Corps. He absented himself from 2nd – 5th July 1915 and was fined seven days' pay. He transferred to the 2nd Battalion on being sent to France on 27th July. He was further in trouble when he was confined to barracks for three days on 19th September 1915, for having a dirty sword on guard mount parade.

The Youngest VCs – George Peachment VC



The Youngest VCs – George Peachment VC

At the Battle of Loos, on 25th September 1915 near Hulloch, France, during very heavy fighting, when the front line was compelled to retire in order to reorganise, Private Peachment saw his company commander lying wounded and crawled to help him. The enemy fire was intense but although there was a shell-hole quite close in which a few men had taken cover, Private Peachment never thought of saving himself. He knelt in the open by his officer and tried to help him, but while doing so was first wounded by a bomb and a minute later mortally wounded by a rifle bullet.

George's body was not recovered after his death and he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial. The initial recommendation for the award of the Victoria Cross came from the man whose life he saved, Captain Guy Rattray Dubs. A memorial service for George was held on 17th October 1915 in Parkhills United Methodist Church, Bury.

George never married and the VC was presented to his mother by King George V at Buckingham Palace on 29th November 1916. In addition to his VC, he was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal 1914-20 and Victory Medal 1914-19. The medal group, a letter of condolence from Captain Dubs to his mother, George's death plaque and other documents were purchased for £31,050 by medal specialist Michael Naxton on behalf of Michael Ashcroft at a Spink auction on 6th November 1996.

The Youngest VCs – George Peachment VC

R.11941 Private George Peachment, 2nd Battalion, The King's Royal Rifle Corps.

For most conspicuous bravery near Hulloch on 25th September, 1915.

During very heavy fighting, when our front line was compelled to retire in order to re-organise, Private Peachment, seeing his Company Commander, Captain Dubs, lying wounded, crawled to assist him. The enemy's fire was intense, but, though there was a shell hole quite close, in which a few men had taken cover, Private Peachment never thought of saving himself. He knelt in the open by his Officer and tried to help him, but while doing this he was first wounded by a bomb and a minute later mortally wounded by a rifle bullet. He was one of the youngest men in his battalion and gave this splendid example of courage and self-sacrifice.

The Youngest VCs – **George Peachment VC**



The Youngest VCs – George Peachment VC



George Peachment VC

1915, France, King's Royal Rifle Corps

At Loos, although hit himself, 18-year-old Private Peachment stopped to help his more badly wounded officer and stayed out in the open to tend his wounds. He was seriously injured by a bomb and soon after shot dead. The officer lived.

Letter to Peachment's mother saying he had been killed in action

Lord Ashcroft Collection



Haine VC MC Group Auction



The Victoria Cross, Military Cross and campaign medals awarded to Lieutenant Colonel Reginald Haine, 1st Bn, Honourable Artillery Company, have been sold at auction by Spink of London. The sale took place on Thursday, 27th November 2025. The sale estimate was between £240,000 and £280,000. The sale hammer price realised £260,000. The identity of the purchaser has not been revealed.

The Reginald Haine VC medal group had previously been on loan to the Imperial War Museum.

Australian VCs for Sale



Australian VCs for Sale



At a recent auction at Noble Numismatics in Sydney, Australia, two Victoria Crosses were offered for sale. The Victoria Cross of World War I recipient, Robert Matthew Beatham VC (which had been very recently sold at auction in August 2025, was on sale with an estimate of \$AUS500,000. The medal did not meet the reserve at the latest auction and went unsold.

Also on the auction list, was the Victoria Cross medal group of Daniel Mark Keighran VC. It was the second time in the last two years the group had been offered for sale. Noble Numismatics had offered the medals previously for sale in November 2024 without success, and again, with an estimate of \$AUS800,000 they again failed to meet reserve and remained unsold.

New Name for DLI Museum

The Durham Light Infantry Museum in Aykley Heads, Durham is set to reopen in 2026, with a new name – “Light”. Durham County Council said the name was inspired by the county's associations with light, including Durham University's involvement in the James Webb Space Telescope.

The DLI Museum opened in 1968 and told the story of the Durham Light Infantry, with particular emphasis on World Wars One and Two.

It shut in 2016 due to cost-cutting measures but plans to refurbish it were approved in March last year. Some parts of the collection were temporarily displayed in the Bill Bryson Library in Palace Green, Durham, and later at The Story, in Mount Oswald, Durham. The plan is to return the collection to the new “Light” next year.

The local authority said the building had been stripped down to its basic structure and almost completely rebuilt. It will be a multipurpose cultural space with links to its military history retained through a DLI gallery telling the regiment's story through objects, documents and film footage, it said. The venue's new name was also inspired by the creation of Bede's lunar calendar in the region 1,300 years ago.

