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Behind the Valour:
A technical, administrative and bureaucratic analysis of the Victoria Cross and the AIF on the Western Front, 1916-1918

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Student Number 3183439

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

University of New South Wales
Australian Defence Force Academy
22 October 2010

Originality Statement

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the award of any of any other degree or diploma at UNSW or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked at UNSW or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, except to the extent that assistance from others in the project's design and conception or in style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.

Victoria D'Alton
UNSW Student Number 3183439

22 October 2010

For my friend,
Lieutenant Paul Kimlin, RAN
O156024
1 January 1976 – 2 April 2005

‘For many are called, but few *are* chosen.’
Matthew 22:14

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the *how* and *why* the Victoria Cross came to be awarded to 53 soldiers of the AIF on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918. It examines the technical, administrative and bureaucratic history of Australia's relationship with the Victoria Cross in this significant time and place. It is a history *Behind the Valour*. For the most part, existing literature involving Australians and the Victoria Cross on the Western Front celebrates or commemorates the acts that resulted in the decoration being awarded. This thesis adds quite a different historiographical dimension.

The thesis first discusses the significance of the Victoria Cross, from its origins up to the beginning of First World War and goes on to provide context and detail concerning Victoria Crosses awarded to soldiers of the AIF while in action on the Western Front. It explains the protocols and procedures required for the Victoria Cross to be awarded. The process followed a strict chain of military command from the field to the War Office in London, and finally the King.

The central arguments of the thesis concern the influences and contentious issues that affected the award of the Victoria Cross. These included, for example, changes made to recommendations, the interpretation of what constituted 'valour', and increased opportunities for some to be recognised over others. Perhaps of most significance was the release of a directive to British and Dominion armies on the Western Front on 29 August 1916. This directive resulted in substantial changes to the way in which the Victoria Cross recognised valour for the rest of the war. The thesis also examines a number of issues relating to the Victoria Cross on the home front in Australia. It argues, for example, that the government used the Victoria Cross and AIF recipients to assist recruitment drives. So too, both sides attempted to exploit the award during the divisive conscription campaigns of 1916 and 1917. The Victoria Cross's relationship with the press, and the media's considerable efforts in portraying the Victoria Cross and its respective recipients as symbols of success is also examined.

Until now, there has been no substantial exploration of important technical, bureaucratic and administrative relationships that existed between the Victoria Cross, the AIF and the Western Front. This thesis is aimed at filling this historiographical hole.

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22/10/10

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Abbreviations

AAMC	Australian Army Medical Corps.
Adjutant	Administrative and operational assistant to the commanding officer.
AF	Army Form.
AIF	Australian Imperial Force.
A & NZ	Australian and New Zealand.
Anzac	Originally the acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, later relating to troops of both nations, or after the First World War Australian soldiers generally.
Aus Imp Force	Australian Imperial Force.
Aus MG Corps	Australian Machine Gun Corps.
AWL	Absent Without Leave.
AWM	Australian War Memorial.
Bar	When a gallantry award was won more than once by the same person, he receives a ‘bar’ instead of another of the same decoration. The bar is fitted to the ribbon of the original decoration.
Barrage	Concentrated artillery or machine gun fire.
Bde	An infantry brigade had a normal strength of about 3580 men across 4 battalions. Most Australian brigades operated with about 2500 men.
BEF	British Expeditionary Force.
Block	A defended barricade in a trench.
Bn	An Australian battalion had an infantry fighting strength of about 895 men but mostly operated at about 550 (often written as Btn as well).
Bty	A battery was either an artillery or trench mortar sub-unit, corresponding to a ‘company’ within an infantry unit. An artillery battery usually consisted of four guns together with personnel and equipment.
Capt	Captain.

CinC	Commander-in-Chief.
CO	Commanding officer.
Coy	An Australian infantry company had a nominal strength of about 227 men. In practice by 1916 most operated with about 100-150 men. There were four companies per battalion.
Cpl	Corporal.
Creeping barrage	An artillery barrage that slowly moved forward to provide protection for the attacking troops advancing behind it.
CSM	Company Sergeant Major.
DAAG	Deputy Assistant Adjutant General.
DAA & QMG	Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quarter Master General.
DCIGS	Deputy Chief of Imperial General Staff.
DCM	Distinguished Conduct Medal (ranked second in order of precedence to the Victoria Cross for gallantry in the field performed by other ranks).
DMS	Deputy Military Secretary.
DSO	Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (awarded to officers for meritorious or distinguished leadership).
Duckboard	Wooden decking laid in trenches used to keep troops out of the mud.
18-pounders	The standard British Empire field artillery gun, firing an 18-pound shell.
EF	Expeditionary Force.
Enfilade fire	Gunfire received or delivered from a flank.
Fire step	A step in the side of the trench to raise a man to a firing position.
Fritz	An ‘affectionate’ name for a German.
Frontal fire	Gunfire received or taken from the front.
Furlough	Leave to allow a soldier to travel.

Gas	Refers to various types of poisonous gases used by both sides during the war.
GC	The George Cross was instituted in 1940 to recognise outstanding bravery not covered in operational gallantry awards.
GHQ	General Headquarters.
GOC	General Officer Commanding.
HQ	Headquarters.
HMAS	His Majesty's Australian Ship.
HMAT	His Majesty's Australian Transport.
Hun	A derogatory name for a German.
Infy	Infantry.
IWM	Imperial War Museum.
Jerry	An 'affectionate' name for a German.
Kamerad	German word, meaning 'comrade', used when wishing to surrender.
KIA	Killed in action.
L/Cpl	Lance Corporal.
Lewis gun	An American-designed lightweight .303 calibre machine gun with a notional fire rate of 550 rounds per minute.
Lt	Lieutenant (Second Lieutenant referred to as 2nd Lt).
Lt Col	Lieutenant Colonel.
Maj	Major.
MEF	Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.
MC	The Military Cross was a gallantry award issued to junior army officers and warrant officers.
MG	Machine gun.

MIA	Missing in action.
MiD	Mention In Despatches. A dispatch was a senior commander's official report detailing the conduct of operations. If a person's name was mentioned in the report due to gallantry of some other noteworthy action, he was entitled to wear a bronze oak leaf on the campaign ribbon. This was available posthumously.
Mills bomb	British issue hand grenade.
MM	The Military Medal was a gallantry award issued to other ranks.
MS	Military Secretary.
NAA	National Archives of Australia.
NCO	Non Commissioned Officer.
NLA	National Library of Australia.
No Man's Land	The dangerous area of land between two opposing trench lines.
NZEF	New Zealand Expeditionary Force.
OC	Officer Commanding a sub-unit.
OR	Other Ranks.
OG1	Old German trench line 1.
OG2	Old German trench line 2.
OIC	Officer in Charge.
OP	Observation post.
OR	Other rank, meaning all non-commissioned ranks.
Parapet	Built up front of edge of a trench, which protected men (either a mound of dirt or sandbags).
Pill box	Concrete machine gun emplacement.
Pioneers	Infantry troops trained and equipped to perform light engineering tasks.

Platoon	A platoon had an infantry fighting strength of about 60 men but mostly operated at about 25-40 men. This detachment was typically under the command of a lieutenant and sergeant.
Pte	Private.
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (often called Shell Shock in WWI).
QM	Quartermaster.
RAP	Regimental Aid Post.
Respirator	A gas mask used to prevent inhaling poisonous fumes during a gas attack.
RSL	Originally known as the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia, or RS&SILA, the League changed its name to the Returned Sailor's, Soldier's and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia or RS&SAILA, in 1940. In 1965 the name was again changed to the Returned Services League of Australia, and in 1990, to the Returned and Services League of Australia.
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major (senior soldier in the unit).
Salient	French military term meaning prominent or projecting part of the line often protruding (bulging) out from the main front line.
SA Inf	South African Infantry.
Sap	Trench dug towards the enemy from which more trenches radiate out each side.
SBs	Stretcher bearers.
Scabbard	Metal sheath for a bayonet.
Section	An Australian section had an infantry fighting strength of about 16 men but mostly operated with 8-12 men. This detachment was typically under the command of a corporal.
Sgt	Sergeant (listed in *London Gazette* as Sjt.).
Sigs	Members of the Signals Corps who usually operated field telephones on the Western Front.
SM	Sergeant Major.

Start line	The line from where an attack commences.
‘Stunt’	Action or attack on the enemy.
TL/Cpl	Temporary Lance Corporal.
T/Cpl	Temporary Corporal.
TM	A trench mortar was a short stubby weapon in the shape of a tube that fired a mortar bomb into the air at an angle greater than 45 degrees.
TMB	Trench Mortar Battery.
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, UK.
T/Sgt	Temporary Sergeant.
UK	United Kingdom.
VC	Victoria Cross.

Introduction – 'For Valour'

The Victoria Cross has attracted the attention of many writers, politicians and military enthusiasts since its inception in 1856 during the Crimean War.[1] From 1856 to 2008 the decoration has been awarded to 1354 men who have fought in conflicts on behalf of Britain and its Dominions. Approximately half of these were awarded on the battlefields of the First World War where it was the highest decoration for gallantry available to soldiers of the British Empire.[2] In all but six cases the Victoria Cross has been awarded during times of war.[3] The original Victoria Cross was an inexpensive bronze cross patté that was taken from the cascabels of two cannons that were captured from the Russians in the siege at Sebastopol in the Crimea in 1854. The cross was treated chemically to give it a dark brown patina and was fitted to a suspender bar decorated with two sprays of laurel leaves and connected to a red ribbon by a 'V' which was linked to the top of the Cross. In the event of a second Victoria Cross, or 'bar' being awarded to a recipient, a second suspender bar would be issued.[4]

The medal inscription for the Victoria Cross stipulates *For Valour*; but what is valour? Is it just another word for fearlessness, heroism, courage, and bravery? Such language certainly strikes images of the 'deeds' for which the Victoria Cross was awarded. There is, of course, no objective or scientific method of measuring such 'valour' and this thesis does not attempt to create one. There are, however, a host of other questions regarding the Victoria Cross that require answers, and many have no direct relationship to an individual act of battlefield heroism. It is towards these questions that this dissertation is aimed.

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[1] The Victoria Cross is referred to as VC intermittently throughout this thesis when it is discussed from another author or historical figure's viewpoint.

[2] Harper, G. & Richardson, C., *In the Face of the Enemy, The Complete History of the Victoria Cross and New Zealand*, Harper Collins, Auckland, 2006, p. 27.

[3] One was awarded to Private Timothy O'Hea who extinguished an ammunition car fire at a train station in Canada on 9 June 1866. The other five were awarded together to British men of 2 Battalion, 24 Regiment, for rescuing stranded companions in the Bay of Bengal on 7 May 1867; Arthur, M., *Symbol of Courage, A History of the Victoria Cross*, Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 2004, p. xiii; Crook, M.J., *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross, A Study in Administrative History*, Midas Books, Kent, 1975, p. 144; & Smith, M.C., *Awarded for Valour, A History of the Victoria Cross and the Evolution of British Heroism*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008, pp. 71-72.

[4] Arthur, *Symbol of Courage*, p. xi; While the Victoria Cross ribbon looks maroon, it is nonetheless officially referred to as red.

This thesis investigates the technical, administrative and bureaucratic history of the Victoria Cross and its relationship with the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918. It is a contextual study of how and why 53 Australian soldiers were awarded the decoration in this specific time and place. Unlike the majority of existing historiography on the Victoria Cross, the purpose of this thesis is *not* to retell the stories of heroic deeds performed by recipients, but to explain the complexities of the processes and procedures behind the award on the Western Front, and its relationship to the AIF for this period. It will, among other issues, examine how the evolution of the Victoria Cross on the Western Front affected soldiers of the AIF in France and Belgium upon their return to Australia. As such, the thesis aims not only to provide a better understanding of the history of the Victoria Cross in a 'battlefield' context, but also to investigate the wide ranging implications of the award on the home front in Australia.

Before the First World War of 1914 – 1918 Australians were well aware of the Victoria Cross and the prestige associated with the medal. A number of books and newspaper accounts concerning the Victoria Cross (and its use in various commercial trademarks) had been in circulation since the Second Boer War in South Africa (1899 to 1902) when the first Victoria Cross was awarded to an Australian following an engagement in 1900. The recipient in this case was Captain Neville Howse, a medical officer of the New South Wales Medical Corps. To this date Howse remains the only Australian member of any medical unit to be awarded the decoration. Before a shot was fired in 1914, many Australians already looked upon the Victoria Cross as the acme of individual military achievement.

Australia's involvement in the First World War began on 4 August 1914 following Germany's disregard of the British ultimatum to withdraw from Belgium. Britain had declared war on Germany, and subsequently, Australia was also at war. The Australian Government had already indicated to Britain and the world that the 'mother country' could rely on its military support.[5] With Australia's militiamen forbidden to serve overseas by the *Defence Act* (1903), an Australian Imperial Force (AIF) was quickly formed in order to send troops to assist Britain in

[5] Palazzo, A., *The Australian Army. A History of its Organisation 1901-2001,* Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001, p. 62.

Europe as soon as possible. Many published investigations of the first AIF formations note the the enthusiasm and excellent physical condition of the troops – while conceding a lack of basic military experience. In fact, it was this inexperience which led to the 1st Division, the first AIF formation to be formed, absorbing most of the effective permanent staff officers available in Australia. It was, out of desperation, decided to recall retired officers to help lead these inexperienced men into their first significant operation on Gallipoli.[6]

On 10 August 1914, less than a week after war was declared, the British government gratefully accepted the Australian offer to provide what was initially an expeditionary force of 20,000 men, and also the total control of the Royal Australian Navy.[7] The government was overwhelmed with the rush of volunteers and soon increased its offer to 50,000 men.[8] The AIF was placed at the disposal of the War Office in London in accordance with pre-war discussions of the Imperial General Staff and the Australian government acceptance of British strategic and operational control of its expeditionary force. The Australian government reserved only the right to administer, pay, clothe, equip and feed its men while they served overseas.[9] At this stage on the 'home front' in Australia there was little sense of the challenges that would face the fledging force. Indeed, as the new AIF officers and soldiers were some of the best (in relative terms) paid Allied troops of the war, they were in some quarters disparagingly labelled as the 'six-bob-a-day-tourists'.[10] Importantly, throughout the war, as part of a Dominion force under British control, AIF troops were eligible for all British decorations including the Victoria Cross. By the time the war was over in November 1918 more than 324,000 Australians had served with the AIF in overseas combat and support roles.

Before the AIF was sent to the Western Front in 1916 it participated in a failed Allied invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey from April to December 1915. During this campaign nine Victoria Crosses were awarded to AIF soldiers; the first to Lance Corporal Albert

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[6] Pearce, G.F., *Carpenter to Cabinet*, Hutchison & Co., London, 1951, p. 121.
[7] Bean, C.E.W., *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume 1, The Story of Anzac*, 3rd Edition, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1942, p. 32.
[8] Andrews, E.M., *The Anzac Illusion Anglo-Australian Relations during World War I*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p. 47.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] Robson, L.L., *Australia and the Great War 1914-1918*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1970, p. 6.

Jacka (14th Battalion) on 19-20 May 1915 for actions at Courtney's Post.[11] After Gallipoli, the five infantry divisions of the AIF were sent to fight on the Western Front from June 1916 to October 1918. This front stretched from the Belgian coast all the way through the north of France to the border with Switzerland in the east. The Australians, however, were mostly deployed in the area north-west of Paris in France and south-west of Brussels in Belgium. This area included the sectors around the Somme, Aisne and Pas de Calais in France, and the Belgian region of West-Vlaanderen. It was in this portion of the front that 53 soldiers of the AIF were awarded a Victoria Cross as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: **AIF troops awarded a VC on the Western Front, June 1916 – October 1918.**

No.	*Name*	*Unit*	*Date of VC*	*Place of VC*	*Posthumous*
1	Pte John Jackson (William)	17 Bn, 5 Bde, 2 Div	25-26 June 1916	SE of Bois Grenier, near Armentières, France	No
2	Pte John Leak	9 Bn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	23 July 1916	Pozières, France	No
3	Lt Arthur Blackburn	10 Bn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	23 July 1916	Pozières, France	No
4	Pte Thomas Cooke	8 Bn, 2 Bde, 1 Div	24-25 July 1916	Pozières, France	Yes
5	Sgt Claud Castleton	5 Machine Gun Coy, 5 Bde, 2 Div	28 July 1916	Pozières, France	Yes
6	Pte Martin O'Meara	16 Bn, 4 Bde, 4 Div	9-12 August 1916	Pozières, France	No
7	Capt Henry Murray	13 Bn, 4 Bde, 4 Div	4-5 February 1917	Stormy Trench, NE of Gueudecourt, France	No
8	Capt Percy Cherry	26 Bn, 7 Bde, 2 Div	26 March 1917	Lagnicourt, France	Yes
9	Pte Jørgen Jensen	50 Bn, 13 Bde, 4 Div	2 April 1917	Noreuil, France	No
10	Capt Ernest Newland	12 Bn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	8 & 15 April 1917	West of Boursies & Lagnicourt, France	No
12	Pte Thomas Kenny (Bede)	2 Bn, 1 Bde, 1 Div	9 April 1917	Hermiers, France	No
13	Lt Charles Pope	11 Bn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	15 April 1917	Louverval, France	Yes
14	Cpl George Howell	1 Bn, 1 Bde, 1 Div	6 May 1917	Bullecourt, France	No
15	Lt Rupert Moon	58 Bn, 15 Bde, 5 Div	12 May 1917	Near Bullecourt, France	No

[11] The other eight Victoria Crosses awarded to AIF soldiers in this war were for actions at Gallipoli. They include Lance Corporal Leonard Keysor (1 Battalion, 7-8 August 1915); Lieutenant William Symons (7 Battalion, 8-9 August 1915); Private John Hamilton (3 Battalion, 9 August 1915); Lieutenant Frederick Tubb (7 Battalion, 9 August 1915); Corporal Alexander Burton (7 Battalion, 9 August 1915); Corporal William Dunstan (7 Battalion, 9 August 1915); Captain Alfred Shout (1 Battalion, 9 August 1915) & Second Lieutenant Hugo Throssell (10 Light Horse Regiment, 29-30 August 1915).

No.	*Name*	*Unit*	*Date of VC*	*Place of VC*	*Posthumous*
16	Pte John Carroll	33 Bn, 9 Bde, 3 Div	7-11 June 1917	St Yves (Messines Ridge), Belgium	No
17	Capt Robert Grieve	37 Bn, 10 Bde, 3 Div	7 June 1917	Messines, Belgium	No
18	2nd Lt Frederick Birks	6 Bn, 2 Bde, 1 Div	20 September 1917	Glencorse Wood, east of Ypres, Belgium	Yes
19	Pte Reginald Inwood (Roy)	10 Bn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	20-21 September 1917	Polygon Wood, east of Ypres, Belgium	No
20	Sgt John Dwyer	4 Machine Gun Coy, 4 Bde, 4 Div	26 September 1917	Zonnebeke, Belgium	No
21	Pte Patrick Bugden	31 Bn, 8 Bde, 5 Div	4 October 1917	Polygon Wood, east of Ypres, Belgium	Yes
22	Sgt Lewis McGee	40 Bn, 10 Bde, 3 Div	21 October 1917	East of Ypres, Belgium	Yes
23	L/Cpl Walter Peeler	3 Pioneer Bn, 3 Div	4 October 1917	Broodseinde, east of Ypres, Belgium	No
24	Capt Clarence Jeffries	34 Bn, 9 Bde, 3 Div	12 October 1917	Passchendaele, Belgium	Yes
25	Sgt Stanley McDougall	47 Bn, 12 Bde, 4 Div	28 March 1918	Dernancourt, France	No
26	Lt Percy Storkey	19 Bn, 5 Bde, 2 Div	7 April 1918	Hangard Wood, France	No
27	Lt Clifford Sadlier	51 Bn, 13 Bde, 4 Div	24-25 April 1918	Villers-Bretonneux, France	No
28	Sgt William Ruthven	22 Bn, 6 Bde, 2 Div	19 May 1918	Ville-sur- Ancre, France	No
29	Cpl Phillip Davey	10 Bn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	28 June 1918	Merris, France	No
30	TL/Cpl Thomas Axford	16 Bn, 4 Bde, 4 Div	4 July 1918	Vaire & Hamel Wood, France	No
31	Pte Henry Dalziel	15 Bn, 4 Bde, 4 Div	4 July 1918	Hamel Wood, France	No
32	Cpl Walter Brown	20 Bn, 5 Bde, 2 Div	6 July 1918	Villers-Bretonneux, France	No
33	Lt Albert Borella	26 Bn, 7 Bde, 2 Div	17-18 July 1918	Villers-Bretonneux, France	No
34	Lt Alfred Gaby	28 Bn, 7 Bde, 2 Div	8 August 1918	East of Villers-Bretonneux, France	No
35	Pte Robert Beatham	8 Bn, 2 Bde, 1 Div	9 August 1918	Rosières, east of Amiens, France	Yes
36	Sgt Percy Statton	40 Bn, 10 Bde, 3 Div	12 August 1918	Near Proyart, France	No
37	Lt William Joynt	8 Bn, 2 Bde, 1 Div	23 August 1918	Herleville Wood, near Chuignes, France	No

No.	*Name*	*Unit*	*Date of VC*	*Place of VC*	*Posthumous*
38	Lt Lawrence McCarthy	16 Bn, 4 Bde, 4 Div	23 August 1918	Near Madame Wood, east of Vermandovillers, France	No
39	L/Cpl Bernard Gordon	41 Bn, 11 Bde, 3 Div	27 August 1918	Fargny Wood, east of Bray, France	No
40	Pte George Cartwright	33 Bn, 9 Bde, 3 Div	31 August 1918	Road Wood, SW Bouchavesnes, near Péronne, France	No
41	Pte Robert Mactier	23 Bn, 6 Bde, 2 Div	1 September 1918	Mont St Quentin, north of Péronne, France	Yes
42	Sgt Albert Lowerson	21 Bn, 6 Bde, 2 Div	1 September 1918	Mont St Quentin, north of Péronne, France	No
43	Lt Edgar Towner	2nd Machine Gun Bn, 2 Div	1 September 1918	Mont St Quentin, north of Péronne, France	No
44	Pte William Currey	53 Bn, 14 Bde, 5 Div	1 September 1918	Near Péronne, France	No
45	Cpl Arthur Hall	54 Bn, 14 Bde, 5 Div	1-2 September 1918	Péronne, France	No
46	T/Cpl Alexander Buckley	54 Bn, 14 Bde, 5 Div	1 September 1918	Péronne, France	Yes
47	T/Cpl Lawrence Weathers	43 Bn, 11 Bde, 3 Div	2 September 1918	North of Péronne, France	No
48	Sgt Maurice Buckley (alias Gerald Sexton)	13 Bn, 4 Bde, 4 Div	18 September 1918	Near Le Verguier, NW of St Quentin, France	No
49	Pte James Wood	48 Bn, 12 Bde, 4 Div	18 September 1918	Near Le Verguier, NW of St Quentin, France	No
50	Maj Blair Wark	32 Bn, 8 Bde, 5 Div	29 September – 1 October 1918	Bellicourt to Joncourt, France	No
51	Pte Edward Ryan (John)	55 Bn, 14 Bde, 5 Div	30 September 1918	Near Bellicourt, France	No
52	Lt Joseph Maxwell	18 Bn, 5 Bde, 2 Div	3 October 1918	Beaurevoir Line, near Estrées, France	No
53	Lt George Ingram	24 Bn, 6 Bde, 2 Div	5 October 1918	Montbrehain, east of Péronne, France	No

Source: Staunton, A., *Victoria Cross, Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2005, pp. 51-196.

The AIF's service on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918 has been chosen as the focus of this thesis in order to restrict the timeframe and geographic area studied, and so provide the context in which genuine comparisons can be made. If, for example, a comparative study of Victoria Crosses awarded to Australians were attempted covering the Boer War to the Second World War, it would incorporate too many variables for effective analysis on the scale of this type of thesis. Two main concerns would exist. First, the context of these conflicts varied greatly, along with attitudes involving gallantry awards in general and the Victoria Cross in particular. Second, the evolution of the Warrant and conventions surrounding the Victoria Cross itself from 1899 to 1945 was so considerable that a Victoria Cross awarded to an Australian in the Boer War did not align with requirements for the same decoration awarded during the Second World War from 1939 to 1945. The time period and geographic location chosen, therefore, on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918, allows for an assessment of Victoria Cross awards where the battleground conditions, commanders and operational circumstances remained relatively static.[12]

Throughout this investigation runs the central question of *how* a Victoria Cross was awarded to a soldier of the AIF on the Western Front. In order to provide an answer the first two chapters provide background on the AIF, the Western Front and, of course, the Victoria Cross. Chapter One examines relevant AIF experiences in France and Belgium from 1916 to 1918 relating to the Victoria Cross and is included to provide necessary context. Chapter Two provides necessary foundation and background analysis about the Victoria Cross itself, its associated Royal Warrant, and the evolution of the award conditions from 1856 until 1916. With this groundwork laid, the next three chapters address questions covering the 'requirements' and 'circumstances' needed to be awarded the Victoria Cross, including an examination of the step-by-step procedure from an initial recommendation for the award to final conferral. These chapters also investigate the changes that were made to Victoria Cross guidelines from 1916 to 1918, and how such developments impacted on the AIF on the Western Front. Chapter Three specifically focuses on the *process* involved in awarding a Victoria Cross to soldiers of the AIF in the period under study while Chapter Four concentrates on a number of contentious issues

[12] As well as the 53 AIF soldiers awarded the Victoria Cross during actions from 1916 to 1918 on the Western Front, Gallipoli Victoria Cross recipient Albert Jacka will also be considered as an example in this thesis due to his significant and famous service on the Western Front, which, according to a number of writers (as outlined in this thesis), may well have merited the award of a Bar to his VC.

surrounding the Victoria Cross – particularly where the theory and practice of awarding the decoration did not necessarily always match. Chapter Five focuses specifically on the significant changes to Victoria Cross eligibility that resulted as a consequence of a very important 29 August 1916 directive.

Chapters Six and Seven move away from the battlefield towards examinations of how Victoria Crosses awarded on the Western Front influenced civilians on the home front in Australia. Chapter Six concentrates on the use of the Victoria Cross and its AIF recipients for political purposes – such as the recruitment drive throughout the war and during the divisive conscription campaigns during 1916 and 1917. Chapter Seven then transitions from the political arena to investigate the relationship between the Victoria Cross (and its recipients), and the effects on the wider Australian society. The issue of media and other forms of exploitation will be specifically investigated.

Across all chapters a unifying question remains. To what degree was the Victoria Cross simply 'For Valour'? There is another history, one 'behind the valour', that affected the award of the decoration to soldiers of the AIF during fighting on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918. It involves such questions such as: how did the Victoria Cross come to represent the ultimate in bravery for Australians? Why did anomalies affecting the Victoria Cross lead to the issue of fairness being questioned? What deeds were considered braver than others? Why did the Victoria Cross generate so much enthusiasm and emotion on the home front?

Despite having captured the attention of a host of authors, from an Australian perspective the historiography of the Victoria Cross is still surprisingly deficient. No published account yet exists of the technical, administrative and bureaucratic aspects to be tackled by this thesis. This dissertation is, therefore, in many respects, an attempt to fill a significant historiographical gap.

In a wider sense, most existing publications on the Victoria Cross tend to retell the stories of heroic deeds performed by recipients.[13] Recent examples in this regard include Victoria Cross

[13] Harper, & Richardson, *In the Face of the Enemy*; Leyland, E., *For Valour – the Story of the Victoria Cross*, E. Ward, London 1960; Percival, J., *For Valour, The Victoria Cross, Courage in Action*, Thames Methuen, London,

collector Michael Ashcroft's 2007 publication *Victoria Cross Heroes* and Bryan Perrett's 2003 book *For Valour, Victoria Cross and Medal of Honor Battles.*[14] Often such works also contain detailed biographical accounts. A number of Australian Victoria Cross recipients have been the subject of dedicated biographies or autobiographies. In 1941 Lieutenant Joseph Maxwell VC wrote a semi-autobiographical description about the trials and tribulations of Australians at war in *Hell's Bells and Mademoiselles.*[15] In 1997 Ric Throssell dedicated much of his own autobiography to his father Hugo Throssell, VC, in *My Father's Son.*[16] Australian biographies about Victoria Cross recipients have experienced a surge in popularity in the last twenty years. Three have been written on the enigmatic character Albert Jacka VC. In 1989 Ian Grant's *Jacka VC Australia's Finest Fighting Soldier*, containing some remarkably incorrect dates and details, covered various aspects of Jacka's life and his perceptions of the higher command.[17] This was followed in 2007 by Robert Macklin's *Jacka VC*, and in the following year Michael Lawriwsky's interpretation of Jacka, written in the form of a chronicle.[18] Harry Murray, VC has also been the subject of two recent biographies published in 2003 and 2005, both describing his rise from a bushman through to his military experiences and beyond.[19] Most recently, in 2008 Andrew Faulkner wrote *Arthur Blackburn, VC*, in which he outlined Blackburn's service experiences across both the First and Second World Wars.[20] While some of these biographies offer limited conjecture as to why Victoria Crosses were not awarded to men like Major Percy Black or the infamous Jacka, while serving on the Western Front, they lack the analysis or technical detail upon which this thesis is based.

1985; & Quinlivan, P., *Forgotten Valour, The Story of Arthur Sullivan VC, Shy War Hero*, New Holland, Sydney, 2006.

[14] Ashcroft, M., *Victoria Cross Heroes*, Headline Review, London, 2007; & Perrett, B., *For Valour, Victoria Cross and Medal of Honor Battles*, Cassell Military Paperbacks, London, 2003.

[15] Maxwell, J., *Hell's Bells and Mademoiselles*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1941. Where a soldier of the AIF has been awarded the Victoria Cross, the initials VC will appear after his name, given its significance to this thesis. However, a soldier's other decorations will not be initialled or identified unless it is significant to the thesis.

[16] Throssell, R., *My Father's Son*, Mandarin Australia, Port Melbourne, 1997.

[17] Grant, I., *Jacka VC Australia's Finest Fighting Soldier*, Sun Books, South Melbourne, 1989.

[18] Macklin, R., *Jacka VC*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2006; & Lawriwsky, M, *Hard Jacka*, Mira, Chatswood, 2007.

[19] Franki, G. & Slatyer, C., *Mad Harry, Australia's Most Decorated Soldier*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 2003; & Hatwell, J., *No Ordinary Determination*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 2005. Hatwell's book is also a co-account about Percy Black, DSO, DCM, and Croix de Guerre.

[20] Faulkner, A., *Arthur Blackburn, VC*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 2008.

Besides biographies, the dominant trend in publications about the Victoria Cross has been to celebrate heroism and commemorate the man and his respective deed. There are general works written about Victoria Crosses awarded across the British Empire to British, Irish, South African, Canadian, Indian, New Zealand and Australian recipients. Such works include Sir John Smyth, VC's *Great Stories of the Victoria Cross,* published in 1977.[21] Similar details exist in Stephen Snelling and Gerald Gliddon's series *VCs of the First World War*, released from 1995 to 2005.[22] Another notable publication about the Victoria Cross is Max Arthur's 2004 *Symbol of Courage, A History of the Victoria Cross,* which includes a detailed discussion of the award's inception and subsequent Warrant changes.[23] General Sir Peter De la Billiere's 2004 work; *Supreme Courage, Heroic Stories from 150 years of the Victoria Cross* is, on the other hand, a practical discussion of the Victoria Cross, and particular circumstances that have and have not influenced the award since 1856.[24]

For specific published works on Australian Victoria Cross recipients Lionel Wigmore and Bruce Harding conducted research in the 1960s, on behalf of the Australian War Memorial, which resulted in the 1963 book, *They Dared Mightily.*[25] Following some updated editions of this work, in 2005 Anthony Staunton published the outstanding *Victoria Cross, Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought,* based on the original evidence of Wigmore and Harding along with substantial new material.[26] Some state specific details on Victoria Cross recipients have also been published. For example, in 1992 Major General G. L. Maitland published *Tales of Valour from the Royal New South Wales Regiment* which detailed biographical particulars, deeds and particular facts of Victoria Cross recipients from New South Wales.[27] Then, in 2006 a booklet was released by Liberal Senator for Tasmania, Guy Barnett, entitled: 'Our Heroes:

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[21] Smyth, J., *Great Stories of the Victoria Cross*, Arthur Barker, London, 1977.
[22] Snelling, S., *VCs of the First World War, Gallipoli*, Alan Sutton Publishing, Gloucestershire, 1995; Snelling, S., *VCs of the First World War, Passchendaele 1917*, Sutton Publishing, Phoenix Mill, 1998; Gliddon, G., *VCs of the Somme, A Biographical Portrait*, Gliddon Books, Norwich, 1991; Gliddon, G., *VCs of the First World War, The Final Days 1918*, Sutton Publishing, Phoenix Mill, 1997; Gliddon, G., *VCs of the First World War, Spring Offensive 1918*, Sutton Publishing, Phoenix Mill, 1997; & Gliddon, G. (ed.), *VCs Handbook, The Western Front 1914-1918*, Sutton Publishing, Phoenix Mill, 2005.
[23] Arthur, *Symbol of Courage*.
[24] De la Billière, P., *Supreme Courage, Heroic Stories from 150 years of the Victoria Cross*, Little, Brown, London, 2004.
[25] Wigmore, L. & Harding, B., *They Dared Mightily*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1963.
[26] Staunton, A., *Victoria Cross Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2005.
[27] Maitland, G.L., *Tales of Valour from the Royal New South Wales Regiment*, Playbill, Sydney, 1992.

Tasmania's Victoria Cross Recipients.'[28] Although such publications focus squarely on the Victoria Cross and its recipients, none delve into questions of how or why initial recommendations for a Victoria Cross resulted in the medal being awarded.

There have also been a number of publications concerning the Victoria Cross award itself.[29] The most resourceful account, used by many authors as a seminal source, is Michael Crook's 1975 *Evolution of the Victoria Cross, A Study in Administrative History.*[30] Crook was the first to investigate administrative aspects of the Victoria Cross. In his book Crook contended that previous 'histories have been on how the decoration was *won*,' and 'that the question the historian would wish to ask, namely, how does it come about that we have a decoration called the Victoria Cross at all, taking the form it does and awarded in the way that it has been?'[31] Then, in 2006 Hugh Halliday released the book *Valour Reconsidered* a Canadian analysis, examining some inquiries into the nature of the Victoria Cross and other bravery awards.[32] This publication has an interesting perspective in that it attempts to compare Canadian Victoria Crosses to those awarded to other Commonwealth forces. In 2008 Melvin Charles Smith's investigation entitled *Awarded for Valour, A History of the Victoria Cross and the Evolution of British Heroism* examined the evolution of the Victoria Cross and the concept of heroism. Of particular interest is his classification of the literature regarding the Victoria Cross into four categories: patriotism, biographies, regional studies, and war or service branch.[33]

It is into this last category of investigation that this thesis fits. It embraces recent analytical work on the decoration, and extends upon it. It is the first to attempt to explore the technical, administrative and bureaucratic history of the Victoria Cross as it applied to the 53 soldiers of the AIF on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918. It is not a celebration or commemoration of the extraordinary acts of those Australian soldiers who were awarded the decoration, but neither is its purpose to ignore or undermine the gallantry displayed by these

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[28] Barnett, G., *Our Heroes: Tasmania's Victoria Cross Recipients*, Liberal Senator for Tasmania, Office of G. Barnett, Launceston, 2006.
[29] Creagh, O., & Humphries, E.M. (eds.), *The Victoria Cross 1856-1920*, J. B. Hayward & Son, Suffolk, 1985; & Glanfield, J., *Bravest of the Brave The Story of the Victoria Cross*, Sutton Publishing, Phoenix Mill, 2005.
[30] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 1.
[32] Halliday, H.A., *Valour Reconsidered*, Robin Brass Studio, Toronto, 2006.
[33] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 2.

men, (or of those not awarded). Rather the objective is to analyse how and why Victoria Crosses were awarded to these individuals, and investigate the various influences and effects of the medal on individuals, the AIF, and to a limited degree Australian society in general during this period. Despite the importance of this issue to the history of the AIF in the First World War, this is a story that until now has not been told.

Research for this thesis is founded upon an extensive investigation of secondary sources on the Victoria Cross, the AIF on the Western Front, and biographies of key players such as Victoria Cross recipients, various military commanders, and Australian politicians. A range of official, government and army publications from Britain and Australia have also been consulted. Primary material from the National Archives of Australia, in both the Canberra and Melbourne reading rooms, has been examined.[34] Sources consulted at the Australian War Memorial included unit diaries, war records registry files, AIF administrative headquarters files, recommendation files for honours and awards from the First World War and C.E.W. Bean's official history records. Personal and private records were also investigated, at both the Australian War Memorial and the National Library of Australia, including those of Defence Minister Sir George Pearce, General Sir John Monash, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, General Talbot Hobbs, Prime Minister William (Billy) Hughes, General Sir Brudenell Cyril White, Sir Neville Howse, VC, Captain Clarence Jeffries, VC, and Mr. Keith Murdoch.

Archival and primary sources investigations in London were conducted in the Imperial War Museum, the National Archives, the National Army Museum and the British Library. The most significant archival evidence used in the United Kingdom was sourced from 'The Ranken-Lummis VC Collection' at the Imperial War Museum and various War Office files located at The National Archives (UK)[35]. This collection consists of important biographical notes on Victoria Cross recipients collected by Canon William Lummis dating from 1895 until his death in 1985 on all Victoria Cross recipients. These notes were added to by Mr F. V. Ranken until his death in 1944 while on active service. Combined, the notes form a massive compilation held by the Imperial War Museum in the Department of Documents files called the 'The Ranken-

[34] Of particular importance have been the National Archives of Australia (NAA) Series A2023, A2481, B883, B884, B1535, B2455, & MP367/1.
[35] The National Archives (TNA) key Series include WO 32 & WO 98.

Lummis VC Collection.' The collection includes files on every Victoria Cross recipient from the time the first was awarded in 1856, and is still added to today to include new recipients. Lummis was a prolific collector of odds and ends relating to recipients and often re-typed extracts from the Official Histories down to secondary sources about the Victoria Cross and recipients. His files always included the citations, newspaper clippings and often photos of the recipients.[36] A copy of part of Lummis' collection is also held at the National Army Museum in London.[37]

The most important singular primary source uncovered was the copy of a 29 August 1916 directive which had a significant influence over eligibility for the Victoria Cross for the rest of the war. This document exists in a number of Australian files but it appears it has only been assumed to have existed by non-Australian researchers. No proof or evidence of its existence has been found in Britain or any other Commonwealth country that fought for the British in the First World War. This is possibly because the document may have been lost in the 7 September 1940 London bombings that destroyed much of the British archival evidence from the First World War regarding recommendations for honours and awards resulting from actions on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918.

In all historical investigation context is crucial. The place to begin this dissertation therefore is not on the home front or with the evolution of the Victoria Cross Warrant – rather it is with the AIF on the Western Front.

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[36] Many files also contain sketches of the action that resulted in the award of the Victoria Cross, collectable cards of VC heroes such as those honoured in 'Gallagher's 6th Series minicards', and articles from encyclopaedic and biographical volumes such as a '*Who's Who in Australia*'. The collection also contains a popular comic *The Victor* which portrayed the VC stories of Walter Brown & Robert Mactier. Henry Dalziel's file even contains copies of songs he had written. Some files also contain information about facility and building dedications and 'openings' in honour of Matthew Currey, Clarence Jeffries, Albert Lowerson and William Joynt; Imperial War Museum (IWM), Department of Documents, The Ranken-Lummis VC Collection 24 (41).1 [Victoria Cross].

[37] National Army Museum (NAM), London, 1974-07-83-595.

Chapter 1 The VC, the AIF, and the Western Front, 1916 to 1918

This chapter investigates the physical relationship between the Victoria Cross and the AIF on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918. In particular, it will link battlefield events with the award of the Victoria Crosses to Australian troops in this period. As such, its purpose is to provide context and lay the foundations for subsequent explorations and investigations. Although the detail is extensive, it is a necessary background and scaffold.

First, it is important to note the origins of the AIF and its original links with the British honours and awards system. In 1901 the *Commonwealth Act* established Australia as an independent nation. Nevertheless, as a Dominion, it was still part of the 'British Empire' especially on an emotional and cultural level. Under international law Australia was still considered British territory.[38] One of the first Acts of the new Australian parliament to be passed concerned defence. The *Defence Act* of 1903 affirmed a citizen-soldier force as the foundation of the Australian Army.[39] It mandated that Commonwealth defence would consist of a volunteer part time militia force and a small permanent defence force limited to staff, training, and garrison duties. The Act specified that if Australia was to participate in imperial wars, it was to be based solely on volunteerism.[40] Following the passing of the initial *Defence Act* Australian military forces were arranged geographically via each state and territory, under a system of Military Districts. Within these Districts infantry formations were based on the establishment of brigades (see Table 2). This basic structural arrangement was also the template followed by the AIF brigades when they were raised and sent on to support the British Empire's war effort in 1914.

[38] Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion*, p. 7.
[39] Dennis, P., (et. al.), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 208.
[40] Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, p. 26.

Table 2: **Typical composition of a citizen-force infantry brigade in Australia, 1904.**

Headquarters	brigadier and brigade staff
Infantry	four battalions
Light Horse	one light horse squadron
Artillery	one field artillery brigade (two 18-pounder batteries and one heavy battery)
Engineers	one field company
Signallers	half company
Support	one infantry transport and supply column
Medical	one field ambulance

Source: Palazzo, A., *The Australian Army. A History of its Organisation 1901-2001,* Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001, p. 29.

As part of the Empire noted, Australian political and military leaders had already made it clear to Britain that it could rely on Australian naval and military support if the need arose.[41] On 10 August 1914 the British government accepted an offer to supply what was initially an expeditionary force of 20,000 men from Australia.[42] The government was overwhelmed with the rush of volunteers and quickly extended its offer to 50,000, largely inexperienced and untrained men. This would be the foundation of the AIF. Many, including Prime Minister Joseph Cook, began to publicly to discuss ideas of how best to assist Britain with the war effort.[43] Given the nature of Australian nationalism at the time, and the social context of the war, the rush to join the AIF was no real surprise. It is important to note that at the time of the First World War many Australians considered themselves British in origin, so fighting for the Empire seemed natural. In fact, the 1911 census revealed that 96 per cent of the Australian population considered themselves British and obviously held a sentimental and emotional attachment to Britain.[44] Interestingly, although the total Australian population was approximately 15 per cent British-

[41] Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, p. 62.
[42] Bean, *Volume 1, The Story of Anzac*, p. 32.
[43] Personal papers of Prime Minister Cook, 1916 diary, NAA, M3580/10.
[44] Robson, *Australia and the Great War 1914-1918*, p. 1.

born, the new AIF consisted of approximately 22 per cent British-born troops for the entirety of the war, with 27 per cent of the first contingent sent overseas claiming British ancestry.[45]

The AIF was further unique in that it remained a volunteer force throughout the course of the war, despite two attempts by Prime Minister Billy Hughes to introduce compulsory overseas military service through conscription referendums in 1916 and 1917 (the role of the Victoria Cross in this is discussed in Chapter Six).[46] Australians also baulked at some other British army traditions and regulations and were the only Allied force, for example, that did not ratify the death penalty for desertion.[47] Nonetheless, despite its political and national 'independence', for all practical purposes, the AIF was placed at the disposal of the War Office in London.[48]

Unsurprisingly, the administrative structures of the AIF overseas paralleled British systems with respect to record-keeping, finance, ordnance, personnel, quartermaster, and other matters of bureaucratic necessities for smooth and efficient maintenance of a military force.[49] Administrative matters for the AIF, when it was part of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF) at Gallipoli, were originally dealt with at the AIF Administrative Headquarters in Cairo. When all AIF infantry divisions moved to France in 1916 AIF Administrative Headquarters moved to 130 Horseferry Road in London. This facilitated easy interaction with the British War Office as well as communication with the Australian Department of Defence in Melbourne. Importantly, although the AIF Administrative Headquarters was privy to War Office information about recommendations for honours and awards, in no way was it able to influence decisions made based on those recommendations.

By the time AIF troops began arriving on the Western Front in April 1916 the two infantry divisions that had fought on Gallipoli had expanded to five; all of which went on to experience combat on the Western Front. Several of the veteran 'Gallipoli' battalions were split to give the new divisions bound for France a leveling of experienced soldiers. Two of the new divisions, the 4th and 5th Divisions, were formed from new recruits training in Egypt, early in

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[45] Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion*, p. 44.
[46] The other exception was the Irish unit which were also solely made up of volunteers.
[47] Thomson, A., *Anzac Memories, Living with the Legend*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994, p. 25.
[48] Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion*, p. 47.
[49] Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, p. 67.

1916, while the 3rd Division was raised in Australia from entirely fresh recruits. In accordance with British military establishment structure, by April 1916 each AIF division had three brigades, each comprising four battalions. In addition to infantry units, each brigade also held headquarters, machine gun, artillery, engineers and signals troops, as well as various medical and support units.[50] At full strength each battalion consisted of just over 1000 men broken up into Headquarters, A, B, C and D Companies. These were again split into platoons who were further divided into sections. This structure was similar across all British and Dominion forces.

The command arrangements superimposed on these structures had a direct influence on how Victoria Crosses came to be awarded to Australian soldiers on the Western Front. In fact, various issues surrounding leadership as it applied to, and within, the AIF were fundamental to who was awarded Victoria Crosses, when, and why the decoration was bestowed. These issues are explored fully in Chapter Four. At the top level the AIF on the Western Front was led by British commanders. In fact, by the time the Somme campaign began in July 1916 the Australian divisions were fully embedded in the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in France and were not considered an independent operational force. By this stage the BEF had expanded to five Armies under the control of the Commander-in-Chief General Sir Douglas Haig. Lieutenant General Sir Charles Munro commanded the First Army; Lieutenant General Hebert Plumer commanded the Second Army; Lieutenant General Edmund Allenby the Third Army; Lieutenant General Sir Henry Rawlinson the Fourth Army; and the Fifth Army was commanded by Lieutenant General Sir Hubert Gough. Gough's command was initially known as the Reserve Army.[51]

Historiographical consensus generally agrees that the BEF, and the AIF within it, was not well served by its most senior commanders in the early and mid stages of the war in France. Haig, for example, has been condemned for 'never see[ing] the ground on which his greatest battles were fought, either before, during or after the war.'[52] So too, it has been claimed by many

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[50] *Australian Imperial Force, Statistics of Casualties*, Records Section, AIF Headquarters, London, 1919.
[51] Prior, R. & Wilson, T., *Command on the Western Front, The Military Career of Sir Henry Rawlinson, 1914-18,* Blackwell, Oxford, 1992, p. 137; Haig was promoted to the rank of Field Marshal on 1 January 1917.
[52] Dennis, P., (et. al.), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2008, p. 88; Macklin, *Jacka VC*, p. 106; Pedersen, P., *Battleground Europe, Fromelles*, Leo Cooper, South Yorkshire, 2004, pp. 110-115; & Prior, R. & Wilson, T., *Passchendaele, The Untold Story*, Scribe Publications, Melbourne, 2003, pp. 48-49. For extensive critiques of Haig's performance see Arthur, G., *Lord Haig*, William Heinemann, London, 1928; Bond, B., & Cave, N., *Haig, A Reappraisal 70 Years On*, Leo Cooper, South

authors that poor leadership decisions by Gough resulted in costly and poorly planned AIF offensives at Fromelles, Pozières and Bullecourt in 1916 and 1917.[53] At the lowest level there is little doubt that the soldiers of the AIF, like those of the BEF, often felt the battlefield consequences of poor decisions made by senior British commanders.

Nonetheless, a British general was placed in charge of the AIF on the Western Front. Lieutenant General Sir William Birdwood took over command of the force after Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges, the initial Australian commander of the AIF, was mortally wounded by a sniper on 18 May 1915 at Gallipoli. As the General Officer Commanding (GOC), the AIF, Birdwood administered the entire force on behalf of the Australian government, with the assistance of his Australian Chief Staff Officer, Brigadier Sir Cyril Brudenell Bingham White. Birdwood's appointment was conferred on 14 September 1916 and backdated to 18 September 1915.[54] Birdwood's previous military experiences had been in the Indian Army. One of his first concerns when he took command of the AIF was the previous decision to split the force into two separate corps. Birdwood was in operational command of the 1st Anzac Corps which included the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Divisions, while the 3rd Division had joined the New Zealand Expeditionary Force as part of the 2nd Anzac Corps, under the operational command of Lieutenant General Sir Alexander Godley. It was possible Major General Sir John Monash, then in command of 3rd Division, believed the split of the AIF into two different corps had the direct potential to disadvantage the soldiers of 3rd Division in terms of the likelihood to be awarded the

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Yorkshire, 1999; Charteris, J., *Field-Marshal Earl Haig*, Cassell & Company, London, 1929; Charteris, J., *Haig*, Duckworth, London, 1933; Cooper, D., *Haig*, Faber & Faber, London, 1935; Davidson, J., *Haig, Master of the Field*, Peter Nevill, London, 1953; De Groot, G.J., *Douglas Haig, 1861-1928*, Unwin Hyman, London, 1988; Dewar, G.A.B., *Sir Douglas Haig's Command, December 19, 1915, to November 11, 1918*, Constable & Company, London, 1923; Duncan, G.S., *Douglas Haig as I Knew Him*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1966; Marshall-Cornwell, J., *Haig as Military Commander*, B.T. Batsford, London, 1973; Secrett, T., *Twenty-Five Years with Earl Haig*, Jarrolds, London, 1929; Sheffield, G., & Bourne, J. (eds.), *Douglas Haig, War Diaries and Letters, 1914-1918*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2005; Sixsmith, E.K.G., *Douglas Haig*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1976; & Terraine, J., *Douglas Haig, the educated soldier*, Hutchinson, London, 1963.

[53] For further reading on Gough's military command see Brown, M., *The Imperial War Museum Book of The Somme*, Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1996; Bryant, A., *Soldiering On, Being the Memoirs of General Sir Hubert Gough*, Arthur Barker, London, 1954; Prior, R., & Wilson, T., *The Somme*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2005; Sheffield, G. & McCartney, H., 'Hubert Gough', Beckett, I.F.W., & Corri, S.J. (eds.), *Haig's Generals*, Pen & Sword Military, South Yorkshire, 2006, pp. 75-96; Sheffield, G., & Todman, D., *Command and Control on the Western Front, the British Army's Experience, 1914-1918*, Spellmount, Staplehurst, 2004; Simpson, A., *Directing Operations, British Corps Command on the Western Front 1914-18*, Spellmount, Gloucestershire, 2006.

[54] Bean, C.E.W., *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume 2, The Story of Anzac*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1924, p. 418.

Victoria Cross. The impact of this command arrangement, and others, is explored in detail in Chapter Four.

For a range of domestic political, operational and structural reasons, by 1917 there was an increasing level of pressure placed on senior British leaders to have soldiers of the AIF amalgamated into a single formation on the Western Front, commanded by an Australian general. In particular, the Australian High Commissioner in London, Andrew Fisher, took up this argument forcefully urging such a structural and command rearrangement in a cablegram to Prime Minister Billy Hughes in July 1917. Fisher was specifically concerned that the 3rd Division had never properly assimilated within the rest of the AIF because they were separated and under Godley's command, a general Fisher had condemned as being 'anti-Australian.'[55] Furthermore, London-based Australian journalist Keith Murdoch suggested in an August 1917 letter to Hughes that, if the Australians were to fight together under an Australian command (rather than under Birdwood), they would perform all the better on the battlefield.[56] In fact, throughout the war Murdoch regularly pressured both politicians and military commanders through letters, visits and editorials, on this key issue.[57]

For his part, by mid-1917 Field Marshal Haig eventually agreed with the Australian push for an amalgamated force and suggested that 1 Australian Corps be formed, with Major General Sir John Monash as its commander. At that time Monash was in command of the 3rd Division. Haig thought highly of Monash and believed him to be a most thorough and capable commander.[58] For his part Godley opposed the concept of an all-Australian Corps because it meant he would no longer have the 3rd Australian Division under his command.[59] This idea also suited Fisher, who suspected there would be opposition to an all-Australian Corps under Birdwood. Fisher suggested to 'Billy' Hughes, the Australian Prime Minister, that an Australian should command the new corps, leaving Birdwood with limited administrative duties connected

[55] Cablegram, Fisher to Hughes, 13 July 1917. National Library of Australia (NLA), Series MS2823, Item 2/9.
[56] Letter, Murdoch to Hughes, 22 August 1917. NLA, MS2823, 2/8.
[57] See various correspondence contained within: NLA, MS2823.
[58] Blake, R., (ed.), *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig 1914-1919*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1952, p. 316.
[59] Despite this Godley had been commending Monash to Pearce as an outstanding officer since 1916; Connor, J., 'Senator George Pearce as Defence Minister', Thesis (PhD), University of New South Wales, 2004, pp. 137-138.

with the AIF.[60] Birdwood, however, wrote to Murdoch in October 1917 declaring how much he wanted to remain GOC of the AIF. The position certainly gave him prestige and patronage, and hope for future advantage following the war.[61]

In any case finally, in November 1917, the five Australian divisions were amalgamated into one army corps, which was to be staffed and commanded by Australians. Of course, the new Australian formations remained answerable to BEF headquarters and Haig.[62] On 12 May 1918 Birdwood took formal command of the British Fifth Army and as a consequence relinquished operational command of the AIF. Monash was promoted to Lieutenant General and was given the task of commanding 1 Australian Corps. Both Murdoch and Australia's official war correspondent, C.E.W. Bean, were delighted with the amalgamation of the Australians after so much agitation and political campaigning.[63]

Against the backdrop of such high command rearrangements, it is important to note that well before they reached the Western Front the rank and file of the AIF were well aware there was a stringent procedure in place for honours and awards; and that the Victoria Cross represented the epitome of individual military achievement. The men of the AIF were quite conscious of the possibility of being recognised for gallantry from the early days on the Gallipoli peninsula. Developments in that theatre made the men particularly and acutely aware of the Victoria Cross in particular. Lance Corporal Albert Jacka (14th Battalion) was the first Australian awarded the Victoria Cross in the First World War for his actions on 19 to 20 May at Gallipoli when he prevented the Turks from overrunning a trench at Courtney's Post. This decoration was soon well known by all soldiers of the AIF. In short order they became familiar with the 'specific requirements' needed to receive a Victoria Cross within the general process of receiving gallantry honours and awards.

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[60] Letter, Fisher to Hughes, undated. NLA, MS1538, 19/113/1/69.
[61] Letter, Birdwood to Murdoch, 26 October 1917. NLA, MS2823, 2/ 9.
[62] Thomson, *Anzac Memories,* p. 25.
[63] It is noteworthy that Murdoch had suggested in a letter to Hughes that the 'damage will be wilful and lasting if an Indian Army Officer remains supreme Commander to the end;' Memorandum, Murdoch to Hughes, undated. NLA, MS1538, 19/113/1/82-83. Although Bean wanted the Australians to be commanded by an Australian, his first choice was Brigadier General Sir Cyril B.B. White as he respected the man and believed Monash was not right for the job. This was despite the fact that White had no operational command experience given he was an administrative staff officer. Memorandum, Bean to Hughes, undated. NLA, MS1538, 19/113/1/86 & 89.

To soldiers of the AIF, such an awareness had been reinforced at Gallipoli by an 8 June 1915 memorandum written by Birdwood, commanding the Anzac Corps, to Lieutenant General J. Gordon Legge, commanding the Australian 1st Division. In the memorandum Birdwood assured his subordinate formations that good and gallant service was being done and in due course would be rewarded with decorations and medals. Through Birdwood, General Sir Ian Hamilton (who was in command of the MEF) had specifically requested submission of recommendations for the immediate awards of cases of individual gallantry. However, at the same time Hamilton warned that fewer awards would be available to those than would be recommended. Hamilton also suggested that future recommendations for bravery awards should be forwarded as soon as possible after the gallant act occurred.[64] This advice was relayed to soldiers of the AIF on Gallipoli. Before they reached France in 1916 they became acutely conscious of the possibility of being recognised for gallantry.

Even at this early stage the issue of gallantry awards was always on the agenda for the AIF. On 20 June 1915 Hamilton wrote to Birdwood identifying himself as the officer who held the power to give distinction and awards for exhibitions of outstanding military qualities or acts, and these were to be recognised as opportunities to improve the men's spirit. But, there were not many immediate awards available, and those that were successful would need to follow the required conditions and the recommendations be immediately sent on to General Headquarters (GHQ), Gallipoli. Hamilton went on to provide a general quota of what was expected, '2 DSOs and 2 MCs would suffice', while DCMs could be given out more freely, but not to the point that they would become common.[65] Victoria Crosses were not mentioned specifically as they were considered reserved for unique acts of supreme and conspicuous valour and were not overtly taken to be an appropriate part of any medal quota.

Further, in a letter dated 20 August 1915 from Anzac Corps Headquarters to the 1st Division, procedures were further clarified with regard to making recommendations for honours

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[64] Letter, Deputy Assistant Adjutant & Quarter Master General (DAA & QMG) ANZAC, 8 June 1915. Australian War Memorial (AWM) Series 25, Item 391/22.

[65] Letter, Hamilton to Birdwood, 20 June 1915, AWM 25, 391/22. A DSO is a Distinguished Service Order, MC is a Military Cross and DCM is a Distinguished Conduct Medal. In the First World War, the DSO and MC were restricted to Officers while the DCM was for other ranks.

and awards under two categories. The first related to conspicuous acts of gallantry deserving immediate recognition, and the second related to 'mentions-in-despatches.' Conspicuous acts included the awarding of the Victoria Cross, Distinguished Service Order, Military Cross or Distinguished Conduct Medal. Recommendations for these decorations needed to be sent immediately to respective corps headquarters with a report giving details of the action, including time and place with accompanying evidence, signed by any witnesses. It was considered imperative that these awards be seen as only for strictly outstanding actions and that they should be submitted sparingly.[66] This information was conveyed down the chain of command. In particular, recent operational recommendations (as a result of the assault on the Turkish Lone Pine trenches) were henceforth transmitted for immediate recognition and it was hoped further selections would be permissible.[67] Then, on 30 August, another memorandum was issued by GHQ at Gallipoli clarifying the proper procedures for which recommendations for Victoria Crosses were to follow. Specifically, it was noted that the recommendation should be reported at once and that it should state the place and date of the act of gallantry, and record the circumstances, supported by the sworn evidence of witnesses. This report was to be in duplicate and written on the correct form.[68] At this stage in the war the number of witness statements required was not mentioned. A much more detailed account of Victoria Cross procedures applicable to the AIF on the Western Front is outlined in Chapter Three. In any case, such developments were further proof that by the end of the Gallipoli campaign soldiers of the AIF knew about gallantry decorations in general, and the Victoria Cross in particular.

Leaving high command arrangements and existing knowledge of the Victoria Cross to one side, in order to appreciate the relationship between the AIF on the Western Front and the particular issue of the Victoria Cross, it is necessary to contextualise the battlefield actions during, and from which, the award was bestowed. As such, a summary of the circumstances during which all 53 soldiers of the AIF were awarded the Victoria Cross in France and Begium from 1916 to 1918 follows. Details of all recipients can be found at Appendix A. This is essential background for the analysis and diagrammatic representation of patterns involved in the award of

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[66] Letter, DAA & QMG ANZAC to GOC 1st Divison, 20 August 1915. AWM 25, 391/22.
[67] Memorandum, Lieutenant Colonel AA & QMG Headquarters (HQ) 1st Division to Brigade Commanding Officer (CO) & Divisional units, 22 August 1915. AWM 25, 391/22.
[68] Memorandum, Brigadier General R.A. Carruthers DA & QMC ANZAC to GOC 1st Division, 30 August 1930. AWM 25, 391/2.

Victoria Crosses to soldiers of the AIF on the Western Front discussed in Chapters Four and Five, in particular, and at other points throughout this thesis.

Armies of Britain and France began battling German forces on the Western Front from September 1914. Before the AIF had arrived in France to join the BEF, it had been fighting on the Gallipoli peninsula as part of the British MEF from April to December 1915. After the evacuation of the peninsula the AIF returned to its training grounds around Cairo in the deserts of Egypt. There the force regrouped, expanded and prepared to enter the European war. Initially the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Divisions, as part of Birdwood's 1st Anzac Corps, were sent to fight near the Belgian border, in Flanders, to gain familiarity with modern trench warfare – including the use of gas. Separated from the rest of the AIF divisions, the 3rd Division, part of Godley's 2nd Anzac Corps (alongside the New Zealanders), would not see action on the Western Front until December 1916.

It is clear that by the time the Australians arrived in France Allied commanders still hoped to crack the stalemate of opposing trenches by large-scale attacks to breach the German lines through which reserves could be sent, and mobility restored to the battlefield.[69] The Australians were repeatedly involved in such attacks, characterised by a massive artillery bombardment to destroy the enemy defences and barricades, followed by an infantry advance across No Man's Land. Despite this type of action repeatedly being halted by German machine gun and artillery fire, the Allies continued to use this basic ploy, for little gain, throughout 1916 and 1917.[70]

More specifically the 2nd Division arrived on the Western Front in April 1916, followed by the 1st Division, with the 4th Division arriving in June and the 5th Division in July.[71] Under the command of Major General Gordon Legge, 2nd Division was dispatched to front line trenches near the French town of Armentières, dubbed 'the nursery' by seasoned Allied formations.[72] The

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[69] Beaumont, J., 'Australia's War', Beaumont, J. (ed.), *Australia's War 1914-1918*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1995, p. 16.
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] Burness, P., *Fromelles and the Somme Australians on the Western Front – 1916*, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Canberra, 2006, p. 2.
[72] Burness, P., *Anzacs in France 1916*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 2006, p. 5.

area was relatively quiet with intermittent periods of fighting, shelling and raids. During one of these raids in June the first Western Front Victoria Cross was awarded to an AIF soldier. Private William Jackson of 17th Battalion was awarded the decoration for actions on the night of 25-26 June 1916. He was a member of a raiding party that entered German trenches. Following intense fighting Jackson's small group withdrew and suffered casualties from artillery fire. Jackson captured a prisoner and then returned to No Man's Land to assist in bringing in 13 wounded men. In helping one comrade with the safe return of another soldier Jackson's arm was blown off from an explosion. Despite this, he returned to his lines before emerging again to assist two more men back to safety.[73]

On 1 July 1916, General Haig set in motion the Somme offensive (known as the First Battle of the Somme) that lasted almost five months. The British Fourth Army, under the command of Rawlinson, was central to the main Somme offensive. As part of this operation Gough's Reserve Army, which at that stage contained the 1st, 2nd and 4th AIF Divisions, was deployed in the area near the Somme River, while the 5th AIF Division remained in French Flanders to the south near the village of Fromelles.[74] On 19 July 1916, under the command of Lieutenant General James McCay, the 5th Division and the British 61st Division attacked the Fromelles ridge in a diversionary operation to draw German attention away from the major Somme operations. The battle was disastrous for the fresh 5th Division, with 5,533 casualties suffered in one night. As an introduction to Western Front Fromelles shocked and depleted the AIF.[75] No Victoria Crosses were awarded to Australians as a result of this battle.

Meanwhile, 100km from Fromelles, on 23 July 1916 the 1st Division, under the command of Major General Harold Walker (a British officer), was sent to attack the German lines around the French village of Pozières.[76] What Haig described as a 'simple task' turned out to be a second devastating and particularly exhausting operation for the Australians.[77] Haig suggested a second unsuccessful attack, this time by 2nd Division, to take ground close to Pozières, as in his

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[73] *London Gazette* Iss. 29740, 9 September 1918, p. 2 of edition 8 September 1916, [p. 8870 of 1918]; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 49-52; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 51.
[74] Burness, *Fromelles and the Somme*, pp. 5-6; & Pedersen, *Battleground* Europe, *Fromelles*.
[75] Beaumont, 'Australia's War', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 17; & Pedersen, *Battleground Europe, Fromelles*, p. 106.
[76] Burness, *Fromelles and the Somme*, p. 5.
[77] Blake, *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig*, p. 155.

opinion the original attack had failed as a consequence of poor preparation. Haig believed the Australian divisional commanders were ignorant, conceited and could not be trusted to work unaided in planning.[78] Haig also suggested Australian losses were 'fairly small … about 1,000 for the whole 24 hours.'[79] This, however, was only for the first day of a long and drawn out six-week campaign.

In any case, by 25 July, following actions in the vicinity of Pozières, three soldiers from the 1st Division had been awarded Victoria Crosses. Private John Leak, of 9th Battalion, on the extreme right of the line at Pozières, was decorated for jumping out from his trench and running forward to throw three bombs into a German post. He then entered the post and bayoneted three German defenders.[80] Another Australian unit, the 10th Battalion, was called to assist the 9th Battalion during this action. As part of this operation Lieutenant Arthur Blackburn and fifty men of D Company were ordered to drive the Germans out of trenches to the front. Blackburn was awarded a Victoria Cross for personally leading four successive bombing parties and capturing close to 200 metres of trench, and destroying a German strong point.[81] Previously in reserve, the 8th Battalion were called forward on the morning of 25 July to attack and secure what remained of the Pozières village. During this attack Private Thomas Cooke, armed with a Lewis gun, was ordered to hold a dangerous post. He did this under heavy fire, despite his comrades falling. Cooke continued to hold the post until he too was also killed. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for this action.[82]

From 25 to 27 July 1916 the 2nd Division replaced the 1st Division, facing Pozières heights. There, 2nd Division encountered heavy machine gun fire and withdrew to safer grounds. A number of men were left wounded in No Man's Land and Sergeant Claud Castleton (5th

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[78] Blake, *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig*, pp. 155-156.
[79] *Ibid*., p. 156.
[80] *London Gazette*, Iss. 29740, p. 3 of edition 8 September 1916, [p. 8871 of 1918]; 1st AIF Dossier of Private John Leak, NAA, B2455; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 55.
[81] *London Gazette* Iss. 29740, 9 September 1918, p. 2 of edition 8 September 1916, [p. 8870 of 1918]; Blackburn, R.A., 'Blackburn, Arthur Seaforth,', Coulthard-Clark, C. (ed.), *The Diggers*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1993, pp. 82-84; Faulkner, *Arthur Blackburn, VC*, pp. 93-127; Kearney, R., *Silent Voices, The Story of the 10th Battalion AIF in Australia, Egypt, Gallipoli, France and Belgium during the Great War 1914-1918*, New Holland, Sydney, 2005, pp. 184-186; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 56.
[82] *London Gazette* Iss. 29740, 9 September 1918, p. 2 of edition 8 September 1916, [p. 8870 of 1918]; 1st AIF Dossier of Private Thomas Cooke, NAA, B2455; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 59.

Machine Gun Company) returned to rescue two of them. While attempting to bring in a third man he was shot and killed, and awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross.[83] Under the command of Major General Sir Herbert Cox (a British Indian officer), 4th Division subsequently replaced 2nd Division and by 6 August a series of attacks, still connected with the Somme offensive continued northward towards Mouquet Farm. During four days of heavy fighting from 9 to 12 August a stretcher bearer from the 16th Battalion was also rewarded with a Victoria Cross. Private Martin O'Meara repeatedly went out and rescued wounded men from between opposing trench lines despite intense enemy fire. He carried water and supplies, including ammunition and bombs, forward while returning with wounded men.[84]

By September 1916 the 1st, 2nd and 4th Divisions of the AIF were taken out of the line and sent back to Flanders to recover.[85] In October 1916 the 1st Anzac Corps, including the 1st, 2nd and 4th Divisions, returned to the Somme, this time accompanied by the 5th Division. In the closing phases of the offensive these formations were involved in more attacks near the villages of Gueudecourt and Flers in November. Meanwhile the 3rd Division, having missed the heaviest battles of 1916, continued training in Britain and had arrived in France by November 1916. By December 3rd Division was deployed near Houplines and Armentières.

By early February 1917, 1st Anzac Corps was ordered to adopt an offensive posture in its section to keep the Germans opposite under pressure. As part of the 4th Division, under the command of Major General William Holmes from January 1917, the 15th Battalion had seized Stormy Trench in February, north-east of Gueudecourt, but was forced to withdraw. Another 4th Division unit, the 13th Battalion, was then sent to attempt to recapture Stormy Trench on the night 4-5 February, and was successful. Captain Harry Murray was in charge of A Company and tasked with consolidating a captured portion of trench from German counter attacks. Murray and his men held the trench for over 24 hours, with Murray encouraging and leading his men in an

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[83] *London Gazette* Iss. 29765, 26 September 1916, p. 2, [p. 9418 of 1916]; 1st AIF Dossier of Sergeant Claud Castleton, NAA, B2455 & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 61. A copy of Castleton's VC recommendation is located in Appendix C.
[84] *London Gazette* Iss. 29740, 9 September 1918, p. 3 of edition 8 September 1916, [p. 8871 of 1918]; 1st AIF Dossier of Private Martin O'Meara, NAA, B2455; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 63.
[85] Burness, *Anzacs in France 1916*, p. 12.

exemplary way. He led bombing parties, bayonet charges, and carried wounded comrades to safety. Murray was awarded the Victoria Cross for such bravery and leadership under fire.[86]

By late February 1917 spirits in the AIF rose when the Germans began to withdraw some twenty or so kilometres to the newly developed and better prepared defensive zone, dubbed by the British the 'Hindenburg Line'.[87] The Australians followed the Germans back toward the line in late March, clearing small villages as they moved from Bapaume toward the new German defence line. During this advance the 7th Brigade (as part of 2nd Division, now under the command of Major General Sir Nevill Smyth, VC) was ordered to capture the village of Lagnicourt. Captain Percy Cherry, of 26th Battalion, was charged with entering the village itself.[88] Despite severe casualties among his company, Cherry took and held the village against heavy German counter attacks, and eventually was killed himself. For his bravery and leadership during this attack he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.[89]

A little over a month after the capture of Lagnicourt, on 2 April 1917 the 50th and 51st Battalions (4th Division) attacked the German-held village of Noreuil. During this attack Private Jørgen Jensen and five comrades attacked a German strong point. Jensen rushed the position and threw a bomb behind the barricade where 45 Germans and one machine gun were positioned. In an audacious move he then drew the pin on another bomb and threatened the Germans, telling them they were surrounded. The Germans surrendered and Jensen was decorated with a Victoria Cross for his courage and bold actions.[90]

A week later, on 8 April 1917, the 1st Division was ordered to capture the villages of Boursies, Demicourt and Hermies as diversionary attacks in support of the main British spring

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[86] *London Gazette* Iss. 29978, 10 March 1917, p. 1 of edition 9 March 1917,[p. 2451 of 1917]; Franki, & Slatyer, *Mad Harry*, pp. 73-84; Hatwell, *No Ordinary Determination*, pp. 139-151; Lincoln, M., 'Murray, Henry William', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 270-272; Macklin, R., *Bravest*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2008; pp. 61-83; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 57-67; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 67-68.
[87] Burness, P., *To Flanders Fields 1917*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 2007, p. 3.
[88] Nevill Smyth received his Victoria Cross as a result of actions on 2 September 1897 during the Battle of Omdurman in the Sudan.
[89] *London Gazette* Iss. 30064, 11 May 1917, p. 1, [p. 4587 of 1917]; Clark, R., 'Cherry, Percy Herbert', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 113-114; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 69-70. A copy of Cherry's VC recommendation is located in Appendix C.
[90] *London Gazette* Iss. 30122, 8 June 1917, p. 5, [p. 5705 of 1917]; 1st AIF Dossier of Private Jorgen Jensen, NAA, B2455; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 73.

offensive at Arras. Boursies was captured by 12th Battalion. Captain Ernest Newland and Sergeant John Whittle both received Victoria Crosses during this operation and a subsequent action at Lagnicourt a few days later. During the attack Newland and his company found themselves under heavy fire. Newland led a bombing attack which suppressed nearby German machine guns, allowing Whittle to move forward to his objective on Newland's left flank. When the Germans counter attacked Newland coordinated a defence and Whittle held his platoon's position under intense fire, charging the Germans to drive them back. Following the attack at Boursies, 12th Battalion was redeployed to Lagnicourt. There, in a localised attack, Newland led his company forward under fire to the same position as Percy Cherry had been where he was awarded the Victoria Cross three weeks earlier. Once in position, Newland encouraged his men to repel the enemy and restore the line while Whittle, again on his flank, charged a German gun crew and killed them all, carrying the German machine gun back to the Australians position.[91]

During the same attack at Lagnicourt Lieutenant Charles Pope (11th Battalion) and his men were in a precarious position in the line between Lagnicourt and the village of Louverval. Pope was ordered to hold his post at all costs. He and his outnumbered men were surrounded by 100 Germans. Pope chose to charge the enemy, enabling a support line to be formed and held. Pope died in this action and was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross for his gallantry and leadership.[92]

On the following day another Victoria Cross was awarded to a soldier of the 1st Division during an attack on the village of Hermies, beginning on 9 April 1917. When the 1st and 2nd Battalions reached their objectives early, a platoon from the 2nd Battalion, which included Private Bede Kenny, was ordered to move around the edge of the village. Many of Kenny's platoon were killed in the fight that followed. For his part Kenny rushed a German position throwing bombs as

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[91] *London Gazette* Iss. 30122, 8 June 1917, p. 4, [p. 5704 of 1917]; *London Gazette* Iss. 30122, 8 June 1917, Supplement, p. 2, [p. 5702 of 1917]; Staunton, A., 'Newland, James Ernest', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 275-276; Allen, S., 'Whittle, John Woods', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 338-339; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 75-79.

[92] *London Gazette* Iss. 30122, 8 June 1917, p. 3, [p. 5703 of 1917]; 1st AIF Dossier of Lieutenant Charles Pope, NAA, B2455; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 83-84.

he moved forward. He eventually took control of the strong point and captured a German machine gun crew, allowing the remnants of his platoon to move forward.[93]

Two days later, 1st Anzac Corps, under the command of Birdwood, mounted an ill-prepared and disastrous attack on the solid German defences near the village of Bullecourt. The Australian 4th Division and British 62nd Division suffered many casualties. After this failure, Gough redrew his plan and another assault was made on 3 May 1917. This attack lasted two weeks and during this operation the Australians were able to penetrate the Hindenburg Line. Initially the 2nd Division was sent forward, and within a few days was relieved by the 1st Division. During these operations, on 6 May 1917 Corporal George Howell of the 1st Battalion was awarded the Victoria Cross for intercepting a German party trying to outflank his battalion. Howell exposed himself to the Germans and threw bombs until his stocks had diminished, where upon continued to attack with his bayonet. Howell's actions inspired his battalion toward a successful counter attack.[94]

On 12 May 1917, the 5th Division (under the command of Major General Sir Talbot Hobbs since January 1917) took over from the 1st Division in holding the recently gained position near Bullecourt. During this operation Lieutenant Rupert Moon, of 58th Battalion, and his platoon were ordered to capture a German machine gun position. Moon and his men rushed the strong point and the Germans retreated to their main trench. Moon was attacked with enemy bombs as he organised his men for a grenade attack into further portions of German trenches. His leadership in both in attack and defence, while wounded, resulted in the award of the Victoria Cross.[95]

By mid 1917 Haig had shifted the focus of the BEF back to Flanders. In particular, he planned to attack the salient around Ypres in Belgium to drive the Germans from the surrounding ridges. In order to move toward Ypres, however, it was first necessary to remove the threat to the

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[93] *London Gazette* Iss. 30122, 8 June 1917, p. 5, [p. 5705 of 1917]; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 71-76; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 81-82.
[94] *London Gazette* Iss. 30154, 26 June 1917, p. 2, [p. 6382 of 1917; Connell, W.H., 'Howell, George Julian', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 188-189;]; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 79-81; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 85.
[95] *London Gazette* Iss. 30130, 12 June 1917, p. 1, [p. 5865 of 1917]; 1st AIF Dossier of Lieutenant Rupert Moon, NAA, B2455; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 87.

south by taking the Messines-Wytschaete ridge.[96] Under the command of Lieutenant General Herbert Plumer, commanding the Second Army, the subsequent battle was fought along a wide frontage and represented the first large scale action for the AIF in Belgium. It began on 7 June 1917 near the town of Messines when the 3rd Division, of 2nd Anzac Corps, still under the command of Monash, entered its first major battle alongside New Zealanders since Gallipoli. On the heels of 3rd Division's assault the 4th Division soon joined in the attack near Messines.[97] As the 33rd Battalion (3rd Division) moved forward towards the German front line trenches, Private John Carroll rushed the enemy's trench line and bayoneted four Germans, assisted a wounded comrade and then continued to attack a German machine gun team, killing three more and capturing the gun. Carroll then extricated two more of his fellows who had been buried when a shell exploded near them, and continued through the night working to rescue more wounded comrades. For his tireless 96-hour effort Carroll was awarded the Victoria Cross.[98]

That same the afternoon the 37th Battalion (3rd Division) moved forward into the unfolding attack. During this action Captain Robert Grieve, in command of A Company, came under fire from a pillbox while breaching a gap in the wire. Half the men and all officers of his company were struck down. Nonetheless, Grieve rushed the pillbox with grenades, taking cover in shell holes as he advanced. He reached the German garrison, killed the occupants and took control of the German trench. A Victoria Cross was awarded for his bravery and leadership.[99]

During this period Haig set his main offensive action for 31 July 1917 at Ypres. The subsequent series of battles, still under Plumer's command, became known as the Third Battle of Ypres. It culminated in the capture of the ruins of Passchendaele. On 20 September the AIF joined the offensive in the Battle of Menin Road. During this action Lieutenant Frederick Birks of the 6th Battalion (1st Division) rushed a pillbox. He killed a number of nearby Germans and captured a machine gun. Birks then organised a small party to destroy another German strong

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[96] Burness, *To Flanders Fields 1917*, p. 6.
[97] The 4th Division was still under the command of Major General William Holmes until he was killed in action on 2 July and replaced by Major General Ewen G. Sinclair-Maclagan.
[98] *London Gazette* Iss. 30215, 2 August 1917, p. 2, [p. 7906 of 1917]; Clark, R., 'Carroll, John', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 104-105; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 85-87; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 91-92. A copy of Carroll's VC recommendation is located in Appendix C.
[99] *London Gazette* Iss. 30215, 2 August 1917, p. 1, [p. 7905 of 1917]; 1st AIF Dossier of Captain Robert Grieve, NAA, B2455; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 93-95.

point, capturing 16 more Germans and leaving nine more as casualties. Birks then reorganised scattered groups from other units and began digging out buried comrades when he was killed by enemy shell. He was posthumously awarded a Victoria Cross for his leadership and bravery.[100] On the same day Private Reginald Inwood of the 10th Battalion (1st Division) moved forward to a German strong post and captured it – killing several Germans and capturing nine others. Inwood's battalion subsequently reached its objectives and beat off a series of counter attacks. During this action Inwood volunteered to go out 450 metres in front of his line to report on enemy movements. The next morning, with the assistance of another, Inwood bombed a machine gun and captured another German.[101] For these actions Inwood was also awarded the Victoria Cross.

After the Battle for Menin Road, Plumer's offensive pushed on at Polygon Wood. On 26 September 1917, the 4th and 5th Divisions attacked together on the edge of Zonnebeke. During this assault Sergeant John Dwyer (4th Machine Gun Company, 4th Division) received a Victoria Cross after he had gone forward with his Vickers machine gun, established himself in a commanding position, and put a German machine gun crew out of action. He captured the German gun and used it, along with his own weapon, against a succession of counter attacks. The next day Dwyer secured a reserve gun when his own was taken out by shell fire, and used it immediately and repeatedly against more German counter attacks.[102] As part of the 5th Division's advance, the 31st Battalion found itself held up by a series of German pillboxes. These strong points were attacked by Private Patrick Bugden who led a number of small parties to silence them with bombs and captured them at bayonet point. Over the period covering 26 – 28 September Bugden also rescued a wounded Australian comrade from German custody and dashed out five times to rescue more of his wounded comrades under heavy fire. He was killed on 28 September and awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross.[103]

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[100] *London Gazette* Iss. 30372, 6 November 1917, p. 2, [p. 11568 of 1917]; Snelling, *VCs of the First World War, Passchendaele 1917*, pp. 110-117; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 99.
[101] *London Gazette* Iss. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 4 of edition 26 November 1917, [p. 12330 of 1917]; Kearney, *Silent Voices*, pp. 249-250; Snelling, *VCs of the First World War, Passchendaele 1917*, pp. 110-117; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 100.
[102] *London Gazette* Iss. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 2 of edition 26 November 1917, [p. 12328 of 1917]; Snelling, *VCs of the First World War, Passchendaele 1917*, pp. 153-162; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 103.
[103] *London Gazette* Iss. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 3 of edition 26 November 1917, [p. 12329 of 1917]; Snelling, *VCs of the First World War, Passchendaele 1917*, pp. 153-162; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 105.

After Menin Road and Polygon Wood the third phase of the Ypres offensive was an attack on Broodseinde Ridge to the left of Zonnebeke on 4 October 1917. By this stage the 2nd Anzac Corps, containing the 3rd Division and the New Zealanders, had been involved. When it attacked alongside the 1st and 2nd Division, it was the first time both Anzac Corps had fought together. The ridge was eventually captured after two weeks of fighting. Two soldiers from 3rd Division were awarded Victoria Crosses following this action. The first, Sergeant Lewis McGee (40th Battalion), was decorated for attacking enemy pillboxes while many of his comrades fell wounded around him. McGee was armed with only a revolver as he rushed one particular German position. He then reorganised the remaining men of his platoon to attack and silence a number of additional German pillboxes on the way to reaching his unit's objective.[104] On the same day Lance Corporal Walter Peeler (3rd Pioneer Battalion), attached to 37th Battalion, was charged with providing anti-aircraft fire with his Lewis gun. While doing so, he encountered German snipers, rushed their position and killed nine of them. Peeler repeated similar acts twice more and in quick succession. In all, he killed 30 Germans and was awarded a Victoria Cross.[105]

Sergeant McGee was killed eight days later on 12 October 1917. By this time the rain had set in at Ypres and the build-up of the mud made offensive action, and life itself, a difficult proposition on the Belgian battlefield. The 12 October also marked the push for the final objective of the Ypres offensive: the village of Passchendaele. The Australians of 3rd Division and the New Zealanders attacked with the support of the 4th Division on the southern flank. As 3rd Division moved forward Captain Clarence Jeffries (34th Battalion) and his company encountered two German pillboxes. Jeffries organised a bombing party to rush one emplacement and captured two machine guns and 35 Germans. A little further forward Jeffries and his men were again harassed by machine gun fire. Jeffries organised another party to silence the guns. During this action Jeffries was killed, but for his efforts he was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. Jeffries' men continued to hold on and reached their objective, before finally being forced

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[104] *London Gazette* Iss. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 2 of edition 26 November 1917, [p. 12328 of 1917]; Beresford, Q., 'McGee, Lewis', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 235-236; Snelling, *VCs of the First World War, Passchendaele 1917*, pp. 167-174; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 109.

[105] *London Gazette* Iss. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 3 of edition 26 November 1917, [p. 12329 of 1917]; Snelling, *VCs of the First World War, Passchendaele 1917*, pp. 167-174; Staunton, A., 'Peeler, Walter', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 283-284; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 110.

to retreat with too few men or supplies to hold the position.[106] On 10 November 1917, after the Canadians relieved the Australian and New Zealand forces, the heights of Passchendaele were, at last, successfully taken. By the end of 1917 all five Australian divisions were united together as a single national force, now called the Australian Corps.

The remaining 29 Victoria Crosses awarded to soldiers of the AIF not thus far discussed on the Western Front were awarded for actions during the victorious year of 1918. On 21 March 1918 the German 'Spring Offensive' was launched in the Somme region. This forced the BEF and allied armies back, in some cases, over 50 kilometres. The British Fifth Army retired to within sight of the vital communication hub of Amiens. The Australian Corps, 100 kilometres away, was rushed south from Flanders to dispersed positions across a 20 kilometre front from Albert to Villers-Bretonneux, extending across both sides of the Somme River. On the night of 27-28 March 1918, while the 47th Battalion (4th Division) moved into position between Dernancourt and Albert, Sergeant Stanley McDougall heard the sounds of bayonet scabbards flapping on the thighs of marching troops and saw Germans advancing toward the railway line in the vicinity of his unit. MacDougall immediately gathered reinforcements including a Lewis gun team. This team was killed in the ensuing engagement, so MacDougall picked up the gun and began to fire it from his hip. McDougall killed seven Germans from two separate machine gun teams, then ran along the edge of the rail embankment and fired on another 20 Germans. By this time 50 more Germans had crossed the railway line so McDougall engaged this group before they had time to defend their position. When he ran out of ammunition, McDougall charged with a bayonet and killed another four Germans. He then collected another Lewis gun and killed and again engaged an unknown number of Germans. The remaining 33 Germans in the immediate area surrendered. For this action McDougall was awarded the Victoria Cross.[107]

About a week later on 4 April 1918, a German attack on Villers-Bretonneux was driven back. The next day on 5 April the Germans attacked at Hébuterne and at Dernancourt. At this point most of the Somme sector was being held by Australian soldiers. The Australian Corps

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[106] *London Gazette* Iss. 30433, 18 December 1917, p. 2, [p. 13222 of 1917]; Hopley, J.B., 'Jeffries, Clarence Smith', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, p. 202; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 91-94; Snelling, *VCs of the First World War, Passchendaele 1917*, pp. 227-230; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 115.
[107] *London Gazette* Iss. 30667, 3 May 1918, p. 2 of edition 30 April 1918, [p. 5354 of 1918]; Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 119; & Williams, J.G., 'McDougall, Stanley Robert', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 234-235.

soon resumed its own local offensives and pressed the Germans at Hangard Wood, two kilometres from Villers-Bretonneux. During this push, the 19th and the 20th Battalions were in the vanguard. During this action, on 7 April, Lieutenant Percy Storkey (19th Battalion, 2nd Division) was awarded the Victoria Cross when he took command of a detachment of 11 men to silence some hidden German machine-gun parties who were causing many Australian casualties. Storkey found 100 German riflemen and machine-gunners with their backs to his party and charged them. Some Germans immediately surrendered. With his revolver Storkey shot three who chose to fight while some of his men rolled grenades into their trenches. In all, 30 Germans were killed and 53 others were taken prisoner.[108]

Later, on 24 April 1918, the Germans attempted the final push towards Amiens after the recaptured of Villers-Bretonneux and nearby Abbey Wood and Hangard Wood. A counter-attack was organised with the 15th Brigade of the 5th Division, moving in from the north to link up with the 13th Brigade of the 4th Division, moving up from the south. During this operation a member of 13th Brigade, Lieutenant Clifford Sadlier (51st Battalion), organised a bombing party with the assistance of Sergeant Charles Stokes. Although wounded, Sadlier led his detachment against nearby German machine guns crews and disposed of them, capturing two guns. Sadlier alone attacked another German machine gun with his revolver, killed four of the crew and took their gun as well. Again, he was wounded and forced back. For his part, Stokes continued to lead the section forward and silenced all German machine guns in his immediate vicinity in Abbey Wood. These actions helped the 13th Brigade to move through this area and link up with the 15th Battalion the next morning, forcing the Germans to retreat. For this action Sadlier received the Victoria Cross and Stokes received the Distinguished Conduct Medal.[109] General Birdwood actually described this operation as the 'turning point of the war.'[110] By the end of April the German spring offensive had come to an unsuccessful close.

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[108] *London Gazette* Iss. 30733, 7 June 1918, p. 1 of edition 4 June 1918, [p. 6775 of 1918]; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 97-102; Pedersen, P., *Battleground Europe, Villers-Bretonneux*, Pen & Sword Military, Barnsley, 2004, pp. 72-73 & 183-184; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 121.
[109] *London Gazette* Iss. 30790, 11 June 1918, p. 2 of edition 9 June 1918, [p. 8156 of 1918]; Pedersen, *Battleground Europe, Villers-Bretonneux*, pp. 115-116; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 125.
[110] Burness, P., *Advancing to Victory 1918*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 2008, p. 4.

By June 1918 the Australian Corps was under the operational control of Lieutenant General Monash who had relinquished command of the 3rd Division to Major General Sir John Gellibrand on 30 May 1918. Birdwood had taken command of the British Fifth Army but nonetheless continued as the administrative commander of the AIF. The troops of the 1st Division were still occupying positions in Flanders and now defended the important railway centre of Hazebrouck. As part of a diversionary assault on 28 June 1918, the 10th Battalion (1st Division) attacked German positions at Merris. During this attack Corporal Phillip Davey took over the command of a 10th Battalion platoon when its officer was killed by heavy fire from a nearby German machine gun. Davey attacked the machine gun post with grenades and killed half the German crew. He returned to his men to replenish his grenades, and then returned to destroy the remainder of the German position which had been reinforced in his absence. Davey captured the German gun and used it to repel a counter attack until he was wounded. For this action he was awarded the Victoria Cross.[111]

Throughout May and June of 1918 the Somme battlefields were relatively quiet. Australian soldiers maintained offensive 'peaceful penetration' operations within which the largest attack was the capture of high ground near Ville-sur-Ancre. This occurred on 19 May 1918 and involved mostly men from 22nd Battalion (2nd Division), which had been under the command of Major General Sir Charles Rosenthal since the beginning of May.[112] During this action Sergeant William Ruthven was an acting company sergeant major when he was awarded the Victoria Cross. He took control when his company commander was wounded. Ruthven's men were stopped during their attack by heavy German machine gun nest. Ruthven, however, then threw a grenade and rushed the enemy position when it exploded. He bayoneted one of the German crew, wounded two more, and captured the gun and six prisoners. Ruthven, after reorganising his men, rushed a nearby post single-handedly armed only with a revolver, and captured 32 more Germans.[113]

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[111] *London Gazette* Iss. 30849, 17 August 1918, p. 1 of edition 16 August 1918, [p. 9659 of 1918]; Bean, C.E.W., *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1942, p. 406; Burness, P., 'Davey, Phillip', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, p. 139; Kearney, *Silent Voices*, pp. 307-309; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 126.
[112] Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 129.
[113] *London Gazette* Iss. 30790, 11 June 1918, p. 2 of edition 9 June 1918, [p. 8156 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, pp. 124-125; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 129-131.

On 4 July 1918 the battle of Hamel was launched. It was a well-planned operation designed by Monash which represented, at least according to the orthodox Australian historical interpretation, one of the first successfully coordinated infantry, artillery, tank and aircraft assault of the war. Four AIF divisions and four American companies were involved. During the battle two soldiers of the 4th Division were awarded Victoria Crosses. Early in the action, the 16th Battalion was charged with clearing Vaire and Hamel Woods. A German artillery barrage, however, halted the Australians and prevented their advance. On his own initiative, however, Corporal Thomas Axford jumped a German trench, bombed and bayoneted various German machine gun crews, killed ten and captured six more enemy soldiers.[114] Concurrently, the 15th Battalion was given the task of capturing another portion of the German trench. The battalion was soon halted by strong resistance from this position. As a member of an Australian Lewis gun crew, Private Henry Dalziel, broke the deadlock by rushing a nearby German machine gun post firing on his own position with his revolver, killing and capturing the crew and gun. The advance was thus able to continue. Although Dalziel had been wounded in the hand and head he continued to work within his Lewis gun team retrieving ammunition for them.[115]

Two Victoria Crosses were also awarded to soldiers of the 2nd Division around the village of Villers-Bretonneux in July 1918. Corporal Walter Brown (20th Battalion) was a member of a small party who had joined the 21st Battalion on the night of 5 July 1918. The next morning he was exploring a trench when asked to locate some nearby German snipers. He walked along a length of the trench and spotted a raised area of ground from which he saw a shot being fired. Brown discarded his rifle, picked up two Mills bombs and charged out of his trench. As he pushed toward the area he had spotted earlier he discovered a German trench with a machine gun in it. He jumped into the trench, killed a German and moved on to the machine gun. Subsequent threats by Brown in the area encouraged 12 Germans to surrender.[116] Later, on the night of 17-18 July 1918, Lieutenant Albert Borella (26th Battalion) was awarded a Victoria Cross for leading his party to a German position straddling a railway line. Some 500 metres further forward a

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[114] *London Gazette* Iss. 30849, 17 August 1918, p. 2 of edition 16 August 1918, [p. 9660 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, p. 291; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 133.
[115] *London Gazette* Iss. 30849, 17 August 1918, p. 2 of edition 16 August 1918, [p. 9660 of 1918]; CMF Dossier of Private Henry Dalziel, NAA, B884; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 134.
[116] *London Gazette* Iss. 30849, 17 August 1918, p. 1 of edition 16 August 1918, [p. 9659 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, pp. 339-341; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 105-110; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 137.

German machine gun was preventing further advance. When Borella and his men reached the enemy trench they rained bombs and Lewis gun fire down onto the defenders. In total 30 Germans emerged from two dug outs and were taken prisoner. Borella and 20 men held this captured position against counter-attacks by 500 Germans for several hours.[117]

In early August 1918 Lieutenant General Rawlinson's Fourth Army advanced on the Somme. The Australian Corps formed one spearhead of an attack that became known as the battle of Amiens. The British 3rd Corps was positioned on the left of the Australians and the Canadian Corps on the right. The 2nd Division was to lead the attack with the other Australian divisions to leap-frog through it to reach their final objectives.[118] The German General Erich Ludendorff described the subsequent attack as a 'black day' for the German army.[119] Four Australian divisions attacked, with the 2nd and 3rd Divisions involved in the first phase and the 4th and 5th Divisions involved in the second phase. During the operation, the 28th Battalion, of 2nd Division attacking east of Villers-Bretonneux, encountered strong resistance. Their attack stalled on wire entanglements and machine gun fire from a German strong point covering the single gap in the wire. Alone, however, Lieutenant Albert Gaby found his way through the wire and attacked the German strong point with his revolver. He drove the German crews from their machine guns and forced 50 to surrender. As a consequence Gaby was awarded the Victoria Cross.[120] Later during the battle of Amiens the 1st Division was ordered to push towards Lihons. On 9 August 1918, Private Robert Beatham (8th Battalion) was also awarded a Victoria Cross for rushing forward when his unit's advance was held up. With a comrade Beatham charged a German position to his front, killing ten and capturing another ten as well as four machine guns.[121]

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[117] *London Gazette* Iss. 30903, 16 September 1918, p. 1 of edition 13 August 1918, [p. 11075 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, p. 372; Fielding, J.P., 'Borella, Albert Chalmers,' Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 85-86; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 141.
[118] Burness, *Advancing to Victory 1918*, p. 13.
[119] Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 147.
[120] *London Gazette* Iss. 30982, 30 October 1918, p. 2 of edition 29 October 1918, [p. 12802 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, pp. 531-532; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 147.
[121] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 7 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14779 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, p. 635; 1st AIF Dossier of Private Robert Beatham, NAA, B2455; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 149.

Three days later the Australians had reached the Somme River and pursued the Germans on both sides back to Péronne. During this advance the 40th Battalion (3rd Division) was assigned a move on the Chuignes road south of Proyart. As the battalion advanced it was shalted by an intense German artillery barrage. Sergeant Percy Statton fired his Lewis gun on the Germans to allow his company to reach the village of Proyart. On the left of the 40th Battalion, the 37th Battalion also had difficulties in advancing. Statton then turned his guns toward the enemy party preventing the 37th Battalion's advance. A detachment from the 37th Battalion then attempted to move forward to attack the enemy strong point in question, but they were annihilated. Revolver in hand, Statton charged the strong point across 75 metres of open ground supported by three other men. Statton disposed of two guns and their crews and rushed two more guns. While the crews attempted to retreat Statton killed them with the two Lewis guns captured earlier. Another German machine gun then began firing on Statton and his men, killing one and wounding another. Statton and the third man crawled back to the 40th Battalion's position while the 37th Battalion inched forward. Later that night Statton retrieved the wounded and killed of his small party. For these combined actions he was awarded the Victoria Cross.[122]

During this Allied advance, on 23 August 1918 the 1st Division and the British 32nd Division attacked towards Herleville Wood. The 6th Battalion led with the 8th Battalion in reserve. During this action Lieutenant William Joynt of 8th Battalion was awarded a Victoria Cross for moving forward, along with a platoon from the 8th Battalion, to the 6th Battalion to reorganise a company that had lost its Officer Commanding. Joynt then led an attack at Plateau Wood where a German post and 50 prisoners were taken. Joynt continued to lead these men along the connecting German trench, capturing more prisoners as he went. Within 50 metres of a machine gun post he was confronted by 20 German defenders. Joynt took their officer captive and the rest surrendered. From this point Joynt continued to push the Germans out of their positions in the wood.[123]

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[122] *London Gazette* Iss. 30922, 27 September 1918, p. 2 of edition 24 September 1918, [p. 11430 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, pp. 707-708; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 151. A copy of Statton's VC recommendation is located in Appendix C.

[123] *London Gazette* Iss. 31034, 27 November 1918, p. 2 of edition 26 November 1918, [p. 14040 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, pp. 745-746; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 155.

On the same day as Joynt's actions in Plateau Wood, the 4th Division attacked towards Vermandovillers in support of the 1st Division and the British 32nd Division. The Australians of 16th Battalion, next to the British division, found their allies held up by heavy machine gun fire. Lieutenant Lawrence McCarthy was awarded a Victoria Cross when he and a sergeant from the 16th Battalion decided to attack the offending German post. They captured the machine gun and continued fighting along a nearby trench, killing a number of Germans and taking three more machine guns. During this attack McCarthy captured 450 metres of trench, five machine guns and 50 prisoners. For this feat McCarthy was awarded the Victoria Cross. C.E.W. Bean called it the most effective individual feat in the history of the AIF.[124]

Four days after McCarthy's deed, the 41st Battalion (3rd Division) reached the north bank of the River Somme south of Fargny Wood. There the Battalion came under heavy machine gun fire. Lance Corporal Bernard Gordon was awarded a Victoria Cross for singlehandedly attacking a German machine gun position that was harassing the Australian position. Gordon captured the post, killed the gunner and then entered Fargny Wood where he cleared a nearby trench and captured 29 more prisoners and two more machine guns. Gordon continued on, taking more German trenches and eventually captured another 22 prisoners and three more machine gun posts, allowing his company to advance more than 1000 metres.[125]

North of the Somme River the Germans made a stand, protected by the fortified hill of Mont St Quentin near Péronne. A double Allied advance was subsequently planned with the 2nd Division to attack Mont St Quentin while 5th Division advanced towards Péronne. In these two actions a total of eight Victoria Crosses were awarded to Australian soldiers, more than any other battle in Australian military history.[126] On 31 August 1918 the 33rd Battalion (3rd Division) advanced along Road Wood, south west of Bouchavesnes, near Péronne, but were held up in the strongly garrisoned wood. Under heavy fire Private George Cartwright stood up and charged,

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[124] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 4 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14776 of 1918]; See various Bean papers on VCs, AWM 38, 8042/107; Connell, W.H., 'McCarthy, Lawrence Dominic', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 230-232;& Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 157.
[125] *London Gazette* Iss. 31082, 26 December 1918, p. 2 of edition 24 December 1918, [p. 15118 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, pp. 776-777; Courtney, J.W., 'Gordon, Bernard Sidney', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 173-174; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 113-115; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 161.
[126] Burness, *Advancing to Victory 1918*, p. 14.

firing his rifle from his shoulder. He received the Victoria Cross for killing three machine gun teams and throwing a bomb at a fourth, followed by capturing another gun and nine more prisoners.[127]

The next day three soldiers from the 2nd Division were awarded Victoria Crosses following actions at Mont St Quentin. Private Robert Mactier (23rd Battalion) assisted his battalion to take its objective by using bombs and a revolver to climb over German wire killing eight enemy soldiers defending a machine gun post. Mactier threw the gun over the German's parapet and rushed the next trench, capturing six more men. He then charged a third post and destroyed it with bombs. In the act of attempting to capture a fourth German position Mactier was himself killed by machine gun fire resulting in a posthumous decoration.[128] Another action at Mont St Quentin Sergeant Albert Lowerson (21st Battalion) and his company advanced on the right of the village, encountering heavy enemy fire. Lowerson organised a storming party to charge the German strong point. His leadership of this action resulted in the capture of 12 machine guns and 30 men and he was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross.[129]

As Lowerson attacked, the 24th Battalion attempted to reach the summit of Mont St Quentin through the village of Feuillaucourt. Machine guns supported the infantry attacks. Lieutenant Edgar Towner of 3rd Section, 7th Machine Gun Company, 2nd Machine Gun Battalion, was ordered to support the 24th Battalion's advance for which he also received a Victoria Cross. In the push forward Towner located and captured a German machine gun. When he noticed more Germans reinforcing their position he led his own team forward with the captured German gun and two Vickers guns and engaged the enemy, inflicting heavy German losses. Later Towner reorganised his guns to cut off and capture 25 more Germans. Thereafter, he continued to use his

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[127] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 7 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14779 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, pp. 818-819; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 119-122; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 163.
[128] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 6 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14778 of 1918]; Lincoln, M., 'Mactier, Robert', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 244-245; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 165.
[129] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 5 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14777 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, pp. 843-844; Stanley, P., *Men of Mont St Quentin*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2009, pp. 126-128; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 167.

guns to harass the Germans. When running low on ammunition, Towner secured another enemy gun and fired it on the retreating Germans.[130]

Also on 1 September, the 53rd and 54th Battalions (5th Division) were given the task of clearing the area between Mont St Quentin and the Somme River in order to capture Péronne and force the Germans back toward the Hindenburg Line. During this action Private Matthew Currey's company (53rd Battalion) was held up by heavy enemy machine gun fire. Currey rushed the German position, killing the crew and capturing the machine gun. Later that day he rushed another German strong point, inflicting many casualties and facilitating his unit's continuing advance. Early the next morning Currey attempted to warn an isolated company they were in danger. While standing in No Man's Land his respirator was punctured, and he was gassed. Despite this, he was still able to assist the isolated company back to safety. For these combined actions Currey was awarded the Victoria Cross.[131] While Currey earned his decoration, Corporals Arthur Hall and Alexander Buckley were busy as part of the 54th Battalion's capture of Péronne. During the attack, as Germans were retreating back trench-by-trench, Hall rushed their line, shot four and captures nine others and two machine guns. To his right Buckley then rushed another machine gun post, shot four Germans and took 22 more prisoners. Hall's and Buckley's actions allowed their battalion to move forward. Hall chased some Germans to a bridge that was blown up before they could cross, while Buckley, in attempting to rush another enemy post, was eventually killed. The next day, with the 54th Battalion on its objective, Hall continued to lead parties to locate points of German resistance. He also helped to rescue a wounded man. Both men were awarded Victoria Crosses, Buckley posthumously.[132]

The next day on 2 September 1918, the 43rd Battalion was given the objective to clear an area near Allaines, north of Mont St Quentin. After taking a trench opposite Allaines the

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[130] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 3 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14775 of 1918]; Gorrell, R., 'Towner, Edgar Thomas', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 321-322; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 169.
[131] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 7 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14779 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, pp. 837-838; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 125-129; Coulthard-Clark, C., 'Currey, William Matthew', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 132-133; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 173.
[132] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 6 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14778 of 1918]; *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 6 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14778 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, pp. 838 & 849; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 131-138; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 174.

battalion faced more than 150 Germans. Corporal Lawrence Weathers promptly rushed a fork in the German trench and killed the garrison's leader. With the support of his comrades and an attached platoon, Weathers then captured 180 Germans and three machine guns and was awarded the Victoria Cross for his efforts.[133]

Sixteen days later on 18 September 1918, the 1st and 4th Australian Divisions attacked towards to the Hindenburg Outpost Line near the St Quentin Canal. During this operation, the 13th Battalion was ordered to attack south of the village of Le Verguier, north west of St Quentin. The 13th Battalion and 48th Battalion attacked together. Two soldiers, one from each unit, were awarded Victoria Crosses on this day. Sergeant Maurice Buckley (serving under the alias Gerald Sexton), armed with a Lewis gun, rushed a number of German posts. By the end of the day he had taken at least six machine gun positions, and nearly 100 prisoners.[134] Meanwhile, Private James Woods (48th Battalion) and three comrades conducted a reconnaissance patrol to find the position of the enemy in the area. Rather than merely reconnoitre, they found a German stronghold and attacked it at once. Woods killed one German soldier, while 30 more retreated, leaving behind four heavy and two light machine guns. As the Germans counter-attacked, Woods lay on top of the parapet and threw bombs passed to him by his comrades to halt them. He kept this up until help arrived to consolidate the position. In this case Wood's tenacity and audacity earned him a Victoria Cross.[135]

By the end of the September, 1918 Monash had been offered the use of 2nd American Corps for an upcoming assault. On 29 September 1918 a single attack against the Hindenburg Line began with the Americans and now-depleted Australian formations. The American 30th Division led the attack while the 5th Division followed through and onto the final objective. Two more Victoria Crosses were the result. Acting battalion commander, Major Blair Wark (32nd

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[133] *London Gazette* Iss. 31082, 26 December 1918, p. 2 of edition 24 December 1918, [p. 15118 of 1918]; Ritchie, W., 'Weathers, Lawrence Carthage', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 329-331; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 179.

[134] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 5 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14777 of 1918]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, p. 903; Horner, D.M., 'Buckley, Maurice Vincent', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 99-100; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 141-147; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 183.

[135] *London Gazette* Iss. 31082, 26 December 1918, p. 3 of edition 24 December 1918, [p. 15119 of 1918]; Higgins, M., 'Woods, James Park', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 351-352; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 185.

Battalion), had moved south of Bellicourt when his advance was held up by two German machine gun nests. Wark organised for a tank to deal with them while he gathered 200 leaderless Americans and attached them to his own battalion. With tank support he captured 40 prisoners at Nauroy, led a small party to rush a German battery in the vicinity, captured four guns and 10 more prisoners, and with two others surprised a further 50 Germans near Magny-la-Fosse, also taking them prisoner. Wark stopped his troops near Joncourt and repelled a counter-attack by 400 Germans. The next day he advanced another 1500 metres near Etricourt. Then, on 1 October he led his men through Joncourt towards the Beaurevoir Line silencing German machine guns along the way and causing heavy casualties. For his leadership, Wark was awarded the Victoria Cross.[136]

On 30 September, while Wark was involved in his assault on the Hindenburg Line, the 55th Battalion were supporting the 53rd Battalion in an attack near Bellicourt. The German resisted the attack fiercely, launching several counter attacks against the Australians. Private John Ryan (55th Battalion) was one of the first men to reach a portion of Australian trench occupied during one such counter attack. He was awarded a Victoria Cross after having led a party of men in a bomb and bayonet charge against German raiders in the Australian trench. He succeeded in killing three and chased the remainder back across No Man's Land.[137]

In the first week of October 1918 the Australians were fighting their final battles around a string of French villages, before eventually handing over to the Americans for some well deserved rest and recovery. During these actions, on 3 October 1918, Lieutenant Joseph Maxwell (18th Battalion, 2nd Division) took over during a local assault on a German trench when his company commander fell wounded. Maxwell's company reached the wire in front of a German position but it was covered by enemy machine gun fire. Alone, Maxwell went through the wire and captured the offending machine gun, killing three and taking four Germans prisoner. His company was then able to pass through the wire. Later, Maxwell silenced another gun that was

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[136] *London Gazette* Iss. 31082, 26 December 1918, p. 1 of edition 24 December 1918, [p. 15117 of 1918]; Gliddon, *VCs of the First World War, The Final Days 1918*, pp. 58-61; Gorrell, R., 'Wark, Blair Anderson', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 327-328; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 187.

[137] *London Gazette* Iss. 31082, 26 December 1918, p. 3 of edition 24 December 1918, [p. 15119 of 1918]; Gliddon, *VCs of the First World War, The Final Days 1918*, pp. 73-75; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 151-5154; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 190.

preventing a flank company easy access through the wire. One prisoner told Maxwell a further 20 Germans were nearby and wanted to surrender. He took two comrades' thinking to accept their surrender but instead found himself surrounded by defenders with no wish to capitulate. Shells began to land and in the confusion Maxwell pulled out a concealed revolver, shot two Germans, and escaped with his comrades. For these series of actions he was awarded the Victoria Cross.[138]

The last Australian action of the war on the Western Front was in capturing Montbrehain on 5 October 1918. As part of this attack Lieutenant George Ingram's company (24th Battalion, 2nd Division) experienced difficulty in advancing due to German sniper and machine gun fire. Ingram led his platoon against a strong point, capturing nine machine guns and killing 42 Germans. He then led a company charge against a quarry that was being defended by some 40 machine guns and 100 men. Ingram alone rushed the first post, shot six Germans and captured a machine gun. He continued to capture enemy posts, inflicting casualties as he went, and took 62 more prisoners. On his last assault he captured 30 Germans in a cellar after shooting the lone gunner protecting the garrison. These actions helped with the capture of Montbrehain and resulted in Ingram being awarded the last AIF Victoria Cross on the Western Front.[139] A few weeks later, on 11 November 1918 German military commanders signed the armistice and within a few hours the fighting ceased.

As foreshadowed in the introduction to this chapter, the detail of these Victoria Cross actions is extensive. However, these actions are the foundations on which subsequent arguments are based and are necessary to provide context for remainder of the thesis. With these foundations set, aspects of the Victoria Cross itself and its respective conditions will be examined next. This, in turn, will provide a basis for the analysis and investigations to be conducted in Chapters Two to Five.

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[138] *London Gazette* issue 311108, 6 January 1919, p. 3 of edition 3 January 1919, p. 307 of 1919; Gliddon, *VCs of the First World War, The Final Days 1918*, pp. 88-92; Howard, E.J.H., 'Maxwell, Joseph,' Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 253-255; Macklin, *Bravest*, pp. 100-111; Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 157-165; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 191.

[139] *London Gazette* Iss. 311108, 6 January 1919, p. 2 of edition 3 January 1919, [p. 306 of 1919]; Bean, *Volume 6 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, pp. 1037-1038; Gliddon, *VCs of the First World War, The Final Days 1918*, pp. 97-99; McIntyre, D., 'Ingram, George Mawby', Coulthard-Clark, *The Diggers*, pp. 195-196; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 195. A copy of Ingram's VC recommendation is located in Appendix C.

Chapter 2 The Royal Warrant, 1856 to 1916

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the evolution of the Victoria Cross Warrant and its conditions from inception in 1856 through to the form it took when the Australians arrived on the Western Front during 1916. Again, as in the previous chapter, this is a necessary contextual foundation for the analysis that follows.

The Victoria Cross was instituted on 29 January 1856 during the Crimean War (1854 to 1856), as a consequence of a belief held by Queen Victoria, and a number of parliamentarians, that there was a need for an award to be introduced to recognise conspicuous gallantry regardless of rank. To this day it remains the highest award for gallantry available to British and Australian defence personnel serving in the face of an enemy. At its inception, the decoration was made retrospective to cover the period of the Crimean War and named in honour of the reigning monarch. Up to this point there had been no means to acknowledge junior officers and other ranks for exceptional bravery in battle. This issue had emerged during the Crimean War as British newspapers reported regular occasions of extraordinary deeds of the ordinary soldier. There was an increasing public desire to recognise conspicuous acts of bravery with an egalitarian type of decoration.[140] The lack of such an award in Britain was, in fact, a notable omission considering that a number of other European countries had long established official awards for gallantry for the private soldier.[141] This included Britain's ally in the Crimea, France, which had instituted the Legion of Honour in 1803. The Prussians, Russians and Austrians also had awards for gallantry accessible to all, regardless of rank.[142] According to Peter De la Billière, the Victoria Cross was introduced 'at a time [in Britain] when rank and privilege were so dominant in society.'[143] The inception of such an award open to all ranks was, therefore, evidence of 'Victoria's far-sightedness.'[144] To the Queen, the Victoria Cross represented an opportunity to both indulge her romanticism and strengthen her bond with the services.[145] In fact, Queen Victoria took a personal interest in the conditions applicable to the Victoria Cross and its

[140] Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. v.
[141] Anon., *The Victoria Cross & George Cross*, Imperial War Museum, London, 1970, p. 13.
[142] *History of the Victoria Cross*, http://www.victoriacross.org.uk/aahistor.htm, date consulted: 11 May 2006.
[143] De la Billière, *Supreme Courage*, p. 2.
[144] *Ibid.*
[145] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 40.

design, including proposing the motto *For Valour*.[146] From the very beginning the intention was to make the Victoria Cross a highly esteemed and exclusive decoration. The idea in this regard was to avoid the fate of other available honours which were perceived to have lost value through wide distribution.[147] However, in the early years, with close to 300 Victoria Crosses awarded in the 1850s alone, there was still some immediate concern in London that the decoration might lose its distinction if too many continued to be given out.[148]

The original Royal Warrant of the Victoria Cross (see Appendix B) indicated that the decoration was to be awarded to soldiers and sailors of the British Army and Royal Navy for the performance in the presence of the enemy of 'some signal act of valour or devotion'.[149] The Royal Warrant was, in this regard, vague in its criteria and offered no definition of exactly what constituted a 'signal act of valour or devotion'.[150] The Warrant itself included an introduction that explained the need for such a decoration, followed by a description of the medal and the 15 clauses, rules and ordinances that covered its conferral.[151] Both the sovereign and Secretary of State were responsible for signing the Royal Warrant, proclaiming the document as law in accordance with the British system of government.[152]

The first clause of the 1856 Royal Warrant identified the design and inscription of the Victoria Cross itself, while the second directed that a blue ribbon would identify naval decorations and a red ribbon for those awarded to any personnel in the army.[153] The subsequent clauses decreed that the names of decorated men were to be published in the *London Gazette*, that a register was to be kept of all recipients, and that a 'bar' would be awarded if a second Victoria Cross was awarded to a single individual. Another section explained the egalitarian nature of eligibility for the decoration, and that it was available to all, regardless of rank, service or wounds, as long as the bravery was considered worthy of the award.

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[146] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 35.
[147] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 68.
[148] *Ibid*., p. 79.
[149] Rank or long service were not considered factors in awarding the Victoria Cross; Anon., *The Victoria Cross and George Cross*, p. 14.
[150] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 43.
[151] Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. v.
[152] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 30.
[153] After 1920 all Victoria Crosses would be issued with a red ribbon.

The most important clause, however, was the fifth. It indicated that the Victoria Cross was only to be awarded to officers and men who had served the British Empire in the presence of the enemy who had performed a 'signal' act of valour or devotion to their country. This rule was vague. Even though it clearly identified the decoration was available to all serving men and that it was a combat award, it did little to suggest a standard to which men could be judged to have reached, making them deserving of the Victoria Cross.[154] It was to be the War Office which decided exactly how to implement the decoration, classified what level of gallantry was worthy of the decoration, and identified the recommended individuals.[155] Personnel within the War Office, and the institution itself, always held enormous power over the Victoria Cross. As a consequence, the decoration was subsequently awarded to those who demonstrated what M.C. Smith described as 'institutionalised heroism.'[156]

The original Warrant went on to provide a number of other important rules and administrative requirements. For example, the Victoria Cross could be granted 'on the spot' if the act deemed worthy of recognition was seen directly by the highest Commanding Officer in the field at the time, subject to confirmation by the Queen. This clause was first used during the Indian Mutiny (1857 to 1859) when Brigadier General Henry Havelock provisionally awarded the Victoria Cross in the field to his own son, Lieutenant Henry Havelock.[157] As a consequence of Brigadier Havelock's perceived partiality, from this point on provisional conferral in the field became rare, with most recommendations going through the formal review process established by the War Office.[158] After 1859 if an 'on the spot' award was made, it was considered a recommendation only, and as with all 'typical' Victoria Cross recommendations, it had to follow the proper bureaucratic channels that were put in place by the War Office.[159] Further clauses specified that the recipient was to be decorated in front of the naval or military force with which he served when he performed the deed that resulted in the award of the Victoria Cross.

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[154] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 43.
[155] It was apparent that the Horse Guards (for reasons unknown but possible because they were the professional head of the army) also had disproportionate influence over what constituted heroism worthy of the Victoria Cross in the early days of the decoration; *Ibid*., pp. 44 & 68.
[156] *Ibid.*, p. 202.
[157] *Ibid.*, p. 66.
[158] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[159] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

Furthermore, the recipient's name was also to be recorded in a General Order along with a description of the event. Such General Orders were then to be issued via the Secretary of State for War.

Interestingly, the original Victoria Cross Warrant stipulated that for any cases that fell outside the rules already specified, there had to be 'conclusive proof' (which they did not define) of the performance of bravery worthy of the Victoria Cross. Furthermore, should a case arise where a group of men were all involved in the performance of an act worthy of a Victoria Cross, an individual name could be 'selected' to 'represent' the group's bravery. This selection was to be presided over by the Commanding Officer present, who could not, himself, be nominated. This process was referred to as a 'ballot system', and is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. From 1856 enlisted men decorated with the Victoria Cross were also eligible for a £10 per annum pension, with any awarded a 'bar' receiving an additional £5. Commissioned officers were not entitled to this pension; however, by virtue of holding a commission it was assumed these men already had an adequate living.[160] Finally, the 1856 Warrant stipulated that a decorated man who broke the law, or who was convicted of treason or cowardice, was to surrender their Victoria Cross and pensions, and have their name struck off the register. But this could only be done at the discretion of the Queen or her heirs.[161] In 1908 King George V overturned this clause, stating 'in future the Cross was not to be forfeited however serious the offence.'[162]

Between 1856 and 1911, largely as a consequence of changes in battlefield operations, a number of amendments were made to the original Warrant over time. These attempts were encouraged by a number of unusual cases.[163] One such example was Havelock's doubtful use of the 'on the spot' ruling. This particular clause was removed entirely from the Warrant in the

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[160] Letter, Australian Government to War Office, 9 August 1915, The Australian Government checked with the War Office that the VC pension was going to paid out of Imperial funds and not Colonial funds. This was confirmed 4 October 1916 to be the case. More correspondence regarding the question existed, 17 October 1916, 25 October 1916 & 24 November 1916, the case arose because Keysor enquired from whom he would be paid his pension, TNA, WO 32/9395; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 53.
[161] Notes from the Original 1956 Royal Warrant as seen in the following two files: TNA, WO 32/3443 & TNA, WO 98/1; Creagh & Humphries, *The Victoria Cross*, p. xiii; Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, pp. 280-282; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 207-209.
[162] The Ranken-Lummis VC Collection 24 (41).1 [Victoria Cross]/2, Department of Documents, IWM.
[163] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 79.

rewrite of 1920.[164] A further change was made on 29 October 1857 which declared that men serving the East India Company during the Indian Mutiny from 1857 to 1859 were eligible. Beforehand, only British troops serving in British units were considered eligible. This exclusion was apparently more about 'moral indignation' rather than racism.[165] Additional amendments were subsequently made relating to British rule and security in India, including the amendment made on 13 December 1858 that permitted eligibility to the 'civil service' during the Indian Mutiny.[166] As a result, five civilians were awarded the Victoria Cross while under military command.[167] Then, on 6 August 1881 eligibility was extended to include chaplains serving the British Army as part of the Indian ecclesiastical establishment. On 21 October 1911 the Royal Warrant was amended for the last time prior the First World War. This further extended eligibility to include native troops serving in Indian units.[168] The Royal Warrant remained unchanged from 1911 until it was totally revised in 1920.

A notable amendment to the Royal Warrant, endorsed on 10 August 1858, made soldiers serving in 'non combat' operations for the British Empire eligible for the Victoria Cross. This changed the original rule which allowed the Victoria Cross to only be eligible to men who were in the presence of the enemy. The change allowed for the decoration to be recognised outside of 'battle' to members of the armed forces who showed conspicuous courage under circumstances of extreme danger, not in the face of the enemy. The proviso was, however, cancelled on 23 April 1881 and the Warrant once again required an act of bravery to be performed in the presence of an enemy. From this point, gallantry displayed while not before the enemy was rewarded with decorations such as the Albert Medal (instituted in 1866), the British Empire Medal (instituted in 1917), and eventually the George Cross (instituted in 1940).[169] The 1881 amendment, now, allowed for extension of eligibility to include auxiliary services and reservist forces.[170]

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[164] Notes on the V.C. Warrant written by Assistant Military Secretary M.D. Graham , 15 June 1918, TNA, ADM 1/8528/174; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 209-218.
[165] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 62.
[166] *Ibid.*, pp. 211-212; & Arthur, J., *Awards of Honour*, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1956, p. 140.
[167] Arthur, *Symbol of Courage*, p. xv.
[168] Arthur, *Awards of Honour*, p. 140; Arthur, *Symbol of Courage*, p. xiii; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 209-218.
[169] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 72.
[170] Arthur, *Awards of Honour*, p. 140; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 210-213.

From an Australian perspective, probably the most significant amendment to the Royal Warrant occurred on 1 January 1867 with inclusion of eligibility for colonial and irregular forces. This was in response to the Second Anglo-Maori War which had begun in 1860 during the British occupation of New Zealand.[171] Consequently, the very first Victoria Cross awarded to someone living in Australia (even if not yet 'Australian') was made to Captain Neville Howse of the New South Wales Army Medical Corps. Howse rode on horseback across enemy fire to rescue a wounded trumpeter on 24 July 1900 during the Boer War (1899 to 1902).[172] For his remaining days Howse was always mindful of the honour of being the first Australian awarded such a prestigious decoration.

In reality, alongside the formal amendments made to the Royal Warrant so far described, other informal conventions in practice influenced how the award was bestowed. Two notable cases in this regard were the posthumous awarding of the Victoria Cross and the largely ignored (during the First World War) 'thirteenth clause' relating to the ballot system for award.[173]

There was no specific reference made in the original rules of the Royal Warrant that precluded awarding the Victoria Cross posthumously. Conversely, the Warrant did not sanction the practice either.[174] However, at the very beginning the Victoria Cross was *not* made available for an action in which the potential recipient was killed, or died shortly afterwards.[175] It is possible that this convention originated within the War Office itself.[176] In a letter written in 1856 the future Secretary of State for War, Jonathan Peel, suggested the Victoria Cross should only be made available to survivors.[177] So too the incumbent Secretary of State for War, Lord Panmure,

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[171] Anon., *The Victoria Cross & George Cross*, pp. 14-15; Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 212-213; & Wigmore & Harding, *They Dared Mightily*, p. 7.
[172] Braga, S., *Anzac Doctor, The Life of Sir Neville Howse, VC*, Hale & Iremonger, Alexandria, 2000, p. 77; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 4.
[173] Halliday, *Valour Reconsidered*, p. 7.
[174] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 89.
[175] *The Victoria Cross Reference*, http://www.victoriacross.net/medal.asp, date consulted: 6 November 2005.
[176] Unaddressed letters dated 27 January 1901, 5 March 1902 & 24 April 1902. TNA, WO 32/7478; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 87.
[177] Letter, Jonathan Peel to John Godfrey, 13 May 1856. TNA, WO 98/3; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 46. Peel took over the position of Secretary of State for War in February 1858 from Lord Panmure whose signature was on the original Royal Warrant of 1856.

personally believed the Victoria Cross should be only considered an award for the living.[178] Peel's view was a classic example of just how much bureaucratic conventions influenced the Victoria Cross. It was this convention regarding posthumous awards, not the Royal Warrant, which led later to historians such as De la Billière incorrectly to conclude that only survivors could win Victoria Crosses as it was 'an order for the living.'[179] Consequently, any potential recipients had to not only survive the act of valour in battle, but also had to stay alive to see the award gazetted.[180] But, it must be stressed this requirement was as a result of the bureaucratic convention, rather than written rules of the Warrant. This convention became accepted practice from the very beginning and posthumous Victoria Crosses were not recommended.[181] The Victoria Cross was not necessarily simply awarded 'For Valour'. It was reserved for the 'valour' of the living.

This situation changed, however, under King Edward VII. The decision to henceforth consider posthumous awards was affirmed in the *London Gazette* of 8 August 1902, which decreed that the decoration would be presented to the next of kin in such cases.[182] As a consequence, men who died while performing an act of valour worthy of the Victoria Cross during the Boer War were recommended. After this precedent the posthumous awarding of the Victoria Cross became a standard procedure – at least for a while.[183] The situation was once more confused when, in April 1906, the Military Secretary at the War Office, General John Ewart, announced that no more posthumous Victoria Crosses should be granted. This caused immediate confusion over the issue of whether or not posthumous Victoria Crosses were to be recognised.[184] The Warrant still allowed it, but convention once again prevented the practice from being adopted.

Posthumous awarding of the Victoria Cross remained an important issue from the beginning of the war in 1914. Convention, not the Royal Warrant, was once again used to

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[178] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 87.
[179] De la Billière, *Supreme Courage*, p. 8.
[180] Glanfield, *Bravest of the Brave*, p. 56.
[181] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 88.
[182] *London Gazette*, Iss. 27462, 8 August 1902, p. 5085; Arthur, *Awards of Honour*, p. 141; & Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 89.
[183] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 90 & 119.
[184] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 85.

determine eligibility. Not surprisingly, outside the War Office the posthumous question remained unclear and this confusion spread across to the battlefield.[185] In 1914 and 1915, there continued to be an unclear understanding from recommending officers in the field who mostly believed posthumous Victoria Crosses were not to be considered for award.[186] In the early stages of the war an award was considered posthumous if a nominee was not alive on the date on which the Commander-in-Chief signed the recommendation for transmission to the War Office. It was, of course, difficult to know whether the man was dead on the precise date of approving the recommendation.[187] From 1916 field officers were formally directed to recognise the eligibility of posthumous awards via a series of instructions regarding recommendations for honours and awards (see Chapter Three).[188]

Permitting posthumous Victoria Cross recommendations to soldiers in the First World War increased the numbers being recommended.[189] In total, 298 Victoria Crosses have been awarded posthumously, and of these, 180 were awarded during the First World War.[190] These 180 posthumous awards made up approximately 30 per cent of all Victoria Crosses awarded from actions between August 1914 and November 1918. Interestingly, M.C. Smith contends that this figure was lower than it might have been as a direct consequence of some senior officers' misunderstandings regarding allowing posthumous recommendations for the Victoria Cross in the First World War (especially during 1914 and 1915). Posthumous figures for the Second World War reached 47 per cent of a total of 182 Victoria Crosses conferred.[191] Smith estimated Victoria Cross recipients in the First World War experienced a lethality rate of three times greater than that of the rest of the military establishment.[192] Understandings of the Warrant and its sundry conditions intended the award in this instance was not simple 'valour'.

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[185] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 89.
[186] Of the 110 Victoria Crosses awarded on the Western Front from 1914-1915, 28 were awarded posthumously, 8 in 1914, and 20 in 1915; Gliddon, *VCs Handbook, The Western Front 1914-1918*, pp. 2-45.
[187] Review of New Orders, Decorations and Medals, pp. 13-14, NAA, A2/1920/3157.
[188] Correspondence regarding recommendations for Honours and Awards, 23 April 1916, AWM 25, 391/40.
[189] Arthur, *Symbol of Courage*, p. xiii.
[190] *Ibid*., (at the time of publishing Arthur's book in 2004); & Glanfield, *Bravest of the Brave*, p. 60.
[191] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 187 & 189.
[192] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

Approximately 80 per cent of Victoria Crosses awarded (492) during the First World War occurred as a result of actions on the Western Front.[193] Of the 53 Australians awarded a Victoria Cross in this theatre, 11 were awarded posthumously; 21 per cent of recipients. These are identified in Table 1 in the introduction to this thesis. Of the total number of 97 Australians who have been awarded a Victoria Cross from 1900 to 2008, 28 were posthumously awarded. These figures reveal how incorrect conclusions such as John Glanfield's analysis that there has always been a 90 per cent possibility of being killed in the performance of the deed for which the Victoria Cross was awarded.[194] The administrative change in convention immediately before and during the early years of the First World War, to once again award posthumous Victoria Crosses, proved to be significant in acknowledging many recipients who would have otherwise not been recognised with this award.

In 1920, after the First World War, the Royal Warrant was once again to officially recognise posthumous awards. This was as a result of a decision made by the 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C.' which was established to revise the Victoria Cross Warrant in July 1918. The committee agreed that a new clause would be included in the Warrant to sanction that the Victoria Cross could be awarded posthumously.[195]

Leaving the whole issue of posthumous awards to one side, the second notable interpretation of the Royal Warrant was the way in which the 'ballot system' was regarded. The original Warrant identified 'groups' of eligible men, which by the time war broke out on the Western Front were probably outdated. The ballot was to be 'in the event of a collective act of exceptional bravery on the part of fifty or more men,' whereby 'the officers and other ranks concerned were to nominate four of their number for the award.'[196] These numbers were originally based on a sub-unit group of 60 to 70 men. During the First World War, however, company numbers swelled to 250 men, without any changes to the Warrant.[197] As a result of this, and a 'lack of democratic voting rights' on the part of enlisted men, the 'ballot system' was

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[193]Glanfield, *Bravest of the Brave*, p. 98.
[194] Glanfield, *Bravest of the Brave*, p. 167. This figure is also suggested by the Victoria Cross Reference website, *The Victoria Cross Reference*, http://www.victoriacross.net/medal.asp, date consulted: 6 November 2005.
[195] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 90.
[196] Anon., *The Victoria Cross & George Cross*, p. 14.
[197] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 115.

considered obsolete and rarely used throughout the First World War.[198] The only time it was used by an infantry battalion occurred when six Victoria Crosses were awarded to soldiers of 1st Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers (29th British Division), for events surrounding the landings on the Gallipoli peninsula on 25 April 1915. These awards were balloted as the battalion's gallantry was considered collective, yet deserving of individual recognition.[199] Yet, for a ballot to be valid all men had a right to nominate, but apparently, in this case, the divisional commander, Major General Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston, only consulted the officers who were with him at the time and no vote was taken to indicate a ballot.[200]

There were three further instances of Victoria Crosses awarded by ballot during the First World War, all to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.[201] The very last time in the war that the ballot was used was following a British naval raid off the Belgian coast near Zeebrugge on 22-23 April 1918. One recipient, Sergeant N.A. Finch of the Royal Marine Artillery, remarked, '[t]his isn't really mine. I'm only selected to wear it on behalf of the regiment.'[202] This was a typical comment from a Victoria Cross ballot recipient. Most felt they had been part of a team effort, and had been 'singled out merely as representatives of the general excellence of their colleagues.'[203]

According to John Glanfield, some ballot nominees were in fact chosen by their Commanding Officer and not selected by the men involved in the action themselves.[204] This explains an amendment to the revised 1920 Warrant that included strict guidelines to be used in the case of future ballot Victoria Crosses. Interestingly, the Victoria Cross awarded to an

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[198] Overall, 46 Victoria Crosses were awarded by ballot, up to and including 1918 (of which 29 related to the Indian Mutiny from 1857 to 1859).

[199] Letter, Lieutenant General Francis Davies, Military Secretary to Secretary War Office, 26 February 1917 & Letter, Lieutenant General Ayler Hunter Weston Commanding 8 Army Corps to (General Headquarters) GHQ, 14 July 1915. TNA, ADM 1/8528/174; Notes regarding recommendations for awards with regards to operations at the Dardanelles, TNA, WO 32/4994; Notes regarding recommendations for awards with regards to 1st Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers for operations at Gallipoli, TNA, WO 32/4995; & Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 111.

[200] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 134-135. These Victoria Crosses have been historically called the 'Six VCs Before Breakfast'. In fact, these Victoria Crosses were actually awarded under Rule Seven, as the commander had sent the recommendations through stating the valour had occurred under his own eye, despite him being on a ship at least 2000 yards off shore.

[201] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 112.

[202] De la Billière, *Supreme Courage*, p. 8.

[203] *Ibid.*

[204] Glanfield, *Bravest of the Brave*, p. 21.

Australian, Major Blair Wark (32nd Battalion), for actions along the Hindenburg Line from 29 September-1 October 1918 could possibly have been a situation where the ballot system was employed. This particular case is explored in detail in Chapter Four.

Despite the numerous changes made to the original Royal Warrant of 1856, the concept of extraordinary valour remained constant. The nature of the bravery displayed by all Victoria Cross recipients, as per the Warrant's intention, put men on equal footing, regardless of rank. But what does valour mean? Does it encapsulate a recipient's personal courage where he behaves in a fearless manner; with dedication, tenacity and selflessness in that one special moment? It is difficult to objectively judge valour or identify that one behaviour in one time and place is more courageous than another. How can one brave act be more deserving than another? While such questions are perhaps unanswerable, more often than not, the award of a Victoria Cross has represented, in Peter De la Billière's words,

> contribution of excellence that is beyond the norm in the field of courage. Perhaps some are more outstanding than others, but any such judgement must be subjective and open to question. The award of a Victoria Cross has always marked out a winner as someone special and elevated above his peers in terms of prowess on the field of battle.[205]

If the 'winner' then is someone special and elevated above his peers, he nonetheless maintains an equal footing with fellow Victoria Cross recipients. Some similar characteristics are shared. A Victoria Cross holder possesses a number of key elements that were demonstrated on the battlefield at the right time, and in the right place. Above all attributes he has courage, which itself involves a combination of the elements of training, discipline, patriotism and faith. He also has been blessed with luck and opportunity. Luck refers to the ability to stay alive and dodge bullets and shells which do not discriminate in selecting their targets and have no regard for rank or position in the military hierarchy.[206] There is no doubt that luck must be taken into consideration for all acts of valour that have resulted in Victoria Crosses. But timing and locality are also associated with opportunity. This refers to being in the right place at the right time, where a conspicuous act of valour, worthy of the Victoria Cross, is not only possible but witnessed by others.

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[205] De la Billière, *Supreme Courage*, p. 354.
[206] *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 33, 35 & 356.

There is no disputing the essential requirement that a potential recipient had to be in a highly recognisable position to be recommended for a Victoria Cross. The nature of trench warfare on the Western Front gave men many opportunities to be recognised as they were often under the direct eye of witnesses and recommending officers. This geographically limited environment provided an arena where valour could be noticed, and goes some way towards explaining why so many Victoria Crosses were won on the Western Front, compared to other battlegrounds. A total of 492 Victoria Crosses were awarded for actions on the Western Front in the First World War out of a total of 1354 Victoria Crosses awarded since 1856, or 36 per cent of all Victoria Crosses awarded.[207] This percentage of decorations was awarded within a small (three per cent) window of the time since the decoration's 154 years' history at the time of writing this thesis. From an Australian perspective, of the 97 Victoria Crosses awarded since 1900, 53 were awarded on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918, some 55 per cent of the total Victoria Crosses awarded to Australians.[208] This is not to suggest that Western Front Victoria Cross deeds were more or less deserving than other Victoria Crosses, it is simply that a static system of trenches gave greater opportunity to see conspicuous acts of courage.

Bravery, luck and opportunity, however, are still only some pieces of the Victoria Cross puzzle. They add to the rules provided by the Royal Warrant, the conditions used in practice, and the evolutionary changes to both since 1856. In addition, however, there is no doubt that for a Victoria Cross to be awarded a bureaucratic process needed to be followed starting from the actual act, to recommendation, and finally to conferral. This process was not without issues of its own and it is to this issue that this thesis now turns.

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[207] Gliddon, *VCs Handbook, The Western Front 1914-1918*, p. 198.
[208] Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. vi.

Chapter 3 The Recommendation Process

Recommendations for the Victoria Cross were dependent not only on the Royal Warrant and its associated conventions, but also on a necessary process within the military chain of command. For an Australian on the Western Front to be awarded a Victoria Cross there were strict guidelines and regulations to be carefully adhered to at all levels of this military hierarchy. This chapter will explore the system of recommendation and bureaucracy from act through to eventual presentation of the Victoria Cross – a process often intensely scrutinised at every step from the field to London. It is important to note that because the AIF was administered as part of the British Army, it was subject to all the regulations outlined in British Army Orders, and subsequently repeated in Commonwealth Military Orders, for distribution to AIF soldiers. All Australian Victoria Crosses were therefore awarded under the British administrative framework.

As the very first step in this process, initial recommendations for all decorations, including Victoria Crosses, were made immediately following a unit's withdrawal from the front. These recommendations were then sent up the chain of command from platoon or company, battalion, brigade, division, corps, and army headquarters and finally to General Headquarters (GHQ).[209] Unlike the general process for recommending general honours and awards on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918, which was occasionally haphazard, the procedures for conferring a Victoria Cross were clear and unique. By 1916 it was firmly established that submissions for this award would only be considered if they passed through this strict military chain of command.[210] At each level, the Victoria Cross recommendations were assessed by the senior officer present (or their delegate), who then determined whether the recommendation was to be endorsed or rejected. It was a requirement that recommendations for the Victoria Cross, like all honours and award recommendations, were completed on the official Army Form (AF) W.3121.[211] There were six key points from the action through to investiture of the award for the

[209] Spencer, W., *Medals, The Researcher's Guide*, The National Archives, Kew, 2006, p. 109.
[210] Various correspondence, 23 July 1916, 27 July 1916, 4 October 1916, 10 October 1916, 16 October 1916, AWM 25, 391/22; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 46. Clause Seven in the original Warrant differed slightly in approval through military command hierarchy.
[211] A variety of examples of Army Form W.3121 can be seen in Appendix C.

Victoria Cross. These included the deed, recommendation, consideration, local promulgation, official publication and finally investiture.[212]

All Victoria Cross recommendations were raised and assessed first within individual units. The process began once a battalion was relieved from the line. At this point all necessary paperwork regarding any recent action would begin to be processed before forwarding to brigade headquarters.[213] Part of this administrative procedure involved determining recommendations for medals for gallantry (including the Victoria Cross) displayed by battalion members. Such recommendations initiated a specific sequence of administrative steps.[214] The battalion commander, usually either a lieutenant colonel or an experienced major, would first request for his company commanders (usually less experienced majors or a captain) to list possible recommendations for bravery awards from within their sub-units. This request would then be communicated to each platoon commander (usually a lieutenant, second lieutenant, or senior non-commissioned officer). For their part platoon commanders were supposed to keep written notes in a pocket-sized notebook of anecdotal evidence of gallantry performed by members of the platoon worthy of recognition, in case they were killed or unable to communicate necessary details after the engagement in person. At times, the exigencies of battle meant such notes were often hastily jotted down on message forms and signals notepads.[215] Of course, it was not always possible to write notes, so senior members of the platoon, such as the platoon sergeant, were often required to investigate and gather advice from the members of the platoon so that a company commander's request for information could be fulfilled. In such cases platoon members were asked to identify any remarkable acts of courage, devotion to duty, dedication to the objective, or acts which prevented the enemy from gaining an advantage. These details were then collected and presented to the company commander who, after adding his own thoughts, passed them to the battalion adjutant (usually an experienced captain) for collation.[216] The role of the adjutant in the recommendation process was critical and is explored in detail later in this chapter.

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[212] Spencer, *Medals*, p. 77.
[213] The base unit used as an example throughout this thesis is the infantry battalion, but the process remained basically the same within any unit regardless of corps or role on the Western Front.
[214] Spencer, *Medals*, p. 78.
[215] See various examples of this in AWM 25, 241/7.
[216] As noted in an interview with Mr. Graham Wilson, Staff Officer Policy Research in Directorate of Honours and Awards, 12 October 2006.

Once a Victoria Cross recommendation was approved at a unit level, it moved further up the chain of command. At each level if approval was given, it was always in the form of a signature that endorsed the application. In theory, this recommendation process should not have taken longer than one month to reach GHQ. Importantly, all recommendations for Victoria Crosses which proceeded up this path were required to be accompanied by eye-witness statements verifying the 'valour' of the individual nominations. The requirements of these witness reports was unique to the process for awarding a Victoria Cross and are discussed in detail in Chapter Four. Along with completing the AF W.3121, the collection and collation of such reports was the responsibility of the battalion adjutant.

All Victoria Cross recommendations and witness reports would proceed from battalion to the brigade level where the brigade's Deputy Assistant Adjutant General (DAAG), often a colonel, would consult with the brigade commander (a brigadier) about each individual case. At this point the DAAG might order a staff officer under his command to conduct interviews for supporting evidence of the action, or investigate for himself. It was the DAAG's prerogative to recommend to his brigadier whether to accept or reject the recommendation depending on what such interviews revealed.

If a Victoria Cross recommendation was approved at brigade level, it would then be forwarded, up along with the witness reports, to division level. Here the process of checking the recommendation followed a similar path to that which had occurred at the brigade level. The divisional commander (usually a major general) would assess each recommendation for its worth (based on the advice of his staff officers). At this level the divisional commander might also indicate if the recommendation was not detailed enough to allow the recommendation for the Victoria Cross to proceed, and possibly ask his staff to conduct an investigation in search of further evidence. Examples of recommendations 'failed' at this level are discussed in Chapter Four. Often, as a result of such investigations, an additional note of the 'consequences' of the specific action for which a Victoria Cross might be awarded would be attached to support the recommendation.

If the divisional commander endorsed a Victoria Cross recommendation, the original copy and a duplicate, as well as the witness reports, would then proceed up to corps headquarters where the responsible Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quarter Master General (DAA & QMG), usually a colonel, would process. It was unusual to have a Victoria Cross recommendation reach this stage and be rejected, given it had already passed through a number of levels in the chain of command without undue cause for concern.[217] The DAA-&-QMG's duty was primarily to ensure all aspects of the procedures had been followed properly and all relevant and specific requirements for the Victoria Cross recommendation were met. If he approved a recommendation on the advice of the DAA-&-QMG, the corps commander would forward the recommendation on to GHQ where the Military Secretary in the field, Major General William Peyton, handled all further administrative requirements.[218] Peyton presented all Victoria Cross recommendations to the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Douglas Haig, for final approval. Once Haig gave his assent, Peyton forwarded it on to the War Office in London.[219]

There were always inherent risks involved in this process of assessment from unit level to GHQ. The recommendations could be destroyed or become lost on the way to the next level, and as a result, duplicate copies were required to be kept at the battalion level. A further risk was that at any level in the chain of command, the senior officer judging the recommendation could reject it.

The final hurdle for a Victoria Cross recommendation was to successfully negotiate the relevant authorities within the War Office. From this point the process by which an individual was recommended for an award was controlled by the Military Secretary's Branch.[220] Specifically, Victoria Cross recommendations and witness reports were sent to the Adjutant General's office and from there they were presented to the 'Victoria Cross Committee'.[221] When

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[217] This is difficult to prove given the complete set of Victoria Cross recommendations were destroyed on 7 September 1940 when the London archival records were bombed during the Second World War.
[218] William Peyton was a British Officer from 1885 to 1930. He enlisted and eventually commanded 7th Dragoon Guards. He served in the Sudan (1897-1898) and South Africa (1899-1900). Of significance to this thesis is his role as Military Secretary to Douglas Haig on the Western Front from May 1916 to March 1918.
[219] As noted in an interview with Mr. Graham Wilson, Staff Officer Policy Research in Directorate of Honours and Awards, 12 October 2006.
[220] See various correspondence files in TNA, ADM 1/8528/174; & Spencer, *Medals*, p. 109. The Military Secretary in the War Office during the First World War was Lieutenant General Francis Davies.
[221] Glanfield, *Bravest of the Brave*, p. 55.

the First World War began this Committee was established to assess all Victoria Cross recommendations. It included bureaucratic and military members appointed by the War Office and Admiralty.[222] During the period 1916 to 1918 the committee consisted of the Secretary of the War Office, the Deputy Chief of Imperial General Staff (DCIGS) and the Deputy Military Secretary (DMS).[223] The Committee was tasked to check that the recommendation was in accordance with the Royal Warrant requirements before deciding whether or not to pass it onto the King for final ratification, or investigated further. At this level, the Victoria Cross Committee could make further requests for additional substantiated evidence through direct contact with Peyton at GHQ.[224] The type of investigations conducted were usually verification of eye-witness evidence and/or interviewing battalion Commanding Officers. If the Committee directed such action it was invariably carried out by the brigade DAAG's staff officers.

If the Victoria Cross Committee agreed with a recommendation it would be forwarded to the Secretary of State for War (along with the witness reports) who would once again check off the recommendation against the Victoria Cross Warrant before forwarding it to King George V for final approval at Buckingham Palace.[225] With the King's approval, the recommendation and witness reports were then used to formulate the official citation which was immediately published in the *London Gazette*, followed by publication in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*. The publication of the citation, describing the actions and achievements of an individual who was to receive a Victoria Cross marked the end of the assessment process.[226] The award

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[222] Letter, Military Secretary (War Office) to Commander-in-Chief (CinC) Sir John French, 25 November 1914. TNA, WO 32/4993. Unfortunately due to the archive records being destroyed in the 7 September 1940 London bombing in the Second World War, the details of members of this committee have not been identified, nor is there any evidence to suggest how often clarification was asked of officers in the field by the Committee.

[223] Minutes of the First Meeting of the 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C', 30 August 1918, Whitehall, TNA, WO 32/3443, p. 34 (original transcript page numbers). Unfortunately none of the records of the 'Victoria Cross Committee' exist as these were destroyed in the September 1940 bombing of London, and as a result the names of members on this committee are unknown with the exception of Colonel Malcolm D. Graham, who was the War Office's Deputy Military Secretary during the First World War.

[224] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, pp. 217-218 & 220-221. During WWI the VC Committee was also known as the Victoria Cross Commission.

[225] This position changed hands a number of times during the war. From 5 August 1914 to 5 June 1916 it was held by Lord Horatio Kitchener of Khartoum; from 6 June 1916 to 5 December 1916 it was David Lloyd George; from 10 December 1916 to 18 April 1918 it was Edward Stanley, and from 18 April 1918 to 10 January 1919 the position was held by The Viscount (Alfred) Milner.

[226] Spencer, *Medals*, p. 78. The *London Gazette* has been the official newspaper of the State, publishing announcements relating to military commissions, promotions and appointments, and military and civil honours and awards.

would then be recorded in the 'Victoria Cross Registry', kept in the War Office by the Secretary of State for War. Citations for Victoria Crosses were also subsequently published in Army Orders following the publication in the *London Gazette*.[227]

Although a detailed description of the action which resulted in the award of a Victoria Cross was required on the original recommendation AF W.3121 form, it was not always included in the final citation published in the *London Gazette*. The published citations of Australian recipients suggests there must have been something of a 'formula' of what to include from the recommendation that, in fact changed during the course of the war.[228] For example, all citations published in 1915 included the date of action, yet these dates were not again included in any other Australian Victoria Cross citation awarded on the Western Front until November 1918. There is one exception, that being the citation for Private Roy Inwood (10th Battalion) for actions at Polygon Wood from 20 – 21 September 1917. These date omissions caused some concern when the official histories of the war were being written as there was no indication of when or where a recommendation for a Victoria Cross was made. This specific issue was raised by Brigadier J. Edmonds while preparing to write the British official histories. In May 1935 Edmonds wrote to C.E.W. Bean, Australia's official historian of the First World War, requesting details of the 7 April 1918 action surrounding the award of Lieutenant Percy Storkey's (19th Battalion) Victoria Cross. Details including the date and place had been left out of Storkey's citation as it appeared in the *London Gazette*.[229]

Once the award of the Victoria Cross to a recipient was published in the *London Gazette*, with citation, instructions would be sent for a medal to be prepared for presentation to the recipient by either the King, Haig, an army, or a corps commander in the field. As far as Royal interference went, there are no known cases of the King ever rejecting a Victoria Cross

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[227] Army Orders, 1914 War Office, 1 January 1915. TNA, WO 123/56; Abbott, P.E. & Tamplin, J.M.A., *British Gallantry Awards*, Nimrod Dix & Co., London,1981, p. 292; Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, pp. 204 & 217; & Harper & Richardson, *In the Face of the Enemy*, pp. 14-15 & 227.
[228] See Appendix D for a complete list of all 53 AIF Victoria Cross citations from the Western Front, 1916 to 1918.
[229] Letter, Edmonds to Bean, 23 May 1935. AWM 38, 7953/30/2; Inwood: *London Gazette* Iss. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 4 of edition 26 November 1917, [p. 12330 of 1917]; & Storkey: *London Gazette* Iss. 30733, 7 June 1918, p. 1 of edition 4 June 1918, [p. 6775 of 1918].

recommendation during the First World War. In fact he took a keen interest in the decoration, and often chose to confer the award on a recipient personally if he could.[230]

Of all the individuals involved in the Victoria Cross recommendation process, including the King, the most important individual was always the unit Adjutant. It was he who was assigned to do the preliminary investigations for a potential Victoria Cross and draft the recommendation that addressed the specific criteria of the extant Victoria Cross Warrant. The Adjutant, was the key link for Victoria Cross recommendations within the field. He was responsible for all administrative and routine duties within a battalion. From time to time therefore, recommendations were mentioned in unit war diaries, but this was not consistent.[231] With their early-stage role in the recommendation process for a Victoria Cross, Adjutants needed to have a working knowledge of the Victoria Cross Warrant and a full understanding of the correct procedures, and changes made to them, required for such recommendations. Writing and communicative ability was also an advantage when recommending the award, and successful Victoria Cross recommendations were, to some degree, dependent on an individual Adjutant's administrative skills.[232]

As part of his initial investigation, the Adjutant would first need to gather all the particulars relevant to the action for which the award of a Victoria Cross was suggested before writing or typing a formal recommendation on the AF W.3121.[233] It was crucial that he follow correct procedure when investigating and writing up Victoria Cross recommendations. First,

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[230] Halliday, *Valour Reconsidered*, pp. 20-21.

[231] See diary notes in AWM 18, 9954/42/7; & various files found in battalion and brigade unit diaries in AWM 4, AIF Unit Diaries: The AIF unit war diaries were maintained in a haphazard way during the First World War. From time to time there was mention of Victoria Cross recipients in battalion and brigade diaries but this was usually just a list of names, often referred to in operational summaries. Of the 53 Victoria Crosses relevant to this thesis only 21 were mentioned in battalion and brigade war diaries around the time of their Victoria Cross deed. Of the 1st Division the following Victoria Cross recipients were mentioned: Leak, Kenny, Howell, Birks, Tubb (mentioned only as a casualty) & Davy. Of the 2nd Division those mentioned included Castleton, Cherry, Storkey, Borella, Gaby & Lowerson. Of the 3rd Division those mentioned included Carroll, Statton, Gordon, Cartwright, McGee & Jeffries. Of the 4th Division those mentioned included Jacka, Axford & Sexton (Maurice Buckley). No Victoria Cross recipients were mentioned in any battalion or brigade war diaries from the 5th Division. Rarely was there mention at all relating to battalion or brigade recommendations for honours and awards. Of the 21 discussed in diaries only Leak, Castleton, Lowerson, McGee, Axford & Sexton (Maurice Buckley) were named in relation to their recommendations.

[232] Letter, Monash to CO 11th Brigade, 17 January 1917. NLA, MS1884, 1/71/487/75a.

[233] Spencer, *Medals*, p. 105. Recommendations to members of the Army were submitted on AF W.3121 and these forms survived the war, only to be destroyed by German action on London on 7 September 1940.

recommendations for the award were to be treated as strictly confidential and on no account were officers and men (the potential recipients) to be informed of their nomination. Recommendations on the AF W.3121 form were also to be submitted in duplicate.[234] Only recommendations made through a correctly completed AF W.3121, when sent up the chain of command, were considered – although both typewritten and handwritten submissions were acceptable.[235] This form required specific details including the nominee's rank, surname (written in block letters and preceding the Christian name), service number (if applicable), unit, date of recommendation, and the date, place and circumstances of the recent action. Care needed to be taken with the particular details so they were complete and correct before the form moved up the chain of command.[236]

An important memorandum from DAA-&-QMG of 1st Anzac Corps was sent on 23 July 1916 to the various Australian divisional headquarters. This memorandum clarified for unit Adjutants the correct procedure for submitting honours and awards recommendations on the AF W.3121 form. The date of this memorandum corresponded with the first day for the battle of Pozières, as a large volume of recommendations was expected following the predicted intensity of this battle. This 'clarification' involved identifying the two distinct kinds of award. First, for immediate acknowledgment of a specific act of gallantry where all recommendations were to be considered the relevant form was to be forwarded to corps headquarters without delay following the act. The Victoria Cross fell under this category and was only ever considered for an 'immediate' award. The second specified category of awards were for demonstrations of good, steady work over a sustained period considered worthy of recognition. These periodical-type recommendations were to be sent up the chain of command only when there was a call for names to be included on the general list of recommendations for an 'Honours Despatch'. A further reminder was given to Adjutants that all unit recommendations be entered on AF W.3121 forms in order of merit. From this point, however, a covering letter was also required, written by the Adjutant, which specified separate listings of officers and men and which confirmed that all associated correspondence was being treated confidentially.[237]

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[234] See Appendix C for a number of successful and unsuccessful Victoria Cross recommendations and variations of the Army Form W.3121.
[235] See various examples of recommendations for 10th Battalion, 1915, 3rd Brigade, 1915 & 21st Battalion, 1918. AWM 25, 391/38.
[236] Memorandum, Lieutenant Colonel AA & QMG 5th Division, 27 April 1916. AWM 25, 391/4.
[237] Memorandum, DAA & QMG 1st ANZAC HQ to 2nd Division HQ, 23 July 1916. AWM 25, 391/22.

Despite the requirement for consistency and accuracy, in practice the manner of completion of AF W.3121 form varied markedly. The 'recommended award' was always identified on the form, but it was not uncommon for a different award to be inserted as it progressed 'up the chain'. Some typed AF W.3121s also included scribbled notes down their margins and at the bottom of their pages. Some such notes included additions or changes made to the recommendations as they moved between various headquarters. On others handwriting was missing altogether, with some forms even having the approval signatures stamped on.[238] Interestingly, a number of AF W.3121s showed recommendations that had been changed with the initial award crossed out and replaced with (usually) a lesser decoration. In any case, once the Adjutant had filled out this form he then passed on all final recommendations to the battalion's commanding officer for signature, and the recommendation moved up to the next level.[239] The AF W.3121 forms were submitted in 'order of merit' for officers and other ranks, meaning highest recommended awards were listed first on the forms. This allowed higher level commanders to 'cut out' numbers for lesser gallantry awards, if there were too many, from the bottom up.

If the battalion Adjutant's writing skills were not adequate it could mean a gallant deed potentially worthy of a Victoria Cross might be ignored or the recommended award altered. Adjutant staff skills were therefore crucial to the 'strength' of the argument for award. On occasion advice was given to Adjutants to improve their techniques in formulating a recommendation for a Victoria Cross. In a letter dated 27 July 1916, for example, a warning was issued to unit commanders in 5th Division that names forwarded for recognition of gallantry and meritorious work in connection with operations on 19 and 20 July at Fromelles would not proceed if generalised terms such as 'displayed coolness and courage', 'held on to first line' or 'did good work' were used. Exceptional performances needed to be specifically detailed and not be written in terms of generalisations or with vague descriptions. It was also noteworthy that there were disparities among recommending battalions that were involved in the assault of 19 July at Fromelles. One recommended 23 bravery awards, another 19, while another unit

[238] A wide variety of recommendations can be found in the file series AWM 25, 391.
[239] As noted in an interview with Mr. Graham Wilson, Staff Officer Policy Research in Directorate of Honours and Awards, 12 October 2006.

recommended only four. Divisional headquarters expected there to be some uniformity regarding the numbers and concluded that a problem existed whereby some Commanding Officers were too relaxed in their nominations, while others were too reticent in acknowledging gallantry.[240] The extension of this line of thought was a concern that if commanders were not consistent in recognising bravery then perhaps the situation might arise in the future Victoria Crosses might be harder to come by in some battalions than in others. No Victoria Crosses were actually awarded for Fromelles.

On 29 August 1916 the most influential directive relating to awarding the Victoria Cross for the remainder of the war was released. The impact of this paperwork changed the ways that Victoria Cross recommendations were considered thereafter. The 29 August 1916 directive was distributed to all AIF units advising that in future Victoria Crosses would *only* be given for acts of conspicuous gallantry which were *materially conducive to the gaining of victory*. The central repercussion of this ruling was that awards would only be granted in victorious battles. At the same time it was also advised that *cases of life saving would not be considered for the award of a Victoria Cross*.[241] The detailed implications of this particular correspondence are explored in detail in Chapter Five.

The key for the Adjutant to properly complete recommendations for honours and awards was to follow the instructions produced in pamphlet 'S.S. 477 Memorandum regarding recommendations for honours and rewards' first issued by Peyton, Military Secretary at GHQ, on 23 September 1916 to all British and Dominion forces on the Western Front.[242] Despite this instruction, and despite the fact that the recommendation process itself and staff work required, and the Royal Warrant, did not change from 1916 to 1918, the requirements worthy of a Victoria Cross remained unclear to many Adjutants. Although the Warrant clearly stated the conditions relevant to the award, these broad requisites were not specific enough to offer detailed procedural guidance for officers in the field. As a consequence, even after 1916 various additional instructions were distributed by the Military Secretary's branch at GHQ each year in

[240] Letter, Lieutenant Colonel AA & QMG 5th Division to unit COs, 27 July 1916. AWM 25, 391/22.
[241] Letter, 2nd Division HQ to 5th, 6th & 7th Brigade & Divisional units, 29 August 1916. AWM 25, 391/2.
[242] Memorandum, Military Secretary to all BEF units, 23 September 1916. AWM 27, 368/13.

Standing Orders and as publications titled 'Instructions' or 'Memorandum'.[243] If followed, these provided solid guidelines for completing recommendations for honours and awards, including the Victoria Cross. Other correspondence in the form of letters and minutes were regularly sent to officers in the field by the Military Secretary to clarify specific points of confusion noted in numerous recommendations being sent up the chain of command. Part of the problem lay in the continued poor staff work of battalion Adjutants.

The 23 September 1916 'Instructions Regarding Recommendations for Honours and Rewards' nonetheless proved to be the most important document to Adjutants throughout fighting on the Western Front regarding the completion of Victoria Cross recommendations. These instructions gave detailed guidelines on how to submit recommendations for the Victoria Cross and were supposed to be used in conjunction with the Royal Warrant. Following the first issue, subsequent updated issues were released in August 1917 and September 1918. One of the primary aims of the instructions was to clarify the bureaucratic guidelines regarding recommendations for honours and awards, and to remind Adjutants how to write them correctly and apply the conditions relevant to specific awards.

The 1916 memorandum gave particular attention to instructions for submitting recommendations. From this point all were strictly to be submitted on the official Army Form W.3121. No other forms were to be recognised as they had on occasions in the past. From now on, these forms were to be sent in duplicate to the Military Secretary with any previous awards also to *always* be stated on the form. This may have been as a result of the perceived need to ensure awards were being spread around the troops adequately to ensure 'morale' remained high. There was also a reminder that recommendations for the Victoria Cross needed to provide evidence that identified the *exceptional* nature of gallant act that stood out and above recommendations for other awards.[244] At this point Peyton was particularly frustrated by a tendency for commanders to resubmit recommendations if an earlier attempt was unsuccessful. He stressed that if award was not approved it would automatically be considered for a lesser award later in Honours Despatches. There was, therefore, no need for resubmission.

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[243] The instructions publications always referred to 'rewards' but for the purpose of this thesis, they will be referred to as 'awards' unless the titles are mentioned in the context of quotations.
[244] Memorandum, Military Secretary to all BEF units, 23 September 1916. AWM 27, 368/13.

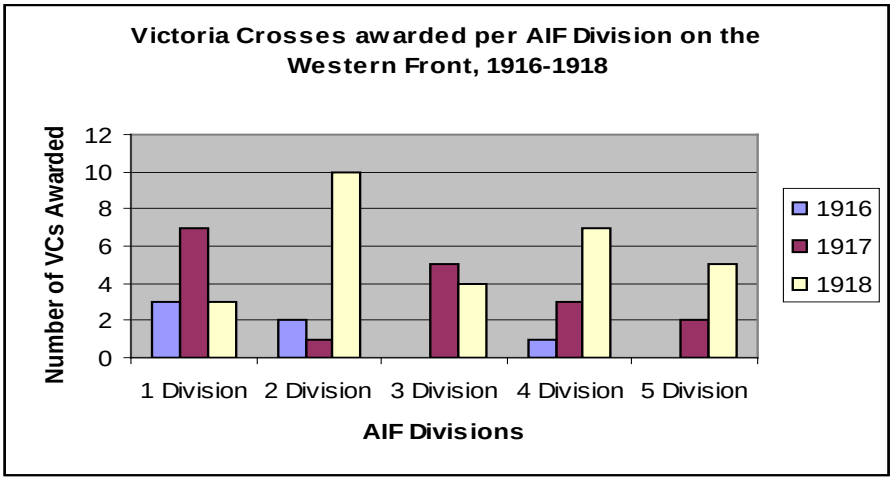
From time to time throughout 1916 new and slight amendments relating to instructions on completing recommendations were also issued. For example, the Adjutant was advised to check that the four copies of the AF W.3121 to be submitted were identical, advising that if a mistake in typing was corrected on the top form, this needed to be repeated on the other three forms. Nominal rolls and Army Lists were also to be submitted along with recommendations as these were supposed to align with the names of recommended men on the AF W.3121. Sufficient space was also to be left at the bottom of the AF W.3121 form for corps and army commanders to sign. Adjutants were now also required to indicate if the recommendation was for a 'bar' to a previously awarded decoration.[245] Adjutants were reminded that for numerous recommendations for a particular raid or small operation, all were to be forwarded together for consideration. Finally, from this point, there would be no recommendations allowed for immediate awards if the nominees became prisoners of war.[246]

Later, on 10 October 1916, a specific circular memorandum was distributed from 5th Division headquarters to its subordinate units bringing further attention to the continued unsatisfactory way in which recommendations for awards, including Victoria Crosses, were being forwarded in that division following the engagements around Pozières. At least half of the recommendations submitted for this action needed to be amended, indicating a poor level of staff work in this regard by unit Adjutants. Many 5th Division recommendations in this case were written carelessly and superficially. Recommendations were clearly to contain full name, rank, regimental number and unit. They were to provide accurate and definite details including the date and place of the deed, as well as all details relating to the act. They were not to use exaggerated adjectives in describing the gallantry; statements such as 'great courage' or 'determination' were considered unacceptable in the 5th Division at least, at this stage of the war. Major General Gordon Legge, the divisional commander, and his staff did not have the time or inclination to personally edit recommendations, send them back for further information, or draw the attention of unit commanders to incorrect recommendations.[247] It was significant that no

[245] A Bar was awarded when a gallantry medal was duplicated; this applied also to the Victoria Cross.
[246] Memorandum, Assistant Military Secretary 5th Army to HQ 1st Anzac Corps, 8 February 1917. AWM 25, 391/23.
[247] Circular memorandum, Lieutenant Colonel AA & QMG 5th Division HQ to divisional units, 16 October 1916. AWM 25, 391/22.

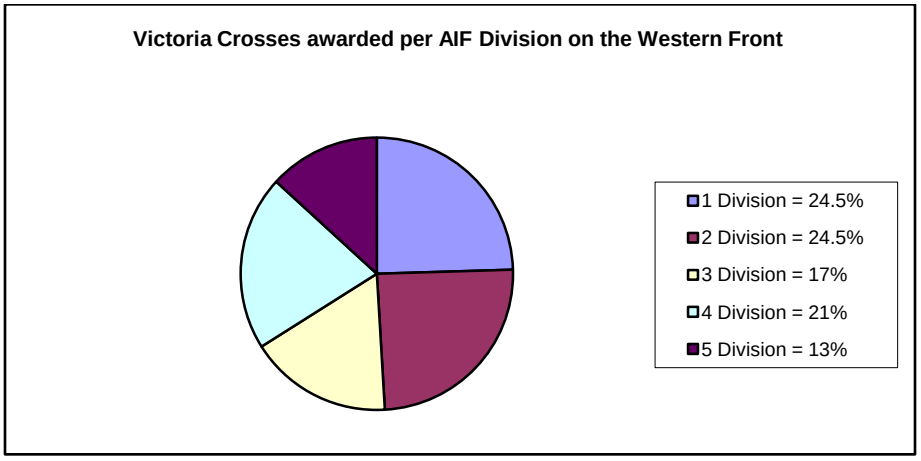
Victoria Cross recommendations were approved for any 5th Division soldier until May 1917 (see Figure 1). In fact, in total the 5th Division had fewer Victoria Crosses awarded throughout its three-year involvement on the Western Front than any other AIF Division. Poor staff-work may well have been a factor here (see Figure 2).

Figure 1:



Source: Staunton, A., *Victoria Cross, Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2005, pp. 51-196.

Figure 2:



Source: Staunton, A., *Victoria Cross, Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2005, pp. 51-196.

It is important to note that during 1916 the 3rd Division saw little action and was not involved in the major battles during that year, which helps explain why no Victoria Crosses were awarded to this division in that year. However, when the division arrived on the Western Front in late 1916 its inexperience with regards the administrative process for rewarding honours and awards was noted. Major General Sir John Monash, commanding 3rd Division, was given advice specifically regarding general recommendations in March 1917. He received direction from Headquarters 2nd Anzac Corps, for example, concerning distribution of Military Medals. Monash was told specifically that this award was too frequently recommended on the grounds of bringing in wounded men, and that it ought instead to be used to recognise acts of gallantry in action.[248] Even divisional commanders such as Monash, it seemed, were not completely aware of the requirements for gallantry recommendations, which inevitably affected potential Victoria Cross recommendations. However, Monash gave advice as often as he received it. In a letter dated 17 January 1917 he wrote to the commanding officer of 11th Brigade to provide some direction regarding writing up recommendations of their gallantry. First, he reminded his subordinate formations that if recommendations were forwarded from brigade to division then the recommending brigadier needed to endorse these by signing them, thus indicating his approval of the recommendation. Second, recommendations were requested to be sent in a 'clean' state, as some submitted were 'very soiled and unattractive'.[249] Third, Monash believed that although most of the acts performed were meritorious, they had been described in a 'most unconvincing way' by Adjutants. Monash suggested that too often nothing 'special' was disclosed to justify the award. Statements were too often too broad, and 'much resourcefulness', for example, did not justify recognition, as Non Commissioned Officers (NCOs) were often expected to set a good example.[250] Although these were general comments about award recommendations, and did not specifically relate to Victoria Cross recommendations, they helped ensure in Monash's formations that when future Victoria Cross recommendations were forwarded, they followed correct procedures, and were subsequently considered. It was essential that good staff work was performed to ensure fair consideration when sending recommendations up the chain of

[248] Letter, HQ 2nd Anzac to Monash, 31 March 1917. NLA, MS1884, 4/937/2305.
[249] Letter, HQ 2nd Anzac to Monash, 31 March 1917. NLA, MS1884, 4/937/2305.
[250] Letter, Monash CO 3rd Division to CO 11th Brigade, 17 January 1917. NLA, MS1884, 1/71/487/75a.

command. Perhaps not surprisingly the 3rd Division, despite seeing less combat than the other AIF divisions, recorded the second highest number of Victoria Crosses' of all of them in 1917.

In other AIF divisions, despite Peyton's instructions issued in the S.S. 477 pamphlet in September 1916, submissions continued to be incorrectly completed and as a consequence, further memoranda regarding honours and awards were issued on 16 October 1916.[251] The problem, however, was widespread across the BEF forces and it was not exclusively an AIF problem. By 1917 military authorities were becoming stricter in that in future no recommendations would be considered for honours or rewards unless they followed the correct format on the required AF W.3121 form. By this time, after multiple reminders and 'sample' recommendations being sent out to units, Adjutants were expected to get it right. This sample read:

> At (*insert place*) on (*insert date*) (*insert name*) displayed conspicuous bravery, coolness etc. Then set out the facts fully (*without adjectives*), with their results as regards the enemy. Then state, (*if the case is so*), effect of his conduct on those with or under his command.[252]

Of particular note from this date also, an additional requirement was added that Victoria Cross recommendations be accompanied by two *eye-witness* reports.

It was further necessary by late 1916 that recommendations sent in by battalions give *all* particulars as prescribed. Each case was to be written up separately by the unit though at times this meant repetition of names, places and dates for each recommendation. Before this, recommendations of the same deed often included multiple names if the deed was considered to have been performed equally by a number of men. Divisional Headquarters would no longer accept such recommendations and for units which did not comply. Furthermore, GHQ was clear in that it would only grant awards for those whose forms were correct and complete. From this point cases whose recommendation was incorrectly completed by Adjutants would go strictly unrecognised.[253]

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[251] Circular memorandum, Lieutenant Colonel AA & QMG 5th Division HQ to divisional units, 16 October 1916. AWM 25, 391/22.
[252] *Ibid.*
[253] Circular memorandum, Lieutenant Colonel AA & QMG 5th Division HQ to divisional units, 16 October 1916. AWM 25, 391/22.

Minor procedural changes for how recommendations for honours and awards were to be submitted continued throughout 1917. A conference of the five BEF armies' Military Secretaries was held at GHQ on 10 February 1917 to update the requirements for honours and awards recommendations, including the Victoria Cross. One significant change to the process of submitting recommendations was introduced following this 1917 conference relating to improving the time it took for gallantry recommendations to travel up the chain of command to GHQ. It was decided that one month was ample time for recommendations to reach the Commander-in-Chief. This did not remove the requirement that at each level in the chain of command dates and signatures were needed to endorse the recommendation before it could be moved onto the next level. A new exception to this condition, however, was for those recommendations resulting from major operations. The Committee decided that in such cases recommendations could be submitted via telegram in situations where the officers and men had been badly wounded and were not likely to live long.[254] This amendment was to allow a man to be rewarded for his gallantry before he died. Previous to this there were a number of cases of individuals not being recognised before they died as a result of delays in processing of his recommendation. Despite the Victoria Cross being available posthumously, this alteration was still particularly important for recommendations for the Victoria Cross, given that it often took longer for these to be approved due to the extra steps taken in London after recommendations had reached the level of Commander-in-Chief. There was an ever-present need for Victoria Cross recommendations and witness reports to be written up as soon as practical and collated by the Adjutant.

Further reminders were posted in a memorandum on 12 March 1917 to 1st Anzac Corps from the Assistant Military Secretary of the Fifth Army again advising Commanding Officers and their Adjutants about the correct procedure for submission of recommendations. This memorandum was in specific preparation for the battle of Bullecourt. Nine points of clarification were included all of which had been previously outlined in the 1916 S.S. 477, including a

[254] Memorandum, Assistant Military Secretary Fifth Army to HQ 1st Anzac Corps, 28 February 1917; & Memorandum, DAA & QMG 1st Anzac Corps to 1st, 2nd, 4th & 5th Divisions, 14 March 1917. AWM 25, 391/23.

reminder to complete recommendations correctly.[255] The Military Secretary's Branch at GHQ might have expected that by 1917 recommendations for honours and awards should be completed accurately. This was, however, still not the case and battalion Adjutants were almost solely to blame. It is difficult to explain why this would be the case as there was not a large turnover of Adjutants in Australian battalions so unfamiliarity could not be a significant cause for frequent mistakes in submitting the forms. The most likely explanation could be the increase in the intensity of battles, especially after the artillery barrage that occurred at Messines in June 1917, where staff paperwork was often completed hastily, thus leading to careless mistakes.

Some particular confusion resulted in June 1917 when the Fourth Army published its Standing Orders indicating that all immediate awards for raids on enemy trenches had to be submitted together, including those for Victoria Crosses.[256] As various unit recommendations were often submitted at different times for the same action, higher command was having difficulty determining who should be recommended when large numbers were involved. Higher headquarters needed to get a full picture of the event and details such as the number of officers and other ranks of the raiding party, together with the number of Military Medals, for example, already awarded by the corps commander for the same raid. This information was required in order for recommendations for such operations to be dealt with as a 'whole'. Victoria Crosses awarded to Australians on the Western Front for successful raids on enemy trenches in this period included Lieutenant Rupert Moon's (58th Battalion) actions on 12 May 1917 near Bullecourt and Private John Ryan's (55th Battalion) raid on 30 September 1918 near Bellicourt. This demonstrated the increased use in 1917 of mass numbers of troops to surprise the enemy in offensive attacks. Previously, the nature of allied trench warfare was more aligned with avoiding unnecessary risks by staying in your own trench and hoping the laws of attrition would eventually wear the enemy down.[257]

An update of guidelines for recommendations of honours and awards was published by Peyton, the Military Secretary, on 4 August 1917 at GHQ. This M.S. 477A was in a similar

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[255] Memorandum, Assistant Military Secretary Fifth Army to 1st Anzac Corps, 12 March 1917. AWM 25, 391/23.
[256] Holman, H.C. *Fourth Army Standing Orders Part 1 (2nd ed.)*, Harrison & Sons, London, 20 June 1917, pp 290-292.
[257] Beaumont, 'Australia's War', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 16.

format to the September 1916 S.S. 477 version with a number of noteworthy alterations for Adjutants. The Army Form W.3121 was initially required in duplicate, then the Standing Orders issued in June 1917 required the form in triplicate, but now according to the August 1917 instructions, the form was only required in duplicate once again.[258] To add to the confusion, AIF formations added their own requirements, including that recommendations should be copied in quadruplicate.[259] The original and two copies were forwarded onto the Military Secretary while the recommending authority kept the other copies. In 1918 the procedure reverted to triplicate copies. No doubt these minor changes in requirements added to the confusion felt by unit Adjutants trying to follow the correct procedure. Another point of friction involved the mention of previous awards. In September 1916 the Military Secretary wrote to Haig asking that the mentioning of previous awards listed on the recommendation form cease. But then, in August 1917 Haig reversed this decision and requested that previous awards should once again be mentioned on the Army Form W.3121 recommendations. This certainly occurred in the 14th Battalion, for example, as each new recommendation for Albert Jacka included his previous awards listed after his name.[260]

Unfortunately, despite a long string of updates and instructions, recommendations that were completed with mistakes continued to be forwarded up the chain of command. As a consequence an exemplar AF W.3121 was distributed on 14 August 1917 to display how it should to be completed. This was sent to unit Adjutants (Table 3).

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[258] Memorandum, Peyton to Haig, 4 August 1917, AWM 25, 391/45, Memorandum, Assistant Military Secretary 5th Army to HQ 1st Anzac Corps, 28 February 1917, AWM, 25, 391/23 & an identical S.S. 477. A was also located in AWM 3DRL, 2316.

[259] Memorandum, Foott, AA & QMG 1st Division to Williams 2nd Division, circa 1917. Found in both AWM 25, 391/45 & AWM 25, 391/3.

[260] As seen in Albert Jacka's recommendation for a Bar to his MC, 15 April 1918. AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007.

Table 3: **An example Victoria Cross recommendation.**

Schedule No. (To be left blank.)	Reg. No.	Rank and Name Unit	Action for which recommended	Recommended by	Honour or Award	(To be left blank)
		Lieut. (Temp Capt) John George SMITH 400th Bn.	At POZIERES, FRANCE on 12th August (Temp. Capt.) SMITH was in command of ……(description of action)…… Original statements by Major JONES and Captain BROWN attached.	Lt. G.O.C. 100th Inf. Brigade.	V.C.	

Source: Form, 'Procedure to be adopted in preparing and submitting lists of names of those recommended for honours and awards, 1917', AWM 25, 391/3.

By 1918 it seemed that most battalion Adjutants had at last become experienced in the art of writing a successful recommendation, with some were perhaps prone even to exaggerating recommendations to represent a deed as more worthy than that which was actually performed. This is probably what happened in regards to the Victoria Cross recommendation for Sergeant Stanley McDougall. C.E.W. Bean, Australia's official war correspondent, interviewed McDougall regarding his actions at Dernancourt on 28 March 1918 and was alarmed to discover that his story was dissimilar to that which his battalion stated in its recommendation. Bean noted 'the boy would [not] talk about himself, was most modest. His action was a magnificent one, but the highly coloured version … by admiring officers and comrades does not represent it at all.'[261] McDougall told Bean, for example, that there were no smoke shells, no smoke bombs and indeed

[261] Bean's notebook, March 1918, p. 6. AWM 38, 606/184/2; & *London Gazette* Iss. 30667, 3 May 1918, p. 2 of edition 30 April 1918, [p. 5354 of 1918].

no smoke at all (all of which are identified in McDougall's citation).[262] He also had seven men with him, while his citation indicates he was alone.[263] Later in his notebook Bean wrote 'the whole of this story is completely inaccurate – the facts are in the report of my talk with McDougall 15/4/18.'[264] As a consequence of this incident Bean questioned the integrity of the whole system for honours and awards, including the legitimacy of Victoria Crosses awarded to Australians on the Western Front. If McDougall's inflated recommendation was successful, perhaps, in Bean's mind, there were other Australians who had received the Victoria Cross on the basis of an Adjutant's writing skills, and the imaginations of the officers within each Australian unit. When writing his official histories, Bean did not record similar discrepancies when in the writing process.[265]

Specific requirements continued to change the way in which Victoria Crosses were recommended as a result of fighting on the Western Front during the second half of 1918. In July 1918 a 'Part II' of its 1917 instruction was published by the Military Secretary's Branch at GHQ.[266] The term 'fighting services' referred to those eligible for the Victoria Cross, meaning award was only available to soldiers of the fighting services.[267] These included all personnel in the divisional organisation, army corps commanders and their staff officers, and army and corps troops whose duties took them into positions of risk and danger. This definition was a late acknowledgement as the issue had been raised in December 1916 by the War Office on behalf of the King who was concerned about recommendations for awards and in general whether or not there was a clear distinction between those serving in direct contact with the enemy, and those behind the lines.[268] Then, in August 1918, another change to the way in which Victoria Cross recommendations were to be accepted was instituted, in that now typewritten replicas of Army

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[262] Bean's notebook, March 1918, p. 10. AWM 38, 606/184/2.
[263] Bean's notebook, March 1918, p. 16. AWM 38, 606/184/2; & *London Gazette* Iss. 30667, 3 May 1918, p. 2 of edition 30 April 1918, [p. 5354 of 1918].
[264] Bean's notebook, circa April 1918, p. 62. AWM 38, 606/185/2.
[265] Bean, C.E.W., *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 Volume 5 The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1937, pp. 194-197.
[266] Fourth Army 'A' notes (PART 2) (3rd ed.), Harrison & Sons, London, July 1918.
[267] Fighting Services should be the only soldiers' eligible for the Victoria Cross was first suggested by Major General Sir W.T. Furse in a conference at the War Office held on 1 July 1918. TNA, WO 32/5400 1918.
[268] Letter, B.B. Cubitt WO to Haig, 8 December 1916. AWM 25, 391/22.

Form W.3121 were acceptable if units had run out of the official forms W.3121. This was applicable to all units fighting under British command.[269]

The final change in procedural matters relating to the Victoria Cross during the First World War was identified in September 1918 when the Military Secretary's Branch sent out the final updated version to the pamphlet 'Instructions Regarding Recommendations for Honours and Rewards', S.S. 477.[270] This superseded the M.S. 477A of 4 August 1917 and was the last significant document Adjutants needed to incorporate in their final Victoria Cross recommendations for the war. In this last set of instructions the Army Form W.3121 was to have no more than three copies, with the original and duplicate sent to the Military Secretary at GHQ. The third copy was to be retained by the recommending authority or otherwise directed by the relevant army commander. It is not known whether AIF units followed this requirement or continued to quadruplicate their recommendations for honours and awards as directed in 1917. A further change occurred in that now all previous awards were to be stated, including bars, showing dates of awards on each recommendation. There was also an interesting comment stating that recommendations for immediate awards were to be judged on 'merits'. If the required standard was reached, an award would result. But, the 'standard' for award was to be maintained.[271] This may have resulted from the concern that war weariness was influencing the men's spirits and being acknowledged for their efforts went a long way to lifting their morale. Also included in the September 1918 instructions were articles that affected the Victoria Cross specifically. From then on there was a requirement to let the War Office know if a recipient who was yet to be presented with the Victoria Cross was also to travel to London, and therefore have the opportunity for the King to invest the recipient with his medal.[272]

Throughout the period 1916 to 1918, once the King approved the awarding a Victoria Cross to a soldier an announcement was made to the men in the trenches on the front line. Such publicity was reinforced at all levels of military command from army, down to corps, division, brigade, and battalion or unit. News reached the men occupying the front lines in a similar

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[269] Letter, 1st Division HQ to 1st Divisional Brigades & other divisional units, 30 August 1918. AWM 25, 391/2.
[270] Circular Memorandum, Peyton to all BEF units, September 1918.AWM 27, 368/12.
[271] *Ibid.*
[272] *Ibid.*

manner to that of the first AIF Victoria Cross announcement awarded to Albert Jacka following actions on Gallipoli in May 1915, when it was proudly announced in the 'Routine Order' on 29 July 1915. The notice was brought to the attention of the men in a telegram received from General Sir Ian Hamilton from the Secretary for Defence, Australia:

> On behalf of the Commonwealth Government desire to offer heartiest congratulations to Lance Corporal JACKA, 14th Battalion, 4th Australian Brigade, who has been awarded the Victoria Cross and who has thus gained distinction of being the first Australian engaged in a recent war on whom this signal honour has been conferred.[273]

Once Jacka's division moved to the Western Front, his First Divisional Commander, Major General Harold Walker, often used 'Special Orders' to acknowledge his men's courageous work in battle and to announce gallantry decorations including Victoria Crosses.[274] Commanders took great pleasure in announcing one of their own was awarded the Victoria Cross throughout the time on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918.

There was often cause for celebration among the men of the AIF following announcements of Victoria Crosses awarded to its members. For example, Major General John Monash of 3rd Division took great pains in announcing honours and awards, especially the Victoria Cross. For this he used 'Divisional Routine Orders' under the heading of 'Administration'. Monash's announcements began: 'His Majesty the King approves of the award of the Victoria Cross to the following', and then the date of publication in the *London Gazette* followed by name and the unit of Victoria Cross recipient and citation.[275] Later, when Major General John Gellibrand took over command of 3rd Division, he sent out 'Special Orders' announcing honours and rewards in order of the importance of each decoration, announcing: 'The undermentioned Decorations have been awarded for gallantry in the Field.'[276] In publishing the names of recipients, corps and divisional commanders wished 'to convey to them their

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[273] Routine Order, announcement by Birdwood, 29 July 1915, AWM 27, 368/23.
[274] Special Orders, announcement by Walker, 1st Division, undated. AWM 25, 713/17/1; Special Orders, 4th & 5th Division, various 4th & 5th divisional commanders, July 1916 to December 1918. AWM 25, 713/17/3; & Special Orders. Announcements by Monash, 3rd Division, February 1917 to May 1918. AWM 25, 713/45.
[275] Routine Orders, announcement by Monash, 3rd Division, 4 August 1917. AWM 25, 707/3/33.
[276] Special Orders, announcements by Gellibrand, 3rd Division, 7 October 1918, 18 December 1918, 20 December 1918. AWM 25, 713/57.

congratulations' and also, perhaps, to inspire more men to emulate the example set.[277] In December 1918, Monash added further comment in announcing that 'under the authority delegated by His Majesty the King, the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief has awarded the following decorations: …' to four more members of the AIF awarded Victoria Crosses.[278] Announcements of Victoria Cross awards were also published in this manner in the army level orders. One such case was Currey's Victoria Cross announcement on 7 March 1919 by General Sir Henry Rawlinson (Fourth Army): 'His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the Victoria Cross to:- …,' followed by Currey's citation.[279] Announcements such as these, it was thought, would boost morale in the AIF, especially as the war dragged on into 1918. The idea was to highlight exemplary behaviour and to boost spirits after more than two years of fighting in France.

In addition to the nature of the act itself, it was always vital that correct procedures be followed in the recommendation process that led to the awarding of a Victoria Cross. Both had to be 'worthy' for an award to be made. The integrity of the chain of command was crucial for a recommendation to proceed. But, this was often dependent on the ability of the unit Adjutant in understanding the requirements necessary for Victoria Cross recommendations to be successfully completed. If the criteria required in the recommendation process were not adhered to it is quite possible fewer Victoria Crosses would have been awarded to soldiers of the AIF from actions the Western Front. Perhaps if staff work had been better there may well have been more. There was a clear and direct correlation between staff work and awards. Having said that, it is also necessary to note that the recommendation process in practice was itself was surrounded by several issues of contention beyond the adherence to form-based bureaucracy, which will be explored in the next chapter.

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[277] Special Orders, announcements by Gellibrand, 3rd Division, 7 October 1918, 18 December 1918, 20 December 1918. AWM 25, 713/57.
[278] *Ibid.*
[279] Fourth Army Order, Announcement by Rawlinson, 4th Army, 7 March 1919. AWM 27, 368/22.

Chapter 4 Contentious Issues

Given the significance of the decoration, it is not surprising that varying degrees of controversy surrounded the awarding of the Victoria Cross on the Western Front during the First World War. Although the recommendation process was clear and unique (if constantly under amendment), misinterpretations of the extant procedures was common and fuelled by a variety of contentious issues and anomalies. Such misinterpretations inevitably led to changes in the way in which the Victoria Cross was considered for reward. In truth, the decoration was not simply 'For Valour', and not as egalitarian or even 'fair' as was often claimed. Frustration existed, for example over the way in which recommendations for the Victoria Cross could be changed without explanation, ideas that there should be a correlation between casualty numbers and the Victoria Cross, as well over issues such as confidentiality and witness reports. There were two particular and significant issues that existed on the Western Front, which had considerable impact on the awarding of the Victoria Cross to soldiers of the AIF. These were differences in interpretation of 'valour' by certain senior commanders, and the disproportionate opportunity for junior officers to be recognised for the award. In examining such issues and anomalies, using a number of example AIF recommendations for the Victoria Cross, it is clear that there was some divergence from the rules and their actual application.

The first point of contention, at the time and since, concerned the ease with which recommendations on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918 could be altered. This could happen at any stage in the chain of command. Victoria Cross recommendations could be changed by either up or downgrading the nominated award, or stopped altogether by officers at any level within the chain, and most often without explanation. This 'lack of explanation' was quite common and poses some difficulty in analysing *why* recommendations were changed or disregarded. The prevailing idea during the war years was that to receive a Victoria Cross recipients actually had to be recommended for one was false. There are certainly examples of 'upgrades' to a Victoria Cross as well as 'downgrades'. The convention concerning the provision of 'no explanation' for a failed recommendation actually originated from the Adjutant General's office within the War Office and had been in place since 1859, as a consequence of dealing with

failed Victoria Cross recommendations from the Crimean War.[280] It was thought that giving reasons for a rejected recommendation provided opportunities for appeal that the War Office had little time or inclination to address.[281] If, for example, a specific lack of evidence was identified, the original recommending authority had more reason to protest as it knew why the recommendation failed, and could possibly attest to provide or manufacture more evidence to improve the recommendation prospects. But, at the same time there was no obvious pattern why some Victoria Cross recommendations did not proceed. Most of the unsuccessful recommendations were downgraded to Distinguished Service Orders or Distinguished Conduct Medals, some to Military Crosses or Military Medals, with the occasional Mention in Despatches. One soldier recommended for a Victoria Cross received a posthumous Albert Medal.[282]

With the 'no explanation' convention in mind, it is difficult to determine why some Victoria Cross recommendations were successful while others were not. Files at the Australian War Memorial indicate that 73 soldiers of the AIF were recommended for a Victoria Cross but did not receive it, while 53 AIF soldiers were successful.[283] This indicates 42 per cent of all recommendations were successful as displayed in Figure 3.[284] However, these files are themselves incomplete. Copies of the complete and original documents no longer exist due to the September 1940 bombing of London that destroyed an archives building, including most Victoria Cross recommendations from the years 1915 to 1918.[285]

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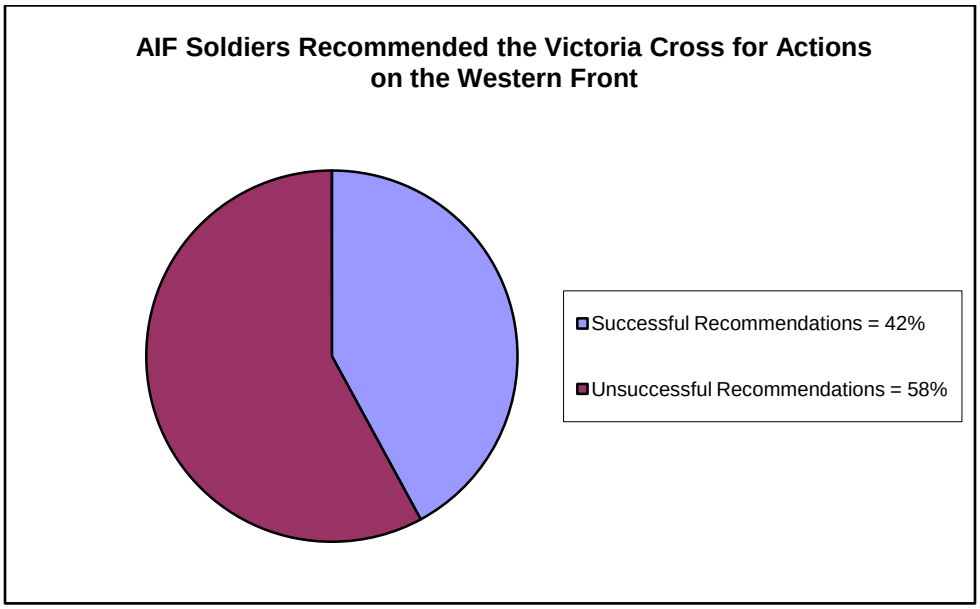
[280] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 55.
[281] However, in some British VC recommendation files which were not destroyed in the September 1940 London bombing, it is interesting to note brief reasons were given for some failed 1914 recommendations, but obviously these were never made public. It is possible reasons were identified and they were kept secret after the war, and were lost in the bombing. These reasons can be located in: Letter, Military Secretary F.S. Robb to CinC French, 8 December 1914 & an undated note. TNA, WO 32/4993.
[282] Halliday, *Valour Reconsidered*, p. 54; & AWM 28, Honours and Awards, Recommendations: First World War, files indicate that 73 members of the AIF were recommended for a Victoria Cross and did not receive it, while 53 AIF members were successful based on the recommendations.
[283] AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007.
[284] AWM 28, Honours and Awards , *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007.
[285] Spencer, *Medals*, p. 105.

Figure 3:



Source: AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007.

While many award recommendations were downgraded to a 'lesser' award, on rare occasions, the opposite occurred whereby a higher award was granted than that which was recommended.[286] It has been alleged that at times during the First World War the British Army issued an overabundance of medals to maintain morale. This involved upgrading recommendations to decorations higher than originally intended, and possibly higher than deserved.[287] Three soldiers of the AIF were in fact upgraded for their original recommendations from lesser decorations to the Victoria Cross. It appears that in these cases the alterations were based on the strength of the argument for their original recommendations. Private William Jackson (17th Battalion), for example, was originally recommended for a Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) for actions at Armentières on 25-26 June 1916.[288] He was recommended

[286] Out of the 53 AIF soldiers who received a Victoria Cross there were only three examples: Jackson, Murray & Sadlier (whose examples are discussed in Chapter Five).
[287] Halliday, *Valour Reconsidered*, p. 9.
[288] Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 51; & Williams, R.D. 'World War One Distinguished Conduct Medals to Australia', Volume 3, unpublished, 1984.

following a successful raid on the enemy strongpoint and for bringing in wounded comrades despite being severely wounded himself after having his arm blown off by a shell. Jackson's recommendation was upgraded to a Victoria Cross as it satisfied the requirements of the decoration – according to his senior commander's interpretation. In fact, the DCM was not cancelled immediately and, consequently, for a short time Jackson had received multiple awards for the same action.[289] Soon after, when this was realised, Jackson's DCM was withdrawn. As noted in the previous chapter the confusion was a result of the fact that the Victoria Cross was processed separately from other gallantry awards. A second AIF member, Captain Harry Murray (13th Battalion), was originally recommended for a bar to his Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for actions on 4 to 5 February 1917 at Stormy Trench, where his leadership inspired his men to hold their ground despite heavy assaults by the enemy. Murray's DSO recommendation was scribbled out on his recommendation form and replaced with a 'V.C.' and the final sentence stated: 'I most strongly recommend Captain MURRAY for the VICTORIA CROSS.' It is unclear whether this alteration was made at brigade or division level.[290] Both Jackson's and Murray's recommendations were well written, and according to their respective senior commanders along the chain of command, their acts were more deserving than the awards for which they were originally recommended.

The potential complexity of changes in recommendations involving the Victoria Cross as they progressed along their administrative journey is well demonstrated by the example of Lieutenant Clifford Sadlier who worked alongside his Sergeant, Charles Stokes (both of 51st Battalion) during action at Villers-Bretonneux from 24 to 25 April 1918. There is no explanation why Lieutenant Sadlier received a Victoria Cross while Sergeant Stokes received a Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM), but it is likely that the issue of rank played a part. Both these men worked together to capture a village. Eventually, Sadlier was so badly wounded he could not go on, and as a consequence Stokes took command and led men of 51st Battalion forward in capturing a number of enemy posts and destabilising the German's hold on the village. Both Sadlier and Stokes' recommendations were similar in content and typed, with the recommended reward written in by hand. Sadlier's recommendation stated MC (Military Cross) while Stokes

[289] Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 289.
[290] AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007.

stated DCM. In terms of gallantry decorations a Distinguished Conduct Medal was less commonly awarded to a soldier than a Military Cross was to an officer. However, the Distinguished Conduct Medal was eventually awarded to Stokes, while the Military Cross was replaced with the Victoria Cross for Sadlier. Perhaps senior commanders, such as their corps commander, General Sir William Birdwood, or Army Commander, General Sir Henry Rawlinson, or perhaps even the Commander-in-Chief Sir Douglas Haig believed the incident deserved at least one Victoria Cross but not two, and one recommendation from the 51st Battalion was to be upgraded. Perhaps the officer simply deserved the Victoria Cross, while the Sergeant the Distinguished Conduct Medal. It is nonetheless puzzling that Stokes did not receive a Victoria Cross also, given that he actually completed the mission and took command once Sadlier had become too incapacitated to continue. Unfortunately, there is no proof that verifies that Sadlier was considered more favourably over Stokes due to his commission, but statistics, revealed later in this chapter, indicate there certainly was inequity in the distribution of Victoria Crosses between officers and other ranks. On the other hand, it was a junior officer's responsibility to go above and beyond his duties to inspire the men he led, often from the front, so the uneven overall numbers of officers being rewarded with the Victoria Cross was perhaps no great surprise.

The vast number of alterations made to recommendations as they moved up the chain of command resulted in downgrading of the original award recommendation. As flagged in Chapter Three this was as a result of a number of factors, most of which involved unit Adjutants, such as inadequate knowledge of the recommendation requirements, especially early in the war. Poorly written and constructed recommendations, or because the 'argument' for a Victoria Cross was not considered strong enough were some common causes. Some early cases exist where inexperienced Adjutants and Commanding Officers within Australian units, clearly unaware of the Victoria Cross Royal Warrant, and did not know how to complete recommendations for the award properly. This was evident even before Australian troops arrived on the Western Front. Earlier, at Gallipoli, when two recommendations from 3rd Battalion were approved by Colonel Nevill Smyth, commanding 1st Brigade, and forwarded to divisional headquarters, both failed to adequately describe the sort of 'conspicuous' gallantry required for a Victoria Cross. One was for Second Lieutenant Thomas Evans (3rd Battalion) for bravery on 26 May 1915 for following

orders to fire his machine gun, go out in the open while under fire (the recommendation did not indicate why) and return. Evans then went out again. There was insufficient evidence of exceptional gallantry in this written recommendation as following orders in a disciplined manner as required by his Commanding Officer was not considered enough. Second, on 2-3 May 1915 Private William Ward (also of 3rd Battalion) was recommended for the Victoria Cross but it was unclear exactly what the recommendation was actually for. It described how Ward and his section assisted four wounded men and held a trench from enemy attack overnight, at least according to Second Lieutenants Meagher and McLeod of the same battalion. Ward was actually crossed out for any award by the time the recommendations list had reached divisional headquarters, as the correct process suggested it should. No doubt both the Adjutant and Commanding Officers of 3rd Battalion and 1st Brigade were subsequently given some rudimentary training on how to complete recommendation forms correctly, and how to adequately describe gallant deeds. These recommendations for the Victoria Cross nonetheless provide evidence of an initially limited understanding of what bureaucratic necessities needed to be covered in order for the Victoria Cross to be awarded, within the AIF as it moved to France.

Many Victoria Cross recommendations that failed because, according to individual interpretation up the chain of command, simply being brave and doing good work was not enough to warrant recognition. A Victoria Cross required proof of extraordinary initiative and something more than obedience to orders.[291] Such was the case of Private Charles Boyle's (9th Battalion) Victoria Cross recommendation which was downgraded to a Distinguished Conduct Medal for actions on 25 February 1917 near Le Barque in France. His recommendation was considered to be 'weak' in comparison to successful recommendations and included a description that he 'encouraged' the men of his platoon into an enemy trench, that he was 'causing damage' to a German position and carried a wounded comrade for 'some distance' under heavy enemy fire.[292] Although he was undoubtedly brave and the recommendation was written using strong adjectives it was considered, at least by Boyle's superiors, that a soldier's duty to encourage, cause damage if given the opportunity, and as of September 1916, rescuing wounded comrades was no longer considered to be sufficient for the award of the Victoria Cross

[291] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 88.
[292] AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007. A copy of Boyle's Victoria Cross recommendation is located in Appendix C.

(this exemption is discussed in detail in Chapter Five). Boyle's recommendation was downgraded.

Occasionally, recommendations for the award of a Victoria Cross for AIF soldiers on the Western Front were not simply accepted, upgraded or quashed. Some were investigated further and even ordered to be 'resubmitted' to strengthen the argument for the award.[293] If a recommendation required further investigation, examinations would often include determining how the action under review resulted in further ground being made, how the enemy was left unable to continue, or how the act which a Victoria Cross was recommended was a turning point (such as allowing an operation to move forward). However, there was little consistency in regards to investigating and strengthening recommendations as some decorations were awarded with little argument and even, at times, incomplete details.[294] For example, Private Thomas Cooke's (8th Battalion) recommendation was very brief and given the circumstances of his entire Lewis gun crew being killed, not submitted with witness reports that validated his bravery at Pozières on 24-25 July 1916.[295] Cooke was nonetheless awarded a Victoria Cross.

Some AIF Victoria Cross recommendations were strengthened by specifically identifying the personal risk the soldier took or damage he received in the action. For example, if the man had a severe head wound, it was to be stated in the recommendation in order to give more emphasis on the bravery, as a man who was wounded and continued to do brave acts was considered by some, it seems, as even more inspirational to his comrades. In fact, if a man had died either in the act or shortly after, his recommendation would often state the death and this, it was thought, might strengthen the argument for award of the Victoria Cross.[296] Such ideas were based on the way in which citations glorified the valour of the soldier who suffered in the act. One example was the citation for Lieutenant Charles Pope (11th Battalion, 15 April 1917). It

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[293] Letter, Monash CO 3rd Division to CO 11th Brigade, 17 January 1917. NLA, MS1884, 1/71/487/75a; also noted in an interview with Mr. Graham Wilson, Staff Officer Policy Research in Directorate of Honours and Awards, 12 October 2006.

[294] It is unknown if this affected awarding of the Victoria Cross to Australians on the Western Front as the complete set of Victoria Cross recommendations were destroyed on the 7 September 1940 when the London archival records were bombed during the Second World War.

[295] *London Gazette* Iss. 29740, 9 September 1918, p. 2 of edition 8 September 1916, [p. 8870 of 1918]; & AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007.

[296] Memorandum, Foott, AA & QMG 1st Division to Williams 2nd Division, circa 1917. AWM 25, 391/3; & AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007.

concluded by stating, 'His body, together with those of men, was found in close proximity to eighty enemy dead – a sure proof of the gallant resistance which had been made.'[297] Death was also glorified in citations if the soldier did not live long after his Victoria Cross deed. Such was the case for Lieutenant Alfred Gaby (28th Battalion, 8 August 1918) whose citation stated, 'Three days later, during an attack, this officer again led his company with great dash to the objective … While engaged on this duty, he was killed by an enemy sniper.'[298]

If a recommendation was rejected outright it was often as a result of one or more of three different factors – completing of the recommendation form incorrectly, not meeting the criteria of the award (including the requirement of witness reports), or because the recommendation was not detailed enough to merit further consideration. Again there were clear indications of the impact of Adjutants who did not understand the correct procedures regarding witness reports. These reports had to be separate from the recommendation, and both written and signed by the eye-witnesses in question to be considered 'valid.'[299] The two examples of Victoria Cross recommendations rejected identified below did not follow the correct procedure regarding witness reports, which helps explain why they were downgraded, both to Distinguished Conduct Medals (DCM).

The first example was the recommendation for a Victoria Cross from operations on 19 and 20 July 1916 for Private Thomas Charles Rowley (56th Battalion). In this case three witnesses actually signed the original recommendation on the original Army Form W.3121 instead of attaching three separate eye-witness accounts as required by correct procedure.[300] By the time Rowley's recommendation reached the divisional level three witness statements had appeared and were now accompanied a rewritten Army Form W.3121, but the VC had already been crossed out and DCM stamped on the form. The second example relates to the recommendation for a Victoria Cross to Lance Corporal Rubin James Hillier (56th Battalion) for the same operation, which included the names of seven witnesses. At least some of these

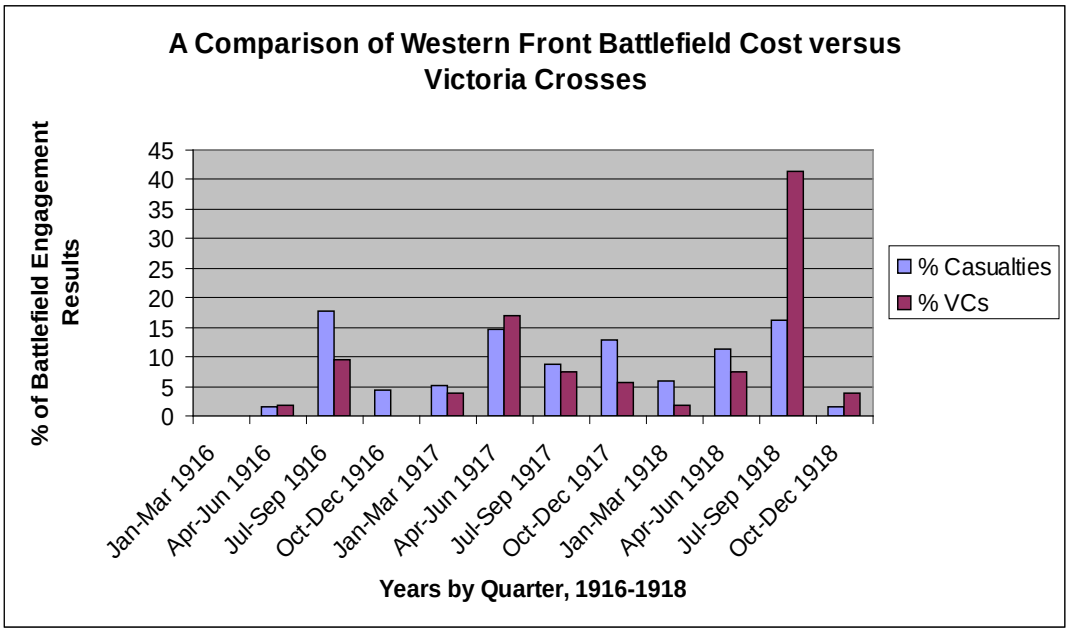
[297] *London Gazette* Iss. 30122, 8 June 1917, p. 3, [p. 5703 of 1917].
[298] *London Gazette* Iss. 30982, 30 October 1918, p. 2 of edition 29 October 1918, [p. 12802 of 1918].
[299] Letter HQ 1st Division to divisional units, 30 August 1916. AWM 25, 391/2; & Circular Memorandum No. 21, QM 5th Division to ADMS, 16 October 1916. AWM 25, 391/22; procedures of witness reports are considered in more detail later in Chapter Four.
[300] Examples of Army Form W.3121 for Private Rowley, 19-20 July 1916. AWM 25, 391/16/4.

witnesses, however, signed a verbatim report of the recommendation as their statements. By the time the recommendation reached corps headquarters the VC had again been crossed out and replaced it with DCM. Later, in March 1918, Major General Sir J.J. Talbot Hobbs, commanding 5th Division, recommended Hillier for the Italian Bronze Medal for Military Valour indicating that he had previously recommended him for the Victoria Cross but that Hillier had been awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal instead.[301]

Moving away from the issue surrounding the upgrading, downgrading or question of recommendations, another significant issue of contention was the suggestion that there should be a correlation between casualties and award recommendations. This was first suggested by the Military Secretary at GHQ on 26 August 1916.[302] This proposal followed the devastation and large casualties at the battles of Verdun and on the Somme. For the AIF, many men had been lost as a result of actions at Fromelles, Pozières and Mouquet Farm, leaving the Australian unit numbers severely depleted. Five AIF soldiers were awarded Victoria Crosses during the battles around Pozières, quite a large number in a short period of time. This may well suggest there was, to a degree, a connection between casualty rates and Victoria Crosses awarded, as Figure 4 indicates, for the initial AIF battles in 1916.

[301] AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007; A copy of Hillier's Victoria Cross recommendation is located in Appendix C.
[302] Memorandum, Foott, AA & QMG 1st Division to Williams 2nd Division, undated. AWM 25, 391/3.

Figure 4:



Source: Beaumont, J. (ed.), *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001, pp. 274-275; & Staunton, A., *Victoria Cross Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2005, pp. 51-196.

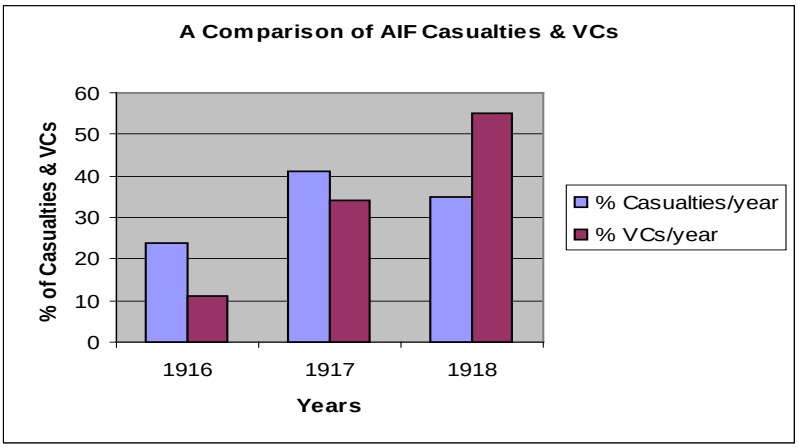
Figure 4 shows a definite pattern that links high casualty rates and an increased number of Victoria Crosses awarded to soldiers of the AIF at Pozières in July 1916, the Spring Offensive around Arras, Bullecourt and Messines from April to June 1917, the battles around Passchendaele in September and October 1917, defending Villers-Bretonneux from April to June 1918, and in the attacks around Hamel, Villers-Bretonneux, and push towards the Hindenburg Line and Mont St Quentin from July to the end of September 1918. Specific figures for these casualty numbers can be located in Appendix G.[303] Even though there was always going to be more opportunity for bravery to be recognised with increased levels of fighting, the correlation is conspicuous.

Across the three years of fighting on the Western Front casualty numbers for the AIF peaked following actions around Passchendaele in September and October 1917. This is compared to the number of Victoria Crosses awarded across the three years which increased for

[303] See Appendix F for figures on casualties and Victoria Cross recipients.

each year, even beyond late 1917, as identified in Figure 5. As the war progressed, with war weariness increasing on the battlefield and on the home front, and with the AIF on the offensive, increased the numbers of Victoria Crosses were awarded. This was not so much a result of the Victoria Cross becoming easier to get, rather, there was simply more opportunity in 1918 for offensive actions to be recognised. With the Allies on the offensive in 1918, as the war was drawing to a close, AIF soldiers on the front line were much more likely to be recognised for a Victoria Cross given the increased opportunities that the offensive created. Therefore, it is no great surprise there was an increase in Australian Victoria Crosses for this year of the war in comparison to previous years on the Western Front.

Figure 5:



Source: Beaumont, J. (ed.), *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001, pp. 274-275; & Staunton, A., *Victoria Cross Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2005, pp. 51-196.

In response to his concern about a suggested a direct correlation between casualty figures and award recommendations General Birdwood, commanding the Anzac forces, wrote to the Assistant Military Secretary at GHQ, in a letter dated 10 September 1916, noting his position on the matter. Birdwood believed it was important to acknowledge the efforts of his men with honours and awards to develop positive spirits among them.[304] At the same time, however, he suggested the Military Secretary's idea regarding a proposed official link between casualties and

[304] Letter, A.M.S., 2nd Army to Birdwood, 10 September 1916. AWM 25, 391/45.

awards was not realistic. However, recognising that it was probably inevitable that ratios were going to be used, Birdwood suggested a formula:

> It certainly is most difficult to lay down anything like hard and fast rules for the grant of the rewards referred to by the military secretary, as the actions for which awards are given may, and generally do, vary so completely in many respects. The number of casualties is of course some indication of the nature of the fighting which has been done, but it cannot I think be taken as anything like a hard and fast guide. For example, a division might suffer enormously heavy causalities in the course of a very few hours though, we will say, suddenly coming under very heavy shell or machine gun fire, and during this time it may be impossible for any large number of acts of gallantry to be performed. The same number of casualties may also be incurred during several days of really hard fighting, during which numberless acts of bravery and initiative may have come to notice, all of which should be rewarded.
>
> It is I think common knowledge such acts, as in previous wars have undoubtedly been thought worthy of the Victoria Cross, are now relegated to lower classes of rewards, e.g., the Distinguished Conduct Medal and even the Military Medal…
>
> If it is desired to lay down any scale, I would suggest that a division engaged, we will say, for a week in such fighting as has been experienced at the Somme, might expect to receive approximately twenty (20) Distinguished Conduct Medals and one hundred (100) Military Medals – this I would suggest as a very rough guide only…[305]

Birdwood clearly believed there was a need for gallantry to be recognised, and although he gave no ratio for the Victoria Cross, it was unavoidable lesser gallantry decorations were to be 'rationed'.[306] Although at that time Birdwood did not think there should be a correlation between casualty numbers and gallantry decorations, he did believe he was fighting a losing battle in this regard.

Despite no official ratio existing for the Victoria Cross at least one author believes there is evidence to suggest the British Army was 'manufacturing' and laundering heroes on the Western Front from 1916. M.C. Smith believed it was doubtful there was any sort of 'quota' system but that a formula existed that mandated 'x' number of Victoria Cross recipients for 'y' number of troops involved.[307] His position may be derived from the fact that during the second

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[305] Letter, A.M.S., 2nd Army to Birdwood, 10 September 1916. AWM 25, 391/45.
[306] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 47.
[307] Minutes to the Second Meeting of the Victoria Cross Commission, TNA, WO 32/3443, p. 11 (original transcript page). During the discussion the elective principle, the Army representative, Colonel Montagu Douglas-Scott, reported that 'in a campaign the Army works out roughly at one [Victoria Cross] in 5,000 [men]' but he did not cite

meeting of the 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C.' held on 12 November 1918, Lieutenant Colonel Lord Herbert Montagu Douglas-Scott reported that in a campaign the Army generally expected a ratio of one in 5000.[308] Despite this contention, there is no proof that such a formula was applied on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918.

A third important issue of contention regarding the awards of Victoria Crosses to soldiers of the AIF on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918 was the nature of confidentiality in the recommendation process. The strict requirement for all recommendations for honours and awards to be treated with the utmost confidentiality was not always maintained. No doubt a lack of understanding of this requirement existed within the AIF before it moved to France in 1916. For example, in Albert Jacka's (14th Battalion) diary notes on 19 May 1915 he wrote little about the incident that proved to be a turning point in his military career – his award of the Victoria Cross at Gallipoli. However, he did write: 'I held the trench alone for 15 minutes against heavy attack. Lieut. Crabbe informed me that I would be recommended.'[309] Jacka's Victoria Cross was gazetted on 24 July 1915, yet he wrote to his mother a week earlier indicating he knew he was going to be recognised with a decoration. Jacka wrote:

> I suppose you will be surprised to hear that my name is amongst the list of men who have been recommended and mentioned in despatches by General Sir Ian Hamilton. If you hear of Lance-Corporal Jacka getting a distinguished service medal or a military cross or something like that you will know it is me.[310]

In general terms, on the Western Front rumours circulated freely regarding Victoria Cross recommendations, such as the one C.E.W. Bean heard in May 1916 that an Australian was to be recommended for taking a trench single-handed. This particular rumour was not true as Australians were not involved in major attacks on the Western Front until July 1916.[311] Nonetheless, when the AIF finally arrived on the Western Front men who were recommended would often get congratulatory cards or cards of appreciation from their Commanding Officers

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any formula for determining the number of Crosses granted as a hard ratio of the number of troops involved; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 149-150.

[308] Minutes of Committee meeting, 12 November 1918. TNA, WO 32/3443; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 182.

[309] Lawriwsky, *Hard Jacka*, pp. 10-11.

[310] 'Modest V.C. Hero', *Argus*, 3 September 1915, p. 5.

[311] Kewster, K., *Gallipoli Correspondent, The Frontline Diary of C.E.W. Bean*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983, p. 101.

thanking them for their work, and implying they had been singled out for official recognition. This practice was widespread throughout all the BEF and was not limited to the AIF alone. It was ordered to stop by GHQ in March 1917.[312] There were also regular reports of officers who wrote to parents of deceased soldiers indicating that had their relative lived, he would have been awarded with decorations, including the Victoria Cross.

Controversial issues surrounding the witness reports that accompanied recommendations for the Victoria Cross also existed within the AIF for the duration of its time in France. The amount of detail contained within witness reports varied greatly and the way in which they were obtained were often questionable. At times submissions were accompanied with minimal witness evidence, and were overlooked for the highest award. However, there was no obvious pattern as some Victoria Cross recommendations that were accompanied by copious amounts of witness reports and evidence were also overlooked, while the contrary also occurred.[313]

It is also worth noting in this regard that the requirement of obtaining witness reports was mostly limited to actions on the Western Front as recognised feats on other battlefields were often unaccompanied by such reports. For example, Jacka's actions in May 1915 at Gallipoli were not witnessed by anyone except the enemy. No witness statements were submitted to accompany his Victoria Cross recommendation. Had this occurred on the Western Front after 1916 Jacka may well not have been recognised. While in the Middle East, particularly with regards to aerial combat, witness accounts were rarely taken as pilots were often alone when their valiant deeds were performed. For cases such as these Victoria Crosses were awarded on the strength of the squadron commander's recommendations. A similar principle existed within the Navy.[314]

Today, it is widely believed that *three* witnesses were required to provide statements in support of a recommendation for a Victoria Cross on the Western Front. Another

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[312] Memorandum, Asst Military Secretary Fifth Army to 1st Anzac Corps, 12 March 1917. AWM 25, 391/23.
[313] Halliday, *Valour Reconsidered*, p. 62.
[314] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 124.

misinterpretation is that one of those witnesses needed to be a commissioned officer.[315] Both beliefs are false. In fact, only two witness statements were required the entire time Australians fought on the Western Front.[316] A commissioned officer was required to write the formalities of the recommendation based on witness accounts, but certainly was not required to actually witness the act of conspicuous gallantry.[317] Some of this confusion is a consequence of claims made by John Glanfield, who notes a 'domestic arrangement on the part of the Field Marshal in France', according to communication dated 30 August 1918 from Colonel David Graham of the War Office to Haig, that an officer had to be a witness to the action being recommended for a Victoria Cross.[318] Glanfield is mistaken; the evidence he refers to points only to the requirement of two witnesses, neither of which needed to be identified as an officer. Michael Crook, by contrast, notes correctly that the 'domestic arrangement on the part of the Field Marshal in France' was actually in relation to the requirement of two witnesses.[319] Three witnesses may have been a requirement for a Victoria Cross recommendation after the First World War, but for actions on the Western Front there was no official requirement for three, nor for one to be an officer.

This is not to suggest, however, that witness reports written by officers might not have been considered at the time to be more influential than those of ordinary soldiers, as the case of Sergeant Albert Lowerson (21st Battalion) for actions on 1 September 1918 at Mont St Quentin suggests. The witness statements accompanying Lowerson's Victoria Cross recommendation were questionable because the witnesses (*all* officers) who provided statements were, in all likelihood, not in sight of Lowerson at the right time to witness his gallant deed.[320] In this case it is likely that the witness reports were drafted by officers because they were perceived as having

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[315] As suggested in Dennis, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p. 204; & Quinlivan, *Forgotten Valour*, p. 200.
[316] In 1918 the wording changed to indicate that witness statements were required by 'at least two' witnesses; see various correspondence, 16 October 1916, circa 1917 & 21 April 1918. AWM 25, 391/22.
[317] Harper, & Richardson, *In the Face of the Enemy*, p. 14.
[318] Minutes of the First Meeting of the 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C', 30 August 1918, Whitehall. TNA, WO 32/3443, pp. 8-9 (original transcript page numbers); & Glanfield, *Bravest of the Brave*, p. 113.
[319] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 222.
[320] The senior soldier present at the time, Sergeant Vic Edwards did witness Lowerson's deed but a witness report written by him was not found; Stanley, *Men of Mont St Quentin*, pp. 126-128.

more influence on strengthening the recommendation than had the witness reports been written by the soldiers in Lowerson's own company.

Witness accounts, of course, often proved difficult to generate, as was the case for the Victoria Cross recommendation for Lance Corporal Walter Peeler (3rd Pioneer Battalion) coming out of an offensive east of Ypres on 4 October 1917. Major General John Monash, commanding 3rd Division, forwarded recommendations for Sergeant Lewis McGee (40th Battalion) and Peeler on 28 October 1917 to 2nd Anzac Corps headquarters with an attached letter indicating that witness statements for McGee were included, but that only one witness statement was included in the documentation for Peeler, as the other witnesses had been evacuated wounded but, as soon as it was possible, those statements would be forwarded.[321] Peeler, however, received his Victoria Cross without the missing statements ever appearing. Regardless of the requirement of witness statements, some flexibility in the accompanying witness reports was tolerated to suit particular circumstances. This seems to have been applied on a case-by-case basis.

Notes issued by Fourth Army in July 1918 included, for the first time, specific and detailed requirements for witness reports for the Victoria Cross. From this point eye-witness evidence accompanying the recommendation was to be written as a separate statement, in the witness' own words, signed and dated by him. No witness statements were to be jointly signed, nor one statement copied by other witnesses. If the witness could not write his own statement it was to be dictated to an officer and certified as correct.[322] The notes also reminded staff officers to expect considerable delay for decisions to be made on Victoria Cross recommendations as these required final approval by the King in London.[323]

Moving on from issues involving unexplained changes, the relationship between casualty numbers and awards, confidentiality and witness reports, there were a number of less tangible anomalies that influenced the awarding of Victoria Crosses to soldiers of the AIF on the Western Front. The first was the problem that surrounded the fact that there was no formal criterion available to senior officers to decide what level of bravery actually warranted a Victoria Cross,

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[321] Letter, Monash to HQ 2nd Anzac Corps, 28 October 1917. AWM 3DRL 2316, 5/5.
[322] Fourth Army 'A' notes (PART 2) (3rd ed.), Harrison & Sons, London, July 1918.
[323] *Ibid.*

let alone what might definitively constitute conspicuous gallantry. Senior officers knew the Victoria Cross was awarded for acts of supreme heroism, but it was a type of gallantry originally envisaged by the War Office in the mid-1850s. From here, it seems expectations of valour worthy of a Victoria Cross morphed into lauding the concept of physical courage, where soldiers were to demonstrate offensive aggression and self sacrifice – men who attacked and disabled the enemy without consideration for their own life on the Western Front. This placed an Adjutant in the awkward position of having to anticipate what his senior commander considered worthy enough to be acknowledged as conspicuous gallantry, and to speculate on his commander's definition of valour. For this reason interpreting valour often came down to a senior commander's judgement on the actions of a soldier in the heat of battle, and the worthiness of his actions. It is clear from the evidence the explicit nature of what valour represented differed from one commander to the next.

A senior commander's personal influence over the award of Victoria Crosses to soldiers of the AIF on the Western Front depended on the attitude of the officer in question, his perception of the decoration, and his interpretation of the idea of valour. Senior officer attitude, therefore, shaped who was and was not awarded a Victoria Cross due to the very nature of their role in the recommendation process. Senior officers in the chain of command included those in battalion command positions, up to and including the Commander-in-Chief of the British Armies in France, Sir Douglas Haig.

Despite the presumption that the system of honours and awards in general, and the Victoria Cross in particular, was fair and equitable, it was always difficult for officers in positions of responsibility to judge valour in exactly the same way as their peers. There is also no doubt that at times on the Western Front personality clashes influenced a commander's attitude towards a soldier. It was also likely that each commander had a different opinion on the Victoria Cross itself, and of course each commander's interpretation of bravery was subjective, despite all attempts to be as detached, objective and as fair as possible. The perceptions of the Victoria Cross differed widely for example, between Lieutenant General Sir Alexander Godley, Major General Sir John Monash and Lieutenant General Sir William Birdwood, and the awards given to men serving under them were shaped by their individual interpretation of valour.

Australian officers in the 3rd Division, fighting alongside the New Zealanders as part of 2nd Anzac Corps, under the command of Lieutenant General Sir Alexander Godley from 1916 to 1917, may well have been disadvantaged in terms of the chance of receiving of Victoria Cross due to his perception of what type of action merited the award. Godley believed valour worthy of the Victoria Cross included extraordinary bravery and inspiration; characteristics he believed were fundamentally necessary for all officers anyway, and therefore part of their duty. It is not surprising that under his command the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (also part of 2nd Anzac Corps) no officers were awarded a Victoria Cross while fighting on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918.[324] In fact, in their recent book Harper and Richardson believe Godley had 'little time for bravery decorations like the VC.'[325] Godley appears to have been more interested in the 'K' awards for officers that led to knighthoods, rather than bravery awards. Very little mention of the Victoria Cross existed in his correspondence throughout the war. This perception and his attitude to his soldiers helped Godley develop a reputation as an unpopular commander.[326] So too, his attitude contradicted the original reasoning behind instituting the Victoria Cross. The award was supposed to recognise outstanding gallantry regardless of rank.[327] Godley, however, did approve the awarding of the Victoria Cross to ten New Zealand soldiers and non-commissioned officers on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918.[328]

Despite Godley's attitude to officers being awarded Victoria Crosses, he still approved two AIF officer recommendations for the Victoria Cross that Major General John Monash, of 3rd Division, had strongly endorsed. These were for awards to Captain Robert Grieve (37th Battalion), for actions at Messines, and Captain Clarence Jeffries (34th Battalion) at Passchendaele.[329] Godley's approval of these two officer recommendations may have been

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[324] Harper, & Richardson, *In the Face of the Enemy*, pp. 97-100, 104-112, 233-234, 236-237.
[325] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[326] Stanley, P., *Quinn's Post*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, p. 9.
[327] Notes from the Original 1956 Royal Warrant as seen in the following two files: TNA, WO 32/3443 & TNA, WO 98/1; Creagh & Humphries, *The Victoria Cross*, p. xiii; Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 280; Harper, & Richardson, *In the Face of the Enemy*, p. 77; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 207.
[328] Gliddon, *VCs Handbook, The Western Front 1914-1918*, pp. 65, 88, 91, 126-127, 150, 159, 160, 164, 172 & 182.
[329] In total five Victoria Crosses were awarded to 3 Division AIF as part of 2nd Anzac Corps between 1916 and 1917; Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 51-196; Grieve (37 Battalion, 7 June 1917), Jeffries (34 Battalion, 12 October 1917); & the other 3 Division Victoria Cross recipients were Carroll (33 Battalion, 7-11 June 1917), McGee (49 Battalion, 4 October 1917) & Peeler (3 Pioneer Battalion, 4 October 1917).

influenced by Monash's vocal support for the recommendations to be forwarded up the chain of command. Monash understood Godley's attitude towards the Victoria Cross but still believed that Grieve and Jeffries had strong enough cases for recognition. These officers got their Victoria Crosses, but nonetheless Monash's frustration at Godley's attitude was reflected in his request to have changes made to the referral of AIF recommendations.[330] Monash proposed an administrative change whereby all AIF recommendations to be passed through the same commanders, whether they were in different corps or not, to ensure equity existed regarding approval of all AIF Victoria Cross recommendations. The specific suggestion was for all divisional recommendations to first submit their recommendations to the GOC of the AIF before proceeding onto corps and finally, GHQ. This way consistency would be ensured across all AIF personnel recommended, as they were not being judged by varying standards, but by the same authority.[331] Monash's recommendation was never instituted. It is noteworthy that despite his personal belief in the impact of recognised bravery, Monash did not recommend any other officers for the Victoria Cross under the corps command of Godley. Perhaps Monash believed no other recommendations were worth pushing forward, knowing how difficult it was to convince Godley of exceptional valour performed by officers. Monash may possibly have recommended more officers if he was commanding a division in the 1st Anzac Corps instead of operating under Godley's command.

Unlike Godley, Monash and Lieutenant General Sir William Birdwood both believed that decorations, especially the Victoria Cross, were valuable tools for lifting morale and inspiring their men to keep fighting. Monash was meticulous in keeping records and notes, especially on honours and awards given under his command, and made great effort to publicise the men under his command who were honoured.[332] Monash actually set up a generic congratulatory card system to recognise decorations within his division. This system sent messages to his men detailing how much he appreciated their services.[333] Monash also believed awards to Australian fighting soldiers were important for their impact on the home front. He specifically wrote to

[330] Letter, Monash to Dodds, 7 September 1917, Adjutant-General, Colonel T.H. Dodds, NAA, MS1884, 1/72/494/151.
[331] Letter, Monash CO 3rd Division to Dodds DAG AIF attached 1st ANZAC, 7 September 1917. NLA, MS1884, 1/72/494/151.
[332] See various examples of Monash's meticulous record keeping in folder AWM 3DRL 2316, 5.
[333] Letter, (Acting Commanding Officer) A/CO 3rd Pioneer Battalion to Monash, 3 December 1917. NLA, MS1884, 1A/15/127/item number unknown.

General Ewan Sinclair-Maclagan, commanding 4th Division on 10 April 1918, to request information regarding the exploits on 28 March 1918 of Sergeant Stanley McDougall (47th Battalion) who was awarded the Victoria Cross. It is interesting to note that Monash had heard McDougall's deeds were to be recommended for a Victoria Cross, yet McDougall's Victoria Cross was not gazetted until 3 May, indicating that there continued to be a lack of confidentiality among Victoria Cross recommendations. Monash intended to share the success of McDougall's Victoria Cross exploits with the whole of the 3rd Division before the recommendation had actually been approved.[334]

There is evidence to suggest Monash would have preferred recognising many more of his men with gallantry decorations. He often replied to families seeking information about lost loved ones and in doing so expressed his desire for more men to be recognised through decorations in some way. He sent a letter on 9 November 1917, for example, to a bereaved father who had asked that, with the loss he had suffered, might it be possible to receive some recognition for his son posthumously. Monash had to respond saying that unless the recognition was a Victoria Cross, which he was not entitled to, no such recommendation was possible. He replied:

> I regret very much that I am not able to do any thing in regard to your request about an award to your late gallant son. The granting of awards does not in any way rest with me. I can merely recommend awards to higher authority, and my recommendations have to filter through Corps and Army Commanders to the Commander-in-Chief personally, who in turn is responsible to the War Council.
>
> The War Council has laid it down most definitely that no award of any kind can be made posthumously to any officer or man of any of the Imperial Armies except the Victoria Cross. This is a rule to which there is absolutely no exception…
>
> This is a ruling which exactly covers the case you have submitted, and I regret that I am not in a position to afford you any satisfaction in this matter.[335]

Monash believed recognition in the form of the Victoria Cross indicated 'success', and perhaps due to his technical background, believed success needed to be quantified by a measurable and valid indicator. The Victoria Cross provided Monash with the opportunity to measure 'achievement' and perhaps this was why he took great pride in recognising recipients.

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[334] Letter, Monash to Sinclair-Maclagan, 19 April 1918. NLA, MS1884, 4/130/499/18.
[335] Letter, Monash to a father of a lost 3rd Division soldier 9 November 1917. NLA, MS1884, 1/72/494/67.

In fact, these measures of success were elevated in his post-war account *Australian Victories in France 1918.* Therein Monash recorded all citations for the Victoria Cross from Sergeant Stanley McDougall's (47th Battalion) Victoria Cross deed on 28 March 1918 to the last AIF Victoria Cross recipient, Lieutenant George Ingram (24th Battalion) on 5 October 1918; 29 Victoria Crosses in all (of the 53 awarded in total of the Western Front). These were recorded in Appendix B of the book where he introduced them with a statement:

> In order to illustrate the nature of the individual fighting carried out by the Australian Corps, during the period covered by this book, the following very small selection has been made from the official records of deeds of gallantry by individual soldiers. In every one of these twenty-nine cases, the VICTORIA CROSS has been awarded by His Majesty the King.[336]

This publication not only boosted Monash himself (and his own personal accomplishments) but also the exploits of the AIF.[337] It was important for Monash to identify with successful Victoria Cross recipients under his command. This not only suited his leadership style but also strengthened his case politically as being chosen the right person to hold the position of the Australian Corps Commander. Monash's attitude to the Victoria Cross provided a stark contrast to Godley's. The result had a tangible impact of the award of Victoria Crosses to Australians on the Western Front.

General Birdwood also sought to build morale among his men by using Victoria Cross citations as opportunities to lift the communal spirits. Following the action at Pozières, Birdwood wrote to Major General Harold Walker, commanding the 1st Division, in a letter dated 27 July 1916. He wanted to personally thank everyone individually for their good work and self sacrifice, and if possible, had hoped there were enough Victoria Crosses to go around for the very large number of soldiers who 'no doubt' deserved them.[338] Birdwood certainly made the most of opportunities to identify gallantry with decorations and he valued and admired the Victoria Cross as a means for individual recognition (which in turn reflected well upon his

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[336] Manuscript for Monash's 'Australian Victories in France 1918', appendix B. NLA: MS1884, 11/207.
[337] A similar account of the last twenty Victoria Crosses awarded to AIF soldiers from Gaby to Ingram also appears in 'The Story of the Fourth Army', Major-General Sir Archibald Montgomery, K.C.M.G., C.B., in Volume 74, Aug[ust] 8 1918 to Nov[ember] 11 1918, pp. 280-300.
[338] Letter, Birdwood to Walker, 27 July 1916 located in both AWM 4, 1/42/18/2, p. 43 & AWM 92, 3DRL 2600.

command). He compiled copious notes on Victoria Cross recipients, which he later passed onto Bean for assistance while writing the Australian official histories.[339]

On par with the importance of command attitudes with regard to the award of Victoria Crosses was the issue of 'opportunity'. Junior leaders were rewarded with a disproportionate number of awards on Western Front from 1916 to 1918. There was no AIF officer of the rank of lieutenant colonel or higher recommended for a Victoria Cross. This was partly due to the nature of their work in the background and away from the direct firing line on which decreased their exposure to physical risks in the front line. The battalion commander only ventured into the front line occasionally to inspect the battle conditions and to ensure he connected with his men and what they were experiencing.[340] As a result it was difficult for senior officers to display the type of valour required for a Victoria Cross. Instead, their bravery and leadership was often recognised with decorations such as the Distinguished Service Order, which was awarded as a consequence of excellent leadership and management skills of units.

Junior officers, on the other hand, were given far more opportunities to be recognised for the Victoria Cross than the men who led them, or even followed them, by virtue of their responsibilities.[341] By definition, it was the duty of junior officers to lead men from the front into combat situations at great personal risk, while demonstrating exceptional bravery in order to inspire the troops and succeed at their allocated tasks.[342] These were the very factors and crucial for recognition with Victoria Cross awards on the Western Front.[343] So if it was an officer's duty to lead and inspire, Godley's interpretation of officers performing gallant acts may seem reasonable in regards to the Victoria Cross not being awarded to officers. Others, however, differed in their interpretation. The historian Michael De-la-Noy, for example, believed there was an argument that officers deserved higher awards for gallantry because they held more responsibility, yet he clarified that gallantry was not supposed to be associated with responsibility.[344] The nature and number of junior officers awarded Victoria Crosses on the

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[339] See various Bean notes in AWM 38, 3DRL, 8042/107.
[340] De la Billière, *Supreme Courage*, p. 39.
[341] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 119.
[342] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[343] AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007.
[344] De-la-Noy, M., *The Honours System*, Virgin, London, 1992, p. 182.

Western Front suggest De-la-Noy's modern day interpretation prevailed over Godley's at that time. Nevertheless, the Warrant and instructions for the Victoria Cross clearly stated that rank should not be taken into consideration of what was and was not worthy of the Victoria Cross, therefore both Godley and De-la-Noy were misinterpreting an important aspect of the decoration. The egalitarian nature of the Victoria Cross was theoretically correct, but in practice the lower echelons of the officer corps were, due to a combination of expectation and circumstance, much more likely to be recognised.[345]

For much the same reason as junior officers, Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) were also disproportionately represented with Victoria Cross awards.[346] Even a corporal from time to time would be responsible for leading small parties of men, and expected to take over if his senior non-commissioned officer was wounded or killed in the heat of battle. Within this context gallant actions by a leader and his men were often acknowledged as a direct result of the leader's bravery as he was in command at the time. If the deed resulted in a Victoria Cross the decoration *could* be interpreted as being on behalf of the work achieved by him and his men. Several examples of junior officers recognised with Victoria Crosses for their personal inspiration and the combined efforts of their men on the Western Front included the gallantry of Lieutenants Percy Storkey (19th Battalion, 7 April 1918), Albert Borella (26th Battalion, 17-18 July 1918) and William Joynt (8th Battalion, 23 August 1918).[347]

An interesting example of a Victoria Cross being awarded to an officer as a consequence of his inspirational leadership and devotion to duty was that of Major Blair Wark (32nd Battalion, 29 September – 1 October 1918), the only AIF officer higher than the rank of captain to receive a Victoria Cross on the Western Front. Often captains were the highest rank for an officer in the forward line as they, along with lieutenants, were predominantly in charge of companies and platoons. However, at the time of Wark's gallantry he was acting battalion commander and was in the thick of action along the Hindenburg Line in late September and early October 1918, leading his men by personal example. Together, his unit rushed and captured enemy batteries,

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[345] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 203.
[346] Despite this, privates formed the bulk of the other ranks and received the majority of Victoria Crosses among the other ranks. Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 105.
[347] AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007.

took four guns, and 60 prisoners, repelled enemy counter-attacks, silenced enemy machine guns and caused heavy enemy casualties.[348] Wark's recommendation was accompanied by countless eye-witness statements by junior officers and men in his battalion that were thick with obvious praise and faith in their officer's ability and courage as a leader. There is little doubt his extraordinary leadership led to a series of successful engagements, yet this is a case when Wark's Victoria Cross was predominantly awarded on behalf of his men – men who obviously thought a great deal of their commanding officer.[349] This may plausibly be considered an example when the use of the ballot Victoria Cross implemented (as discussed in Chapter Two), where a number of men could have been nominated to be voted by the group for Victoria Cross recognition. Despite this, no ballot system was used in this case. There is little doubt Wark deserved the Victoria Cross, yet he would not have been able to achieve the objectives without his men's support. In cases such as this acts of 'leadership valour' resulting in a Victoria Cross can be attributable to those being led as much as the leader himself.

Ordinary soldiers had far less opportunity to attract attention or perform individual feats of outstanding valour than junior leaders.[350] However, if inspiring others to perform brave acts was considered worthy of a Victoria Cross, and required qualities of junior officers and NCOs were to lead men into battle, it is reasonable to assume that soldiers awarded a Victoria Cross would be noticed for promotion to the officer ranks. But the statistics of AIF Victoria Crosses recipients from the Western Front do not reflect this. In fact of the 53 AIF Victoria Crosses awarded on the Western Front 27 other ranks lived long enough to be commissioned.[351] Only two of these men, however, were commissioned, while a further nine were promoted to NCO positions. This meant 16 recipients' ranks remained unchanged following their Victoria Cross actions as seen in Figure 6.[352] Accordingly, 59 per cent of recipients were not promoted following their Victoria Cross action, indicating that promotion was not automatically part and parcel of being decorated.

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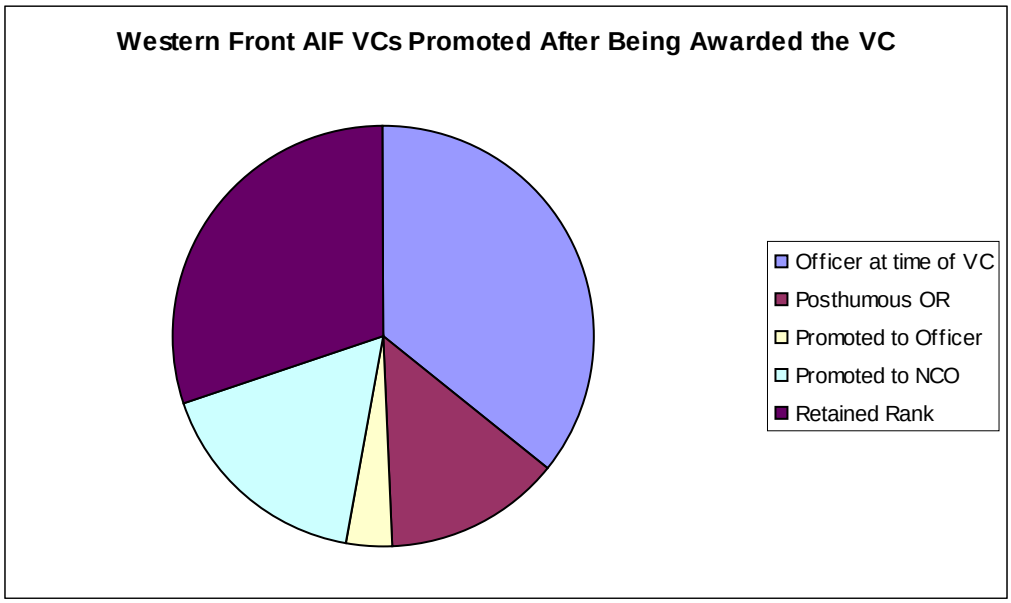
[348] Wark's citation, *London Gazette* Iss. 31082, 26 December 1918, p. 1 of edition 24 December 1918, [p. 15117 of 1918].
[349] AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 187–188.
[350] De la Billière, *Supreme Courage*, p. 15.
[351] 26 Victoria Cross recipients were either already officers or were posthumously awarded.
[352] See Appendix E for VC Recipient's promotion status following the award of the decoration.

Figure 6:



Source: Staunton, A., *Victoria Cross Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2005, pp. 51-196.

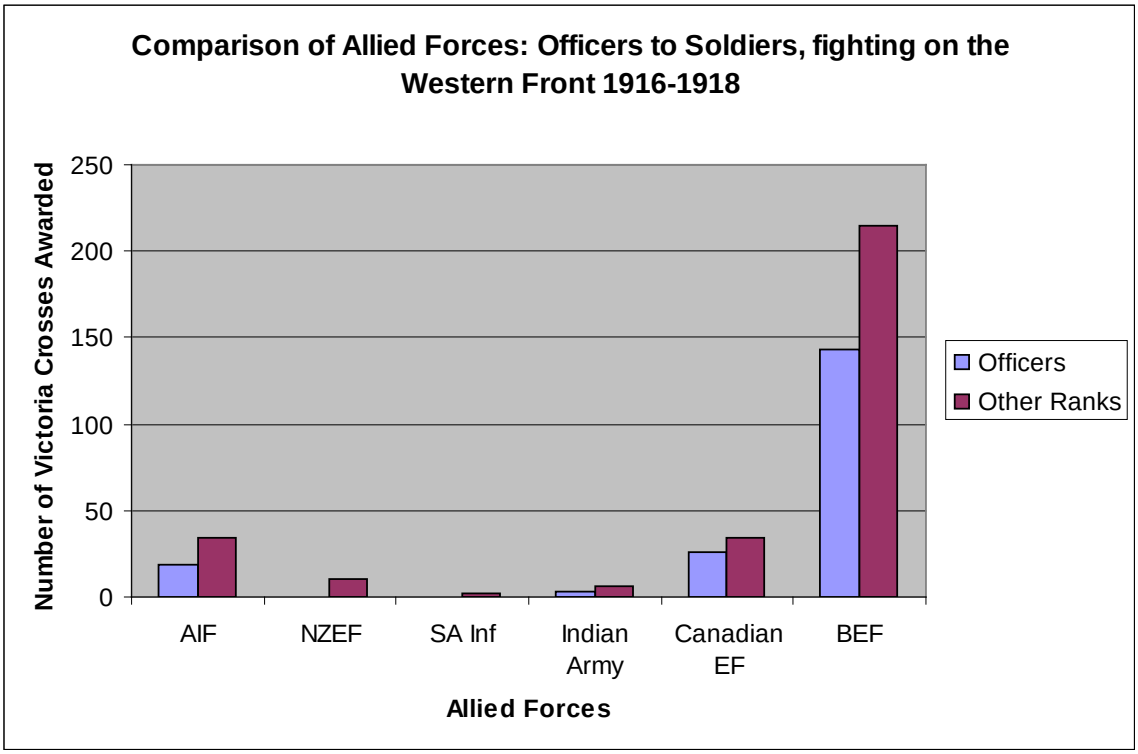
Even though junior officers had more opportunity for being recognised, fewer AIF officers (19) received Victoria Crosses than men (34) on the Western Front.[353] This equates to 35 per cent of AIF Victoria Crosses awarded to officers. At the same time officers made up only three percent of overall AIF numbers.[354] These meant officers of the AIF were around ten times more likely than ordinary ranks in the AIF to be rewarded with the Victoria Cross on the Western Front. For the entire BEF (including soldiers of Dominion forces), of the total 492 Victoria Crosses awarded for actions on the Western Front between the years 1914 and 1918, 191 were awarded to officers and 301 were awarded to soldiers. This total was similar to AIF numbers with 37 per cent of Allied Victoria Crosses going to officers.[355]

[353] Of those 34, five sergeants received Victoria Crosses in part due to their leadership of those under their command including Sergeant John Whittle (12 battalion, 8 and 15 April, 1917), Sergeant Lewis McGee (40 battalion, 4 October 1917), Sergeant William Ruthven (22 battalion, 19 May 1918), Sergeant Percy Statton (40 battalion, 12 August 1918) and Sergeant Albert Lowerson (21 battalion, 1 September 1918).
[354] This three per cent was also an average for all allied forces fighting on the Western Front; *Australian Imperial Force, Statistics of Casualties*, Records Section, AIF Headquarters, London, 1919; & as discussed with historian Dr. Peter Stanley 3 September 2008. However, overall, officers, including staff officers totalled about ten per cent of the military establishment. Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 102.
[355] Gliddon, *VCs Handbook, The Western Front 1914-1918*, pp. 2-198.

A comparison of AIF figures to other Dominion forces including those of fighting forces from New Zealand, South Africa, India, Canada and the combined forces of the United Kingdom (listed as BEF in Figure 7, including British, Welsh, Scottish and Irish forces) also fighting on the Western Front shows that officers were always disproportionally represented in the award of the Victoria Cross compared to ordinary soldiers (see Figure 7). As previously discussed, New Zealand officers were completely overlooked with eight Victoria Crosses awarded to other ranks of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and none to officers. Similarly no Victoria Crosses went to South African officers, with only two awarded to soldiers. The interesting figures of the Indian Army, Canadian Expeditionary Force and the forces representing the United Kingdom as a whole tell a different story, with all exceeding the average of 37 per cent of Victoria Crosses awarded to officers. The Indian Army were led by British officers who received three of the six total Victoria Crosses awarded for actions on the Western Front, 50 per cent of awards. Canadian officers received 43 per cent of Victoria Crosses with 26 officer Victoria Crosses and 34 soldier awards. Another high percentage of officer to soldier Victoria Crosses for this theatre of war characterised the British forces with 40 per cent of Victoria Crosses awarded to those holding commissioned rank; 143 awarded to officers and 215 awarded to soldiers. These figures certainly outnumber the overall proportion officers in the BEF which comprised less than one per cent of the fighting forces.[356]

[356] *Australian Imperial Force, Statistics of Casualties*, Records Section, AIF Headquarters, London, 1919.

Figure 7:



Source: Gliddon, G. (ed.), *VCs Handbook, The Western Front 1914-1918*, Sutton Publishing, Phoenix Mill, 2005, pp. 2-198.

Taken in total these figures suggest Victoria Crosses awarded to officers and men of AIF were in fact about average for fighting on the Western Front with New Zealand and South Africa as anomalies with no officers being awarded Victoria Crosses. Conversely, officers from India, Canada and the United Kingdom were disproportionally more likely to receive a Victoria Cross than the average soldier. Conversely, of course, was the fact that leading from the front in assaults also meant there was more opportunity for junior officers to be wounded or killed as well. Three per cent of a typical AIF battalion manpower were officers, while total Western Front battle casualties for AIF officers compared to men was four per cent.[357] Each of the 60 AIF infantry battalion suffered similar officer casualty statistics, extending from three per cent for eight battalions, four per cent for 35 battalions and five per cent for 17 battalions. Many of the

[357] Total battle casualties for AIF engagements on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918 were 7781 officers and 174469 other ranks; Beaumont, J. (ed.), *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001, pp. 274-275.

same circumstances that placed junior officers in situations where they could display the action needed to receive a Victoria Cross, also placed them in mortal peril.[358]

For their part many junior officers recognised that their decoration was awarded partly on behalf of their men's actions and there was a level of 'required' modesty to acknowledge their efforts. When speaking about his Victoria Cross valour in the South Australian House of Assembly, Lieutenant Arthur Blackburn (10th Battalion, 23 July 1916), for example,

> was not endeavouring to achieve a reputation for modesty; but … always regarded the winning of that decoration not as any reward for what I personally did, but as a reward for the bravery and gallantry of those men whom it was my privilege to lead. Many of them have obtained the greatest honor that anyone in this world can secure – a little white cross in France – and it is for the gallantry of those men that the decoration was awarded.[359]

It might seem obvious that a Victoria Cross recipient should make a statement such as this but many reflected differently. Lieutenant Joseph Maxwell (18th Battalion) was also given the opportunity to command in the offensive toward Beaurevoir late 1918 and said of his Victoria Cross 'I have reflected that if I was the bravest man during that day, then God help the man who was most afraid.'[360] Although Maxwell was not suggesting his Victoria Cross was attributable in part to the men under his command, he did recognise that the battle was fearsome for both him and the men he led. Both Blackburn and Maxwell, by virtue of their ranks, were in positions whereby the *opportunity* to be seen performing feats of valour worthy of a Victoria Cross was unavoidable.

Taken in total, there was a range of contentious issues surrounding the award of the Victoria Cross to soldiers of the AIF on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918. Changes in recommendations and rejections without explanation were the main issue. Issues such as a correlation to casualty numbers, confidentiality, witness reports, the interpretation of valour and prevailing attitudes of senior commanders, and the unbalanced opportunity for recognition on part of junior leaders, added to the mix. By far, however, the two most significant and influential

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[358] *Australian Imperial Force, Statistics of Casualties*, Records Section, AIF Headquarters, London, 1919.
[359] Faulkner, *Arthur Blackburn, VC*, p. 116.
[360] Maxwell, *Hell's Bells and Mademoiselles*, p. 231.

‘contentious issues’ with regard to recommendations and awards of the Victoria Cross on the Western Front to Australians were connected to a directive issued by BEF GHQ on 29 August 1916. It is to these two issues the next chapter turns.

Chapter 5 The 29 August 1916 Directive: A VC Watershed

While Chapter Three outlined the evolution of the Victoria Cross recommendation process, and Chapter Four detailed a series of contentious issues surrounding the award of the Victoria Cross to AIF recipients on the Western Front, 1916 to 1918, the two perhaps most controversial factors with respect to the decoration have not yet been discussed. they are important enough to warrant a chapter in their own right. Both issues came from a single directive issued by General Headquarters on 29 August 1916. This was the most important directive concerning the Victoria Cross on the Western Front during the First World War. Both issues warrant a comprehensive investigation as they fundamentally influenced the award of Victoria Crosses to soldiers of the AIF during the period 1916 to 1918.

All troops fighting as part of the BEF had the same opportunity to be recognised for the Victoria Cross. Theoretically, there should not have been any one particular force either disadvantaged or advantaged by interpretations of the instructions relating to recommendations for the Victoria Cross. However, there is evidence to suggest some soldiers of the AIF were in fact disadvantaged, due to a serious misunderstanding of the 29 August 1916 GHQ directive by senior AIF commanders, especially in relation to saving life or rescuing wounded comrades. The impact of this misunderstanding changed the way in which Victoria Cross recommendations were considered within the AIF thereafter, making the selection of an Australian soldier for the award of a Victoria Cross much more difficult. The directive stipulated that in future Victoria Crosses would *only* be given for acts of conspicuous gallantry which were *materially conducive to the gaining of victory*, meaning Victoria Crosses would only be awarded following a victorious battle. The directive also advised that *cases of life saving would not be considered for the award of a Victoria Cross*. This meant aiding or rescuing wounded men was no longer a valid justification for recommendation for the Victoria Cross. However, there was an exception that allowed soldiers whose duty it was to care for the wounded in such cases to remain eligible for the award, and it was this exception that senior commanders of the AIF quite wrongly misinterpreted.

The first major change relating to the 29 August 1916 directive was that to be awarded the Victoria Cross from this date the act of gallantry had to be 'materially conducive to victory'. This essentially meant that 'defensive' acts worthy of the Victoria Cross were no longer to be considered.[361] General Haig, it appeared, wanted to use the Victoria Cross to encourage acts of offensive aggression and self sacrifice. The war, after all, would not be won by a stoic defence. As a consequence the Commander-in-Chief sought to reward actions that were 'materially conducive' to victory only. Haig, in this sense, used the Victoria Cross as a 'motivational tool' to reward aggressive acts of valour. In this way the directive shaped the Victoria Cross into a symbol of success, as well as individual heroism.

An obvious consequence of the 'materially conducive' amendment from 1916 was that it became more difficult to gain a Victoria Cross on the Western Front. The new requirements meant recommendations would only be considered for actions that were part of the 'gaining of victory' – extraordinary bravery not part of a successful offensive was no longer eligible for the award.[362] From August onwards recommendations for Victoria Cross awards were rarely successful for failed battlefield operations, no matter how extraordinary the valour. This meant, in real terms, that bravery previously worthy of a Victoria Cross now went unrewarded or was recognised with a lesser decoration. Importantly, however, operational success or failure was often decided by senior commanders weighing up the extent to which operational objectives were reached. As a consequence, senior officers continued to have a significant personal influence over awarding Victoria Crosses through interpretation of this part of the August 1916 directive.

The impact of the 'materially conducive to victory' part of the directive can be shown by investigating the two assaults on the French town of Bullecourt in April and May 1917, the first was a failure, the second a successful operation. By the time the AIF was moved into the area in March and April 1917 to prepare for assaults near Bullecourt, consideration for the award of a Victoria Cross was strictly for engagements that were materially conducive to the gaining of

[361] Letter, 2nd Division HQ to 5th, 6th & 7th Brigade & divisional units, 29 August 1916. AWM 25, 391/2.
[362] *Ibid.*

victory. In practice this ruled out any recommendations for the Victoria Cross following the failed First Battle of Bullecourt on 11 April 1917. Later, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Murray, VC, a veteran of the battle, wrote: 'I was given a bar to my DSO, Birdwood personally told me it would have been a bar to my VC had we won the battle;' by now, however, it was 'not the practice to give the VC to a man who had been in a losing battle.'[363] The application of this rule was, however, seldom as clear cut as Murray implied.

Though written in August 1916, this ruling was, in many cases, not widely promulgated until August 1917, a year later, when general updated instructions regarding recommendations for honours and awards were released. Until this time misunderstanding of this requirement continued to cause confusion among junior officers in the AIF. Lieutenant Edgar Rule (14th Battalion) believed no Victoria Crosses were awarded because the First Bullecourt operation was too confusing in its conduct and outcome, and as a result, 'they were overlooked.'[364] Rule's statement shows he was personally unaware that Victoria Crosses were, by that time, only considered for successful operations. Furthermore, Lieutenant William Carne of the 6th Machine Gun Company suggested there 'appeared to be an Army practice of awarding few decorations for an unsuccessful operation and granting generously for a successful one.'[365] Again, this shows an ignorance of the change made to eligibility for the Victoria Cross within AIF units. With a better prepared battle plan, on 3 May 1917 the Second Battle of Bullecourt was successful. Two Victoria Crosses were awarded following this engagement to Corporal Julian Howell (1st Battalion) on 6 May 1917, and Lieutenant Rupert Moon (58th Battalion) on 12 May 1917.

The only exception to the 'materially conducive to victory' ruling occurred when the AIF was then sent into the region east of Ypres in late September 1917. Here successful encounters at Menin Road, Polygon Wood and on Broodseinde Ridge resulted in six Victoria Crosses over 15 days fighting, two awarded in each phase of the general offensive.[366] As the 3rd Division moved

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[363] Franki, & Slatyer, *Mad Harry*, p. 104.
[364] Rule, E., *Jacka's Mob, A Narrative of the Great War by Edgar John Rule*, complied & edited by C. Johnson & A. Barnes, Military Melbourne, Prahran, 1999, p.79.
[365] Burness, P., 'Inspirational Bravery', *Wartime 32*, 2005, pp. 6-10.
[366] Those awarded included Second Lieutenant Frederick Birks (6 Battalion, 20 September 1917) and Private Reginald Inwood (10 Battalion, 20 – 21 September 1917), Sergeant John Dwyer (4 Machine Gun Company, 26 September 1917), Private Patrick Bugden (31 Battalion, 26 – 28 September 1917), Sergeant Lewis McGee (40 Battalion, 4 October 1917) and Lance Corporal Walter Peeler (3 Pioneer Battalion, 4 October 1917).

closer to capturing the village of Passchendaele, however, their progress halted. Here, an anomaly occurred during the failed second attack on Passchendaele when a Victoria Cross was awarded posthumously to Captain Clarence Jeffries (34th Battalion) on 12 October 1917. Although this was a failed battlefield operation, Jeffries had made some significant progress in successfully reaching the first objective, and had been killed before the second objective could be reached. The brigade finally attained its second objective but had lost too many men to hold the position, and was consequently withdrawn. Despite the attack failing to achieve its goal, Jeffries' recommendation for a Victoria Cross succeeded, indicating there must have been some interpretation of 'local' success regarding Jeffries' personal actions.

The tide of war on the Western Front had moved decisively by the middle of 1918, after the Germans had lost a number of major engagements in their assaults toward Amiens. Allied armies, including the AIF, forced the battle line further east and even closer to Germany. Repeated Allied assaults in the '100 days of victory' led to continuing offensive action. The changing nature of fighting on the Western Front, and the growing frequency of Allied victories, therefore provided more opportunities for Victoria Crosses. Offensive acts and successes were all by their nature 'materially conducive to victory'. By this stage the soldiers of the AIF knew about the changes to Victoria Cross eligibility and also understood their heightened opportunities for recognition given the shift towards an offensive battlefield focus. As Lieutenant Colonel Ernest Knox Knight led the 37th Battalion along the Roman Road he commented to a tank commander: 'There'll be a train load of V.C's waiting for us when we get back, if it's a success.'[367] He was right. Despite the casualties, 20 soldiers of the AIF were awarded with a Victoria Cross between 8 August and 5 October 1918, and all were awarded won the basis of recommendations deemed materially conducive to the gaining of victory.[368] There was in the last phases of the war on the Western Front a clear correlation between battlefield success and Victoria Crosses.

With the exception of Jeffries' Victoria Cross, those awarded to soldiers of the AIF after August 1916 were all in circumstances 'materially conducive to the gaining of victory'.

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[367] Bean, *Volume 6, The Australian Imperial Force in France 1918 – the Armistice*, p. 687.
[368] Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 147-196.

However, the Jeffries anomaly suggested that there continued to be some room for exceptions and interpretation by senior commanders. This was also evident in regard to the interpretation of the second key part of the same 29 August 1916 instruction where cases of saving a fellow soldier's life were no longer considered eligible for the Victoria Cross.

The 29 August 1916 directive also told AIF commanders that future cases of gallantry involving life saving, however brave the act, would no longer be considered for the award of the Victoria Cross.[369] Haig hoped this ruling would strengthen his attacks as it would prevent soldiers withdrawing from an assault to rescue comrades in the hope they would be recognised with a Victoria Cross.[370] Haig believed such action should not be rewarded with the highest decoration, especially as this type of action weakened the attacking force. Haig therefore sought to limit actions being rewarded with Victoria Crosses to those of offensive aggression and self sacrifice. Haig knew the Victoria Cross had a 'direct tendency to induce young men in the army to do things – gallant they may be, but still rash and contrary to discipline – in the hope of obtaining the reward and honour which it conferred.'[371] Haig needed to direct the focus to the front line soldiers toward the objective and not to the wounded on the battlefield and in this way neglecting duty 'in the pursuit of glory.'[372]

Following the 29 August 1916 ruling, subsequent feats of bravery previously worthy of the Victoria Cross, performed by soldiers involving rescuing wounded men were, as a consequence, not awarded with this decoration. Instead these actions often led to lesser gallantry awards such as the Military Medal. It is quite probable the ruling came into existence so that men would avoid trying to rescue comrades during battle (perhaps even for the purpose of being recognised for the Victoria Cross), and in doing so deplete the fighting strength of the force. GHQ believed it could not afford to lose fighting men for the purpose of rescuing or tending wounded.[373] Haig himself had long held views that the Victoria Cross should only be recognised for offensive aggression and self sacrifice, despite refraining from making such changes before

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[369] Letter, 2nd Division HQ to 5th, 6th & 7th Brigade & other units groups in 2nd Division, 29 August 1916. AWM 25, 391/2; & Letter, 1st Division HQ to 1st, 2nd & 3rd Brigade & other units groups in 1st Division, 30 August 1916. AWM 25, 391/2.
[370] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 204.
[371] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 253.
[372] *Ibid.*
[373] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 159.

August 1916.[374] It is possible that the amendment was late in being implemented due to the long history of the Victoria Cross awarded for humanitarian efforts in the past, especially during the Boer War.[375] Haig, however, wanted to redirect the focus from humanitarian heroism to reinforce the importance of attack and aggression in the assault. This was eventually communicated to the troops from August 1916. Men now knew what was required if they wanted to be recognised with the Victoria Cross. It had become clear that high command on the Western Front did not want men who would rush to the aid of the fallen; it 'wanted killers first and foremost'.[376] The need for this change had become clear to Haig following actions on the Somme during 1916. He believed he was losing too many men – men who had fallen wounded and men who would retrieve the casualties. The Commander-in-Chief sought to shift the focus to encourage the men to attack the enemy, take enemy ground and inflict casualties. As a consequence the August 1916 directive shifted the Victoria Cross focus away from humanitarian acts.[377]

But a key exception to the life saving ruling was misinterpreted by senior commanders of the AIF. From August 1916, the Victoria Cross was not to be considered for any acts of saving life '*except for those whose duty it was to care for such cases*'.[378] It was this convention that the AIF seemed unable to apply. The exception referred to men whose duty it was to care for wounded men who were unable to return to their line independently, which included some soldiers of the medical corps and infantry stretcher bearers. Although the medical corps had their own stretcher bearer parties, each AIF battalion also had its own small section of stretcher carriers. Technically the exception was intended to mean such soldiers were *still eligible* for the Victoria Cross. They were, after all, serving alongside the infantry men at the front line but their central role was to rescue the wounded.[379]

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[374] Blake, *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig*, p. 79.
[375] In fact, 53 per cent of Boer War Victoria Crosses were for saving life; while 30 per cent of 1915 Victoria Crosses were awarded for saving life; 19 per cent of 1916 Victoria Crosses were awarded for saving life; 13 per cent of 1917 Victoria Crosses were awarded for saving life; 6 per cent of 1918 Victoria Crosses were awarded for saving life; but these Victoria Crosses were across the war and included campaigns in the air, on the sea and in the desert. Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 119, 138, 144, 157 & 161.
[376] *Ibid*., p. 151.
[377] *Ibid.*, p. 149.
[378] Letter, 2nd Division HQ to 5th, 6th & 7th Brigade & divisional units, 29 August 1916. AWM 25, 391/2.
[379] 'Non-Combatants', article discussing the issue of ineligible gallantry decorations to Non-Combatants, *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*, 22 December 1917, p. 12.

As a rule, senior AIF commanders interpreted the August 1916 instruction as a blanket ineligibility for any feat involving saving life and rescuing comrades. There was significant confusion over the issue, and it appeared that AIF commanders simply ignored the exceptions. In September 1916 even C.E.W. Bean, Australia's official war correspondent, wrote in his diary:

> They tell me that a notice has been given that the VC will not in future be given for acts of gallantry, but only for acts which help to win a battle. If that is so, then the stretch-bearers are out of it. This stupid fiddling with the Victoria Cross does not detract from the acts which do not get it – they stand unchanged by war office … GHQ or any one else in the world. It is the Victoria Cross that suffers. If his class of action is not out from recognition by the Victoria Cross it is the cross which becomes a poorer thing – a cheaper class of distinction – not the act which fails to win it.[380]

Bean's regard for stretcher bearers was a theme which ran throughout his writings, beginning on the second day of AIF operations on Gallipoli in 1915. Bean wrote about the constant danger from enemy fire on the troops but reported 'the stretcher-bearers carried their burdens through it, erect,' often noting the bravery of these men.[381] He was personally outraged by this incorrect interpretation of the August 1916 directive. Stretcher bearers in the AIF were only 'out of it' as a consequence of a failure by AIF Commanders to apply the ruling exception.

The issue of receiving a Victoria Cross for rescuing comrades had, in fact, been a subject of discussion long before August 1916. A number of prominent individuals held longstanding opinions on the issue of duty versus heroism in regards to rescuing the wounded.[382] Lord Kitchener, for example, declared in 1901 that 'steps should be taken to discourage recommendations for the Victoria Cross in civilized warfare in cases of mere bringing in of wounded and dismounted men.'[383] Kitchener's personal policy was reflected in his command decisions throughout the Boer War.[384] Then, in 1902 General Sir Ian Hamilton described his personal reluctance to recommend Victoria Crosses for rescue or wounded men 'when (if they

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[380] Bean's diary, September 1916, pp. 22 & 24. AWM 38, 606/58/2.
[381] Bean, *Volume 1, The Story of Anzac*, p. 553.
[382] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 169.
[383] Letter, General Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief South Africa to Under Secretary of State for War, War Office, 26 June 1901. TNA, WO 32/7463. Halliday, *Valour Reconsidered*, p. 26; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 80.
[384] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 158.

lay quite still) they were probably safer than being rescued.'[385] Moreover, in 1914 both Generals Sir Douglas Haig and Sir John French expressed their view that Victoria Crosses should not be awarded for the rescue of wounded officers and men 'unless under very exceptional circumstance.'[386] Interestingly, they both agreed that although this should 'definitely' apply to officers, while more consideration should be given for the men.[387] At a dinner party with King George V, the Prince of Wales, and General Sir John French in France on 4 December 1914 Haig offered his thoughts on what sort of deed should win a Victoria Cross. The King had expressed the opinion that the award of the Victoria Cross for carrying a wounded man out of action was justified and beneficial. Haig replied:

> Each case must be judged on its merits but, as a rule, any careless movement did a wounded man much harm and also frequently tended to increase loss of valuable lives. As a matter of fact we have to take special precautions during a battle to post police, to prevent more unwounded men than are necessary from accompanying a wounded man back from the firing line![388]

This perhaps explains why Haig was not in favour of the Victoria Cross as recognition for acts involving the rescuing of wounded comrades. Haig's attitude was further revealed in his comments regarding the Victoria Cross recommendation for British soldier Private F.W. Dobson in September 1914. Dobson volunteered to retrieve two wounded comrades. Under heavy fire he crawled out in front of his trench line where he found one man dead. He then proceeded to rescue the other. His Commanding Officer witnessed the bravery and immediately recommended him for the Victoria Cross. The recommendation proceeded, with approval, until it reached GHQ when Haig stopped it, suggesting he:

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[385] Halliday, *Valour Reconsidered*, p. 26; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 80.
[386] At this time Haig was Commander of the 1st Army while French was Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in France. Haig took over the Commander-in-Chief position on 19 December 1915. This strained their friendship following a fond association since Haig was French's Chief Staff Officer during the Boer War. Blake, *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig*. More evidence of French's disapproval of VCs given for rescuing can be found in Letter, CinC French to Secretary War Office, 25 November 1914. TNA, WO 32/4993.
[387] Letter, CinC French to Secretary War Office, 25 November 1914. TNA, WO 32/4993; & Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 262.
[388] Blake, *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig*, p. 79; & Quinlivan, *Forgotten Valour*, pp. 198-199.

> …fully appreciated the bravery shewn by no. 6840 Pte. F.W. Dobson, 2nd Btn Coldstream Guards, who is recommended for the V.C., but I am not in favour of this reward being granted for bringing in wounded officers or men in European warfare & I therefore recommend [he] should be granted the D.C. medal.[389]

In accordance with Haig's wishes Dobson was subsequently awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Importantly with regard to the issue of rescuing the wounded, in 1914 the 'Victoria Cross Committee' asked Lord Kitchener (Secretary of State for War at the time) for guidance, regarding the process for awarding Victoria Crosses to men for such cases.[390] The Committee was concerned that Victoria Cross recommendations were being 'filtered' before they reached the Commander-in-Chief on the Western Front at the time, Field Marshal Sir John French. Many recommendations involving rescues were being sent through the 2nd Corps under the command of General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien while very few were sent through the 1st Corps under the command of Haig. When asked about this situation, Haig replied, 'I am not in favour of giving V.Cs for rescuing wounded men in European warfare.'[391] Haig agreed with Kitchener's stance on Victoria Crosses for rescuing the wounded while fighting in South Africa and was not recommending similar numbers as Smith-Dorrien for similar acts. Inevitably, Kitchener refused to comment and 'handballed' the issue back to the overall Commander-in-Chief at the time, Field Marshal French.[392] French eventually agreed with Haig's position that rescuing wounded should not result in a Victoria Cross.[393] However, it was not until August 1916, with Haig now as Commander-in-Chief of the BEF, that this attitude crystallised as policy.[394]

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[389] Letter, Douglas Haig, Headquarters, 1st Army Corps to Adjutant General [Lieutenant General C.F.N. Macready], General Headquarters, 30 September 1914. TNA, WO 32/4993; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 158.
[390] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 158.
[391] Letter, 1 Army Corps Commander Haig to Adjutant General GHQ, 30 September 1914 & undated notes from VC Committee concerned about humanitarian VCs and disparity of the Two Army Corps. TNA, WO 32/4993.
[392] Undated notes from VC Committee concerned about humanitarian VCs and disparity of the Two Army Corps. TNA, WO 32/4993; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 158.
[393] Letter, Field Marshal Sir John French to Secretary, War Office, 25 November 1914. TNA, WO 32/4993; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 159.
[394] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 142, 159-160.

Haig's attitude on the issue of Victoria Crosses and rescuing wounded soldiers was not unique. Indeed, by the time his instruction was issued on 29 August 1916 there was already some feeling among the senior Allied commanders that too many Victoria Crosses were being issued for assisting the wounded, considered a 'defensive' action, instead of for gallantly fighting during an offensive action. This is perhaps understandable given that of the Victoria Crosses awarded to soldiers of the AIF on the Western Front before the ruling came into existence, 50 per cent of them were for rescuing comrades.

On the other hand there have always been those who opposed Haig's position. A number of histories of the AIF medical corps during the First World War have included commentary on the respect and admiration of the work performed by the stretcher bearers. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Beeston, commanding 4th Field Ambulance, believed that many stretcher bearers had deserved the Victoria Cross and had gone unrewarded.[395] At the same time there is no evidence to suggest that Beeston himself recommended any of his own stretcher bearers for the Victoria Cross.[396] The official historian of the medical services during the First World War, Colonel Arthur Graham Butler, fuelled the debate. He suggested the collecting of casualties from the fighting zone in battle was part and parcel of the battle itself and added that battalion stretcher bearers' work put them in as much danger as the infantry troops they worked alongside.[397]

The heart of the matter, however, was correctly identified by Butler. He concluded the absence of Victoria Crosses to members of the AIF medical corps was as a result of misinterpretation from their own leaders of the instructions regarding recommending a Victoria Cross. The August 1916 GHQ directive stated: 'Cases of gallantry in life saving, of however fine a nature, will not be considered for the award of the V.C.'[398] The order was repeated in a general instruction by 2nd Division on 9 September 1916 which indicated the change in policy for the award of the Victoria Cross. Reasons for this change were explained later in a further order from GHQ on 29 September 1916:

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[395] Braga, *Anzac Doctor*, p. 147.
[396] AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007.
[397] Butler, A.G., *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 Volume 2, The Western Front*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1st Edition, 1940, pp. 147 & 277.
[398] Butler, A.G., *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 Volume 3 Special Problems and Services*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1st Edition, 1943, p. 1045.

> In future the Victoria Cross or other immediate reward will not be given for the rescue of wounded, *excepting for those whose duty it is to care for such cases*. Such attempts, more often than not, result in the death of the would-be rescuer and rescued. Moreover [such actions] depletes the fighting strength of units: perhaps at most critical moments.[399]

This instruction was passed to Australian divisions but, according to Butler, the modification implied by the words 'excepting for those whose duty it is to care for such cases' was not universally understood or applied.[400] The evidence presented clearly shows this was the case therefore, why no Victoria Crosses were recommended for AIF members of the medical corps from September 1916.[401] The blame lay with the AIF itself – not Haig.

A subsequent instruction by General Sir Douglas Haig dated 2 November 1916 attempted to dispel the confusion with the following explanation:

> The objects the Commander-in-Chief had in view are:
> (i) To ensure that the rescue of wounded should not be allowed to interfere with the use of every available man for any operations in course of execution.
> (ii) To avoid unnecessary loss of life.
> (iii) To discourage attempts to win honours for the sake of honours themselves.
> It is somewhat difficult to differentiate, but the Commander-in-Chief will be ready to consider for some reward such cases as:
> (a) Rescuing men buried in trenches.
> (b) Bringing wounded men back from a raid.
> (c) Any act specifically ordered by an Officer to help stretcher-bearers in their duties.
> (d) Beyond this, any act which is *bona fide* and not in contravention of the spirit of the above provisos.[402]

Item (iii) (d) gave senior commanders some flexibility to argue for special consideration if they believed there was a legitimate case. The ruling was further explained in an August 1917 instruction regarding recommendations for honours and awards which noted that the bona fide rescuing of wounded could be considered only in circumstances such as if a soldier rescued another while under fire buried in dugouts or in trenches, or bringing in wounded men from a raid where the job could not be left for allocated stretcher bearers (thus also preventing the

[399] Butler, *Volume 3 Special Problems and Services*, p. 1045.
[400] *Ibid.*
[401] Paradoxically, all six Australian Victoria Cross recipients of the Boer War were awarded for rescuing comrades.
[402] Butler, *Volume 3 Special Problems and Services*, p. 1045.

enemy obtaining identification), or any special act ordered by an officer to assist stretcher bearers in their duty in accordance with the spirit of the stated scenarios.[403] Such rulings were applied to the case of Private Patrick Bugden (31st Battalion) whose case is examined below.

Butler believed that such actions identified in item (iii) 'for some reward' led to the impression on behalf of AIF commanders that the original directive which they believed ruled out recognition for all acts of life saving still applied to the Victoria Cross. As a consequence AIF commanders continued to consider acts of saving life, potentially worthy of Victoria Crosses, were not to be recommended. Nevertheless, the medical services of the AIF continued to believe there were courageous acts being performed by its members in assisting in the safe retreat of the wounded. The irony was that AIF stretcher bearers were, in fact, always eligible for the Victoria Cross as it was their *duty* to care for the cases of rescued men. If valour of the highest order was displayed in the concert of this duty, then a Victoria Cross ought to be recommended. Another historian of the medical corps, Michael Tyquin, agrees with Butler in that such soldiers were disadvantaged because AIF commanders continued to misconstrue the August 1916 directive:

> The directive was an attempt to dissuade men from falling behind in assaults to look after their wounded, 'excepting those whose duty it is to care for such cases'. Unfortunately Australia took the order literally with the result that 'in the AIF acts of life saving [such as that of Howse in the Boer War] which … would have been recommended for and rewarded by the Victoria Cross were not so recommended.[404]

Up until the 29 August 1916 directive, which according to the AIF excluded the Victoria Cross for acts of life saving, three of the six AIF recipients on the Western Front to that date had received their Victoria Crosses as a direct result of rescuing comrades. Those included Private William Jackson (17th Battalion, 25-26 June 1916); Sergeant Claud Castleton (5th Machine Gun Company, 28 July 1916); and Private Martin O'Meara (16th Battalion, 9-12 August 1916) who had been awarded Victoria Crosses during fighting in June, July and August, 1916. Yet there were also exclusions before the August direction was released. For example, Corporal Stanley

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[403] Memorandum, Peyton to Haig, 4 August 1917, AWM 25, 391/45; Memorandum, Assistant Military Secretary 5th Army to HQ 1st Anzac Corps, 8 February 1917. AWM 25, 391/23 and an identical S.S. 477. A was located in AWM 3DRL, 2316.

[404] Tyquin, M., *Little by Little, A Centenary History of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2003, p. 160.

Carpenter's (2nd Battalion) Victoria Cross recommendation was downgraded to a Distinguished Conduct Medal for actions *as a stretcher bearer* from 22 to 25 July 1916 at Pozières. There was no explanation given, but the recommendation was similar to those of Jackson, Castleton and O'Meara, in rescuing and tending to wounded comrades. It is possible Carpenter's recommendation was downgraded because he was in less danger than the other three who were awarded Victoria Crosses. Private O'Meara (16th Battalion), a stretcher bearer and last Australian to be recognised for saving life, was perhaps lucky to be awarded the Victoria Cross before the August directive came into force.[405]

From time to time the August 1916 directive, the Australian misinterpretation of the rescuing of comrades meant that recommendations for Victoria Crosses that included reference to life saving always included brave feats that were considered materially conducive to victory. Such was the case of Private Patrick Bugden (31st Battalion, 26-28 September 1917), whose citation included numerous feats involving leading small parties to rush strongly defended pillboxes, silencing enemy machine-guns, and the rescue of a corporal from being taken prisoner, as well as the rescuing of wounded men.[406] Sergeant Percy Statton's (40th Battalion, 12 August 1918) Victoria Cross citation also included among other brave acts, the rescuing of two wounded men.[407] Nevertheless, the August 1916 ruling was still misinterpreted for the AIF fighting on the Western Front. Against Haig's intent, in the AIF there was a blanket disqualification of the Victoria Cross for gallantry that was for saving life alone – including for stretcher bearers.

The predicament of stretcher bearer Private Arthur Carlson (2nd Battalion), was an interesting case. C.E.W. Bean voiced his concern regarding the lack of acknowledgment for this man's bravery. Bean was rarely critical of policy; however, he noted in Volume IV of his Official History that 'a rule had been made that mere saving of a life was not to constitute grounds for the award of the Victoria Cross,' and added that higher authority had mistakenly removed the exception from their consciousness, and as a result the bravery performed by men

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[405] O'Meara was not so lucky following the war. War service had affected him so badly (as it had many stretcher bearers) that upon returning to Australia following the war O'Meara was institutionalised in a mental hospital in Perth and spent close to 15 years restrained to a bed until his premature death in 1935. A copy of Carpenter's Victoria Cross recommendation is located in Appendix C.

[406] *London Gazette* Iss. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 3 of edition 26 November 1917, [p. 12329 of 1917].

[407] *London Gazette* Iss. 30922, 27 September 1918, p. 2 of edition 24 September 1918, [p. 11430 of 1918].

like Carlson was no longer being recognised for the award.[408] On 4 May 1917 Private Carlson's Victoria Cross recommendation for actions at the Second Battle of Bullecourt was changed to 'DCM' from 'VC' by his commanding officer who added 'as it is understood that the VC would not be granted for life saving.' Interestingly, Brigadier General William Lesslie, commanding 1st Brigade, then wrote in the section 'to be left blank' 'I recommend Pte Carlson for the Victoria Cross. In my opinion the instructions issued on the subject are not intended to debar a stretcher bearer from obtaining the highest reward for valour.'[409] Lesslie was right, Carlson's Commanding Officer was wrong. It is unfortunate that not all AIF commanders shared the same understanding of the instruction as Lesslie. If this was the case perhaps more stretcher bearers might have been rewarded. In the end, however, Carlson's recommendation was dismissed altogether. The point is that Carlson may have been acknowledged and received a Victoria Cross had he fought as a soldier of the British Army where the rule was interpreted correctly and stretcher bearers and medical officers continued to be recognised.

To further illustrate the confusion within the AIF on this issue, a number of Australian soldiers from certain units continued to be recommended for the Victoria Crosses despite the direction that that saving life was no longer an eligible criterion unless the soldier in question was a stretcher bearer. One case was that of Lieutenant Arthur Muriel (46th Battalion), who most definitely was not a stretcher bearer, but was recommended on 8 April 1918 for the Victoria Cross. He was rescuing wounded comrades, despite the danger to himself, on the night of 5 and 6 April 1918 near Albert in France. The recommendation was forwarded on through to GHQ when a response to the recommendation was sent back to headquarters of the Australian Corps on 21 April 1918 and copied to the 12th Brigade on 4 May 1918 with the following note:

> With reference to the recommendation that Lieut. A.J.C. MURIEL, 46th Battalion, A.I.F., be awarded the VICTORIA CROSS, submitted under your No. 97/233 of the 15th instant, it is regretted that in view of the definite instructions issued under Military Secretary's letter No. MS./H/3631 of the 29th September (to the effect that Immediate Awards would not be given for the rescue of wounded except to those whose duty it is to care for such cases), the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief cannot forward this recommendation.

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[408] Bean, C.E.W., *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 Volume 4, The Australian Imperial Force in France 1917*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1943, pp. 497-498.
[409] AWM 28, Honours and Awards, *www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 22 April 2007. A copy of Carlson's Victoria Cross recommendation is located in Appendix C.

> In these circumstances the name of Lieut. Muriel has been noted for 'Mention' in a future Honours Despatch.[410]

No matter how gallant this act by Muriel, it was never going to be considered worthy of a Victoria Cross. Muriel was not a stretcher bearer; he was an infantryman. The ruling of the August 1916 instruction was applied correctly in this instance. What the case shows, however, is that while some AIF commanders did not grasp the fact that such acts by stretcher bearers were allowed, others did not understand that similar acts by soldiers other than stretcher bearers were ineligible.

Both issues discussed thus far, the ruling of Victoria Crosses only to be awarded for acts materially conducive to victory and that which ruled out all but stretcher bearers from being recognised for rescuing wounded comrades, show an important trend in the evolution of the award during the First World War. If acts recognised by the Victoria Cross on the Western Front are divided into five categories: offensive, defensive, symbolic, secondary and humanitarian, an important trend emerges (see Figure 8).[411] In line with Haig's personal concept of the Victoria Cross and perhaps its perceived utility as a motivational tool, the decoration became a mechanism used to acknowledge valour associated with *battlefield aggression*, rather than bravery on the battlefield in a more general sense. Figure 9 clearly shows the ever growing proportion of 'offensive' and 'aggressive' recipients.[412]

In the representations at Figures 8 and 9 the features of an 'offensive' act included aggressive actions such as gaining ground, capturing enemy strong points and/or breaking enemy formations. Defensive acts included defending one's own territory and resisting enemy attacks. Symbolic acts of gallantry included rallying of the troops, saving one's own weapon systems from capture and/or capturing the enemy's weaponry systems. Secondary acts of gallantry were those which were necessary to achieve victory through combat engineering, reconnaissance and

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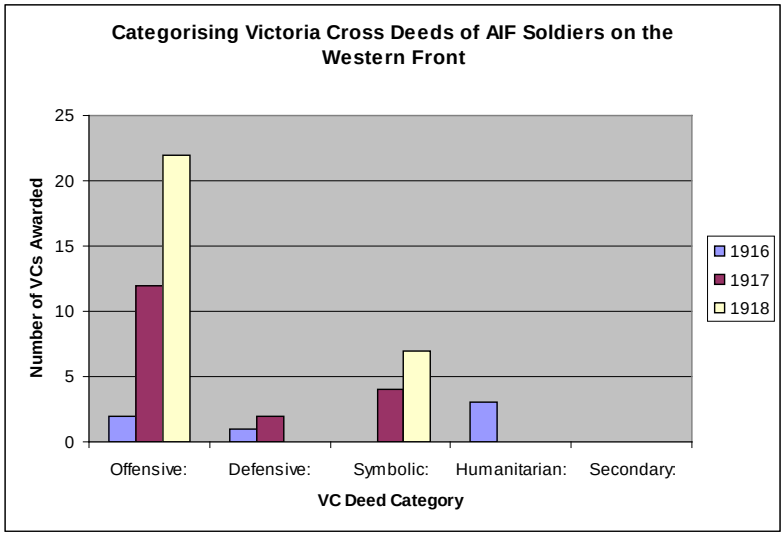
[410] Letter, HQ 4th Army to HQ Australian Corps, 21 April 1918. AWM 25, 391/2.
[411] As historian M.C. Smith had explained in: *Awarded for Valour*, 2008.
[412] Many recipients, of course, had more than one identifying feature and so the most dominant feature was used to categorise. The categories listed for each recipient are identified in Appendix E.

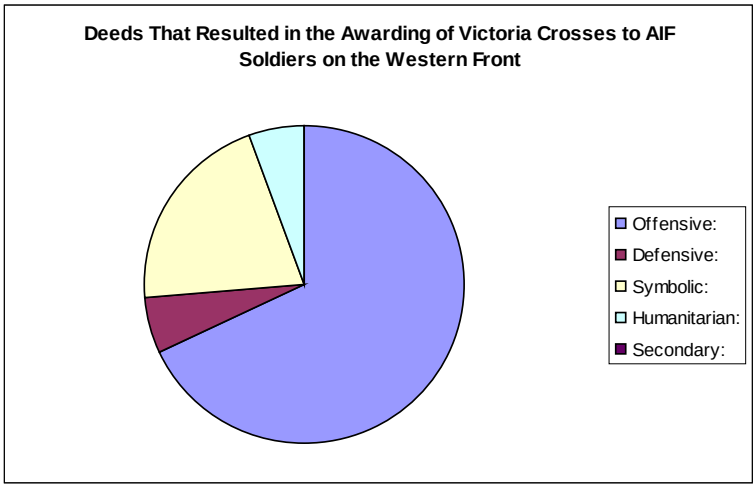
resupply of provisions and ammunition. Humanitarian acts included gallantry such as saving life and/or disposing of ordnance that was potentially life threatening.[413]

Figure 8:



Source: Staunton, A., *Victoria Cross Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2005, pp. 51-196.

Figure 9:



Source: Staunton, A., *Victoria Cross Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2005, pp. 51-196.

[413] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 94.

Following the war this trend continued and was formally incorporated into the 1920 revision of the Royal Warrant pertaining to the Victoria Cross. The 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C.' established to revise the Victoria Cross Warrant in August 1918, asked Haig his opinion for possible changes to be included in the revised Warrant.[414] As a result, Haig's personal vision of the place and purpose of the Victoria Cross, founded on the basis of aggressive action, was written into the 1920 Victoria Cross Royal Warrant which governs the Victoria Cross to this day.[415] Perhaps such an evolution was inevitable. Warfare on the Western Front had been characterised by machine guns, barbed wire and massive troop formations. It was very different from the warfare of the Victoria era when the original Royal Warrant was written.[416] Haig understood the importance of gallantry decorations not only as rewards for bravery, but also as tools of command which he could control in order to encourage particular actions, while ignoring other actions which he believed were counter-productive to the war effort. The Western Front was a war of attrition, with killing of the enemy the principal goal. This was important as Haig believed soldiers who rescued wounded comrades, and who often became casualties themselves, did not contribute to winning, and he shaped the Victoria Cross accordingly.[417] In doing this the Victoria Cross moved away from recognising the 'type' of valour that was awarded during the Boer War.[418] Aggression became the key factor in determining Victoria Cross valour from 1916. The concept of Victoria Cross heroism following the First World War continued to move towards the aggressive, merciless and hostile end of the spectrum. Before the war the hero often saved the wounded.[419] From 1916 he did not. M.C. Smith described the desired behaviour of a potential recipient from this point as that of a 'homicidal maniac, eager to kill until killed himself.'[420]

The 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C.' responsible for codifying this change was originally set up to totally revise the Victoria Cross Royal Warrant

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[414] Letter, Francis Davies to Frederick Ponsonby, 6 August 1918. TNA, WO 32/3443; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 168 & 184.
[415] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 186.
[416] *Ibid.*, p. 131.
[417] *Ibid.*, p. 204.
[418] *Ibid.*, pp. 152 & 156.
[419] *Ibid.*, pp. 185, 189 & 202.
[420] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

and subsequent amendments. The idea came from the British Naval Civil Secretary, Sir Oswyn Murray, following concerns regarding the ambiguous use of the Victoria Cross ballot system in the raid on Zeebrugge on 22-23 April 1918.[421] The idea was passed onto the Deputy Military Secretary at the War Office, Colonel Malcolm David Graham. After viewing past files regarding the Victoria Cross Royal Warrants, Graham agreed that some ambiguity existed regarding a number of clauses, and with the new request to include the Royal Air Force; he recommended a general committee be convened to rewrite the Warrant in its entirety.[422] Subsequently, Graham wrote to Sir Frederick Ponsonby, the Keeper of the Privy Purse, to brief the King on the proposed committee. The King approved and appointed Ponsonby as its chair. The King especially wanted to bring forward the issue of opening eligibility for the Victoria Cross to women.[423] The 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C.' first met on Friday 30 August 1918 at the War Office to review and revise the Victoria Cross Royal Warrant.[424] As chairman of the committee, Ponsonby issued a press release announcing his mandate to make the Victoria Cross more in line with 'the requirements of modern warfare.'[425] It is important to note that of all the committee members, it was probably only Colonel Graham who had been actively involved in warfare conditions similar to those seen on the Western Front, so there was a level of inexperience when it came to what constituted bravery in the field. The

[421] Letter, R.H. Brade War Office to O. Murray, 2 July 1918. TNA, ADM 1/8528/174; 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C', 30 August 1918, Whitehall. TNA, WO 32/3443, pp. 9-15 (original transcript page number); & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 165.

[422] Notes on VC Warrant by Colonel Graham, 15 June 1918. TNA, ADM 1/8528/174; Board Minutes, 11 July 1918. TNA, ADM 1/8528/174; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 166.

[423] Letter, Military Secretary Lieutenant General Francis Davies to Admiral A.F. Everett, 6 August 1918, Letter, Everett to Davies, 7 August 1918 & Notes by Naval Secretary, 8 August 1918. TNA, ADM 1/8528/174; 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C', 30 August 1918, Whitehall. TNA, WO 32/3443, p. 34 (original transcript page number); Letter, Sir Frederick Ponsonby to Malcolm Graham, 3 August 1918. TNA, WO 32/3443; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 166.

[424] Copies of repeated documents relating to this can be found in NAM, London, 1998-10-146-1 contains a file of War Office material on the Victoria Cross, including lists of recipients, statutes and warrants, correspondence and minutes of committees, 1856-1962. Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 170-171.

[425] Co-ordination etc, of warrants relating to the V.C. Constitution of Committee, TNA, WO 32/3443; 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C', 30 August 1918, Whitehall. TNA, WO 32/3443, p. 1 (original transcript page number); Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 171; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 171. Apart from Ponsonby and Graham, other committee members included Naval Secretary, Rear Admiral Sir A.F. Everett, Colonel Robert H. More of the Air Ministry, and Colonel S.D. Gordon represented the India Office. Representing the Colonial Office were Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Elder Beattie, & the Assistant Under Secretary of State, Henry Charles Millar Lambert.

committee did not convene again during September and October 1918. Their second meeting was, in fact, held on 12 November 1918, one day after the Armistice.[426]

As a result of the Committee's deliberations 1920 the Victoria Cross was only to be given for 'most conspicuous bravery or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy'.[427] Additional alterations streamlined the mechanism for the recommendation and approval process.[428] Interestingly, the committee also dropped the 1858 extension of the Royal Warrant involving noncombat situations, despite the fact that an amendment in 1881 had already ruled out the recognition of non-combat acts of valour.[429] Ponsonby confirmed the trend that to get a Victoria Cross 'you have to do a bit of fighting – you have to shoot somebody'.[430] Other clauses were moved around, renumbered, reworked, tightened and updated to reflect the new requirements and expectations of modern warfare while the wording was simplified.[431] Despite discussion over whether there should be rules pertaining to particular forces (Navy, Army and Air Force) it was eventually decided to maintain a Warrant that covered all three services at once, but as a consequence the question over 'witnesses' was hotly debated. The Army practice of two eye-witnesses was proposed by Colonel Graham as a general rule but this was not always possible for the Air Force. As a result the wording of the Warrant changed to 'conclusive proof … according to the customs of the recommending authority'.[432] Despite the evolution of the revised conditions successive recipients of the Victoria Cross after 1920 continued to exhibit characteristics that set them apart

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[426] Minutes of the Second Meeting of the 'Conference on Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C', 12 November 1918, Whitehall. TNA, WO 32/3443; p. 1 (original transcript page number); & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 180. By this time Admiral Everett and Colonel Graham had been replaced by the new Naval Secretary Commodore Sir Rudolf Walter Bentinck, & Lieutenant Colonel Lord Herbert A. Montagu Douglas-Scott respectively.
[427] Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 288; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 216.
[428] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 182.
[429] *Ibid.*, p. 176.
[430] *Ibid.*, p. 178.
[431] *Ibid.*, p. 181.
[432] Colonel Graham was still disconcerted as he believed conclusive proof referred to a reasonable need for evidence, and the idea of requiring two witnesses, which had been domestic arrangement on part of Field Marshal Haig, was just that, conclusive proof. 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C', 30 August 1918, Whitehall. TNA, WO 32/3443, pp. 8-9 (original transcript page numbers). Minutes of the Conference on the 'Committee on Co-Ordination of Warrants Relating to the Victoria Cross', 12 November 1918, Whitehall. TNA, WO 32/3443, pp. 4, 6-7 (original transcript page numbers); & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 171, 174, 182

from the ordinary. The original intention of Queen Victoria to decorate the men who had displayed extraordinary valour in the service of their country was maintained.

The new Victoria Cross Royal Warrant was approved in 1919 by King George V, based on the VC Committee's 1918 recommendations. The implementation of the new Warrant was left, however, until after the Versailles Peace Treaty to ensure no further recommendations for Victoria Crosses were left over from the war.[433] The revised Warrant was subsequently signed on 22 May 1920 incorporating all the variations and extensions made during the war by various directions and instructions.[434] Another important consequence of amendments and interpretations during the First World War, codified in the 1920 re-write was that it became *more* difficult to be recognised for a Victoria Cross. The twentieth century witnessed the introduction of a number of gallantry decorations that inevitably restricted the availability of the Victoria Cross to those considered braver than that which warranted, for example, a Mention in Despatches. Deeds which warranted a Victoria Cross during the Crimean or Boer Wars, for example, were not considered as worthy for a Victoria Cross during the First World War and certainly not afterwards.[435]

The evolution of the Victoria Cross from a decoration that recognised humanitarian actions to one which looked more favourably upon aggressive actions took a gigantic step as a result of the 29 August 1916 directive. This document changed what was to be considered worthy of a Victoria Cross forevermore. Such a transition was not without problems. Across the BEF a 'defensive' type of bravery was no longer recognised as once it was. Within the AIF

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[433] Letter, Lord Stamfordham Buckingham Palace to Walter Long MP, 25 March 1919. TNA, ADM 116/3595; & Abbott & Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, p. 288.

[434] One notable change involved standardising the ribbon colour to a standard red for all three services (Navy, Army and Air Force). Collectively, the committee agreed that a clause should formally and finally be included sanctioning 'that the Cross may be awarded posthumously.' In fact, during the first committee meeting Ponsonby indicated it was his understanding that the individual had to survive the action long enough for his name to be submitted as a recommendation so there obviously continued to be a misunderstanding of posthumously awarding the Victoria Cross; Letter, War Office to Secretaries Admiralty, Air ministry & Colonial Office, 12 August 1918. TNA, ADM 1/8528/174; 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C', 30 August 1918, Whitehall. TNA, WO 32/3443, pp. 36-38 (original transcript page number); Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, p. 90; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 170, 181 & 187.

[435] 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the 'Committee on Co-Ordination etc. of Warrants Relating to the V.C', 30 August 1918, Whitehall. TNA, WO 32/4993, p. 4 (original transcript page number). Following on from this tradition, it was considerably harder to be awarded a Victoria Cross during the Second World War: 64 Australians were awarded a Victoria Cross during 1914-1918 and only 20 Australians were awarded during 1939-1945; Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. vi; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 188 & 205.

stretcher bearers within infantry units and Medical Corps soldiers were also excluded for an award to which they were entitled. The Victoria Cross on the Western Front was always contentious and controversial from 1916 to 1918 and thereafter. But, while the Victoria Cross itself played a considerable role in the story of AIF actions on the Western Front, there is also another story – one that is closer to home and involved the wider Australian relationship with the decoration itself. It is away from the trenches and to the home front that this thesis now turns.

Chapter 6 Political Use of the VC

While the Victoria Cross was always prominent in the minds of those fighting on the Western Front, it also generated intense interest on the home front during the First World War. The Australian government quite clearly attempted to use the Victoria Cross to stimulate continuing enthusiasm for the war effort. This chapter will explore the ways in which the Victoria Cross was specifically politicised in the recruitment drives, evident across the country throughout the war, and in the divisive conscription campaigns in both 1916 and 1917. The conscription issue in particular intensified fractures within Australian society on the home front. The prestige of the Victoria Cross was such that politicians wanted to be associated with it and utilize its political potential. While political use of the Victoria Cross in Australia was widespread it was not unique, particularly given that at the time of the decoration's institution in 1856 one of the intentions of the Victoria Cross was not only to inspire men to be the best and exhibit great bravery, but to also aid recruitment.[436] As action continued on the Western Front, and in the context of Australian governmental control over press transmissions of all news coming from the Western Front through the censorship regulations, politicians used the decoration itself and the respective Victoria Cross recipients to promote their own political agendas. This chapter examines the role and use of the Victoria Cross in both the recruitment and conscription campaigns during the First World War from 1916 to 1918.

Censorship in Australia during the years of the First World War allowed the government to control information that related to actions on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918. The government was able to control almost all aspects of public knowledge relating to the war through the War Precautions Act, assented on 29 October 1914, modelled on Britain's Defence of the Realm Act. The Act enabled the government to control the conduct of individuals and movement of information, which may have put the war effort in jeopardy.[437] According to some, as a consequence the Act essentially gave the government and its agents the ability 'to do nearly

[436] Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 35.
[437] Commonwealth Acts, vol.XIII, 1914-1915, No. 10, The War Precautions Act in Robson, *Australia and the Great War*, pp. 5 & 36-37.

anything they liked.'[438] This included the restriction of civil liberties and extensive implementation of censorship.[439] Censorship restricted published materials, including cartoons, pictures and literature relating to the actions of Australian armed forces. It was against the law to incite disloyalty to the Allied cause, or interfere with recruitment, training, discipline or administration of the armed forces. It was also illegal to publish unauthorised accounts of military operations.[440]

The censorship laws were effectively managed by the Minister for Defence, Sir George Pearce, to suit government purposes.[441] Newspapers across the country were warned not to publish rumours relating to the war effort or unconfirmed reports of victories or defeats.[442] The government's justification for such restrictions was to quell 'unnecessary alarm' that inflamed or prejudiced the public mind.[443] Pearce himself believed censorship significantly affected the perceptions of the war for Australians. He suggested the public should not even be told why some information was forbidden, as the whole issue was too sensitive for the public during times of war. If he attempted to explain this idea in public in more detail, he believed it would defeat the purpose the law served.[444] Importantly, however, these regulations were not impartial as they were used by Prime Minister Hughes and his government to support the campaign for conscription (discussed later in this chapter) and to suppress opposition to the campaign.[445] Before the 1916 conscription referendum newspapers followed censorship regulations diligently, but after this failed first attempt at conscription, opposition to the war became more public despite government regulations.[446]

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[438]; Commonwealth Acts, vol.XIII, 1914-1915, No. 10, The War Precautions Act in Robson, *Australia and the Great War*, pp. 5 & 36-37.
[439] Beaumont, J., 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, J. (ed.), *Australia's War, 1914-1918*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1995, p. 38.
[440] *Ibid.*, p. 39; & Scott, E., *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 Volume 11, Australia During the War*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 2nd Edition, 1937, pp. 64-65.
[441] Connor, 'Senator George Pearce as Defence Minister'.
[442] Scott, *Volume 11, Australia During the War*, p. 65.
[443] Coward, D., 'Impact of War on New South Wales 1914-1917', Thesis (PhD), Australian National University, 1974, p. 82.
[444] Pearce, *Carpenter to Cabinet*, p. 119.
[445] Fewster, K., 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', *War & Society*, Vol. 3, No. 1, May 1985, pp. 37 & 42.
[446] Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion*, p. 46.

Information relating to the war that was publicly released was filtered by the government to present an impression of the war that was not necessarily accurate. The policy meant government-appointed censors would scan all newspapers before they went to print and proscribe articles they felt were contradicting the government's efforts or policies with regard to the war or likely to cause alarm. In addition, as part of this effort, all personal letters could be intercepted and read. Breaking censorship laws could mean lengthy jail terms and the government could prosecute anyone who took a stand that was perceived to have assisted the enemy or prejudiced recruiting.[447] This filtering of information continued throughout the entire war, preventing objective news coming to Australian citizens' attention from the various theatres of war. The public depended on this censored press for reports of the Australian experiences in both battle, and general information about how the war was progressing in both Europe and the Middle East.[448] In truth, articles published on the war often bore little similarity to the actual events.[449] Typical exposés included individual good news stories of soldiers who had overcome their wounds through courageous determination to perform their duties, while any gruesome details were intentionally excluded.[450] In particular many popular articles were published on the heroics that resulted in a Victoria Cross being awarded to a soldier of the AIF on the Western Front. This was newsworthy and the censors were happy for those men to be identified in a very public manner to celebrate their individual war effort. Yet stories on the crippled and private suffering of returned soldiers were not welcome and were rarely discussed in public.[451] Some historians have contended that censorship added to the division within Australian society as it was controlled by professional middle class people who were strongly patriotic and often at odds with unskilled lower classes, particularly if they were of Irish origin.[452]

Censorship even affected soldiers serving on the Western Front. One case in point concerned Victoria Cross recipient Lance Corporal Walter Peeler, VC (3rd Pioneer Battalion) whose private letters came to the attention of the censors. In fact, published interviews with returned soldiers were often subjected to scrutiny by the censors and private letters from soldiers

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[447] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 38.
[448] Coward, 'Impact of War on New South Wales 1914-1917', p. 73.
[449] Robson, *Australia and the Great War*, pp. 37-38; Tyquin, M. *Madness and the Military, Australia's Experience of the Great War*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2006, p. 11.
[450] Larsson, M., *Shattered Anzacs*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2009, p. 39.
[451] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[452] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 40.

were checked to ensure they did not mention officers in negative ways or leak operational details.[453] Lance Corporal Walter Peeler, VC, actually faced a court martial for breaking the censorship regulations for writing a letter that included his unit's position in January 1917. This was nine months before Peeler performed the act that resulted in him being awarded a Victoria Cross at Broodseinde, Belgium on 4 October 1917. He was found guilty of the offence and had to forfeit two months' pay. In his defence Peeler said, 'I wrote the letter with no intention of giving information to anyone, only the lady mentioned.'[454] The offending letter had actually indicated his position as 'Somewhere in Frog Land.'[455] This suggests the censorship regulations were quite stringent given that 'Frog Land' did not in any way disclose exactly where in France Australian troops were positioned. While censorship restricted news, it was also used to promote the government's recruitment campaign during the war. At the same time the soldiers' morale on the Western Front was affected by the lack of truthful correspondence – they knew a falsified picture was being portrayed on the home front.[456]

Throughout 1916 to 1918 the Australian government focused on generating more enlistments through a recruitment campaign to replenish and build on the existing AIF numbers on the Western Front. By January 1916 recruiting bodies had began a concerted drive to raise the numbers of recruits. Local meetings were held in public halls across the country and marches were conducted to garner support.[457] These marches were intended to start in one location, and move to the next, while recruiting men along the way in a snowball effect. They became affectionately known as 'Cooees.'[458] One reason for such action was that recruitment had dropped off in Australia from 1916 and the numbers enlisting were not sufficient to resupply AIF units on the Western Front due to the ever-increasing casualty numbers. While the news of Gallipoli in 1915 triggered a surge of enlistments, for example, news following the battles in July 1916 at Fromelles and Pozières had the reverse effect.[459] This drop was despite censorship

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[453] Scott, *Volume 11, Australia During the War*, p. 66; Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs*, p. 41; & Evans, R., *Loyalty and Disloyalty, Social Conflict on the Queensland Homefront, 1914-18*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1987, p. 33.
[454] Peeler, Walter, Date of Court Martial 20 January 1917, NAA, A471/9944.
[455] *Ibid.*
[456] Lemarchand, L., Military Correspondence and Censorship during 1917: Representing and Remembering War', *The Flinders Journal of History and Politics*, Vol. 21, 2000, p. 92.
[457] Robson, *Australia and the Great War*, p. 11.
[458] Robson, L.L., *The First A.I.F.*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1970, p. 57.
[459] Beaumont, ;Australia's War', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 19.

efforts to preventing real news from reaching home. It was a consequence of a combination of the way the war appeared to drag on, and the long and continual casualty lists that were allowed to be printed in the newspapers. These lists, which could not be censored, left a negative impression on those back home, and consequently recruitment figures suffered.

The general focus of recruiting efforts for 1916 was to appeal to eligible men's sense of comradeship and obligations to enlist and fight as a soldier of the AIF – and this is why the Victoria Cross became an important political tool. Recruitment propaganda took many forms in the newspapers including advertisements, articles and photographs. One such photograph was taken for recruitment purposes of an arranged meeting in October 1916 of Lieutenant Albert Jacka, VC, shaking hands with fellow Victoria Cross recipient, Private Martin O'Meara, VC (16th Battalion, 9-12 August 1916).[460] There were also large numbers of recruitment posters on roadside buildings, while public meetings and appeals were organised all over the country. A number of recruitment posters included images of the Victoria Cross such as the 1917 poster 'Man you are wanted!' (See Appendix H).[461] From time to time a wounded soldier, crippled officer, or a returned Victoria Cross recipient might stand to speak in a dance or theatre interval, or to sunbathers at surfing beaches to ask for mates to assist in the fighting in France. Even gatherings such as open-air shows, town halls or post offices provided opportunities for recruitment speeches.[462] In fact, some disabled soldiers became spruikers on the recruiting platform, drawing attention to the men who had not yet enlisted.[463] Yet it was the Victoria Cross recipients who were the obvious choice for the government to utilise as symbols for recruitment back in Australia. These men had already been identified through positive stories resulting from the war. They had been marked as heroes and their influence was judged (at least in the eye of the recruiters) to be commensurate. It was hoped that the desire for young potential recruits to identify with such figures was attractive enough to enlist.

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[460] Grant, *Jacka VC*, p. 86.
[461] *AWM Collections Database*, ARTV05005, www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp, date consulted: 9 October 2008.
[462] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 52; &Scott, *Volume 11, Australia During the War*, p. 402.
[463] Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs*, p. 32.

Wounded Victoria Cross recipients from Gallipoli were also used to help promote recruiting as many more men were still needed to strengthen the AIF on the Western Front from 1916. Captain William Symons, VC (7 Battalion, 8-9 August 1915), of Gallipoli fame, for example, was the guest speaker at a patriotic demonstration at Brunswick in May 1916 for the purpose of generating interest in recruiting.[464] On another occasion, another Gallipoli veteran, Lieutenant Hugo Throssell, VC (10 Light Horse Regiment, 29-30 August 1915), addressed members of the stock exchange in Melbourne in June 1916 following his return to Australia in April to recover from his wounds.[465] Throssell was allocated light duties but worked strenuously in the recruiting campaign until he embarked to return to the Light Horse in January 1917.[466] Private William Jackson, VC, had also been returned to Australia to convalesce from his wounds. As he had lost his right arm during the action that resulted in him being awarded the Victoria Cross, there was no possibility he would return to the fighting. Instead, Jackson was employed in Victoria specifically as a recruiting agent, charged with setting up meetings on behalf of the State Recruiting Committee to generate volunteers.[467]

Across the country ardent recruiting agents aimed to draw potential men into enlistment through targeting potential recruits' interests and principles. For example, in New South Wales agents were chosen carefully as respected members of the community.[468] The president of the Recruiting Association in Tamworth, for example, was police magistrate H.F. Roberts. He chaired a recruitment meeting in August 1915 where the speaker addressed the crowd claiming young volunteers 'went to glory and adventure and to romance'.[469] This was in response to a need for more men for the continued assault on the Gallipoli peninsula. It was hoped that imploring men to join in the 'adventure', to experience 'glory and romance', would appeal to a carefree young, single man who perhaps yearned to be seen as an Australian hero. But, as the war dragged on and more reports of casualties reached home through long obituary notices in newspapers across the country, such visions lost their attractiveness.[470] There also appeared to be an increased awareness at home of the dangers of warfare, with those returned and invalided

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[464] 'Captain Symons, V.C. Presentation at Brunswick', *Argus*, 15 May 1916, p. 8.
[465] 'Lieut. Throssell, V.C., Welcomed on 'Change', *Argus*, 22 June 1916, p. 6.
[466] Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 41.
[467] 'Recruiting, Country Route Marches', *Argus*, 24 July 1918, p. 9; 'A Jacka Thousand', 25 June 1918, p. 4.
[468] Coward, 'Impact of War on New South Wales 1914-1917', p. 256.
[469] *Ibid.*, pp. 215-216; & 'Call for Recruits', *SMH*, 6 August 1915, p. 9.
[470] Crotty, M., *Making the Australian Male*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 2001, pp. 92 & 227.

men, crippled from their experience, seen in the streets. No matter how strong the censorship laws were, or how enthusiastically the Victoria Cross was used in recruitment, these invalids were a stark reminder of the reality of war. There is no doubt their existence back in mainstream Australia harmed the recruitment campaigns, and the government's desire to use the Victoria Cross to promote the war effort. The war was not the romantic, glamorous opportunity for heroics to be displayed. Instead, for men of the AIF, the reality was of trench warfare, shellfire and slaughter.[471] Interestingly, however, the drop in recruiting had come from people who had not yet experienced the war, and could not easily imagine what war was like on the Western Front, yet the long casualty lists and increased numbers of invalided soldiers were enough to put potential recruits' minds off the idea.

By 1917, in the context of such changing perceptions, recruiting associations attempted to enlist men in lots of 1000 which, in effect, was the number needed to replace a complete infantry battalion. The Sportsmen's Committee of New South Wales, for example, attempted to cross the border with an enthusiastic approach into Victoria. They believed they could establish support throughout country Victoria to appeal to interested 'sportsmen' who might see the war as a type of sporting challenge.[472] The image of Albert Jacka, VC, was used for such purposes. Posters showed Jacka calling his sporting comrades to join him: 'Join together, train together, embark together, and fight together … Enlist in the Sportsman's Thousand … Show the enemy what Australian sporting men can do' (see Appendix I).[473] There is no evidence that Jacka approved of his image being used in this type of propaganda, but it was obvious the government was trying to create a correlation between the Victoria Cross, heroism, and enlisting to fight in the war. In 1918 the Sportsmen's Thousand of Victoria successfully reached its quota of men of 'athletic quality' who apparently played sport regularly.[474] There was still a strong belief that sportsmen, like Jacka, had already developed skills and qualities that would be advantageous on the

[471] Tyquin, *Madness and the Military*, p. 57.
[472] Scott, E., *Volume 11, Australia During the War*, Angus & Robertson, 1937, p. 403; & Robson, *The First AIF*., p. 128.
[473] Macklin, *Jacka VC*, pp. 9 & 72; & *AWM Collections Database*, ARTV00026, AWM, www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp, date consulted: 9 October 2008.
[474] Scott, E., *Volume 11, Australia During the War*, 1937, pp. 460-461.

battlefield.[475] In fact, Jacka's popularity was so extensive that an 'Alburyite' suggested in a letter to the editor of the *Argus*, that given Jacka had been wounded again, could the:

> Commonwealth Government bring him back to Australia, and when he is quite well, let him gather up a Jacka thousand. He evidently bears a charmed life. He cannot win any higher distinction than he has already earned, namely, the V.C. and the M.C. We all admire his bravery and daring, and surely he deserves some respite from the fighting.[476]

There is no question that Victoria Cross recipients and other representatives from the AIF were used for such political purposes, and often without their approval, to influence recruitment. While the government had asked other returned Victoria Cross recipients to address public places, the name of well known Victoria Cross soldier, Jacka, resonated, particularly throughout Victoria.[477] Jacka's image continued to be used on recruiting posters throughout the war.[478] Hughes personally believed using the so-called home bred heroes in favour of the war effort would entice more men to enlist, in the hope they too, might be recognised a hero. No doubt the posters and moving speeches featuring Victoria Cross recipients did attract some young men's attention, as they perhaps wanted to epitomise the Empire's 'middle class' concept of bravery and masculinity embodied in the Victoria Cross, that was being promoted throughout the country.[479] But on the whole, the use of Victoria Cross recipients was not as effective as the government had hoped for in generating more recruits.

Each State Recruiting Committee had projected target numbers of recruits to reach each month and there was a level of competition that existed among them to reach their respective targets. This rivalry incorporated figures for how many Victoria Crosses were awarded per state, allowing claims that some states were more successful in aiding the war effort than the others. Obviously, with New South Wales and Victoria being the most populous states, there was an expectation they would send the most recruits (see Figure 10). But, interestingly, Victoria Crosses were not awarded in the same proportion as the enlistment figures (see Figure 11 and

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[475] *AWM Collections Database*, ARTV00026, AWM, www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp, date consulted: 9 October 2008.
[476] 'A Jacka Thousand', *Argus*, 24 June 1918, p. 4.
[477] Powell, D., 'Albert Jacka VC and the 1916 Conscription Debate', *La Trobe Journal*, No. 63, Autumn 1999, p. 34.
[478] *AWM Collections Database*, ARTV00026, AWM, www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp, date consulted: 9 October 2008.
[479] Crotty, *Making the Australian Male*, pp. 1, 9 & 28; Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*, pp. 27 & 38; & Tyquin, *Madness and the Military*, p. x.

Figure 12). So, if using the Victoria Cross to aid recruitment was meant to attract more heroes, it failed, given that the awards did not proportionally correlate with enlistment figures. In fact, based on enlistment figures and Victoria Crosses awarded for actions on the Western Front, there was 12 times more chance of being awarded a Victoria Cross for men from Tasmania than Queensland, or twice as many chances if you originated from Western Australia than Victoria or New South Wales (see Table 4).[480] Given these figures, and contemporary press reports, many Tasmanians believed their local soldiers were superior in the bravery stakes than those from other states, although there was no evidence to suggest Tasmanian recruiters focused more on the Victoria Cross than other state.[481] Statistically what this proves is that no matter how many recruits were enlisted from each state, the Victoria Cross figures were proportional to the recruiting figures. Despite this, the government persisted in attempting to use the award to lure men into enlisting.

Figure 10:

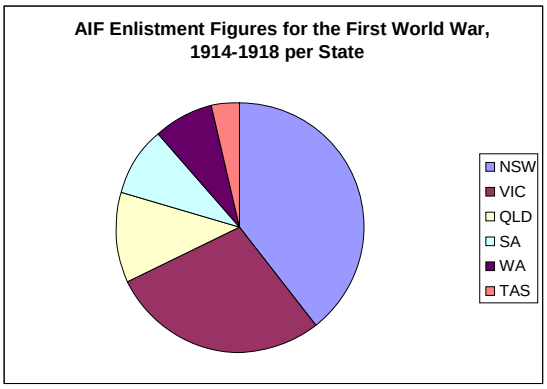
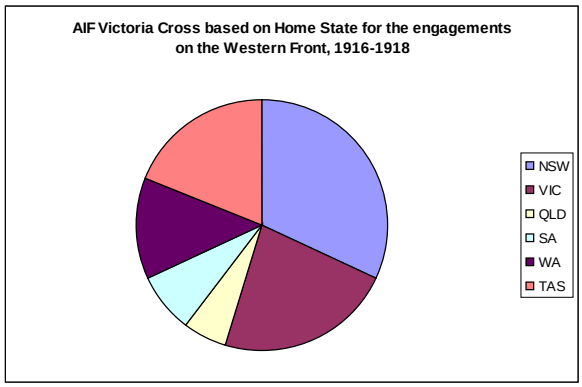


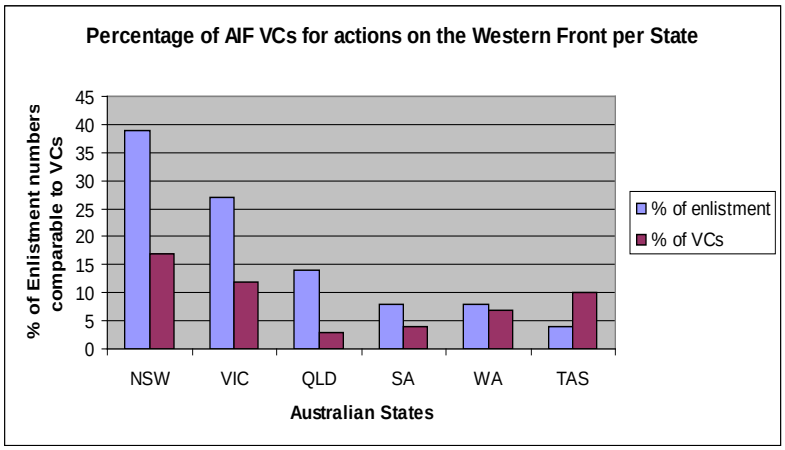
Figure 11:



Source: Beaumont, J. (ed.), *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001, pp. 108-110; & Staunton, A., *Victoria Cross Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2005, pp. 51-196.[482]

[480] See Appendix E for VC Recipient's Home States. These figures were identified by the State where the recipient had spent most of his time before enlistment.
[481] Lake, M., *A Divided Society, Tasmania During the World War I*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1975, p. 192.
[482] See Appendix E for VC Recipient's Home States. These figures were identified by the State where the recipient had spent most of his time before enlistment.

Figure 12:



Source: Beaumont, J. (ed.), *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001, pp. 108-110; & Staunton, A., *Victoria Cross Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2005, pp. 51-196.[483]

Table 4: **Likelihood of Receiving a Victoria Cross on the Western Front per State.**

State:	Enlistment totals:	VCs awarded:	VC/enlisted men:
NSW	164 030	17	1 in 9 649
VIC	112 399	12	1 in 9 367
QLD	57 705	3	1 in 19 235
SA	34 959	4	1 in 8 740
WA	32 231	7	1 in 4 604
TAS	15 485	10	1 in 1 549

Source: Beaumont, J. (ed.), *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001, pp. 108-110; & Staunton, A., *Victoria Cross Australia's Finest and the Battles they Fought*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2005, pp. 51-196.[484]

[483] See Appendix E for VC Recipient's Home States. These figures were identified by the State where the recipient had spent most of his time before enlistment.
[484] See Appendix E for VC Recipient's Home States. These figures were identified by the State where the recipient had spent most of his time before enlistment.

Despite the government's efforts to use the Victoria Cross as a tool to stimulate enlistment numbers, the recruitment campaign continued to struggle as the war progressed from 1916. The drain on manpower caused by losses at Fromelles and Pozières in July 1916, in particular, prompted Prime Minister Hughes to attempt to introduce conscription for compulsory overseas military service.

Like its use as a recruitment tool, political manipulation on the home front of the Victoria Cross recipients, and the decoration itself, was a feature of the conscription campaign. In December 1915 Australia's Governor General, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, believed conscription necessary in Australia if voluntary enlistments fell below requirements.[485] He made moves to strengthen Australia's war effort by approaching Prime Minister Hughes on the issue. It is notable that by this time Munro Ferguson had lost confidence in the Defence Minister, Pearce, who had served as acting Prime Minister while Hughes travelled overseas, even though he too was in favour of conscription.[486] At this stage Hughes believed conscription was not necessary – at least until Britain had adopted the measure. However, the issue of conscription was already being touted as a possibility in the public sphere as some union movements had, as early as 1915, declared themselves to be against the idea.[487]

After coming to support the idea of conscription, introducing it proved not as straightforward as Hughes had hoped. Early in 1916, while Hughes was visiting London, Britain had introduced compulsory military service.[488] Hughes saw the relative ease with which it had been introduced there and believed, incorrectly, the same could be done in Australia.[489] Conscription as a concept sat comfortably for Hughes, however, in a way it did not for many of his colleagues. Hughes saw compulsion as a principle inherent in unionism. Many, even of his party, did not agree. For Hughes and his supporters it was important that the rights of the individual were subordinated to the common good – in this case winning the war. Hughes

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[485] Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson was Governor General of Australia from 1914 to 1920.
[486] Connor, 'Senator George Pearce as Defence Minister', pp. 90, 92-93, 102 & 104.
[487] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 44.
[488] Jauncey, L.C., *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, Macmillan of Australia, South Melbourne, 1968, p. 126.
[489] Beaumont, 'Australia's War', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 20; & Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', p. 40.

believed all sections of society should contribute in a manner decided by the government.[490] It had become apparent to him with the high casualties on the Western Front in July 1916 that more was needed to bolster the enlistment figures in order to sustain the AIF overseas. Hughes believed conscription was necessary, and using the Victoria Cross to aid recruiting was not having the desired effect.[491] Hughes raised the question in parliament and cabinet resolved that the issue should be put to the people in a direct referendum.[492]

There was, in fact, no legal need for a referendum as both through the War Precautions Act, and by introducing relevant legislation in Parliament, the Federal government had the power to initiate conscription. However, Hughes knew using either method had the potential to split the Labor Party.[493] He also knew many in his own party were against the idea and even if conscription was accepted by the House of Representatives, the Labor dominated Senate would have rejected it, causing further political divisions.[494] As a result, Hughes considered the better option was for the people to decide – if the people spoke his party would simply have to accept it. Hughes tried in vain to convert his own party, and the union movement, concluding that the issue was part of a moral crusade against the forces of disorder and disloyalty, and a barbaric enemy.[495] He even went as far as ordering the censors to excise criticism of him being personally connected with conscription, which was designed to protect his standing within the labour movement.[496]

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[490] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 45.
[491] Cunneen, C., *King's Men. Australia's Governors-General from Hopetoun to Isaacs*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983, p. 132.
[492] Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', p. 40. A Referendum is typically used to change the Australian Constitution, but in this case it was not used for that purpose. The conscription issue was a plebiscite, rather than a true Referendum. Despite this, the term 'Referendum' is used throughout the historiography and as such will also be referred to in this thesis; Connor, 'Senator George Pearce as Defence Minister', p. 102.
[493] Evatt, H.V., *Australian Labour Leader, The Story of W.A. Holman and the Labour Movement*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1942, p. 399; Main, J.M., *Conscription, the Australian Debate, 1901-1970*, Cassell, North Melbourne, 1970, p. 4; & Robson, *The First AIF*., p. 85.
[494] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 45; & Lake, *A Divided Society*, pp. 67-68.
[495] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, pp. 46-47.
[496] Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', p. 44.

On Hughes' side, pro-conscriptionists were more likely to be middle class and were able to draw on the resources of the state and the education system.[497] Australian newspapers were also almost universally for conscription and began publishing articles in support of the idea.[498] The use of Victoria Cross as a symbol of positive war news continued throughout the conscription campaigns. Albert Jacka, VC, was personally alarmed to learn his photograph was being used as propaganda to sell the idea of conscription (see Appendix I).[499] So too, Protestant church groups and academic leaders also saw the need for conscription and got behind Hughes' campaign, even though some Anglican laymen changed their mind in the subsequent referendum.[500] Throughout this period there was a focused campaign to blur the distinction between anti-conscription and anti-war and the government, particularly Pearce, used the laws of censorship to muzzle any opposition to conscription.[501] Examples can be found throughout pro-conscriptionist journals and newspapers of 1916 and 1917. The persuasive nature of such articles, and cartoons therein, declared conscription as essential for the path to victory. It was important, however, to the conscriptionist cause that the anti-conscriptionists appeared to receive fair treatment from the censors, that freedom of speech prevailed, and democratic principles appeared to be intact.[502] Despite this censorship was perceived to have a negative effect on the anti-conscription movement, and literature was circulated quietly without approval of the censors, often risking confiscation and jail terms for those caught distributing the material.[503]

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[497] Robson, *The First AIF*., p. 172; & Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 40.

[498] With the exception of some Labor and Catholic newspapers.

[499] Grant, *Jacka VC*, pp. 35 & 91; Macklin, *Jacka VC*, pp. 9, 11, 72 & 129; & *AWM Collections Database*, ARTV00026, AWM, www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp, date consulted: 9 October 2008.

[500] Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*, p. 87; James, F., 'Conscription and Conscientious Objection: Anglican View', Forward, R. & Reece, B. (eds.), *Conscription in Australia*, University of Queensland, St Lucia, 1968; Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, p. 291; Main, *Conscription, the Australian Debate*, p. 4; Moses, J.A., 'Australian Anglican Leaders and the Great War, 1914-1918: The 'Prussian Menace,' Conscription, and National Solidarity', *The Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 25, No. 3, October 2001, pp. 306-323; & Robson, *The First AIF*., p. 105; James, F., 'Conscription and Conscientious Objection: Anglican View', Forward, & Reece, *Conscription in Australia*, p. 264.

[501] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 39; Connor, 'Senator George Pearce as Defence Minister', pp. 93, 107, 112 & 127; Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', pp. 37-54; Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, pp. 156, 161, 180 & 300; & Walker, B., *A Story of the 1916 and 1917 Campaigns in Victoria*, Anti-Conscription Jubilee Committee, Melbourne, 1968, p. 11.

[502] Evatt, *Australian Labour Leader*, pp. 402-403; Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', pp. 41, 44 & 48; & Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, pp. 127, 176.

[503] Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', p. 42; & Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, p. 200.

Even anti-conscriptionist meetings were monitored by detectives recording the words of the speakers with a view to prosecuting them under the War Precautions Act.[504] Senator Pearce personally sanctioned a raid on the Melbourne Trades Hall early in the campaign in May 1916 to confiscate thousands of copies of an anti-conscription manifesto with the excuse that it had not been cleared by the chief censor, and that he would not tolerate a mockery being made of the censorship regulations.[505] Pearce again ordered a raid on the Melbourne Trades Hall in July 1916 seizing further anti-conscription paraphernalia.[506]

Groups around the country, however, were quickly organised to oppose conscription.[507] Anti-conscriptionists based their claims on what they saw as common sense, principles, conspiracy theories and racism and an inherent belief that men should not be forced to go overseas to kill. Advocates included a large proportion of the working-class, the majority of the union movement, some members of the Labor Party, and a few middle-class liberals, pacifists and some feminists.[508] Many Irish Catholics were also strong anti-conscriptionists and, as they made up 21 per cent of the Australian population at the time, this group represented a sizeable opponent for Hughes.[509] Anti-conscriptionist pamphlets were even distributed with a declaration that soldiers who were sent overseas as conscripts would be likened to men serving jail sentences.[510] Both those who supported and those who opposed conscription tended to hold strong beliefs and were stubbornly opposed to the other side of the argument, creating a divided society on the home front. Despite the trauma caused by the sheer loss of life and personal grief Australians encountered, the war itself did not change Australian society in this regard, but rather

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[504] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 48.
[505] Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', pp. 42-43; Johanson, G.R., 'The Compulsory Military Call-up of October 1916: An Aspect of the Conscription Referendum', Thesis (MA), University of Melbourne, 1975, p. 28; & Sammut, J., ''Busting' the Anti-Conscription Legend', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 91, Part 2, December 2005, pp. 163-183.
[506] Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, pp. 139-140; & Sammut, ''Busting' the Anti-Conscription Legend', pp. 163-183.
[507] Cunneen, *King's Men*, pp. 130-131.
[508] Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', p. 42; & Main, *Conscription, the Australian Debate*, p. 3.
[509] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 49; Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*, p p. 87-88; Kildea, J., 'Australian Catholics and Conscription in the Great War', *The Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 26, No. 3, October 2002, p. 298; Main, *Conscription, the Australian Debate*, p. 4; & Murphy, D.J., 'Religion, Race and Conscription in World War I', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 20, Issue 2, 1974, p. 155.
[510] Holloway, E.J., *The Australian Victory over Conscription in 1916-1917*, Anti-Conscription Jubilee Committee, Melbourne, 1966, p. 13.

accelerated existing social, economic and political developments, and intensified already entrenched divisions, especially in relation to differing opinions on recruitment and conscription.[511]

There were many influential figures, including those associated with the Victoria Cross, fighting against the idea of conscription in 1916. One such figure was Lieutenant Albert Jacka, VC's, father, who fiercely opposed the idea of compulsory service.[512] Nathaniel Jacka, a union man and labourer, addressed an anti-conscription meeting at the Melbourne Town Hall in October 1916. Nathaniel said 'His sons would scoff at the word conscription.'[513] Yet, a few days later, in a letter to the editor of the *Argus* a friend of Albert Jacka, Mr Reg Turnbull, wrote of what he considered to be the 'misinformed' views Nathaniel Jacka had of his famous son regarding his opinion of conscription. Turnbull continued: 'I do not want to contradict Mr. Jacka, but, in view of the fact that I have a letter in front of me from our V.C. hero, I feel in honour bound to tell the public that Lieutenant Jacka, V.C., is absolutely in favour of conscription.'[514] He quoted further contents of the letter from Jacka: 'By the time you get this letter Australia will be on trial. Do what you can, Reg., to urge your friends to vote 'Yes.' All the boys over here will send their 'Yes' votes. I don't think any decent man will vote 'No.' We want more men if we are to win.'[515] By the contents of the letter it seems clear that Jacka wanted Turnbull to be his voice back home. But, Nathaniel Jacka then issued a sworn declaration denying existence of such a person named Reg Turnbull who supposedly lived in Wedderburn and was a friend of his

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[511] Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. xviii; Doyle, H., 'Australian World War I Casualties: Social Impacts', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 165, 2004, p. 29; Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*, p. 87; Garton, S. *The Cost of War, Australians Return*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996, p. 12; Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, p. 143; Lake, *A Divided Society*, p. 44; Lake, M., *Getting Equal*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1999, p. 64; Nicoll, F., *From Diggers to Drag Queens*, Pluto Press, Annandale, 2001, p. 44; Smith, F.B., *The Conscription Plebiscites in Australia 1916-17*, Victorian Historical Association, Melbourne, 1966, pp. 10 & 21; & Withers, G., 'The 1916-1917 Conscription Referenda: A Cliometric Re-Appraisal', *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol. 20, Issue 78, April 1982, pp. 36-47.

[512] Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, p. 212; Macklin, *Jacka VC*, p. 11; Powell, 'Albert Jacka VC and the 1916 Conscription Debate', pp. 31-36; & Rawling, J.N., *Conscription in Australia*, Modern Publishers, Sydney, year unknown, p. 15.

[513] 'Anti-Conscription, Town Hall Demonstration', *Argus*, 25 October, 1916, pp.10-11; & Hurley, F.T., 'Compulsory Military Training and the Conscription Referendum in Victoria, 1911-1916', Thesis (MA), University of Melbourne, 1972, pp. 114-115.

[514] 'Lieut. Jacka V.C., on Conscription' *Argus*, 27 October 1916, p. 6.

[515] *Ibid.*

son's.[516] Nathaniel believed Turnbull was the figment of a pro-conscriptionist's imagination.[517] Perhaps the appearance of this article is no coincidence given the *Argus* newspaper reports were notably in favour of conscription.[518] In any case the incident is a prime example of the use of the Victoria Cross within this public debate.

Interestingly, Jacka's image was also used in Queensland by anti-conscriptionists in 1916. Jacka's actions that resulted in him being awarded a Victoria Cross in May 1915 were used by some in the Queensland education system to encourage students to 'detest war' as a whole and conscription in particular. The Queensland School Papers had promoted this story, indicating celebration of militaristic matters was simply 'false patriotism.'[519] No matter what the cause or agenda, the image of Jacka, being awarded a Victoria Cross was again being exploited to suit different political agendas on the home front.

The formal decision to opt for a conscription referendum was announced on 30 August 1916, and for Hughes it was crucial the soldiers themselves believed in the cause.[520] The soldiers were to vote before the referendum was held back in Australia in an attempt by the pro-conscriptionist lobby to use an 'assumed overwhelming soldier support for the Yes vote' to generate the same result from the people.[521] Some pro-conscriptionist returned soldiers had even started breaking up meetings of those opposed to the idea, giving Hughes further evidence that conscription was supported by the AIF and going to succeed.[522] Hughes originally wanted an Australian hero to come home to speak on behalf of the cause. He had requested General Sir William Birdwood speak to Albert Jacka, VC, on the possibility of returning home to spearhead

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[516] Hurley, 'Compulsory Military Training and the Conscription Referendum in Victoria, 1911-1916', p. 115; & Powell, 'Albert Jacka VC and the 1916 Conscription Debate', pp. 31-36.
[517] Evatt, *Australian Labour Leader*, p. 413; & Powell, 'Albert Jacka VC and the 1916 Conscription Debate', p. 31.
[518] Hurley, 'Compulsory Military Training and the Conscription Referendum in Victoria, 1911-1916', p. 3.
[519] Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*, p. 140.
[520] Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', p. 48.
[521] Evatt, *Australian Labour Leader*, p. 415; Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', pp. 48-49; McMullin, R., 'Australian Perceptions of the Great War: The Soldiers' Vote in the Conscription Referenda, 1916 & 1917', paper presented at the Australian War Memorial History Conference, Canberra, 1981, p. 2; & Walker, *A Story of the 1916 and 1917 Campaigns in Victoria*, pp. 16-19.
[522] Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, pp. 137-138; & Rawling, *Conscription in Australia*, p. 12.

the conscription campaign on behalf of the government.[523] Despite his personal support for conscription, Jacka, however, did not 'believe the VC should be used in a way that would tarnish it politically.'[524] Comrade and unit historian, Captain Edgar Rule, recorded Jacka saying that 'a man had no right to expect to be put into a case just because he had a VC, and he told the authorities that his place was with the battalion; if they wanted to get him back to Australia, they would have to send him back in chains.'[525] Jacka assuredly did not want to travel back to Australia to be used for a political agenda.[526] If Jacka was not prepared to return, however, then Hughes still wanted to use him to influence the troops on the Western Front in their decision making. Hughes knew he had a good chance of enforcing conscription with an AIF 'Yes' vote.

London-based Australian journalist Keith Murdoch was given the task by Hughes to attempt to influence soldiers overseas to vote 'Yes' from his London base.[527] Hughes recognised a major part in winning the battle for conscription at home was to convince the men at the front that they needed regular and fresh reinforcements. At Hughes' request, Murdoch was to arrange meetings to address the troops and to investigate what they thought. Murdoch, however, suggested to Hughes there could possibly be a 'No' response from the men (although he did not go into the reasons why he thought this), but he was confident the Light Horse troops would vote 'Yes' because they felt an overwhelming feeling of isolation and lack of support from the people back home.[528] Hughes wrote to Murdoch suggesting 'It is imperative that a voice from the trenches calling on Australia to vote 'YES' and send reinforcements should be heard.'[529] It had never occurred to Hughes that there would be anything less than an overwhelming AIF 'Yes' vote to lead the 'patriotic cause' on the home front.[530]

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[523] Powell, 'Albert Jacka VC and the 1916 Conscription Debate', p. 34; & Walker, *A Story of the 1916 and 1917 Campaigns in Victoria*, p. 15.
[524] Macklin, *Jacka VC*, p. 129; & Powell, 'Albert Jacka VC and the 1916 Conscription Debate', p. 34.
[525] Grant, *Jacka VC*, p. 92; & Powell, 'Albert Jacka VC and the 1916 Conscription Debate', p. 34.
[526] *Ibid.*
[527] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 48; & Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', pp. 48-49.
[528] Telegram, Hughes to Murdoch, October 1916. NLA, MS1538, 20/113/2/111.
[529] *Ibid.*
[530] McMullin, 'Australian Perceptions of the Great War: The Soldiers' Vote in the Conscription Referenda, 1916 & 1917', p. 1.

Hughes, however, did not get the support he needed from those on the Western Front. Unfortunately for him, the British Commander-in-Chief in France, General Haig, refused to allow meetings to occur whereby soldiers would be addressing other soldiers.[531] Murdoch wrote to the Prime Minister, regarding the conscription speeches, suggesting 'Haig was exceedingly kind but would not hear of any meetings of soldiers being addressed by soldiers. That would be subversive of discipline, because it would introduce politics in a virulent form. It was only by fighting his whole staff that I got him to agree to allow any meetings.'[532] Murdoch reported that Anzac Corps commander, Birdwood, and Australian Chief Staff Officer, Brigadier Sir Cyril White, were very sympathetic to the cause and had arranged informal troop meetings.[533] Hughes had organised for a manifesto to be distributed to the soldiers that strongly argued the case for conscription.[534] He hoped the expected 'Yes' vote from the troops was to be used as the finale to influence voting in Australia, and if, by chance, the vote was 'No' then the vote numbers could be absorbed into the general population's votes without the public knowing. Just before the overseas vote was collated Murdoch reported back to Hughes in a cablegram sent on 24 October 1916 indicating he was pleased to announce he had secured positive messages from representative soldiers, including Jacka, who declared, 'Anzacs demand to be reinforced. Trust Australia will not leave us in the lurch; strong regiments mean light losses (signed) Lieut. Jacka V.C.'[535] There were even pro-conscriptionist pamphlets distributed in Victoria indicating the soldiers themselves wanted a 'Yes' vote.[536] The vote in favour from the men at the front was, however, too little and too late to use in order to sway public opinion for the 'Yes' vote.[537]

The 1916 conscription referendum result from the front line was disappointing for Hughes. The AIF was only narrowly in favour of conscription with 72,399 for and 58,894

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[531] Letter, Murdoch to Hughes, 24 October 1916. NLA, MS2823, 2/3/7, p. 2.
[532] *Ibid.*
[533] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[534] Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, pp. 233-244; Johanson, 'The Compulsory Military Call-up of October 1916: An Aspect of the Conscription Referendum', appendix C; & McMullin, 'Australian Perceptions of the Great War: The Soldiers' Vote in the Conscription Referenda, 1916 & 1917', p. 1.
[535] Cabelgram, Murdoch to Hughes, 24 October 1916. NLA, MS1538, 20/113/2/240; & Hurley, 'Compulsory Military Training and the Conscription Referendum in Victoria, 1911-1916', p. 113.
[536] Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, pp. 285-286.
[537] Faraday, B., 'Half the Battle, The Administration and Higher Organisation of the AIF 1914-1918', Thesis (PhD), University of New South Wales, 1997, pp. 114-115.

against.[538] There was no doubt both Hughes and Jacka were disappointed. The unimpressive figures were not enough to be used as a resounding influence back home so Hughes immediately acted to suppress the figures. They were subsequently absorbed into state figures, while a special regulation made it an offence to disclose details of the soldiers' vote.[539] Hughes eventually revealed the figures at the start of his election campaign, on 27 March 1917, but given the lateness of release, they were treated with scepticism.[540]

In fact, some scepticism still exists today with many believing that the soldiers voted against conscription.[541] There have also been rumours that large batches of votes from the Western Front that were against conscription were simply not counted.[542] Australia's official war correspondent C.E.W. Bean, for his part, had argued the AIF vote was swayed by men in camps and on transports and not those directly involved in fighting on the front line in France. Bean believed the men on the front line definitely wanted assistance, even at the expense of men being forced to serve.[543] Yet, historian Kevin Fewster believed that the troops serving in France voted three to one against conscription, although this assumption is not backed up with sufficient evidence.[544] A 'No' vote was perhaps seen by the troops as a public baulk and mark of disrespect against the hierarchy, given the men knew the military and political chiefs wanted a 'Yes' vote. It is also probable that 'No' votes may have been cast by soldiers in the belief that if conscription came in, so too might the death penalty for certain military offences.[545] Haig was never impressed with the lack of the death penalty for soldiers of the AIF, suggesting one Australian in

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[538] Evatt, *Australian Labour Leader*, p. 415; & Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', pp. 49 & 54.
[539] Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', p. 49; & McMullin, 'Australian Perceptions of the Great War: The Soldiers' Vote in the Conscription Referenda, 1916 & 1917', p. 2.
[540] McMullin, 'Australian Perceptions of the Great War: The Soldiers' Vote in the Conscription Referenda, 1916 & 1917', p. 3; & Rawling, *Conscription in Australia*, p. 16.
[541] Evatt, *Australian Labour Leader*, pp. 404 & 415; Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, p. 277; McMullin, 'Australian Perceptions of the Great War: The Soldiers' Vote in the Conscription Referenda, 1916 & 1917', p. 3; & Robson, *The First AIF*., pp. 118-120; & Rawling, *Conscription in Australia*, p. 16. Rawling suggests 40,000 soldiers were for conscription, while 106,000 were against it.
[542] McMullin, 'Australian Perceptions of the Great War: The Soldiers' Vote in the Conscription Referenda, 1916 & 1917', p. 4.
[543] Bean, C.E.W., *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 Volume 3, The Australian Imperial Force in France 1916*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1929, p. 892; & McMullin, 'Australian Perceptions of the Great War: The Soldiers' Vote in the Conscription Referenda, 1916 & 1917', pp. 4-5.
[544] Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', p. 49.
[545] Blake, *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig*, p. 291.

every hundred men were in prison due to the Australians' refusal to allow capital punishment.[546] Haig thought if Australians were eligible to be put to death they would be more disciplined. The men perhaps did not want this to be a consequence of conscription, given some conscripted men would be sent to fight against their will. It is possible a conscripted army would need to be more tightly disciplined than the soldiers of the AIF were used to, and some were already difficult subordinates.

The first unsuccessful conscription referendum was held in Australia on 28 October 1916. Enlistment had actually swelled, anticipating a 'Yes' vote in response to the government's advanced call up of eligible men, but in the aftermath, enlistment numbers decreased.[547] It appears that, despite Jacka's popularity, the Victoria Cross and its heroes once again could not be used effectively as political tools to sway the public into voting for conscription. During the campaign the Labor Party had inevitably split, much as Hughes' feared, and there was a resurgence of division between the Protestant and Catholic sections of the population.[548] But the 'No' vote was victorious with 1 160 033 votes against to 1 087 557 for, as well as a majority of the states.[549] Hughes remained Prime Minister following the defeat and headed an interim ministry until he negotiated, by January 1917, a merger with the Opposition to form the Nationalist Party. This coalition gave him a majority in the lower house but Labor retained control in the Senate.[550]

Following the defeat of the October 1916 referendum in Australia, the Governor General, Munro Ferguson, wrote to General Birdwood about the result being a disappointment and 'very depressing.'[551] In subsequent letters he expressed his disillusionment, saying: 'I can only say that the situation here since the Referendum has become not only disappointing but grave.'[552] In the following year Munro Ferguson continued to discuss his dissatisfaction that recruiting numbers

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[546] Blake, *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig*, p. 291.
[547] Beaumont, 'Australia's War', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 20.
[548] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 35.
[549] *Ibid.*, p. 50.
[550] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 50.
[551] Letter, Ferguson to Birdwood, 31 October 1916. AWM 3DRL, 2574/3; & Letter, Ferguson to Birdwood, 11 November 1916. AWM 3DRL, 2574/3.
[552] Letter, Ferguson to Birdwood, 24 November 1916. AWM 3DRL, 2574/3.

had not improved.[553] The home front, divided on this issue, was subjected to an even more bitter campaign when Hughes decided to hold a second conscription referendum in late 1917 as enlistment numbers had again dwindled, and replacements were needed from severe casualties caused following the Battle of Third Ypres in September and October 1917.[554] During the 1917 campaign compared to the earlier debate, little was heard from Victoria Cross recipients still serving in the field. At the time depleted AIF divisions were relying on their own sick and wounded men returning to get back to strength given there were so few new reinforcements arriving.[555]

Predictably, the second referendum campaign was even more divisive than the first with previous arguments for and against rehashed and extreme measures being taken on behalf of both sides.[556] As was the case in 1916, anti-conscriptionists were portrayed as disloyal and cowards, sympathetic to the enemy and destroyers of social order. Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix, played a major role in the 1917 referendum as a prominent and controversial advocate of the 'No' vote.[557] He represented himself as the spokesman of the working class and was able to pull huge crowds when he spoke. Not surprisingly, Hughes tagged Mannix as the 'bogeyman' and set out to tear the character of the archbishop apart.[558] The notorious Melbourne entrepreneur John Wren (who gave £500 to Jacka for being the first Australian Victoria Cross of the war) was a strong Irish Catholic supporter of Archbishop Mannix and used his influence to promote opposition to conscription.[559] Wren described Mannix as 'one of the greatest men

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[553] Letter, Ferguson to Birdwood, 4 June 1917. AWM 3DRL, 2574/5; & Letter, Ferguson to Birdwood, 5 February 1917. AWM 3DRL, 2574/5.
[554] Beaumont, *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, pp. 274-275; & Connor, 'Senator George Pearce as Defence Minister', pp. 126-127.
[555] Bean, *Volume 4, The Australian Imperial Force in France 1917*, p. 948**.**
[556] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 52; Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*, pp. 106-108; Fewster, 'The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916', p. 51; Inglis, K.S., 'Conscription in Peace and War, 1911-1945', Forward, & Reece, *Conscription in Australia*; & Lake, *A Divided Society*, p. 120; Robson, *The First AIF*., p. 168.
[557] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 53; Calderwood, G., 'A Question of Loyalty: Archbishop Daniel Mannix, the Australian Government and the Papacy, 1914-18', *Footprints*, June 2005, pp. 12-48; Charlesworth, M., 'Australian Catholics and Conscription', Forward & Reece, *Conscription in Australia*; Cunneen, *King's Men*, p. 132; Evatt, *Australian Labour Leader*, pp. 409-410; Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, p. 167; & Main, *Conscription, the Australian Debate*, pp. 4 & 59-60.
[558] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 53.
[559] Wren was a well known businessman, sports promoter, bookmaker, racecourse proprietor and Catholic layman with interests in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. He enlisted in August 1915 and was discharged in November 1915 medically unfit due to an ear infection; Australian Dictionary of Biography – Online Edition, John Wren, www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A120651b.htm (date consulted: 14 January 2009); McKernan, M., *The Australian*

living.'[560] This was so much so that in 1920 Wren organised a guard of honour of as many Victoria Cross recipients as he could gather, fourteen in all, mounted on white horses for the St Patrick's Day celebrations in Melbourne in honour of Mannix.[561]

As in 1916, a manifesto regarding the 1917 referendum was distributed to soldiers on the front line on 3 December 1917, on behalf of the government, as it was once again crucial that Hughes had the support of the men at the front.[562] Telegrams were regularly published in AIF Orders in support of conscription in order to generate support from the soldiers. One such telegram was written by Lieutenant Arthur Blackburn, VC (10th Battalion, 23 July 1916), President of the Returned Soldiers' Association in Adelaide. Blackburn urged: 'Owing to failure of volunteerism, Returned Soldiers, by overwhelming majority, passed resolution in support of Referendum. Wish you to communicate same South Australian Units abroad.'[563] Further telegrams hoping for support in the referendum proposal included a plea from the secretary of a meeting of returned wounded and sick officers of the AIF, Sydney. The telegram said: 'Ask you to convey to our comrades at front our sincere hope for Referendum proposals be carried thus securing urgent reinforcements.'[564] In a letter to his brother back home, one Australian soldier, Sergeant W.H. Serle, believed conscription would again be turned down by the troops, but they had resolved to stick by each other no matter whether fresh troops were to arrive or not.[565]

The Federal government again failed with the second referendum to enforce conscription on 20 December 1917. The result was 1 181 747 'No' votes, against 1 015 159 'Yes' votes.[566] This time the overseas soldier votes swung slightly away from compulsory service, although

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People and the Great War, Nelson, West Melbourne, 1980, p. 113; Robson, *The First A.I.F.*, pp. 49-50; & Sekuless, P. & Rees, J., *Lest We Forget, The History of the Returned Services League, 1916-1986*, Rigby, Dee Why West, 1986, p. 26.

[560] Brennan, N., *John Wren: Gambler His Life and Times*, Hill of Content, Melbourne, 1971, p. 128.

[561] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

[562] Manifesto sent to troops at the front, 3 December 1917. AWM 4, 1/1/67; Connor, 'Senator George Pearce as Defence Minister', p. 127; Jauncey, *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, pp. 317-320; & McMullin, 'Australian Perceptions of the Great War: The Soldiers' Vote in the Conscription Referenda, 1916 & 1917', p. 7.

[563] AIF Orders – Volume Notices, AIF Orders, 11 December 1917, NAA, MP390/5.

[564] AIF Orders – Volume Notices, AIF Orders, 11 December 1917, NAA, MP390/5.

[565] Serle, W.H., 'A Soldier Explains the Conscription Votes', *La Trobe Journal*, No. 18, October 1976, p. 44.

[566] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 54.

there was still a majority for the 'Yes' vote.[567] It has been suggested by Bean and Murdoch that men on the Western Front voted 'No' but they were outnumbered by men of the Light Horse, and men training in camps and in England.[568] By this stage the fabric of the nation was strained by the two referendums of October 1916 and December 1917. With the failure of both there was an uneasiness that a third challenge might be attempted, but that never came to fruition. Munro Ferguson once again expressed his complete disenchantment when he wrote to Birdwood that conscription was an issue that in future 'had better be decided by Parliament.'[569] The lack of volunteers and failed attempts at conscription resulted in discussions within the AIF on the Western Front regarding a restructure with the possibility of the 3rd Division being dissolved in order to replenish the other divisions, but this never eventuated.[570] The conscription referenda were lost despite the Federal government's exploitation of all state agencies at their disposal – including both Victoria Cross recipients and their fellow soldiers.[571]

In the context of the failure of conscription, recruitment campaigns continued in earnest into 1918. Different strategies needed to be employed to try and boost interest in volunteers on the home front. Once again the Victoria Cross came to the fore. In one such attempt Keith Murdoch sent a cablegram to Prime Minister Hughes suggesting the possibility of sending a mission of approximately 15 Victoria Cross men to 'stir up recruiting.'[572] Murdoch suggested it might be a way of improving the relationship between the AIF and the people back home as it was thought in France that they did not have a clear understanding of what the men were enduring at the front. Murdoch was concerned that men who had already returned home had been spreading 'wrong and alarmist ideas' and discussing the war in a negative manner.[573] Hughes agreed with the concept to use the Victoria Cross to generate more enlistments and discussed the matter with the Minister for Defence, Senator Pearce. Pearce also agreed with the idea and sent

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[567] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 54; McMullin, 'Australian Perceptions of the Great War: The Soldiers' Vote in the Conscription Referenda, 1916 & 1917', p. 8; & Scott, Ernest, *Volume 11, Australia During the War*, 1937, p. 427. Men serving in Australia, on transports and overseas were included in the count: Yes: 103,789; No: 93,910.
[568] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 55; & Robson, *The First A.I.F*. p. 119.
[569] Letter, Ferguson to Birdwood, 7 January 1918. AWM 3DRL, 2574/5.
[570] Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, pp. 67-70.
[571] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 40.
[572] Murdoch had interests in 250 newspapers across the country while he was a war correspondent in London.
[573] Cabelgram, Murdoch to Hughes, undated. NLA, MS1538, 16/2/1/102/27/1906.

the request to AIF headquarters in London for action expressing '... his wish that all V.C. winners be returned to Australia'.[574] Advice was then sent to General Birdwood to request Victoria Cross recipients fighting on the Western Front be returned to assist with recruiting and engender 'popular support'.[575] The specific request noted: 'It is desired to give all V.C. winners in A.I.F. now abroad a furlough enabling them spend few months in Australia. Their presence here would give great fillip to recruiting ... Please let me have your views as early as possible indicating numbers concerned.'[576]

Birdwood agreed that a number of Victoria Cross recipients could be removed from their units on the Western Front for a few months to aid recruiting back in Australia.[577] As a consequence, arrangements were put in place for approximately three months' furlough for Victoria Cross holders to return home. These men were to be sent back to the district in which they enlisted and each district was asked to host their respective Victoria Cross recipient in regard to travel, accommodation and other financial arrangements.[578] Birdwood requested General Monash determine who would travel for this purpose. Monash agreed with the concept, contending '... it is desirable to afford winners of the Victoria Cross an opportunity of proceeding on duty to Australia, provided that their character and type of ability is such as would render their services of value to the recruiting movement. I do not think, however, that any officer or man should be returned except with his own free will.'[579] From this statement it was obvious that Monash believed some Victoria Cross recipients could have a positive effect and should be encouraged to go, while others were better off staying at the front due to their potential lack of public respectability, or because they refused to leave their comrades in the trenches.

In late July 1918 General Monash and his divisional commanders eventually agreed that approximately 12 recipients of the Victoria Cross should be granted furlough and return to Australia as part of Murdoch's recruiting proposal.[580] It was explained by Monash that '... it is hoped that their visit to Australia will help recruiting. No officer or man is to be retained with his

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[574] Letter, Dodds DAG, AIF HQ to Admin HQ AIF London, 7 September 1918. AWM 25, 449/3.
[575] Cablegram W.S. 117, Dept. Defence to Birdwood, 27 June 1918. NAA, MP367/1.
[576] *Ibid.*
[577] Birdwood to HQ AIF, 22 July 1918. AWM 25, 449/3.
[578] Memorandum, Trumble to Commandant 2 Military District, 25 September 1918. NAA, MP367/1.
[579] Letter, CO Australian Corps to HQ AIF, 22 July 1918. AWM 25, 449/3.
[580] Letter, DAG, AIF to HQ AIF, 25 July 1918. AWM 25, 449/3.

unit on the ground that he cannot be spared.'[581] Despite this directive, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Murray, VC, who at the time was the Commanding Officer of the 4th Machine Gun Battalion, was not sent home on the grounds that he could not easily be replaced.[582]

Monash's direction was communicated to all Victoria Cross recipients who were asked if they wanted to return to assist in the recruiting campaign. Jacka, VC, for one, refused to be returned to Australia to assist with rounding up more volunteers. In fact, he threatened to terminate his own appointment if forced to go – a potentially awkward incident senior commanders were keen to avoid.[583] It was suggested to Jacka that he could simultaneously assist recruiters and have time 'to rest and recovery from his wounds' and that he was still suffering as a consequence of previous battles and battle fatigue.[584] Jacka, however, strongly opposed the return, saying he felt he needed to stay on the front line.[585] Jacka was perhaps anxious to avoid direct conflict with his estranged father, and his involvement in assisting with recruitment would do just that. Nathaniel's strong anti-conscriptionist view and Jacka's support for conscription were incompatible.[586] Jacka instead, intended to continue fighting with his unit. With Jacka's refusal it was decided by AIF authorities that there did:

> not seem to be much point in sending back a chap who is absolutely 'fed up' – as Jacka will be if the decision is held to. I am afraid also that he would probably do recruiting a definite injury: he might unburden himself to someone and it would make a fine argument for the 'Anti's'.[587]

Of course, it is now known that after the 1917 attempt to enforce conscription there were no more attempts, but this comment indicated there appeared to remain hope that a third attempt at conscription might be a possibility, at least by AIF officers on the Western Front.

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[581] Circular letter 19/1197, DAG AIF to HQ each Division, HQ AIF/HQ 5th Army, HQ Aust Corps & Admin HQ AIF, 25 July 1918. AWM 25, 449/3.
[582] Letter 19/1197, T/CO 4th Division to HQ Australian Corps, 15 July 1918. AWM 25, 449/3.
[583] Letter, Unknown author to Coleman DAAG AIF HQ 5th Army, 3 September 1918. AWM25, 449/3.
[584] Letter, Admin HQ AIF London to Birdwood, 15 September 1918. AWM 25, 449/3.
[585] Jacka's reasons for his refusal to go included his supposed engagement and intention to marry a lady in England in the coming months.
[586] Cabelgram, Murdoch to Hughes, 24 October 1916. NLA, MS1538, 20/113/2/240; & Powell, 'Albert Jacka VC and the 1916 Conscription Debate', p. 35.
[587] Letter, Unknown author to Coleman DAAG AIF HQ 5th Army, 3 September 1918. AWM 25, 449/3.

Similarly, officers in AIF headquarters in London also felt that sending back home a Victoria Cross recipient to enhance recruitment was not a wise move if the individual opposed the idea. Indeed, it was argued by an unknown officer at AIF headquarters in London that 'I am afraid that if we persist in returning Jacka to Australia merely because he is a V.C. man we should come in for a great deal of criticism both here and in Australia.'[588] Not all officers of the AIF, it seemed, believed using the Victoria Cross as a tool to enhance recruitment was sensible. Jacka certainly did not believe in using his status as a Victoria Cross recipient to encourage recruitment during the conscription campaign, so it is not surprising he refused to go for this specific recruitment promotion.[589] Like Jacka, Corporal Martin O'Meara, VC (16th Battalion, 9-12 August 1916), also refused to travel back to Australia for the purpose of assisting with the recruitment campaign in 1918, although no reason was given.[590] It is possible that O'Meara held the same beliefs as Jacka.

There were also a number of other Victoria Cross recipients who were not deemed 'suitable' to return to assist with recruiting. For example, Private John Leak's (9th Battalion, 23 July 1916) Commanding Officer recommended he not be sent home as he was undergoing a suspended sentence of two years. It was suggested Leak be given three months further 'trial' with his unit to prove himself.[591] Lieutenant Rupert Moon (58th Battalion, 12 May 1917) also opted to stay behind with his unit, although no reason was given, and Sergeant John Hamilton (3rd Battalion, 9 August 1915), of Gallipoli fame, preferred to stay in order to complete the Officer Course he was participating in.[592]

Nonetheless, passage was soon arranged for those Victoria Cross recipients who agreed to return to assist with recruitment. These included Captain Percy Storkey, Lieutenant Leonard Keysor, Second Lieutenants John Dwyer, Stanley McDougall, and William Ruthven, Sergeant John Whittle, Corporals Jørgen Jensen, Roy Inwood, Thomas Kenny, and Walter Peeler, and

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[588] Letter, Admin HQ AIF London to Birdwood, 15 September 1918. AWM 25, 449/3.
[589] De la Billière, *Supreme Courage*, pp. 128-129; Lawriwsky, *Hard Jacka*, p. 91; & Macklin, *Jacka VC*, p. 129.
[590] Letter, DAG AIF/HQ 5th Army to Admin HQ AIF London, 26 August 1916. AWM25, 449/3.
[591] Letter, CO 1st Division to HQ AIF/HQ 5th Army, 16 August 1918. AWM 25, 449/3; suspended sentence of 2 years I.H.L. awarded by F.G.C.M., 25 November 1917. AWM 25, 449/3.
[592] Letter, AIF HQ London to Secretary Dept. of Defence, 14 August 1918. AWM 25, 449/3; & Letter, Commandant Dept. of Defence to Secretary Dept. of Defence, 16 August 1918. AWM 25, 449/3.

Lance Corporal John Carroll.[593] Lieutenant Albert Borella (26th Battalion, 17-18 July 1918) returned later, after he was declared unfit to return to duties in the field, to assist with the recruitment campaign specifically 'in view of the award to him of the Victoria Cross'.[594] Some other Victoria Cross recipients were returned to Australia for other (non-recruitment) reasons including Lieutenant Clifford Sadlier (51st Battalion, 24-25 April 1918), who was returned on medical grounds, while both Corporal Phillip Davey (10th Battalion, 28 June 1918) and Private Henry Dalziel (15th Battalion, 4 July 1918) were too unwell to return immediately and could go home to help boost recruitment only once they were fit to travel.[595]

In preparation for the VC recipients' return, memorandums were forwarded to all Australian Military Districts. The following, for example, was sent to the NSW commandant of the Second Military District in anticipation of the return of Leonard Keysor, Thomas Kenny and Percy Storkey, directing him to:

> Invite the State Recruiting Committee to get in touch with these V.C. winners with a view to taking, in consultation with you, such advantage from their stay in this country, as may be secured from a recruiting point of view. At the same time the Minister would be glad if you would do what is possible to assist those concerned to derive the fullest benefit of their furlough and … to grant travelling concessions and other facilities. Doubtless there will also be a widespread desire to extend the honors of public welcome, with which you are invited to co-operate.[596]

Administrative arrangements had been made in advance. The Victoria Cross recipients were to receive full pay in advance for 60 days. The men were also advised to take advantage of the travel allowance applicable to their rank while they were engaged in their recruiting

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[593] Storkey (19 Battalion, 7 April 1918), Keysor (42 Battalion, 7-8 August 1915), Dwyer (4 Machine Gun Battalion, 26 September 1917), McDougall (46 Battalion, 28 March 1918), Ruthven (22 Battalion, 19 May 1918), Whittle (12 Battalion, 8 and 15 April 1917), Jensen (50 Battalion, 1 April 1917), Inwood (10 Battalion, 20-21 September 1917), Kenny (2 Battalion, 9 April 1917), Peeler (3 Pioneer Battalion, 4 October 1917; & Carroll (33 Battalion, 7-11 June 1917); See various correspondence with VC recipients and their units. AWM 25, 449/3.

[594] Letter, HQ AIF/HQ 5th Army France to HQ 2nd Division & OC 26th Battalion, 16 September 1918. AWM 25, 449/3.

[595] Sadlier: Letter, Commandant Dept. of Defence to Secretary Dept. of Defence, 16 August 1918. AWM 25, 449/3; Davey & Dalziel: Letter, DAAG Australian Section GHQ 3rd Echelon to HQ AIF/HQ 5th Army, 13 September 1918. AWM 25, 449/3.

[596] Memorandum, Trumble to Commandant 2nd Military District, 25 September 1918, NAA, MP367/1.

promotion.[597] The same memorandum was also sent to Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.[598] Ironically, after so much organisation, the ship that carried the Victoria Cross recipients back home set sail from Britain on 24 August 1918, but by the time it arrived in Australia the war was over and recruitment was no longer considered necessary. Despite failing to arrive home in time to fulfil this responsibility, however, it was clear the government was prepared to exploit the Victoria Cross and respective recipients for political ends. The government had every intention of politicising the Victoria Cross in any way possible in order to assist it to reach its recruitment goals.

As a consequence of the war drawing to a close, questions by military authorities were raised as to what to do with the newly returned Victoria Cross recipients. On 18 November 1918 the Director General of Recruiting wrote to the Minister of Defence, Senator Pearce, enquiring about the 15 Victoria Cross recipients who had already returned to Australia to assist with recruitment. The Director wanted to know what to do with these men, and their pay and allowances, given that recruiting was no longer an issue. Some of the recipients expressed a willingness to give addresses in the public's interest to provide views of war for the benefit of repatriation. The idea was to inform the public of the necessity to care for and embrace the returned men following a traumatic four years away from family and friends. A few of the men had actually begun recruiting work before it became obvious recruitment was no longer necessary. Most had probably planned for a recruitment campaign, but it now seemed more applicable to prepare for a campaign on behalf of repatriation. The Director suggested they would probably draw larger crowds as repatriation advocates and it would help 'concentrate public attention on the repatriation work while interest in the war was still fresh.'[599]

But the idea of Victoria Cross recipients speaking on behalf of repatriation was quashed by the Director of the Department of Repatriation. As a consequence of a memorandum issued

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[597] Memorandum, Chief Accountant to Paymaster 6th Military District, 2 October 1918, NAA, MP367/1; VCs Dwyer, McDougall & Whittle returned for furlough for recruiting purposes; Memorandum, Chief Accountant to All District Paymasters, 7 November 1918, NAA, MP367/1.
[598] Memorandum, Chief Accountant to Paymaster 2nd Military District, Paymaster 3rd Military District, Paymaster 4th Military District, Paymaster 5th Military District 2 October 1918 [Regarding VCs Kenny, Storkey, Keysor, Peeler, Ruthven, Symons, Inwood, Jensen, Carroll & Sadlier returned for furlough for recruiting purposes], NAA, MP367/1.
[599] Memorandum, Director General of Recruiting to Minister of Defence, 18 November 1918, NAA, A2481 & NAA, A1918/7480.

on 2 December 1918, the proposal for the Victoria Cross recipients to give addresses and identify issues soldiers may have in settling back into society, and how best these could be tackled for the benefit of repatriation, was rejected. It was instead decided that these men could only be used in two ways by the Department of Repatriation. First, they could be used to raise money for the Department through admission charges to hear them speak of their experiences, organised by local committees and through invitational functions. From the department's perspective there was a problem in that it was unclear whether many of these men had the capacity for public speaking, and they had little knowledge of what work the Department of Repatriation performed. This was a strange concern given that public speaking for the purpose of recruitment was the reason why they were sent home in the first place. The second way was to provide publicity to the work of the Department of Repatriation. The Chief Clerk of the department, however, suggested a lack of knowledge on the part of the Victoria Cross recipients on how the department operated might be severely detrimental.[600] In the end, despite the government's insistence to return these Victoria Cross recipients from the Western Front, their use was now considered superfluous.

Despite the government's attempted use of the Victoria Cross and its respective AIF recipients, it failed to use the award to achieve its goals. It tried in vain to use the Victoria Cross to create the support required to maintain adequate numbers of enlistments during the recruitment drives. Similarly, the Victoria Cross did not prove a decisive factor in the conscription debate despite government attempts to use it as a political tool. Finally, in a last-ditch effort to generate enthusiasm to enlist, Victoria Cross recipients were called back to Australia to take up the recruitment campaign in an effort to swell enlistment numbers. This too, proved a wasted effort given the war was over by the time the men reached Australian shores. The lack of governmental success in using the Victoria Cross to achieve its political aims from 1916 to 1918 does not, however, mask the significance of the attempt. Nevertheless, the occupation of popular imagination of the Victoria Cross remained in the forefront of the public eye during this period, and its recipients were treated with a great deal of adulation, despite the government's attempts to exploit this popularity. The politicisation of the award in this period remains a key and hitherto neglected part of its history.

[600] Minute, Chief Clerk Ryan of Dept of Repatriation, 2 December 1918, NAA, A2481 & NAA A1918/7480.

Chapter 7 The VC and the Home Front

Victoria Cross recipients had an important impact on the home front beyond their attempted exploitation for recruitment and during the conscription debates. These men were thrust into the limelight during the war years of 1916 to 1918, being portrayed as symbols of success by Australian newspapers and all manner of other media. They were regular 'good news stories' and invariably became objects of public popularity and accolade. Their reputations, and that of the Victoria Cross decoration itself, became so desirable that private organisations wanted to be associated with them, while others sought to protect and assist them rebuild their lives following the war. The public affection for the decoration and the recipients was so intense that some men even fraudulently posing as Victoria Cross recipients. This chapter will explore the power of Victoria Cross popularity in society both during and following the war, and introduce the concept of the 'pedestal phenomenon'. It will seek to unravel some of the social and cultural pressures placed on the Victoria Cross recipients themselves, and assess the positive and negative effects this had on these men.

While fighting was relentless on the Western Front during the years 1916 to 1918, there was continual discussion of the war back in Australia via the press. But, as discussed in Chapter Six, the press was not painting an accurate picture of what life was really like for soldiers on the front line due to the censorship regulations.[601] Instead, the media tended to romanticise the war in the best tradition of y propaganda, and presented the allies as essentially the champions of 'good,' defeating the embodiment of 'evil.' Press reports intended to celebrate achievements, hide embarrassments, and 'to invoke national pride, create a feeling of righteousness and incite hatred for the enemy'.[602] Reading about the war effort became the norm for Australians as the story of such conflict, especially on such an unprecedented scale, was a novel experience for such a newly formed nation. The government always considered it necessary to keep the horror of warfare on the Western Front away from the public's eyes and ears, and prevent a more

[601] Beaumont, 'The Politics of a Divided Nation', Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 38; & Commonwealth Acts, vol.XIII, 1914-1915, No. 10, The War Precautions Act in Robson, *Australia and the Great War*, pp. 5 & 36-37.
[602] Williams, J.F., *Anzacs, the Media, and the Great War*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1999, p. 4.

realistic image from being projected, which may have had devastating consequences on the enlistment numbers of eligible men and general public support.[603]

Government propaganda sought to promote the war with 'good news' stories of Australian achievements. As a consequence, the press became a willing agent in the identification of individuals that could be thrust into the limelight and mooted as heroes back on the home front. Such was the case for the new Australian Victoria Cross recipients who quickly became institutional and popular symbols of success. Stories of the Victoria Cross and the respective recipients were reported and 'magnified' at every available opportunity.

The heroics of Gallipoli had an immediate impact in Australia due, perhaps, to 'the emotional poverty of Australian history [which] had suddenly and substantially been enriched with drama for the first time.'[604] The press took great interest in reporting the story of the first Victoria Cross awarded to an Australian at Gallipoli to Lance Corporal Albert Jacka (14th Battalion) following actions in May 1915. The publicity given to Jacka's story back home was tremendous with substantial articles published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Argus* announcing the award.[605] The Australian public moved to idolise its heroes and Jacka's wartime experiences remained of great public interest throughout his subsequent service on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918. An article in the *Argus* reported that Mr John Wren (as discussed in Chapter Six) had promised a gift of £500 to the first Victoria Cross recipient of the war. Jacka was the first recipient and received a cablegram of congratulations, while his parents received a letter from Wren, which asked where he could send the cheque.[606] Shortly an article written by C.E.W. Bean appeared in the *Argus* detailing the exploit of how Jacka 'won the VC' afterwards.[607]

From the earliest day of the war newspaper editors seemed desperate to track their new heroes' epic adventures and to inform the public of 'positive' war stories. In fact, it was during

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[603] Commonwealth Acts, vol.XIII, 1914-1915, No. 10, The War Precautions Act in Robson, *Australia and the Great War*, pp. 5 & 36-38.
[604] Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion*, p. 62.
[605] 'For Bravery, Australians Earn V.C.', *SMH*, 26 July 1915, p. 9; 'Victorian V.C.',*Argus*, 27 July 1915, p. 7.
[606] 'Mr J. Wren's Gift', *Argus*, 30 July 1915, p. 7.
[607] 'C.E.W. Bean Cabled from Alexandria, How the VC was won', *Argus*, 10 August, 1915.

the First World War that newspapers reached perhaps their highest point of social influence in Australia.[608] They followed their Victoria Cross champions and reported all events relating to them – including further decorations. When Jacka returned to Australia in October 1919 there was great jubilation.[609] Newspapers announced his arrival and people lined the street to get a glimpse of the hero who had been represented as a symbol of hope and success for all throughout the war, especially for those who had lost loved ones. Jacka's homecoming marked the 'physical culmination of the war effort for many people.'[610] There was a great deal of fanfare from the time he stepped off the ship to his procession to the town hall.[611] Soon after, a function was organised to officially welcome home Victoria Cross recipients Jacka and Sergeant Maurice Buckley (13th Battalion, 18 September 1918) by soldiers of 14th Battalion.[612]

Newspapers across the country published articles on Australians being awarded the Victoria Cross throughout 1916. Most included biographical details and photographs of the recipients.[613] Catchy newspaper titles such as 'Australian Heroes, Victoria Crosses' and 'Soldier Heroes, Victoria Cross, Won by Twelve Men' were printed. Even investitures of the Victoria Cross to recipients were newsworthy, such as that presented to Albert Jacka by the King on Friday 29 September 1916.[614] There was even evidence of the rivalry between the states in this regard with announcements laying claim to 'heroes' such as article titles like: 'Victoria Cross, Won by Five Australians, One Victorian', 'The Victoria Cross, Awards to Australians, One Queenslander included', and 'Second Western Australian V.C.'[615] Stories like these served to overshadow the unfortunate news of lost loved ones who had perished or been wounded and identified in the obituary section, which was permitted by the censors to be published in newspapers.

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[608] Lake, *A Divided Society*, p. 130.
[609] 'Captain Jacka, V.C. Return on S.S. Euripedes', *Argus*, 21 October, 1919, p. 6.
[610] Grant, *Jacka VC*, p. 161.
[611] Macklin, *Jacka VC*, pp. 224-225.
[612] 'Victoria Cross Winners, Welcome by Comrades', *Argus*, 8 November 1919, p. 21.
[613] 'Australian Heroes, Victoria Crosses', *Advertiser*, 11 September 1916, p.8; 'Australian Heroes, Victoria Crosses' *SMH*, 11 September 1916, p. 7; 'V.C. Won by Australian, Late Sergeant Castleton', *Argus*, 27 September 1916, p. 15; 'Victoria Cross Hero', *SMH*, 27 September 1916, p. 7; & 'Soldier Heroes, Victoria Cross, Won by Twelve Men' *SMH*, 27 September 1916, p. 11.
[614] 'Lieutenant Jacka, V.C. Decorated by the King', *Argus*, 2 October 1916, p. 8; 'Jacka, V.C. Decorated by the King', *Argus*, 20 November, 1916, p. 7.
[615] 'Victoria Cross, Won by Five Australians, One Victorian', *Argus*, 11 September 1916, p. 6; 'The Victoria Cross, Awards to Australians, One Queenslander included', *Courier Mail*, 11 September 1916, p.7; & 'Second Western Australian V.C.', *West Australian*, 13 September 1916, p. 8.

Home-grown Victoria Cross heroes were newsworthy, and good news of the war sold papers, increased circulation, and was 'proof' to and for the government that they were sending men to war for the good of the nation. Such stories were never restricted by the censors. Newspaper articles in Australia were often published within a day or two of the official notification of a Victoria Cross announcement in the *London Gazette*. Throughout the war years the stories remained constant, complete with exaggerated adjectives that emphasised the heroism of the man and the barbaric nature of the tough enemy. There is little doubt the articles may also have encouraged some eligible men to enlist in the hope that they could perhaps become the next hero, and achieve the ultimate recognition for bravery: the Victoria Cross. Some newspapers published 'letters to the editor' about the Victoria Cross as articles on the decoration were popular among readers. In one such letter to the editor of the *Argus*, in February 1916, Mr P. de Jersey wrote how valuable the award was, saying 'such a decoration is of the simplest character in itself – and priceless in all that it signifies'.[616] Another similar article discussing the specific prestige of Australians being awarded the Victoria Cross was published in the *Argus* in September 1916.[617]

As the war continued in 1917 'heroic' Victoria Cross stories continued to be reported in newspapers across the country. The press announcements on Victoria Cross recipients became more regular as the decoration was awarded to more and more members of the AIF. The articles did not differ greatly in their content, but the level of state rivalry increased. For example, Harry Murray (13th Battalion, 4-5 February 1917) was claimed by Tasmania, where he was born, by Western Australia, where he enlisted, and by Queensland because that was where he settled following the war.[618] When Murray's Victoria Cross was announced, the newspapers in Western Australia (where he enlisted) and Tasmania (where he originated) immediately reacted. In Tasmania the *Examiner* and the *Mercury* both published articles describing Murray's act of gallantry.[619] The story appeared in the *West Australian* on 17 March, noting Murray's

[616] 'The Victoria Cross and The Times', *Argus*, 1 February, 1916, p. 10.
[617] Editorial Comment, *Argus*, 11 September 1916, p. 6.
[618] Maitland, *Tales of Valour*, pp. 57-67; See Appendix E for VC Recipient's Home States. These figures were identified by the State where the recipient had spent most of his time before enlistment.
[619] 'Winners of the V.C., Magnificant Work', *Examiner*, 12 March 1917, p.5; & 'For Valour, Australian Wins the V.C.', *Mercury*, 12 March 1917, pp.5-6.

connections with places he had lived, as well as a short summary of his military career. Then the *Westralian Worker* picked up on the story, proudly declaring Murray 'Another Timber Worker VC', and a union member at that.[620] The following month the *Sunday Times* published a lengthy article about Murray, his family and quotes from his citations from previous awards, although there was some exaggeration and inaccuracies in the article.[621] The *Sunday Times* even suggested Murray's award was all thanks to the local community in which he grew up. Such reports were seldom front page news, but fitted into pages that immediately followed the first three pages covering regular, local affairs. Other articles published in 1917 included Victoria Crosses awarded to Captain Percy Cherry, Private Jørgen Jensen, Captain James Newland, Sergeant John Whittle, Private Thomas Kenny, Lieutenant Charles Pope, Corporal George Howell, Lieutenant Rupert Moon and Second Lieutenant Frederick Birks.[622] Newspaper reports of the war remained optimistic, and good news stories such as those of Victoria Cross recipients were eagerly printed and just as eagerly digested.

In 1918 articles continued to publicise the exploits of Victoria Cross recipients including Private Reginald Inwood, Sergeant John Dwyer, Private Patrick Bugden, Sergeant Lewis McGee, Lance Corporal Walter Peeler and Captain Clarence Jeffries.[623] Due to recent successes

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[620] Westralian, 17 March 1917,p. 5; the first Timber worker was Jacka (14 Battalion, 19-20 May 1915).
[621] Hatwell, *No Ordinary Determination*, p. 154.
[622] Cherry (26 Battalion, 26 March 1917), Jensen (50 Battalion, 2 April 1917), Newland (12 Battalion, 8 and 15 April 1917), Whittle (12 Battalion, 8 and 15 April 1917), Kenny (2 Battalion, 9 April 1917), Pope (11 Battalion, 15 April 1917), Howell (1 Battalion, 6 May 1917), Moon (58 Battalion, 12 May 1917) & Birks (6 Battalion, 20 September 1917); 'Australian V.C., Captain P.H. Cherry', *Argus*, 12 May 1917, p. 19; 'Brave Australians, Another Victoria Cross', *SMH*, 12 May 1917, p. 13; 'Tasmanian V.C., A Huon Orchardist', *Examiner*, 14 May 1917, p. 5; 'The V.C., Awarded to Tasmanian', *Mercury*, 14 May 1917, p. 5; 'Victoria Cross, Won By Australians', *Argus*, 9 June 1917, p. 19; 'Six Australian V.C's., Gallant Heroes Decorated', *Examiner*, 9 June 1917, p. 8; 'For Valour, Thirty Victoria Crosses, Awarded to Anzacs', *Mercury*, 9 June 1917, p. 7; 'Victoria Cross for Australians' *SMH*, 9 June 1917, p. 13; 'Bondi Winner of the Victoria Cross', *SMH*, 11 June 1917, p. 8; 'Lance-Corporal Kenny, V.C.', *SMH*, 12 June 1917, p. 8; 'Australian V.C., Lieutenant Moon, of Victoria', *Argus*, 15 June 1917, p. 7, 'Gallant Australian Officer', *SMH*, 15 June 1917, p. 7; Comment in the Personal Column, *Bulletin*, 21 June 1917, p. 14; 'Australian V.C., Corporal Howell, Deed that Won Honour', *Argus*, 28 June 1917, p.7; 'Australian's Heroism', *SMH*, 28 June 1917, p.7; 'V.C.'s Bestowed, Captain Newlands', *Examiner*, 23 July 1917, p. 5; & 'Danish-Australian V.C.'s Cry', *Argus*, 12 September 1917, p. 7.
[623] Inwood (10 Battalion, 20-21 September 1917), Dwyer (4 Machine Gun Company, 26 September 1917), Bugden (31 Battalion, 26-28 September 1917), McGee (40 Battalion, 4 October 1917), Peeler (3 Pioneer Battalion, 4 October 1917) and Jeffries (34 Battalion, 12 October 1917); 'An Australian Hero, V.C. Awarded After Death', *Argus*, 9 November 1917, p. 6; 'New V.C.'S, Splendid Deeds' *Examiner*, 10 November 1917, p 8; 'V.C. Heroes', *SMH*, 10 November 1917, p. 13; 'Victoria Cross Won by Australians', *Argus*, 27 November 1917, p. 7; 'New V.C's, Five Australians', *Examiner*, 27 November 1917, p. 6; 'V.C. Heroes, Deeds of Australians', *SMH*, 27 November 1917, p. 7; 'For Valour, The Victoria Cross', *Mercury*, 27 November 1917, p.5; 'The Awards for Gallantry',

more Victoria Crosses were awarded, and publicised accordingly (see Chapter One for details on the military push). Such articles still included identification of the heroic deeds and biographies of the recipients.[624] So too did the various state 'competitions' to 'claim as their own' respective Victoria Cross recipients continue. There was even a published article identifying Victoria Cross recipients who were of Irish descent.[625] Articles were also printed that welcomed home Victoria Cross heroes such as Private William Jackson, Lieutenant Clifford Sadlier and Private John Carroll.[626] The *Argus* continued to promote the concept of Victoria Cross heroism by asking its readers 'Who had not thrilled at the recital of daring deeds that won for some obscure Australian bush boy or city lad the prized Victoria Cross?'[627] Newspaper editors wanted to highlight 'good' news coming out of the war to maintain readership and popularity.[628]

Throughout the war, even when Victoria Cross recipients were found to have unsavoury indiscretions in their background, all was forgiven and ignored for the sake of the reportable heroics. For example, when Victoria Cross hero Maurice Buckley (13th Battalion, 18 September 1918) disembarked on his return to Australia he travelled by motorcade to Melbourne's Town Hall and was greeted by an honour guard. The prestige of the Victoria Cross was immense and Buckley was unreservedly forgiven for his indiscretions regarding his 1915 repatriation for venereal disease and subsequent reenlistment under an alias (although probably this was not

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Mercury, 28 November 1917, P.5; 'Corporal Inwood, V.C.', *Advertiser*, 29 November 1917, p. 7; & 'The Late Capt. C.S. Jeffries, of South Maitland', *SMH*, 22 December 1917, p. 12.

[624] 'Won the V.C.', *Examiner*, 4 May 1918, p. 7; 'V.C. for Valiant Australian', *Mercury*, 4 May 1918, p. 7; 'Deeds of Valour', *SMH*, 8 June 1918, p. 13; 'Australian V.CS', *SMH*, 19 August 1918, p. 8; 'Australian Heroes, Awarded the Victoria Cross', *West Australian*, 19 August 1918, p. 5; 'The Victoria Cross, Awards to Australians', *Courier Mail*, 20 August 1918, p. 7; 'Victoria Cross', *Argus*, 13 July 1918, p. 17; 'V.C. for Australian', *Argus*, 17 September 1918, p. 5; 'How a V.C. Was Won' *Examiner*, 28 September 1918, p. 7; 'For Valour, The Victoria Cross' *Mercury* 28 September 1918, p. 8; 'New V.C.'s, Gallant Deeds', *Examiner*, 30 September 1918, p. 6; 'For Valour, The Victoria Cross', *Mercury*, 30 September 1918, p. 5; 'The Victoria Cross, Awarded to Ten Australians', *Courier Mail*, 17 December 1918, p. 7; 'Victoria Cross, Australian Heroes', *Argus*, 17 December 1918, p. 7; 'Victoria Cross Awards, Australian Recipients', *SMH*, 17 December 1918, p. 7; 'The Australians, 10 Victoria Crosses', *West Australian*, 17 December 1918, p. 5; 'Victoria Crosses, An Adelaide Hero', *Advertiser*, 28 December 1918, p. 7; 'Victoria Crosses, Awarded to Australians', *Examiner*, 28 December 1918, p. 4; 'The Victoria Cross, Further Awards to Australians', *Mercury*, 28 December 1918, p. 5; 'Australian V.CS', *SMH*, 28 December 1918, p. 9; & 'The Victoria Cross, Awards to Australians', *West Australian*, 28 December 1918, p. 5.

[625] 'Irish Victoria Cross Heroes', *Argus*, 11 March 1918, p. 7.

[626] Jackson (17 Battalion, 25-26 June 1916), Sadlier (51 Battalion, 24-25 April 1918) & Carroll (33 Battalion, 7-11 June 1917); [Jackson] 'Our Soldiers, Welcome in Sydney', *SMH*, 6 July 1917, p. 7; [Sadlier and Carroll] 'A Returned Victoria Cross Hero', *SMH*, 11 July 1917, p. 7; & 'Victoria Cross Winners, Welcome Home', *West Australian*, 2 November 1918, p. 8.

[627] 'Men for the War', *Argus*, 23 February 1918, p. 19.

[628] Lake, *A Divided Society*, p. 130.

publicly known), at least by the military authorities. In an article published by the *Argus* the reason given was that Buckley was invalided home, had overstayed his leave, and consequently re-enlisted in Sydney under the pseudonym 'Gerald Sexton'.[629] His indiscretion was not known at the time of his award. Only afterwards did Buckley inform his superiors. There is little doubt these minor details were hidden and glossed over by the military authorities who no doubt wanted an embarrassment such as this to avoid the news stands. Even in 1919 when publicity on the war was drawing to a close, newspaper men wanted to remind their readers of the heroes of the war, including those announced after the war was over, such as Private James Woods, Lieutenant George Ingram and Lieutenant Joseph Maxwell.[630]

Throughout the war years the newspapers performed a particular role in promoting Victoria Cross recipients as *symbols*, classic Australian heroes that the public could worship. Reports of such heroes produced, replete with fanfare, an opportunity for the public to put their heroes on a pedestal, to surround them and draw enthusiasm from the spectacle in what can be referred to as a 'pedestal phenomenon'. Effectively, this phenomenon was an *attraction* to the Victoria Cross and it's recipients felt by members of the public. The 'pedestal phenomenon' *generated* associated jubilation strongly identified with success, and it gave people a chance to perhaps momentarily forget the horrors of the war.[631] The basis of this phenomenon was that when a member of society enjoys success on the scale of the Victoria Cross, others want to be part of that fame. As a consequence, people were attracted to the Victoria Cross recipient in such a way that they place their 'hero' on a pedestal in order to idealise what he represents for them. In doing this people tended to gather around the Victoria Cross holder metaphorically, as metal is drawn to a magnet. The attraction of the decoration itself and what it represented was indicative of the social values at the time and probably existed in other Dominion countries as well. People wanted to be associated with what the Victoria Cross had come to represent in society – a symbol of success, bravery and masculinity. These were to a degree also seen as successful elements of creating a strong nation and brotherhood. Elements of Australian society thus sought

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[629] Quinlivan, *Forgotten Valour*, p. 166; Comment in Personal Column, *Argus*, 19 December 1918, p. 6.
[630] Wood (48 Battalion, 18 September 1918), Ingram (24 Battalion, 5 October 1918) and Maxwell (18 Battalion, 3 October 1918); 'Australia and the Great War – Military' *Argus*, 6 January 1919, Supplement, p. 3; 'List of Honours, Sixty-Four V.C.'s', *Argus*, 6 January 1919, p. 7; 'Victoria Cross Hero', *SMH*, 6 January 1919, p. 6; 'New Australian V.C.'s', *Argus*, 8 January 1919, p. 6; 'Young Heroes, Winners of the V.C.', *SMH*, 8 January 1919, p. 10; & 'V.C. Championship', *Argus*, 30 August 1919, p. 6.
[631] Williams, *Anzacs, the Media, and the Great War*.

social and even economic capital from the decoration. Links with the Victoria Cross occurred throughout the community in advertisements, concessions, acknowledgments and indulgences offered to recipients.

Advertisements exploiting the Victoria Cross were, in fact, an issue before, during and after the war with a number of companies specifically advertising their products in association with the Victoria Cross. With the first Australian recipients of the Victoria Cross receiving them in the Boer War, associated promotions involving the Victoria Cross began. For example, in 1900 an application was lodged in Victoria by a company trading in cigar and cigarette manufacturing. The company requested a trade mark using a maltese cross with the initials of VC in the middle of the cross.[632] Another 1900 application was made in Tasmania on behalf of Robert Harper and Company Proprietary Limited, with a similar request.[633] Then, in 1902 an application in Victoria was lodged advertising Scotch Whisky Extra Special 'VC' brand – V and C were situated on either side of a VC medal (complete with the 'For Valour' inscription).[634] Furthermore, in 1905 another Tasmania request from Victoria Butter wanted to use the maltese cross symbol and the letters VC in the centre for their trademark. This particular request was eventually abandoned.[635] Companies sought explicitly to be associated with the Victoria Cross, even before the First World War began.

It was not long into the First World War before advertisements for merchandise began circulating within Australia in association with the Victoria Cross, particularly following the announcement of the first such decoration to an Australian, Albert Jacka. Newspaper advertisements often used Victoria Cross images (for which they neither asked the permission of individuals to have their image used, nor paid for it), and often quoting supposed testimonies of their products by the soldiers. For example, 'Zam Buk', it was claimed, 'keeps VC winner fit'.[636]

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[632] Application for Registration of Victorian Trade Mark depicting a cross with the letters VC – in respect of tobacco, cigars and cigarettes by De Beer and Feres, NAA, A11731/6392.
[633] Application for Tasmanian Trade Mark titled Victoria Cross in respect of substances used as as ingredients in food, NAA, A1566/2196.
[634] Applications for Registration of Victorian Trade Marks titled Fine Old Scotch Whisky VC Brand depicting medal in respect of whisky, NAA, A11731/7463.
[635] Application of Trade Mark titled Maltese Cross with the letters VC in respect of chemical preservative by Victorian Butter Factories, NAA, A1566/3170
[636] Gammage, B., *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1975, p. 12.

Zam-Buk was a patent medicine that claimed to keep blood circulating and heal all sorts of pains and wounds. The advertisement in the *Bulletin* in 1915 read 'Won the Victoria Cross, kept fit by Zam-Buk in a trying campaign ... A grand thing for soldiers on active service, says this V.C. hero.'[637] In this *Bulletin* advertisement Private Abraham Acton, a British soldier of 2 Border Regiment, supposedly said: 'I have used Zam-Buk for my feet, especially to keep frost-bite out and to cure sprains; also for cleanly and quickly healing cuts from barbed-wire and other things.'[638] Furthermore, the advertisement reported that 'with frequent application Pte. Acton kept his feet and limbs so supple and fit that months of hard campaigning still left him with the endurance necessary to win the most coveted V.C.'[639] Although Private Acton was British, the advertisement was indicative of the popularity the Victoria Cross had on the Australian home front, and the fact that Australians were eligible for the decoration inevitably helped sell the product. A separate advertisement for Zam-Buk was published in the *Bulletin* in 1916 stating 'Two V.C. Heroes kept fit by Zam-Buk in a trying campaign' referring to actions on the Western Front.[640] This time the advertisement featured Private H.H. Robson of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Scots Regiment, as well as Private Acton, referred to in the previous advertisement.

Furthermore, in 1916 a motor tyre advertisement attempted to associate itself with the success and popularity of the Victoria Cross. The symbol of the decoration was represented by the tyre company in the *Australian Motorist* magazine.[641] The advertisement read 'Famous Crosses', there was a large image of the Victoria Cross and the words 'Victoria Cross' were included in the advertisement. The advertisement was for 'Clincher Cross' motor tyres.[642] Following the war there was also a 1920 poster advertisement from John Sands that displayed Albert Jacka, the Victoria Cross image and the statement 'He kept his pledge, You Buy Peace Bonds.'[643] Associated advertising with the Victoria Cross was a drawcard that generated popularity in connection to the 'pedestal' that the decoration created.

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[637] 'Won the Victoria Cross', *Bulletin*, 17 June 1915, p. 52.
[638] *Ibid.*
[639] *Ibid.*
[640] 'Two V.C. Heroes', *Bulletin*, 21 September 1916, p. 48.
[641] Commonwealth of Australia Opinion No. 169, Crown Solicitor to Secretary Attorney-General's Department, 5 & 13 April 1916, NAA, A2023.
[642] The Australian Motorist advertisement of North British 'Clincher Cross' Motor Tyres, 1 March 1916, NAA, A2023.
[643] *AWM Collections Database, ARTV00784*, www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp, date consulted: 9 October 2008.

Despite the perceived inappropriateness of this type of advertising during the First World War, there were no government regulations clearly protecting the decoration's use and abuse in this manner. As a result, in March 1916, the Department of Defence's Secretary, Mr Thomas Trumble, wrote to the Crown Solicitor to enquire if anything could be done to prevent such advertisements from publication.[644] The government was concerned that the Victoria Cross and what it represented was not being protected as a 'sacred symbol,' and was rather being exploited for the purpose of associated publicity with product selling. The attempt at such 'protection' failed.

Businesses also wanted to be associated with the Victoria Cross and recipients and sometimes offered money as reward for their association. For example, in October 1915 Adelphi, a Sydney company, announced it would allow workers to go fight at the front, telling them 'that any amongst them winning the V.C. will get £250 and the boss's admiration.'[645] Similarly, in June 1917, the directors of the National Australia Bank voted to present £100 to Lieutenant Rupert Moon who had been awarded the Victoria Cross as he had been an employee of the bank, before volunteering.[646] Even schools promoted their 'heroes' such as at the 'speech day' in 1918 at Caulfield Grammar School when the school proudly associated itself with having educated Captain Robert Grieve of 37th Battalion who received his decoration for actions on 7 June 1917.[647]

The value and acclaim of the Victoria Cross was certainly highly prized by the men of the AIF themselves while serving on the Western Front. This value was obvious as expressed in the following letter received by 31st Battalion sent by N.D.L. Cummins to the Officer in Charge Base Records, Department of Defence, Melbourne, dated 18 October 1918. The letter said, 'One of our valued clients, Mr J.H.N. Hamilton, of 'Joliment', Jandowae, was killed in action in France. His widow informs us that … before his death he made a promise that the first man (if any) of his Platoon who won the Victoria Cross would receive from him or from his Estate the sum of

[644] Minute Paper D9/1/74, T. Trumble to Secretary, 28 March 1916, NAA, A2023.
[645] Untitled Article, *Bulletin*, 28 October 1915, pp. 8-9.
[646] 'Gift to V.C. Hero', *SMH*, 27 June 1917, p. 11.
[647] 'Victoria Cross, Australian Heroes', *Argus*, 17 December 1918, p. 7.

£100.' Mrs Hamilton wanted to honour her husband's promise so the letter was sent to see if anyone was eligible.'[648] No Victoria Cross was awarded to any member of the platoon, and consequently Mrs Hamilton kept the money. No doubt if a Victoria Cross was awarded there would have been a local celebration whereby Mrs Hamilton would have been able to publicly acknowledge the bravery of her own husband and make an association with the Victoria Cross.

With all this associated publicity the Victoria Cross recipient was never inconspicuous and, to a degree, what he did with his life from then on was of public interest, both for the rest of the war and long after. Recipients were also given special considerations, often in the form of financial concessions, or rousing public acknowledgement, and generally indulged in recognition of their famed Victoria Cross. At times these concessions were initiated by private organisations wanting the associated 'pedestal phenomenon' effect, while other concessions were offered by the government and the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia (RS&SILA) in order to make the recipient's life a little easier, and public acknowledgement and accolade in death.[649] The Department of Repatriation also played a role in attempting to secure an easier life for ex-soldiers. There is no doubt their slogan 'Help the Man with the Medal' which appeared on the front cover of their magazine *Repatriation* on 25 April 1919 indicated there was a need to recognise all medal recipients with concessions.[650]

One conspicuous example of Victoria Cross association was by Tivoli Theatres which specifically used the image of the Victoria Cross for promotional purposes. In June 1918 Tivoli announced they wanted to reward AIF soldiers who were Victoria Cross recipients with life passes to all Tivoli Theatres. The Honourable Hugh McIntosh, MLC (NSW), assisted Tivoli Theatres with this promotion. Of the seven Victoria Cross recipients who had returned from war at that stage, three lived in Victoria, and McIntosh suggested the passes be presented by the local member to those recipients. The other four passes could be mailed out. McIntosh was unsure if a Tivoli Theatre existed in Tasmania. He also suggested further arrangements could be made on

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[648] Offer of 100 Pounds by late Mr J.H. Hamilton to 1st VC of 2nd Platoon, 31st Battalion, AWM 18, 9954/7/13.
[649] Sekuless, & Rees, *Lest We Forget*, p. 49 & Garton, *The Cost of War*, pp. 54 & 76.
[650] Lloyd, C. & Rees, J., *The Last Shilling, A History of Repatriation in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1994, pp. 66-67.

return of the other recipients from the war.[651] As a result a letter was sent to all living Victoria Cross recipients residing in Australia in to present their passes. The Minister for Defence, Senator Sir George Pearce, was to be in attendance in Sydney and Melbourne to present the life passes to the recipients at a formal public presentation. Arrangements were also being made for presentations in other state capitals. Most invitations to Victoria Cross recipients were sent to the men such as this example sent to Captain James Newland, VC (12th Battalion, 8 and 15 April 1917):

> The Hon. Hugh D. McIntosh, M.L.C. (New South Wales) has expressed a desire to present to members of the Australian Imperial Force who have won the Victoria Cross a Life Pass to all Tivoli Theatres. Arrangements are being made for the ceremony of presentation on convenient occasions, and the Minister will be glad to know in this connection whether you will be in Melbourne or Sydney in the near future to accept this thoughtful gift from Mr. McIntosh.[652]

After the war letters were sent to commandants of each Military District for those men who were unable to be presented personally, such as the following letter referring to Lieutenant Clifford Sadlier, VC (51st Battalion, 24-25 April 1918):

> The Hon. Hugh D. McIntosh, M.L.C. (New South Wales) has expressed a desire to present to members of the Australian Imperial Force who have won the Victoria Cross a Life Pass to all Tivoli Theatres and at the request of Mr McIntosh I am now forwarding herewith Pass to be presented in his name to Lieut. C.W.K. Sadlier. Will you be so good as to arrange for delivery of the gift accordingly?[653]

While Tivoli Theatres were receiving free publicity following association with the Victoria Cross, there were other organisations in the community trying to protect the recipients. The Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia (RS&SILA) believed it was important that Victoria Cross recipients, above all others, should be given special consideration in the community. They lobbied the government for concessions that were targeted at making a life and settling back into the community a little easier for the nation's Victoria Cross recipients. The RS&SILA believed the extra pressure of public admiration meant Victoria Cross recipients were at risk of having difficulty settling back into mainstream daily life due to their public

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[651] Letter, Unknown author to Hugh D. McIntosh, 11 June 1918, NAA, MP367/1.
[652] Letter, Trumble to J.E. Newland VC, 22 October 1918, NAA, MP367/1.
[653] Memorandum, Trumble to Commandant 4th Military District, 29 April 1919, NAA, MP367/1.

profile. Specifically, in August 1919 the RS&SILA lobbied for State and Commonwealth Governments to grant free life railway passes to Victoria Cross recipients.[654] But not all state governments thought this was fair, given the huge numbers of other, unrewarded soldiers who needed government assistance.[655] Most, however, wanted the passes to be paid for by the Federal Government.[656] The RS&SILA also asked for extra funding for state funerals for Victoria Cross recipients. This was to ensure acknowledgement of the Victoria Cross recipient's efforts during the war. It was also to allow the public to grieve the loss of a symbol of heroism and success.[657]

Victoria Cross recipients were eligible for post-war concessions because of the perceived nature of their contribution during the war. Additional government financial assistance was given if the recipients were deemed in 'need' of it.[658] Assistance was requested and given to help Victoria Cross holders to secure jobs and further their vocational training following the war.[659] Furthermore, during the Second World War it was decided the government needed to check on the wellbeing of AIF soldiers who had received the Victoria Cross during the First World War. No doubt this was brought about due to potentially negative news that the government was failing in its duty to look after such men who had sacrificed so much for their country, and as a consequence, men might be less willing to enlist for fighting in a subsequent war. It was decided that if past Victoria Cross holders were in need of financial or other assistance, the government would offer it. However, this was on the strict proviso that the men had done everything possible

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[654] Letter, RS&SILA to State & Commonwealth Governments, 7 August 1919. NAA, A2/1920/2279.
[655] Various Correspondence, State to Commonwealth Government, 20 December 1919 & 25 November 1920. NAA, A2/1920/2279.
[656] *Ibid.*
[657] Various correspondence, 24 June 1920, 18 September 1922, 13 October 1922 & 28 November 1922. NAA, B1535; Correspondence regarding funeral for Captain A. Jacka, VC, 19 January 1932, 17 February 1932, 18 February 1932, 23 February 1932. NAA, B1535; Various correspondence, RS&SILA (RSL) & Commonwealth Government. NAA, MP742/1; Correspondence regarding funeral for W. Jackson VC, NAA, MT1131; & Lloyd & Rees, *The Last Shilling,* p. 353.
[658] See various correspondences relating to gratuities in respect to decorations, 2 December 1916, 4 October 1917, 5 April 1918, 23 May 1918, 19 August 1918, 11 September 1918, 27 September 1918. NAA, MP508/1; Various correspondences relating to pensions for 1st AIF VCs, 3 December 1947 & 8 January 1948. NAA, MP742/1; Request for information regarding Victoria Cross annuities, 10 November 1952. NAA, MP927/1; & Letter, Chief Paymaster to Secretary for Defence, 4 October 1917. AWM 25, 391/3.
[659] Application for vocational training on behalf of TL Axford VC, MM, NAA, A1861/1920/3470; Request for assistance – Percy V Storkey, NAA, A1861/1921/19161; Application for assistance – Rupert Moon, NAA, A1861/1922/3730; Correspondence W Jackson VC, NAA, CP30/3/40; & Correspondence Major E T Towner VC, MC, NAA, M1415/334.

to live as model citizens. No assistance was offered to Joseph Maxwell, VC (18th Battalion, 3 October 1918), who it was deemed, might waste any assistance provided due to his profligacy:

> In considering this matter I think that we must recognise the probability that such a man as Mr. Maxwell will spend every penny that comes into his hands, and he will receive little advantage from it … Mr Maxwell was certified as an inebriate in the beginning of 1939, and escaped from Kenmore Mental Hospital, New South Wales, into which institution he had been committed.[660]

However, in 1943 the government was willing to assist John Leak, VC (9th Battalion, 23 July 1916), who was seen as a recipient worthy of extra assistance:

> Leak is the occupier of a small block of land which is in a very poor type of country. He has a few sheep, and does some market gardening. He is married, has six children, and just manages to exist. He is well respected and all the tradespeople speak most highly of him and his family. He is thoroughly recommended for any assistance which may be forthcoming.[661]

Despite the government making special considerations for all Victoria Cross recipients, it was clear that authorities wanted to ensure any extra assistance given was only to those recipients whom they judged deserved help. Certain unsavoury behaviours exhibited by some recipients, such as Maxwell, were not to be acknowledged. At the same time not all Empire governments were as generous as the Australian. In 1920 a former British Boer War recipient of the Victoria Cross believed that Australian recipients were enjoying a variety of benefits not being provided by the British government who had failed, he believed, in its duty to provide for its heroes, suggesting 'honour is all very well, but a little help is worth a lot of sympathy'.[662] The Australian government certainly had fewer Victoria Cross recipients to take care of than Britain, and of course all the Australians were volunteers, choosing to go to war on behalf of their government, unlike many of their British counterparts.[663]

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[660] Minute paper, Secretary RS&SILA for Defence to Department Army, 30 September 1943. NAA, MP727/1.
[661] Letter, Assistant Secretary Department Army to RS&SILA, 24 November 1943. NAA, MP727/1.
[662] Letter, Colour Sergeant Harry Hampton to Private Secretary of King George V, 30 September 1920. TNA, WO 32/9394; & Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, p. 1.
[663] Perhaps it would be interesting for a future study to be undertaken that would consider how many conscripted men were awarded the Victoria Cross compared to volunteers.

Acknowledging the Victoria Cross publicly was facilitated by King George V himself during the war. The King had asked that whenever possible, he personally wanted to present the decoration to recipients to acknowledge the bravest of the British Empire soldiers.[664] The Victoria Cross was considered so special that recipients were even written about in correspondence between senior commanders and officials. For example, in 1917 General Sir William Birdwood wrote to the Governor General Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson about the successes the AIF were enjoying in regard to the prestigious Victoria Cross. Birdwood was proud of the reputations and rewards of soldiers of the AIF writing:

> Other officers who have established tremendous reputations here are Murray, who came out as a private in the 16th Battalion, and the older of the two Jacka brothers. The former, who is a Tasmanian, won the V.C. and the D.S.O., and only today has been awarded a Bar to the latter – I should imagine the best record in the war. Jacka (such a good modest fellow) has just won a Bar to his Military Cross, having as you know already won the Cross and the V.C. – our first one during the war. Both these officers won their last – named decorations in the fighting near Bullecourt on the 11th April.[665]

The Governor General, Munro Ferguson, was charged with the duty of presenting Victoria Crosses to the next of kin in cases of posthumous Australian decorations. The presentation would also include a letter of condolence to the family for their loss which stressed the 'specialness' of the award. When Captain Clarence Jeffries died in action which resulted in him being posthumously awarded a Victoria Cross on 12 October 1917, King George V wrote to his father: 'It is a matter of sincere regret to me that the death of Captain Clarence Smith Jeffries, 34th Battalion Australian Imperial Force, deprived me of the pride of personally conferring upon him the Victoria Cross, the greatest of all rewards for valour and devotion to duty.'[666] This type of condolence letter was specifically and individually written for Victoria Cross recipients' next of kin, as the decoration was held in such high esteem. Munro Ferguson personally organised such presentations. On 7 June 1917 he received a letter from Downing Street advising him of Lieutenant Charles Pope's (11th Battalion, 15 April 1917) posthumous Victoria Cross. Munro Ferguson was sent Pope's next of kin details, instructions to present the decoration, and a letter

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[664] Memorandum, unaddressed, undated. AWM 18, 9954/7/2; & Letter, B.B. Cubitt to Sir (Unknown), 15 August 1916. TNA, WO 32/5393.
[665] Letter, Birdwood to Ferguson, 9 May 1917. AWM 3DRL, 2574/14, p. 9.
[666] Letter, King George V to Joshua Jeffries, 20 December 1917. NLA, MS9701.

from the King.[667] The presentation was made to Pope's widow at a parade of troops in Perth.[668] Then, on 18 June 1917, the Governor General received another letter advising him of Captain Percy Cherry's (26th Battalion, 26 March 1917) Victoria Cross. Munro Ferguson was requested to present the Victoria Cross, his other medals, and a letter of condolence to his next of kin, Cherry's father, in Tasmania.[669] In this case the presentation was made by the Governor of Tasmania, Sir Francis Newdegate.[670] It was always considered important that the deceased Victoria Cross recipient was acknowledged publicly for the sacrifices he had made. The tributes afforded the deceased family inevitably led to the family being linked, whether they liked it or not, to the 'pedestal phenomenon.' Following the ceremony for the posthumous awarding of the Victoria Cross these families were exposed to a range of publicity surrounding the Victoria Cross, as they were thrust into the public eye.

The Victoria Cross 'pedestal phenomenon' in Australia was so strong that some members of society turned to fraud to make an association with it. These men, from different communities across the country, craved the fame of the Victoria Cross, and all it represented. They falsified themselves as recipients, invariably causing embarrassment to their colleagues, communities and themselves.[671] Whether mentally disturbed, attempting to defraud the government, or attention seeking nuisances is immaterial; such men all sought after the success the Victoria Cross came to represent.

The first case of a fraudulent Victoria Cross recipient was reported in the *British Australasian* in 1916 where a man, Sergeant Frank Taylor, had been introduced to talk at a recruitment meeting by the local recruiting agency (who had heard of his existence in the local community) as a soldier of the AIF wearing the Victoria Cross. He spoke of his heroics and was later found to be a fraud, arrested and sentenced for the crime.[672] It is unclear how he was 'found out' but there is no doubt the recruiting agency who asked him to speak felt humiliated by this incident.

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[667] Letter, Downing Street to Ferguson, 7 June 1917. NAA, A11803/1917/89/688.
[668] Letter, Governor General to Secretary of state for Colonies, 10 December1917. NAA, A11803/1917/89/688.
[669] Letter, Downing Street to Ferguson, 18 June 1917.NAA, A11803.
[670] Letter Ferguson to F.A. Newdegate, 12 October 1917, NAA, A11803.
[671] De la Billière, *Supreme Courage*, p. 260.
[672] 'A Bogus V.C.', *British Australasian*, 24 February 1916, p. 22.

Then, in 1917 two more cases of Victoria Cross fraud appeared and were investigated. The first case involved a man who claimed to be Driver William Richard Campbell of the Australian Artillery, who posed as a Victoria Cross recipient, having obtained the ribbon from a local tailor while he was on convalescence in London.[673] Apparently, while in York in the United Kingdom, the Mayor publicly entertained Campbell and invited dignitaries to meet the hero until he was discovered.[674] A second case involved Gunner E. L. Christie who believed he had been recommended for a Victoria Cross but, according to his divisional commander, Christie had 'a diseased mind', and despite the fact that he was a good fighter, 'he is a man who cannot be relied upon, and is generally a perfect nuisance to all'.[675] Christie had been court martialled for using insulting language on 3 September 1917 to his superior officer, drank too much, used aliases, made false claims for a pension based on incapacity, went absent without leave twice, and seemed to have constant grievances to air.[676] In a letter to Senator Pearce, Christie wrote that he was recommended for the Victoria Cross in June 1917 for two performances on two consecutive days at Messines. He stated the recommendation was signed by four different officers and forwarded to England. Christie claimed General Harold Grimwade (General Commanding Divisional Artillery) had 'especially' made comment on the Victoria Cross recommendation. He thought an injustice had been performed in his not yet being conferred and considered it was an insult to his family. Yet following an investigation, no recommendation for a Victoria Cross was found to exist. Pearce concluded that if Christie had been recommended it was plausible that he could have received a Distinguished Conduct Medal or the Military Medal if the Victoria Cross had been downgraded (as outlined in Chapter Four).[677] Overall the associated investigation concluded that: 'At no time was Gunner Christie recommended for the V.C., nor is there evidence to show that any Officer of his Unit for personal malice, spite or other reasons prevented such recommendation going through.'[678] A letter was sent to Christie summarising the findings and saying that no further action was to be taken in his case.[679]

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[673] 'An Australian Imposter', *Mercury*, 24 January 1917, p.5.
[674] IWM, Department of Documents, The Ranken-Lummis VC Collection 24 (41).1 [Victoria Cross]/L19 VC Box 44, Private John Leak, VC file.
[675] Inquiry notes regarding Christie, 22 August 1919. NAA, MP367/1/28/11/17.
[676] Absent With Out Leave is often referred to as AWOL.
[677] Letter, Christie to Pearce Minister for Defence, 2 September 1918, NAA, MP367/1.
[678] Precis, 13 August 1919, NAA, MP367/1.
[679] Letter, Staff Commandant AIF HQ to Christie, 22 August 1919, NAA, MP367/1.

More cases of fraudulent Victoria Cross recipients became apparent following the war. It was reported in a 1919 edition of the New South Wales *Police Gazette*, for example, that Mr Ernest Williams had escaped a Mental Hospital in Gladesville posing as a Victoria Cross recipient, and a description of his appearance was included in the hope someone would be able to assist in locating him.[680] By July 1920 the situation of individuals fraudulently wearing Victoria Crosses was serious enough to be brought to the Governor General's attention. As a consequence all fraudulent Victoria Crosses were investigated with high priority. The government felt it was important the public were not misled by frauds who sought the popularity and trappings of success an association with the Victoria Cross invariably brought.[681]

Another fraudulent incident began in 1921 involving a man known as Sergeant Major Drinnan, VC. When investigating his authenticity, military authorities were in some confusion as to whether he might in fact be Bombardier Joseph Brennan who received a Victoria Cross following the Indian Mutiny as a Sergeant in April 1858. Yet, it was reported Brennan had died in 1872.[682] Drinnan claimed to have changed his name from Brennan, suggesting there was mix-up in his spelling at the recruiting depot before fighting in India. He continued to imply that it would be disappointing if he was no longer allowed to wear the medals he had worn for over 60 years – especially as it had apparently been Queen Victoria herself who had presented the Victoria Cross. Drinnan said it would be a shame if he was not allowed to wear his rightful medals and that they would have to be buried with him. He compared himself to the Unknown Soldier buried in London as the 'Unknown and dishonoured V-C – in Bundaberg' [*sic*].[683] He then continued to add that he had five sons and he was not sure that all would enlist in the next big war given the treatment their father had received. No matter what the real name of this man was, his claims for being a Victoria Cross recipient were never substantiated.

In a similar case, Mr David Richardson claimed he had received a Victoria Cross during the Zulu War of 1879 and requested payment for the pension he suggested he was entitled to in

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[680] 'Escaped Lunatic', *N. S. W. Police Gazette*, 30 April 1919, p. 1.
[681] Correspondence, Ferguson to unknown person, 15 July 1920. NAA, A11804.
[682] Letter, Blamey to Bruche, 27 August 1924. NAA, MP367/1.
[683] Letter, Drinnan to Blamey, 16 March 1921, NAA, MP367/1.

1921. After police investigations (including a theory that Richardson was Drinnan writing with an alias) it was decided that this man had been impersonating the real Richardson, VC, after the actual recipient had auctioned his medals.[684] Richardson's story was unclear and he had forgotten many names, dates and places. He claimed to have served in the Royal Navy and received the decoration under an assumed name. When asked what the name was he refused to supply it, citing family reasons. The investigating authority, the Grafton police in northern New South Wales, eventually deemed his claim to be fraudulent.[685]

Fraudulent Victoria Crosses had actually been in circulation in Britain since 1900, and in 1906 the British War Office requested that a private and discrete marking be identifiable on future Victoria Crosses for the purpose of recognising the genuine article from spurious imitations. The makers of the Victoria Cross, Hancocks, proceeded with this matter with extreme care. The only evidence of subsequent action in this regard, however, was a War Office reply letter indicating Hancock had telephoned in agreement to the new requirement for an inconspicuous mark to be included on all issued Victoria Crosses from then on.[686] The mark was kept so private, however, that it seems the War Office was never informed of the nature of the marking! Given the lack of documentation of this requisite, there is no doubt that Australian authorities knew nothing of this matter, for if they had, surely they would have asked the bogus Victoria Cross recipients to present their decoration to test for authenticity.

The fraudulent wearing of the Victoria Cross, or the claiming to be a legitimate recipient, indicated there were members of society who wished to be associated with the 'pedestal phenomenon' that the Victoria Cross created at any cost. These imposters (whether they were deemed mentally ill or not) wanted to enjoy in the popularity and success associated with the decoration, and somehow believed they were entitled to the concessions and accolades afforded to the legitimate recipients. This provides further evidence of the prestige the Victoria Cross was held in by all sectors of the community. For some it was an irresistible temptation to enjoy that esteem, whether they were deserving of it or not.

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[684] Letter, Blamey to Bruche, 27 August 1924. NAA, MP367/1.
[685] Letter, Secretary Dept of Navy to Grafton Superintendent Police, 12 December 1921, NAA, MP367/1.
[686] Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, pp. 199-200.

Regardless of what the press were reporting, or the public were celebrating, the Victoria Cross had an important impact on the recipient himself. There is no doubt the award bestowed an unprecedented level of popularity on the recipient himself. The recipient was idolised because of the award's prestige.[687] The act of gallantry for which the medal was conferred was inevitably considered as the supreme moment of the man's life. The Victoria Cross was synonymous with heroism, public admiration and success, and despite how the individual soldier felt about the medal he was forever more a symbol of public admiration. Some Victoria Cross recipients soaked up the popularity the decoration brought with it, while others found life after the medal to be challenging and living up to the reputation of a Victoria Cross 'hero' too difficult to bear.

Occasionally a Victoria Cross recipient wanted to be publicly acknowledged, to be noticed, and to revel in his hero status. Such was the case of Joseph Maxwell, VC (18th Battalion, 3 October 1918), who wrote in 1917 (although his book was not published until 1941) about the popularity of both Albert Jacka and Harry Murray in his autobiographical account on his war experiences. Maxwell consciously wanted to emulate the Victoria Cross heroes and be recognised as a hero himself. As a result, during his tour of the Western Front, he regularly volunteered for many dangerous missions, including the assault in the battle for Menin Road remembering:

> I was given command of No. 5 platoon of B Company. This proved a golden opportunity for me … I was unknown or known only to the military police and my associates in the battalion, while Colonel Harry Murray and Captain Bert Jacka, both of whom held the Victoria Cross among other decorations, were known to every Australian at home and abroad.[688]

Not all Victoria Cross recipients felt as Maxwell did. Some were circumspect or modest – although, perhaps this was to a degree a 'false modesty' and a reaction to what was expected of them by society. In some ways the modesty of a hero was a cultural expectation of the time. Following the war, Canon William Lummis (discussed in the Introduction to this thesis as a collector of information about Victoria Crosses) wrote letters to many Victoria Cross recipients asking them to describe themselves in relation to their Victoria Cross. Lieutenant William Joynt

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[687] De la Billière, *Supreme Courage*; & Nicoll, *From Diggers to Drag Queens*, p. 103.
[688] Maxwell, *Hell's Bells and Mademoiselles*, pp. 109-110.

said of his award: 'So many other men deserved it more than I did,' while Sergeant Ruthven replied in a self-deprecating way: 'I was a bit of a dare devil in my youth.'[689] In 1923 C.E.W. Bean wrote to historian Newton Wanliss requesting information about Albert Jacka (14th Battalion, 19-20 May 1915). Bean suggested that unlike other Victoria Cross recipients (whom he did not name), Jacka had not been spoilt by the decoration; it had not changed the man he was beforehand.[690] Jacka resisted personal publicity and the trappings of fame for the rest of his life. He apparently considered that the medal represented the efforts of the men with whom he served and faced the dangers of war together, especially those who had died, and should not be considered an opportunity for fame.[691] Victoria Cross collector, Lord Michael Ashcroft, believes Jacka enjoyed the recognition the decoration gave him, but not the publicity that went along with it.[692] Harry Murray, VC (13th Battalion, 4-5 February 1917), shared a similar 'matter of fact' attitude to the decoration that was probably, to some extent, a culturally expected reaction, stating: 'I had never sought, nor had I taken part in any affairs in life after the war which would attract attention to me because I felt that a medal, once bestowed, and recognition once given, was sufficient, and it was not right to refer it constantly. 'The act had been done and the award had been given' said Murray; 'one should not seek more.'[693] Both Jacka and Murray chose and were able to move on to the next chapters in their lives, rather than to live in the shadow of their respective awards.

Some AIF Victoria Cross recipients did not enjoy the substantial amount of unwanted publicity that came with the Victoria Cross and many found fame difficult to handle. Recipients were often invited back to their home town for a hero's welcome and presented with gifts and associated accolades. Some men were even offered gifts of money. But, in many cases, it was unclear whether it was the man who was being celebrated, or the fact that he was a member of a community that wanted to exploit his status as a Victoria Cross recipient to encourage local belief in the war effort and that the war had been a just cause.[694] Gliddon has suggested the Victoria Cross brought additional problems in that recipients were marked as something special

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[689] IWM, Department of Documents, The Ranken-Lummis VC Collection 24 (41).1 [Victoria Cross]/J36 VC Box 41, Lieutenant-Colonel William D. Joynt, VC file; R76 VC Box 63, Major William Ruthven, VC file.
[690] Macklin, *Jacka VC*, p. 274.
[691] *Ibid.*, p. 9; & De la Billière, *Supreme Courage*, p. 141.
[692] Ashcroft, *Victoria Cross Heroes*, p. 244.
[693] Hatwell, *No Ordinary Determination*, pp. 248 & 250.
[694] Gliddon, *V.C.s of the Somme, A Biographical Portrait*, p. vii.

and there was an expectation of performance in all future engagements that would undoubtedly be published in the press.[695] The pressures put on recipients always to be the strong and brave man, and to continue to exhibit heroic attributes forever more, was often difficult to bear. This concept was explored in an article in the *Herald* newspaper on 13 September 1969 in which a psychologist interviewed five Victoria Cross recipients on the theme 'What Makes a Hero?', including some Western Front veterans.[696] All soldiers, especially those recognised as First World War heroes, were supposed to be the epitome of 'muscular Christianity', the central figures promoted by the Edwardian middle class, identifiable by their manliness, bravery, fortitude, immunity to pain, and equipped with stoic endurance.[697] But, not all of them, including those who had been awarded a Victoria Cross, lived up to this expectation.

Following the war there were a number of Australian Victoria Cross recipients who never settled down, nor moved on from their war experiences. One such case was Private John Ryan, VC, who returned from the war but never fully integrated back into a stable family life. He roamed the New South Wales and Victorian countryside seeking employment and died a lonely, premature death in 1941.[698] Many returned soldiers, like Ryan, suffered a debilitating and profound impact resulting from the war, and had deep, lasting and scarring psychological wounds which, in turn, impacts on the families and communities to which they belonged.[699] Another unfortunate recipient in this category was Private Martin O'Meara, VC (16th Battalion, 9-12 August 1916), who went insane and was locked up in a mental institution, probably due to his disturbing war experiences. O'Meara had been admitted to the Claremont Hospital for the Insane soon after his return to Australia. At an investigation into the hospital's negligence another patient at the time reported to the 'Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly on the Claremont Hospital for the Insane' that O'Meara was not given any treatment, but was instead tied down in a strait-jacket for fourteen hours a day from 4.30pm until 11.00am as there was only one attendant on ward duty at night.[700] O'Meara also died a lonely and untimely death in 1935. It

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[695] Gliddon, *V.C.s of the Somme, A Biographical Portrait*, p. vii.
[696] IWM, Department of Documents, The Ranken-Lummis VC Collection 24 (41).1 [Victoria Cross]/R76 VC Box 63, Major William Ruthven, VC file.
[697] Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs*, pp. 50-51; & Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*, p. 38; & Crotty, *Making the Australian Male*, pp. 9, 28 & 227.
[698] Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, p. 190.
[699] Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs*, p. 23.
[700] Oliver, B., *War and Peace in Western Australia*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1995, p. 151.

is unknown whether he had family waiting for his return to normality. O'Meara witnessed trauma and horror everyday on the Western Front in his role as a stretcher bearer for his unit, and it is possible that he was unable to live up to the heroic ideal that society was expecting of him.

Men like O'Meara were sometimes described at the time as suffering shell shock, what is known today as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). O'Meara and other ex-soldiers like him never got over their wartime experiences.[701] Damaged returned soldiers, including O'Meara, were left crippled for life, and despite their accolades were often not considered as wartime heroes, but post-war malingerers not worthy of being revered for their heroic stand on the battlefield.[702] Physically or emotionally crippled men simply did not fit into the mould the Anzac Legend had created as a tough minded, youthful, able-bodied warrior.[703] Men such as O'Meara had no hope of living up to the expectation of returning to Australia a 'hero'.[704] There is little doubt that while society wanted to continue to worship successful Victoria Cross recipients, it also turned a blind eye on those who failed to live up to its expectations. This included men such as Maxwell, Ryan and O'Meara.

Even the best-known Victoria Cross heroes like Albert Jacka, VC, himself suffered for a time from shell shock following an engagement during the assault on Pozières in 1916.[705] It is certain that living up to the honour of being awarded a Victoria Cross meant there was extra stress on the recipient to live up to society's expectation of being a recognised hero. It must have been difficult and challenging enough for some shell shocked soldiers fitting back into a civilian life when the war was over, let alone for those carrying the burden and expectations of being a Victoria Cross hero. No doubt, elements of the public also found it difficult to associate soldiers' experiences in the war with shell shocked, eccentric and anti-social behaviour.[706] It was commonly held belief at the time that returned soldiers (whether they be Victoria Cross recipients or not) who suffered from shell shock had failed in a necessary measure of self control

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[701] Garton, *The Cost of War*, p. 173; & Nicoll, *From Diggers to Drag Queens*, pp. 37-38, 51-57 & 61.
[702] Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs*, p. 22.
[703] *Ibid*.; & Nicoll, *From Diggers to Drag Queens*, p. 16.
[704] Tyquin, *Madness and the Military*, p. x.
[705] Macklin, *Jacka VC*, pp. 120-127.
[706] Tyquin, *Madness and the Military*, p. 114.

that was central to the dominant code of Edwardian and military manhood.[707] These men were considered the antithesis of Anzac masculinity because they had buckled under the pressure and had failed in society's expectations.[708]

Likewise, the Great Depression pushed more ex-servicemen 'over the edge' with financial hardships such as those faced by Hugo Throssell, VC (who eventually committed suicide in 1933), Albert Jacka, VC, who experienced business difficulties during the Depression, and Henry Dalziel, VC, who held a farm in Atherton, Queensland as part of the Soldier Settlement Scheme which proved unprofitable.[709] For a small number of AIF Victoria Cross recipients, connotations of the decoration brought unique difficulties. Quite rightly Winston Churchill once quipped, 'a medal glitters, but it also casts a shadow.'[710] Statistically there is little noticeable distinction between those ex-servicemen whose post-war lives crumbled, whether they were Victoria Cross recipients or not. However, it was certainly more likely that the public would know if a Victoria Cross recipient was not coping with life, compared to that of an unknown ex-member of the AIF. That, in itself, must have represented a significant burden.

The Victoria Cross took on a life of its own on the home front during the war years of 1916 to 1918. The decoration provided a positive focus for a nation that was far removed from the Western Front. Newspapers enjoyed a period of popularity and influence they had not seen before and this was due, in part, to stories of the Victoria Cross and its power as a symbol of success for many Australians. The press portrayed the award and those who were awarded it with jubilation which helped to create a situation in Australia where the decoration and its recipients were propped up on a pedestal by those attracted to its associated symbolism of success and fame. The 'attractiveness' or 'pedestal phenomenon' was something organisations sought to be associated with it, which in turn was expected to reflect the award's popularity and success back onto themselves. This was notable in advertisements that used the image of the Victoria Cross and even though some unscrupulous members of society who sought the adulation of the

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[707] Crotty, *Making the Australian Male*, p. 9.
[708] Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs*, p. 160.
[709] See various correspondence, 14 June 1928, 23 June 1928 & 10 August 1928, NAA, A458/7461/1/210; Tyquin, *Madness and the Military*, p. 115; Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs*, p. 252; Garton, *The Cost of War*, p. 25; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 22 & 41.
[710] Quoted in Halliday, *Valour Reconsidered*, p. 160.

decoration without being entitled to it. Victoria Cross recipients were given special considerations in society to help them settle back into their communities. Some recipients were able to do this successfully, others were not. The effect of being a Victoria Cross recipient and being propelled into the limelight was often difficult for a man who had been simply recognised for a singular and extraordinary act in extraordinary circumstances – conditions which did not readily translate back to a peacetime life.

Conclusion

The Victoria Cross was awarded to 53 soldiers of the AIF on the Western Front from the years 1916 to 1918. There was always more, however, to the award than great stories of bravery. In fact, a whole other side to the decoration exists, *Behind the Valour*. Those decorated with a Victoria Cross needed to meet specific requirements and a successful recommendation involved much more than simple 'valour'. By the time Australians arrived on the Western Front most knew that to be awarded a Victoria Cross an act of conspicuous gallantry was required, along with staff work, approval made at every level of the existing British army system. Not only was the Victoria Cross a gallantry decoration, it was also the centre of a complex technical, administrative and bureaucratic history.

The Victoria Cross was introduced in 1856 as the highest gallantry decoration and was eligible to all soldiers and sailors regardless of rank with the British Armed Forces. The Royal Warrant established its guidelines, yet failed to define the conspicuous gallantry which underwrote the award. The Victoria Cross evolved as battlefield conditions changed and other groups were considered for eligibility. The most significant of these changes occurred in 1867 when colonial forces were considered eligible, thus making Australians potential recipients. As time progressed, a number of informal conventions were also implemented, such as the contentious issue of whether or not the Victoria Cross should be made available posthumously. The issue was initially decided against by the War Office. In 1914, however, posthumous Victoria Crosses were available, although some British commanders were still unsure about the issue until further advice was given in the form of regular memorandums and guidelines for completing recommendations for the Victoria Cross issued throughout the war.

By the end of the war the Royal Warrant was completely revised, although this process began before the war drew to a close. The BEF's Commander-in-Chief on the Western Front, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, helped to define what the Victoria Cross became by the end of the First World War – and there has been little change in official attitudes concerning the award since. Significantly, Haig's influence moved the Victoria Cross from recognising acts of humanitarian valour and moved it towards acknowledging aggressive acts that encouraged

dangerous and deadly feats performed with little regard for personal safety. It is not surprising that, as a consequence, posthumous Victoria Crosses became more common during the Second World War and subsequent conflicts. Nevertheless, two constant requirements were needed for a Victoria Cross to be awarded on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918; those being the potential recipient had to have luck and opportunity on his side.

The evolution of Victoria Cross bureaucracy was significant throughout the years 1916 to 1918, when it reached its maturity. Of central importance was the memorandum of 29 August 1916, directing that from then on the Victoria Cross was only to be considered for acts that were materially conducive to victory, and that cases of saving life would no longer be considered for the award, unless it was a man's duty to care for such cases. With senior AIF commanders misinterpreting this directive, the memorandum directly affected how soldiers of the AIF were considered for award of the Victoria Cross for the rest of the war. An analysis of this document in particular, sheds new light on the history and evolution of the Victoria Cross.

Of course the implications of the August 1916 announcement ensured that all acts worthy of a Victoria Cross were not going to be taken into consideration unless the battlefield action concerned was victorious, and that saving life was no longer considered for the decoration. This statement was in line with Haig's vision for success in this theatre of war. Given the nature of trench warfare and the stalemate it created, Haig believed success was a matter of attrition, and he needed to wear the enemy down. As a consequence, it was essential he had large numbers of troops on the front line. Humanitarian acts of valour to rescue a wounded man essentially meant the two men were taken out of that line, the rescued and the rescuer and Haig did not wish to entertain that idea, nor promote or reward it. It is unfortunate that AIF senior commanders, especially those in the Australian Army Medical Corps, did not interpret the exception to this rule correctly, which essentially prevented stretcher bearers from remaining eligible for the Victoria Cross, even if conspicuous gallantry was performed worthy of the decoration. What Haig wanted were soldiers who would perform aggressive acts in which the soldier fearlessly attacked the enemy with disregard for his own safety and was able to demobilise, kill or capture the enemy and the enemy's weaponry systems.

To be awarded a Victoria Cross the recommendation process was clear and meticulous with approval required at every level of the command structure from the battalion, where the recommendation was initiated, through to brigade, division, corps, army and finally to GHQ where the Commander-in-Chief, Haig, had the final say 'in the field' whether it was to be approved or rejected. Unfortunately, there was no requirement to specify why a recommendation was rejected so it is difficult to objectively assess why cases of similar gallantry may have resulted in different awards. From time to time the process was slowed down due to mistakes being made regarding completing the recommendations, mostly as a result of Adjutants' errors and the fact that associated Victoria Cross regulations were often ineffective, confusing and ever-evolving. Issues of contention always existed regarding the maintenance of confidentiality, and the requirement of witness statements to accompany Victoria Cross recommendations. Nonetheless, if a Victoria Cross recommendation was successful, there was much jubilation and celebration in the field, particularly within the recipient's unit. The Victoria Cross lifted, at least in the opinion of senior BEF commanders, the men's spirits, boosted morale, and assisted in reducing war weariness.

Throughout the course of the war certain anomalies existed that affected the award of the Victoria Cross, and there was some divergence between the 'rules' and their real life application. Senior commanders' interpretations had some influence over who was awarded the Victoria Cross, the decoration itself, and what type of act was considered worthy enough for a Victoria Cross. Despite the decoration being set up as egalitarian in nature, there was also a far greater chance for the Victoria Cross to be awarded to a junior officer due to the opportunities available to them by virtue of their position in the front line. After all, it was a junior commander's responsibility to inspire others and lead from the front with courage. Indeed, more officers were recognised for the Victoria Cross on the Western Front than the other ranks, by proportion of their numbers, and the AIF was not exceptional within the BEF in this regard. These anomalies quite rightly raise questions of 'fairness' in awarding the Victoria Cross and its egalitarian nature.

While the Victoria Cross was rewarded on the Western Front, the decoration was also exploited on the home front to suit political purposes. The Victoria Cross and AIF recipients

were used to try and stimulate the government's recruitment campaigns. This was done through images of brave recipients through the use of poster propaganda. Then, in 1916 and 1917, the Victoria Cross and recipients were once again subjected to attempted exploitation by Prime Minister Hughes as symbols to encourage voting for conscription, but this had little impact in a country deeply divided over the issue of overseas compulsory military service. In 1918 the government requested a number of Victoria Cross recipients be sent home to generate enthusiasm and encourage continued enlistment in a direct appeal to young potential recruits minds. Perhaps they too, could demonstrate Victoria Cross – brand of masculinity and valour and return home a hero. By the time the recipients arrived back home, however, the war had ended.

Overall, recipients of the Victoria Cross were expected by society to remain heroes forever but this expectation was too much for some to accept and a number of recipients died premature and lonely deaths as a consequence. It was difficult for these men to maintain society's expectation of them and for many, returning to a life of normality was not possible. The press had assisted to put these men up on a pedestal within their communities and this created a phenomenon whereby association with a Victoria Cross recipient was perceived as somehow reflecting his fame. On their return home from war Victoria Cross recipients were given gifts, extra government assistance, and notoriety. Some men even attempted to pass themselves off as Victoria Cross recipients in order to claim some of these 'benefits', but were disgraced when discovered. Yet, forever more, Victoria Cross recipients remained connected with that moment of valour that set themselves and their futures as Australian symbols of success. These symbols from the Western Front were integral to understanding what was *Behind the Valour* in a technical, administrative and bureaucratic history of Australia's relationship with the Victoria Cross.

In reflecting on the research behind this thesis, there is ample opportunity to propose further areas for investigation. Examples include inquires into the *need* to recognise and award bravery medals, the evolution and administrative history of other decorations, and the respective effect of such decorations on society. Throughout writing this thesis the author has often wondered on the legitimacy of *objectivity* when awarding military decorations, and considered ways in which to minimise contentious issues and those that often lead to differing

interpretations. Can theory be transferred into practice in this regard with minimal interference? Should a government be able to expect some level of entitlement or 'return' once a decoration has been awarded? Further investigations could also be made into how decorations affect an individual's life – both personally, as well as consequence of being in the public eye.

Perhaps the single most significant aspect of this particular project, however, has been the discovery of the 29 August 1916 directive that changed the way in which Victoria Crosses were awarded. Although some authors hinted at possible changes at this date during the war, given humanitarian Victoria Crosses ceased to be awarded much past 1916, and those awarded in the second half of the war were for offensive actions only, this directive has previously not been uncovered or analysed anywhere in the world. This is a result of the Australian government's request to have duplicates made of all documentation relating to honours and awards which passed through AIF Headquarters in London and those copies being transported back to Australian archival facilities following the war. As a consequence some important directives made in the field on the Western Front were saved from the September 1940 bombing of London. It is unlikely this particular directive has been found in other Dominion archives as no other author has ever referenced such a document. Not only is this significant in the history of the Victoria Cross, but also highlights the importance of properly archiving valuable documents, and what a wonderful collection of past Australian military documents this country possesses. Considering archives have only been collected for a few hundred years here in Australia, it is a relief that archiving is taken seriously, and we are able to treasure our past in order to understand our present, and shape our future.

In any case, this thesis has set out in detail that for the AIF on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918, as for all 'British' forces from 1856 to the present, the Victoria Cross has always been about much more than simple 'bravery'. As this study has shown, what is *Behind the Valour* has always been at least as important as the act for which the decoration was given.

APPENDIX A: *Summary Details of AIF Victoria Cross Recipients from the Western Front (N.B. Jacka has also been included as Number 0).*

	Name & Rank	Unit	Date of VC Deed	Date of Recomm.	Place of VC Deed	Posthumous
0	L/Cpl Albert Jacka	14 Btn, 4 Bde, NZ & A Div	19-20 May 1915	?	Courtney's Post, Gallipoli	No
1	Pte John Jackson (William)	17 Btn, 5 Bde, 2 Div	25-26 June 1916	18-Jul-16	South-east of Bois Grenier, near Armentières, France	No
2	Pte John Leak	9 Btn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	23-Jul-16	31-Jul-16	Pozières, France	No
3	Lt Arthur Blackburn	10 Btn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	23-Jul-16	?	Pozières, France	No
4	Pte Thomas Cooke	8 Btn, 2 Bde, 1 Div	24-25 July 1916	31-Jul	Pozières, France	Yes
5	Sgt Claud Castleton	5 Machine Gun Coy, 5 Bde, 2 Div	28-Jul-16	25-Aug-16	Pozières, France	Yes
6	Pte Martin O'Meara	16 Btn, 4 Bde, 4 Div	9-12 August 1916	16-Aug-16	Pozières, France	No
7	Capt Henry Murray	13 Btn, 4 Bde, 4 Div	4-5 February 1917	?	Stormy Trench, NE of Gueudecourt, France	No
8	Capt Percy Cherry	26 Btn, 7 Bde, 2 Div	26-Mar-17	?	Lagnicourt, France	Yes
9	Pte Jørgen Jensen	50 Btn, 13 Bde, 4 Div	2-Apr-17		Noreuil, France	No
10	Capt Ernest Newland	12 Btn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	8 & 15 April 1917	?	West of Boursies & Lagnicourt, France	No
11	Sgt John Whittle	12 Btn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	8 & 15 April 1917	?	West of Boursies & Lagnicourt, France	No
12	Pte Thomas Kenny (Bede)	2 Btn, 1 Bde, 1 Div	9-Apr-17		Hermies, France	No
13	Lt Charles Pope	11 Btn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	15-Apr-17	?	Louverval, France	Yes
14	Cpl George Howell	1 Btn, 1 Bde, 1 Div	6-May-17	?	Bullecourt, France	No
15	Lt Rupert Moon	58 Btn, 15 Bde, 5 Div	12-May-17	?	Near Bullecourt, France	No
16	Pte John Carroll	33 Btn, 9 Bde, 3 Div	7-11 June 1917	?	St Yves, Belgium (Messines Ridge)	No
17	Capt Robert Grieve	37 Btn, 10 Bde, 3 Div	7-Jun-17	16-Jun-17	Messines, Belgium	No
18	2nd Lt Frederick Birks	6 Btn, 2 Bde, 1 Div	20-Sep-17	20-Sep-17	Glencorse Wood, east of Ypres, Belgium	Yes
19	Pte Reginald Inwood (Roy)	10 Btn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	20-21 September 1917	?	Polygon Wood, east of Ypres, Belgium	No
20	Sgt John Dwyer	4 Machine Gun Coy, 4 Bde, 4 Div	26-Sep-17	?	Zonnebeke, Belgium	No
21	Pte Patrick Bugden	31 Btn, 8 Bde, 5 Div	26-28 September 1917	2-Oct-17	Polygon Wood, near Ypres, Belgium	Yes
22	Sgt Lewis McGee	40 Btn, 10 Bde, 3 Div	4-Oct-17	21-Oct-17	East of Ypres, Belgium	Yes
23	L/Cpl Walter Peeler	3 Pioneer Btn, 3 Div	4-Oct-17	4-Oct-17	Broodseinde, east of Ypres, Belgium	No
24	Capt Clarence Jeffries	34 Btn, 9 Bde, 3 Div	12-Oct-17	?	Passchendaele, Belgium	Yes
25	Sgt Stanley McDougall	47 Btn, 12 Bde, 4 Div	28-Mar-18	?	Dernancourt, France	No
26	Lt Percy Storkey	19 Btn, 5 Bde, 2 Div	7-Apr-18	?	Hangard Wood, France	No
27	Lt Clifford Sadlier	51 Btn, 13 Bde, 4 Div	24-25 April 1918	?	Villers-Bretonneux, France	No
28	Cpl Phillip Davey	10 Btn, 3 Bde, 1 Div	28-Jun-18	?	Merris, France	No
29	Sgt William Ruthven	22 Btn, 6 Bde, 2 Div	19-May-18	?	Ville-sur- Ancre, France	No
30	TL/Cpl Thomas Axford	16 Btn, 4 Bde, 4 Div	4-Jul-18	5-Jul-18	Vaire & Hamel Wood, France	No
31	Pte Henry Dalziel	15 Btn, 4 Bde, 4 Div	4-Jul-18	8-Jul-18	Hamel Wood, France	No
32	Cpl Walter Brown	20 Btn, 5 Bde, 2 Div	6-Jul-18	?	Villers-Bretonneux, France	No
33	Lt Albert Borella	26 Btn, 7 Bde, 2 Div	17-18 July 1918	25-Jul-18	Villers-Bretonneux, France	No
34	Lt Alfred Gaby	28 Btn, 7 Bde, 2 Div	8-Aug-18	?	East of Villers-Bretonneux, France	No
35	Pte Robert Beatham	8 Btn, 2 Bde, 1 Div	9-Aug-18	?	Rosières, east of Amiens, France	Yes
36	Sgt Percy Statton	40 Btn, 10 Bde, 3 Div	12-Aug-18	?	Near Proyart, France	No
37	Lt William Joynt	8 Btn, 2 Bde, 1 Div	23-Aug-18		Herleville Wood, near Chuignes, France	No
38	Lt Lawrence McCarthy (Laurence)	16 Btn, 4 Bde, 4 Div	23-Aug-18	?	Near Madame Wood, east of Vermandovillers, France	No
39	L/Cpl Bernard Gordon	41 Btn, 11 Bde, 3 Div	27-Aug-18	17-Sep-18	Fargny Wood, east of Bray, France	No
40	Pte George Cartwright	33 Btn, 9 Bde, 3 Div	31-Aug-18	7-Sep-18	Road Wood, SW Bouchavesnes, near Péronne, France	No
41	Pte Robert Mactier	23 Btn, 6 Bde, 2 Div	1-Sep-18	?	Mont St Quentin, north of Péronne, France	Yes

	Name & Rank	Unit	Date of VC Deed	Date of Recomm.	Place of VC Deed	Posthumous
42	Sgt Albert Lowerson	21 Btn, 6 Bde, 2 Div	1-Sep-18	13-Sep-18	Mont St Quentin, north of Péronne, France	No
43	Lt Edgar Towner	2nd Machine Gun Btn, 2 Div	1-Sep-18	?	Mont St Quentin, north of Péronne, France	No
44	Pte William Currey	53 Btn, 14 Bde, 5 Div	1-Sep-18	5-Sep-18	Near Péronne, France	No
45	Cpl Arthur Hall	54 Btn, 14 Bde, 5 Div	1-2 September 1918	4-Sep-18	Péronne, France	No
46	Temp Cpl Alexander Buckley	54 Btn, 14 Bde, 5 Div	1-Sep-18	4-Sep-18	Péronne, France	Yes
47	Temp Cpl Lawrence Weathers	43 Btn, 11 Bde 3 Div	2-Sep-18	?	North of Péronne, France	No
48	Sgt Maurice Buckley (Gerald Sexton)	13 Btn, 4 Bde, 4 Div	18-Sep-18	?	Near Le Verguier, NW of St Quentin, France	No
49	Private James Woods	48 Btn, 12 Bde, 4 Div	18-Sep-18		Near Le Verguier, NW of St Quentin, France	No
50	Maj Blair Wark	32 Btn, 8 Bde, 5 Div	29 Sep-1 Oct 1918	?	Bellicourt to Joncourt, France	No
51	Pte Edward Ryan (John)	55 Btn, 14 Bde, 5 Div	30-Sep-18	10-Oct-18	Near Bellicourt, France	No
52	Lt Joseph Maxwell	18 Btn, 5 Bde, 2 Div	3-Oct-18	?	Beaurevoir Line, near Estrées, France	No
53	Lt George Ingram	24 Btn, 6 Bde, 2 Div	5-Oct-18	27-Oct-18	Montbrehain, east of Péronne, France	No

APPENDIX B: *Victoria Cross 1856 Warrant*

Firstly. – It is ordained that the distinction shall be styled and designated the "Victoria Cross", and shall consist of a Maltese Cross of Bronze with Our Royal Crest in the centre, and underneath which an scroll bearing this inscription, "For Valour."

Secondly. – It is ordained that the Cross shall be suspended from the left breast by a blue riband for the navy, and by a red riband for the army.

Thirdly. – It is ordained that the names of those whom We may be pleased to confer the decoration shall be published in the *London Gazette*, and a registry thereof kept in the office of Our Secretary of State for War.

Fourthly. – It is ordained that anyone who after having received the Cross, shall again perform an act of bravery, which, if he had not received such Cross, would have it entitled him to it, such further act shall be recorded by a Bar attached to the riband by which the Cross is suspended, and for every additional act of bravery an additional Bar may be added.

Fifthly – It is ordained that the Cross shall only be awarded to those officers or men who have served Us in the presence of the enemy, and shall have then performed some signal act of valour or devotion to their country.

Sixthly. – It is ordained, with a view to place all persons on a perfectly equal footing in relation to eligibility for the decoration, that neither rank, nor long service, nor wounds, nor any other circumstance or condition whatsoever, save the merit of conspicuous bravery, shall be held to establish a sufficient claim to the honour.

Seventhly. – It is ordained that the decoration may be conferred on the spot where the act to be rewarded by the grant of such decoration has been performed under the following circumstances:

I. When the fleet or army in which such an act has been performed, is under the eye and command of an admiral or general officer commanding the forces.

II. Where the naval or military force is under the eye and command of an admiral or commodore commanding a squadron or detached naval force, or of a general commanding a corps, or division or brigade on a distinct and detached service, when such admiral, commodore, or general officer shall have the power of conferring the decoration on the spot, subject to confirmation by Us.

Eighthly. – It is ordained, where such act shall not have been performed in the sight of a commanding officer as aforesaid, than the claimant for the honour shall prove the act to the satisfaction of the captain or officer commanding his ship, or to the officer commanding the regiment to which the claimant belongs, and such captain or such commanding officer shall report the same through the usual channel to the admiral or commodore commanding the forces in the field, who shall call for such description and attestation of the act as he may think requisite, and on approval shall recommend the grant of the decoration.

Ninethly. – It is ordained that every person selected for the Cross, under Rule Seven, shall be publicly decorated before the naval or military force or body to which he belongs, and with which the act of bravery for which he is to be rewarded shall have been performed, and his name shall be recorded in a General Order, together with the cause of his especial distinction.

Tenthly. – It is ordained that every person selected under Rule Eight shall receive his decoration as soon as possible, and his name shall likewise appear in a General Order as above required, such General Order to be issued by the naval or military commander of the forces employed on the service.

Eleventhly. – It is ordained that the General Orders above referred to shall from time to time be transmitted to Our Secretary of State for War, to be laid before Us, and shall be by him registered.
Twelfthly. – It is ordained that as cases may arise not falling within the rules above specified, or in which a claim though well founded, may not have been established on the spot, We will, on the joint submission of Our Secretary of State for War, and of Our Commander-in-Chief of Our army, or on that of Our Lord High Admiral or lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in the case of the navy, confer the decoration, but never without conclusive proof of the performance of the act of bravery for which the claim is made.
Thirteenthly. – It is ordained that, in the event of a gallant and daring act having been performed by a squadron, ship's company, a detached body of seamen and marines, not under fifty in number, or by a brigade, regiment, troop, or company, in which the admiral, general or other officer commanding such forces, may deem that all are equally brave and distinguished, and that no special selection can be made by them, then in such case the admiral, general, or other commanding officer may direct that for any such body of seamen and marines, or for every troop or company of soldiers, one officer shall be selected by the officers engaged for the decoration; and in the like manner one petty officer or non-commissioned officer shall be selected by the petty officers and non-commissioned officers engaged; and two seamen or private soldiers or marines engaged respectively for the decoration; and the names of those selected shall be transmitted by the senior officer in command of the naval force, brigade, regiment, troop, or company, to the admiral or general officer commanding, who shall in due manner confer the decoration as if the acts were done under his own eye.
Fourteenthly. – It is ordained that every warrant officer, petty officer, seaman, or marine, or non-commissioned officer or soldier, who shall have received the Cross, shall, from the date of the act by which the decoration has been gained, be entitled to a special pension of Ten Pounds a year, and each additional Bar conferred under Rule Four on such warrant or petty officer or non-commissioned officers or men shall carry with it an additional pension of Five Pounds per annum.
Fifthteenthly. – In order to make such additional provision as shall effectually preserve pure this most honourable distinction, it is ordained that if any person on whom such distinction shall be conferred, be convicted of treason, cowardice, felony, or of any infamous crime, or if he be accused of any such offence and doth not after a reasonable time surrender himself to be tried for the same, his name shall be forthwith be erased from the registry of individuals upon whom the said decoration shall have been conferred by an especial warrant under Our Royal Sign Manual, and the pension conferred under Rule Fourteen shall cease and determine from the date of such warrant. It is hereby further declared that We, Our heirs and successors, shall be the sole judges of the circumstance demanding such expulsion; moreover, We shall at all times have power to restore such persons as may at any time have been expelled both to the enjoyment of the decoration and the pension.[711]

[711] PRO WO32/3443 The Victoria Cross Warrants, PRO WO98/1 Original Royal Warrant; Creagh & Humphries, *The Victoria Cross*, p. xiii; Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross*, pp. 280-282; Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pp. 207-209.

APPENDIX C: *Examples of Army Forms W.3121*

All recommendations provided are for the Victoria Cross to soldiers of the AIF on the Western Front. Some are successful, while others are not. Please note the differences in the way in which recommendations were presented. Only some are written on the correct Army Form W.3121. Listed recommendations include:

1. Corporal Stanley F Carpenter, 2nd Battalion, 22 to 25 July 1916, Unsuccessful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross, 2 copies: one handwritten, the other typed.

2. Sergeant Charles C. Castleton, 5th Machine Gun Company, 28 July 1916, Successful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.

3. Private Charles Boyle, 9th Battalion, 25 February 1917, Unsuccessful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.

4. Captain Percy H. Cherry, 28th Battalion, 26 March 1917, Successful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.

5. Private Arthur L. Carlson, 2nd Battalion, 4 May 1917, Unsuccessful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.

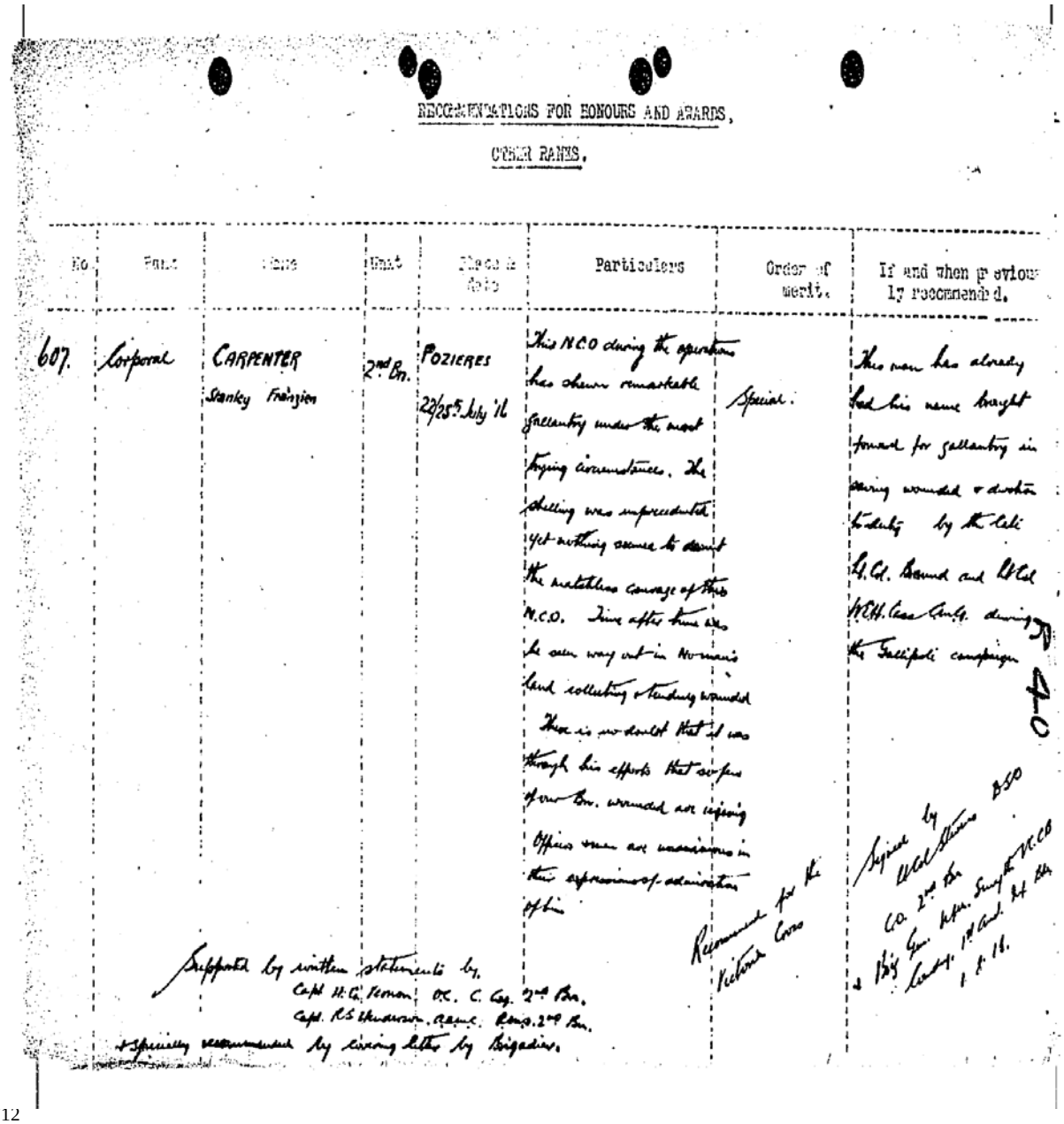
6. Private John Carroll, 33rd Battalion, 7 to 11 June 1917, Successful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.

7. Lance Corporal Rubin J. Hillier, 56th Battalion, 26 September 1917, Unsuccessful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross (two pages).

8. Sergeant Percy C. Statton, 40th Battalion, 12 August 1918, Successful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.

9. Second Lieutenant George M. Ingram, 24th Battalion, 5 October 1918, Successful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross (over 2 pages: page 1 being a negative).

Corporal Stanley F Carpenter, 2nd Battalion, 22 to 25 July 1916, Unsuccessful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross, 2 copies: handwritten copy.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HONOURS AND AWARDS,

OTHER RANKS.

No.	Rank	Name	Unit	Place & Date	Particulars	Order of merit.	If and when previously recommended.
607.	Corporal	CARPENTER Stanley Frainzien	2nd Bn.	POZIERES 22/25th July '16	This N.C.O during the operations has shewn remarkable gallantry under the most trying circumstances. The shelling was unprecedented yet nothing seemed to dismit the matchless courage of this N.C.O. Time after time was he seen way out in No man's land collecting & tendering wounded. There is no doubt that it was through his efforts that so few of our Bn. wounded are injuring. Officers & men are unanimous in their expressions of admiration of him.	Special.	This man has already had his name brought forward for gallantry in saving wounded & devotion to duty by the late Lt. Col. Braund and Lt Col W.E.H. Case Cmdg. during the Gallipoli campaign.

Supported by written statements by Capt H.G. Vernon O.C. C. Coy. 2nd Bn. Capt. R.S. Henderson A.A.M.C. Rems. 2nd Bn. & specially recommended by covering letter by Brigadier.

Recommended for the Victoria Cross

Signed by Lt Col Stevens DSO C.O. 2nd Bn & Brig Gen. Wfr. Surg. Lt Col Cmdg. 1st Aust. Lt Bde 1.8.16.

R 40

712

[712] AWM28, Honours and Awards, http://awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp, date consulted 26 May 2009.

Corporal Stanley F Carpenter, 2nd Battalion, 22 to 25 July 1916, Unsuccessful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross, 2 copies: typed copy.

1st.Infantry 1st.Australian 1st.A & N.Z.Army August 1st.1916

2nd.Battn.	607	Corporal Stanley Franzien CARPENTER.	At POZIERES, FRANCE during period 22/25th. July 1916. This N.C.O. throughout the operations showed remarkable gallantry under the most trying conditions and although the shelling was almost unprecedented in severity nothing seemed to daunt the matchless courage of this N.C.O. Time after time he went out into 'No Mans Land' to collect and tend wounded. There is no doubt that it was through his efforts that so few of our Battalions wounded are missing. Officers and men are unanimous in their expression of admiration of him.	G.O.C. 1st.Inf. Brigade V.C.

Major General,
Commanding 1st.Aust. Division.

713

[713] AWM28, Honours and Awards, *http://awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 26 May 2009.

Sergeant Charles C. Castleton, 5th Machine Gun Company, 28 July 1916, Successful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.

5th. Aust. Inf. Bde. 2nd. Aust. Div. 1st. A. & N. Z. A. Corps, 25th August 1916.

Schedule No.	UNIT	Regtl. No.	RANK AND NAME	REASON	RECOMMENDED BY	HONOUR OR REWARD.	
	5th. Aust. M.G. Coy.	1352	Sgt. CASTLETON Claude Chas (Killed)	For conspicuous gallantry and bravery on the night of 28th July 1916, N.E. of POZIERES when the Infantry made an attack on the German Trench. During the attack on the enemy trench the Infantry were temporarily driven back owing to intense machine gun fire. Many wounded were left lying in shell holes in NO MAN'S LAND. Whilst NO MAN'S LAND was still under intense machine gun and shrapnel fire, Sgt. CASTLETON went out and twice brought in wounded men on his back; a third time he went out and was bringing in his third wounded man when he was hit in the back and killed instantly.	Brig-General Commanding 5th. Aust. Inf. Bde.	Victoria Cross	

[redacted]

714

714 AWM28, Honours and Awards, *http://awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 26 May 2009.

Private Charles Boyle, 9th Battalion, 25 February 1917, Unsuccessful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.

[M1151] W5378/M786 500m 9/16 G&S E.369. Forms/W.3121/3 Army Form W. 3121.

3rd. Aust. Infy. Brigade. 1st. Australian Division. 1st. ANZAC Corps. 1st. March 1917. Date of Recommendation.

Schedule No. (to be left blank)	Unit	Regtl. No.	Rank and Name	Action for which commended	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
	9th. Battalion	329	Private Charles BOYLE ✓	Near LE BARQUE, FRANCE, on the 25th. February, 1917. Private BOYLE ~~continually shouted words of encouragement to men nea. him and~~ was one of the first men into the enemy's trench. He set a fine example to all ranks. He shot an enemy sniper who was doing considerable damage and while in a detached post rescued a wounded man from the village of LE BARQUE. To do this he had to carry the wounded man a distance of ½ (half) a mile over badly broken ground the whole of which was under heavy fire. Not previously recommended or rewarded.	C.O. 9th. Battalion	Victoria Cross	

H G Bennett .....Brig-General
Commanding 3rd. Aust. Inf. Brigade.

His gallantry encouraged the men of his platoon

715

[715] AWM28, Honours and Awards, *http://awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 26 May 2009.

Captain Percy H. Cherry, 28th Battalion, 26 March 1917, Successful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.

7th AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE

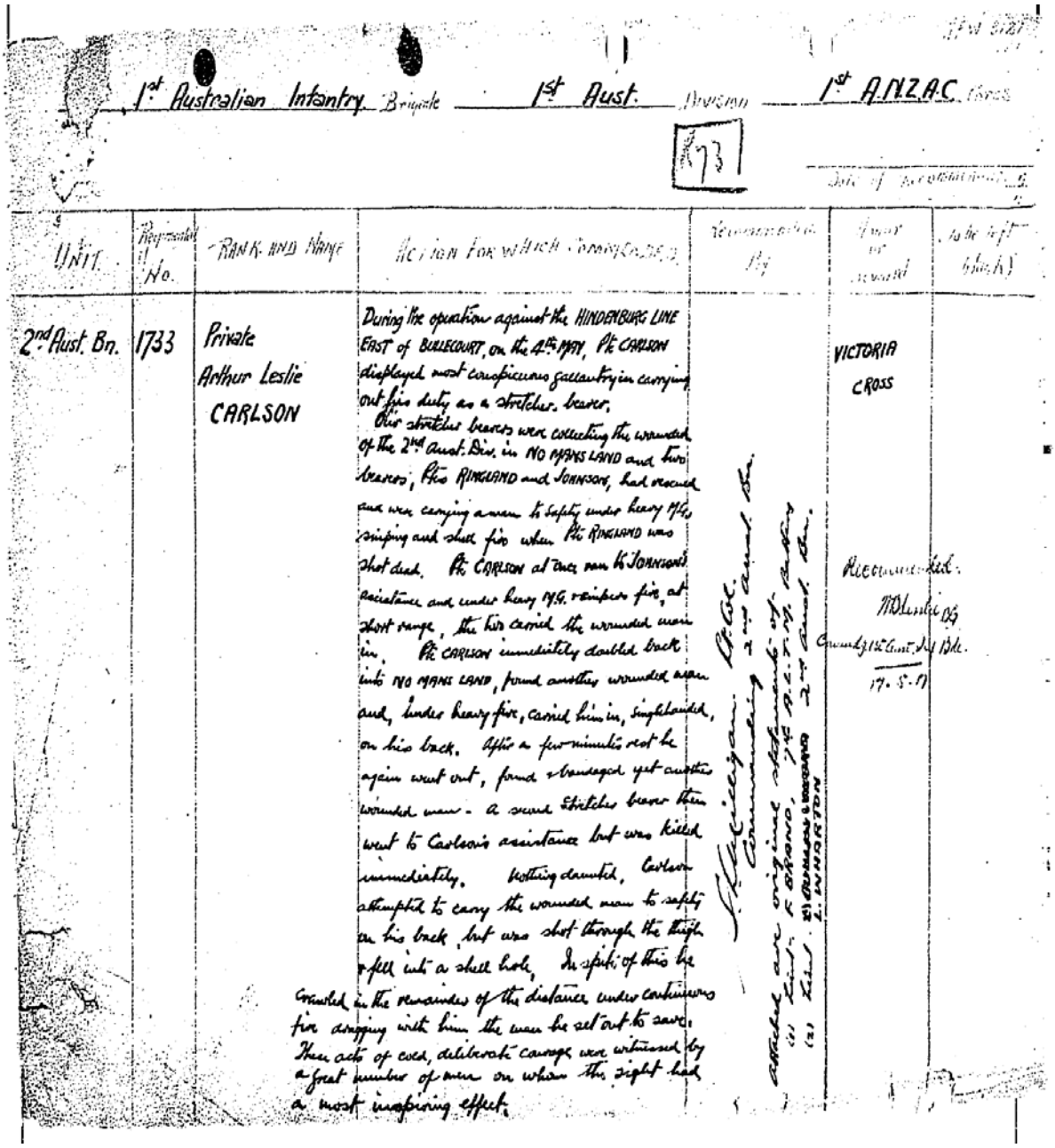
Army Form W. 3121.

Schedule No.	Unit	Reg.No.	Rank and Name	Action for which commended	Recommd by	Honor or Reward	To be left blank
	28th Bn. A.I.F.		Captain Percy Herbert CHERRY.	During the attack on LAGNICOURT on the morning of 26th March 1917, this Officer was in Command of "C" Coy. who stormed and cleared the village. His gallantry and bravery is beyond description. After all the Officers of his Company were casualties, he carried on in face of fierce opposition, and mopped up the town in a most careful and determined manner. He continuously sent reports of the progress being made, and when held up for some time by an enemy strong point, immediately organized Lewis gunners, bombers, and rifle bombers, and led the rush which captured this position. His leadership, coolness, and bravery set a wonderful example to his men. On clearing the village he took charge of the situation, and with about 100 men, and with the assistance of Lieut. STAPLETON, was mainly instrumental in beating off a most determined counter-attack made by the enemy with about 1000 men. He was wounded in the leg at about 6.30 a.m. but would not leave his post, encouraging all around him to hold out in the face of fierce opposition. He was unfortunately killed by an enemy shell at about 4.30 p.m. During the day he personally killed 9 Germans. He had previous to this attack been wounded on three occasions, and was recommended for a D.S.O. when the Battalion attacked the MALT TRENCH North of WARLENCOURT on March 1st 1917.	He was recommended for D.S.O.	V.C.	

716

[716] AWM28, Honours and Awards, *http://awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 26 May 2009.

Private Arthur L. Carlson, 2nd Battalion, 4 May 1917, Unsuccessful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.



1st Australian Infantry Brigade 1st Aust. Division 1st A.N.Z.A.C. Cross

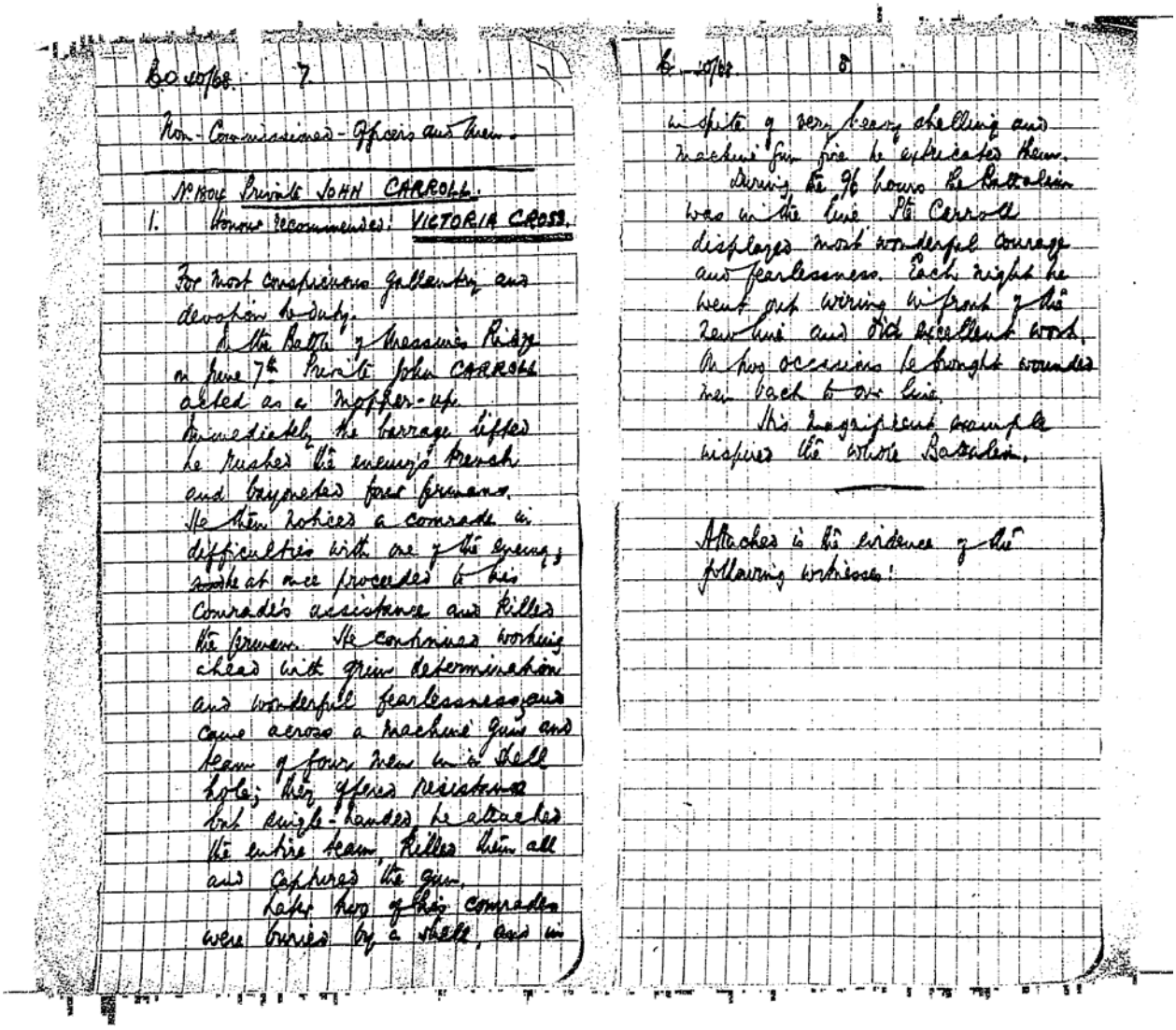
73

Unit	Regimental No.	Rank and Name	Action for which commended	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(to be left blank)
2nd Aust. Bn.	1733	Private Arthur Leslie CARLSON	During the operation against the HINDENBURG LINE EAST of BULLECOURT, on the 4th MAY, Pte CARLSON displayed most conspicuous gallantry in carrying out his duty as a stretcher-bearer. Our stretcher bearers were collecting the wounded of the 2nd Aust. Div. in NO MANS LAND and two bearers, Ptes RINGLAND and JOHNSON, had rescued and were carrying a man to safety under heavy M.G., sniping and shell fire when Pte RINGLAND was shot dead. Pte CARLSON at once ran to JOHNSON's assistance and under heavy M.G. & sniper fire, at short range, the two carried the wounded man in. Pte CARLSON immediately doubled back into NO MANS LAND, found another wounded man and, under heavy fire, carried him in, single handed, on his back. After a few minutes rest he again went out, found & bandaged yet another wounded man. A second stretcher bearer then went to Carlson's assistance but was killed immediately. Nothing daunted, Carlson attempted to carry the wounded man to safety on his back, but was shot through the thigh & fell into a shell hole. In spite of this he crawled in the remainder of the distance under continuous fire dragging with him the man he set out to save. These acts of cold, deliberate courage were witnessed by a great number of men on whom the sight had a most inspiring effect.	S. Macilligan Lt. Col. Commanding 2nd Aust. Bn. Attached are original statements of (1) Lieut. F. BRAND 7th A.L.T.M. Battery (2) Lieut. (1) ADAMSON & WOODWARD 2nd Aust. Bn. L. WHARTON	VICTORIA CROSS Recommended. M. Blenkie DG Commdg 1st Aust. Inf. Bde. 17.5.17	

717

[717] AWM28, Honours and Awards, http://awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp, date consulted 26 May 2009.

Private John Carroll, 33rd Battalion, 7 to 11 June 1917, Successful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.



BO 10/68. 7

Non-Commissioned-Officers and Men.

No 1804 Private JOHN CARROLL.

1. Honour recommended: VICTORIA CROSS.

For most conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty.

In the Battle of Messines Ridge on June 7th Private John CARROLL acted as a mopper-up. Immediately the barrage lifted he rushed the enemy's trench and bayoneted four Germans. He then noticed a comrade in difficulties with one of the enemy; he at once proceeded to his comrade's assistance and killed the German. He continued working ahead with grim determination and wonderful fearlessness and came across a machine gun and team of four men in a shell hole; they offered resistance but single-handed he attacked the entire team, killed them all and captured the gun.

Later two of his comrades were buried by a shell, and in

B 10/68. 8

in spite of very heavy shelling and machine gun fire he extricated them.

During the 96 hours the Battalion was in the line Pte Carroll displayed most wonderful courage and fearlessness. Each night he went out wiring in front of the new line and did excellent work. On two occasions he brought wounded men back to our line.

His magnificent example inspired the whole Battalion.

Attached is the evidence of the following witnesses:

718

[718] AWM28, Honours and Awards, http://awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp, date consulted 26 May 2009.

Lance Corporal Rubin J. Hillier, 56th Battalion, 26 September 1917, Unsuccessful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross (two pages: 1 of 2).

[M1787] W10715 M1107 1000m 12/16s 191 G&S E.688. Forms W.3121/4

IMMEDIATE REWARD.

Army Form W. 3121.

14th Infantry Brigade. 5th Australian Division. 1st Anzac Corps. 12-10-17 Date of Recommendation.

Schedule No. (to be left blank)	Unit	Regtl. No.	Rank and Name (Christian names must be stated)	Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
	56th Infantry Battalion, A.I.F.	2417	L/Corporal Rubin James HILLIER	At Polygon Wood on 26th September 1917, this N.C.O. was always at the front in the attack. Early in the engagement he had the knuckles of two fingers of the left hand shot off, but he continued at duty, always in the lead. Near the final objective a strong point with a machine gun held up the right flank. L/Cpl. HILLIER, alone, proceeded to the right of this point. A couple of shots were heard from his direction, the machine gun ceased fire, and the advance continued. When the other men reached the post they found L/Cpl. HILLIER already there. Later in the engagement L/Cpl. HILLIER received a second wound, the tip of his nose being shot off. He was urged to go to the Dressing Station, but declined. Instead he worked energetically on the consolidation of the position. A third wound - through the right forearm - did not deter him. At 10 p.m. he was in a patrol, and received a fourth wound, through the leg, which caused his retirement. This N.C.O. showed magnificent courage and cheerfulness, as well as fine leadership. His bravery and devotion to duty were of the greatest value, and had an inspiring effect on the other men. When the main party reached the machine gun post referred to above, they found two German dead, and L/Cpl. HILLIER had accounted for them. At all times he made light of his own wounds. His wonderful courage and devotion to duty			

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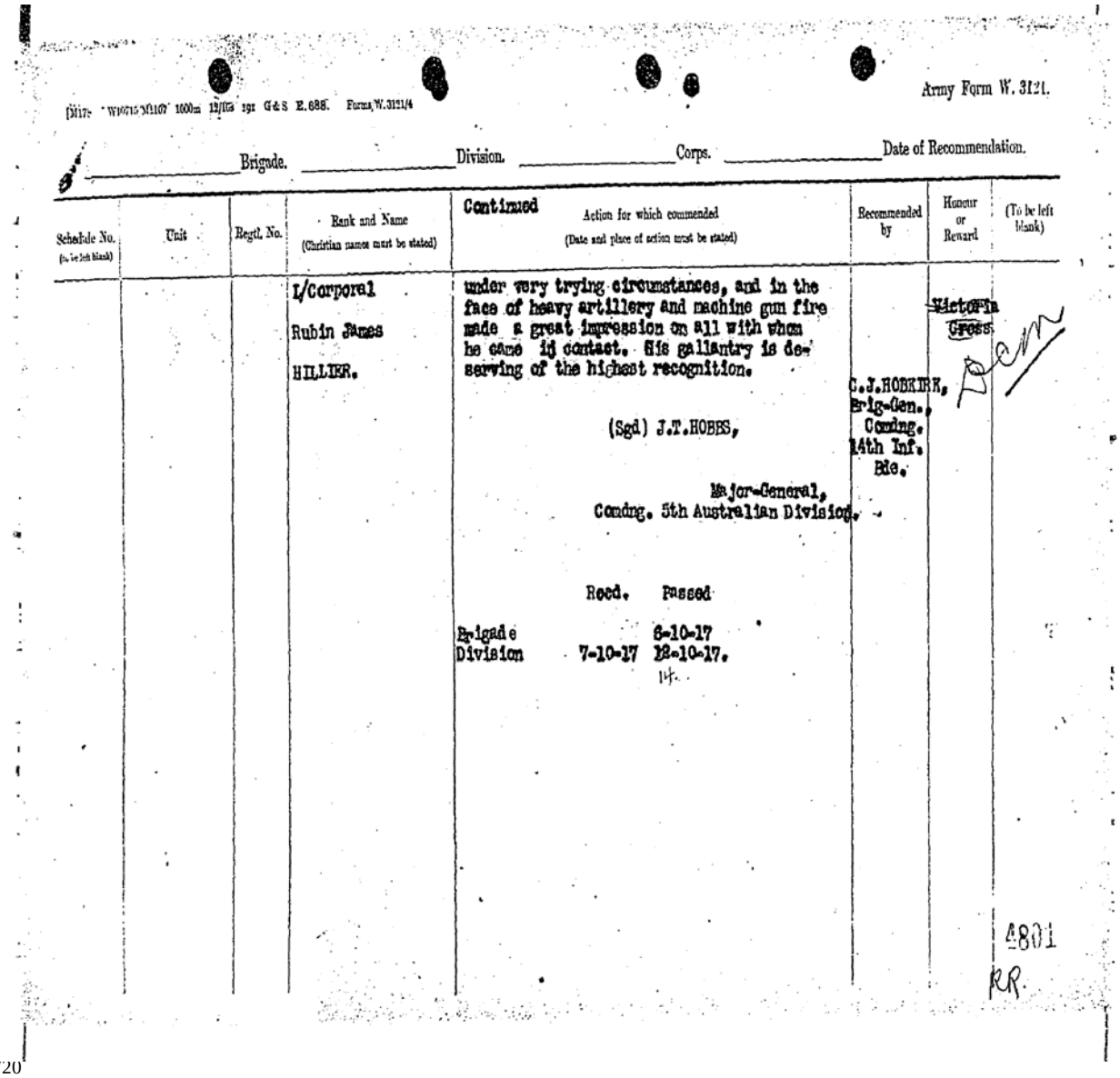
719

[719] AWM28, Honours and Awards, http://awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp, date consulted 26 May 2009.

Lance Corporal Rubin J. Hillier, 56th Battalion, 26 September 1917, Unsuccessful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross (two pages: 2 of 2).



[M17] W10715 M1107 1000m 12/18 191 G&S E.688. Forms W.3121/4

Army Form W. 3121.

_____ Brigade. _____ Division. _____ Corps. _____ Date of Recommendation.

Schedule No. (to be left blank)	Unit	Regtl. No.	Rank and Name (Christian names must be stated)	Continued Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
			L/Corporal Rubin James HILLIER.	under very trying circumstances, and in the face of heavy artillery and machine gun fire made a great impression on all with whom he came in contact. His gallantry is deserving of the highest recognition. (Sgd) J.T.HOBBS, Major-General, Comdng. 5th Australian Division.	C.J.HOBKIRK, Brig-Gen., Comdng. 14th Inf. Bde.	~~Victoria Cross~~ Dem	

	Recd.	Passed
Brigade		6-10-17
Division	7-10-17	12-10-17. 14.

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RR.

720

[720] AWM28, Honours and Awards, http://awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp, date consulted 26 May 2009.

Sergeant Percy C. Statton, 40th Battalion, 12 August 1918, Successful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.

TRIPLICATE

Date Recommendation Passed forward.-

	Recd.	Passed.
Brigade.	17.8.18	22.8.18
Division.	23.8.18	29.8.18
Corps.		
Army.-		

10th Aust. Inf.- 3rd. Australian. Australian.

40th. Battalion, A. I. F.-

506.- Sergeant Percy Clyde STATTON, (M.M).-

(Awarded Military Medal - MESSINES June 1917)

Authority - II Anzac R.O.1221 of 24/6/17)

For most conspicuous gallantry and initiative in action near PROYART on 12th August, 1918.- The platoon commanded by Sergeant STATTON reached its objective, but the remainder of the Battalion was held up by heavy machine gun fire. - He skilfully engaged two machine gun posts with Lewis gun fire, enabling the remainder of his own Battalion to advance. -

The advance of the Battalion on his left had been brought to a standstill by the heavy enemy machine gun fire and the first of our assaulting detachments to reach the Machine Gun posts were put out of action in taking the first gun. -

Armed only with a revolver, in broad daylight, Sergeant STATTON at once rushed 4 enemy machine gun posts in succession, disposing of two of them, killing 5 of the enemy. The remaining two posts retired and were wiped out by Lewis gun fire. -

His act had a very inspiriting effect on the troops who had been held up; they cheered him as he returned. - By this daring exploit he enabled the attacking troops to gain their objective. -

Later in the evening, under heavy machine gun fire, he went out again and brought in two badly wounded men. -

Sergeant STATTON set a magnificent example of quick decision and determined gallantry. -

Commanding, 10th Australian Infantry Brigade.- Brigadier-General.

THE VICTORIA CROSS.

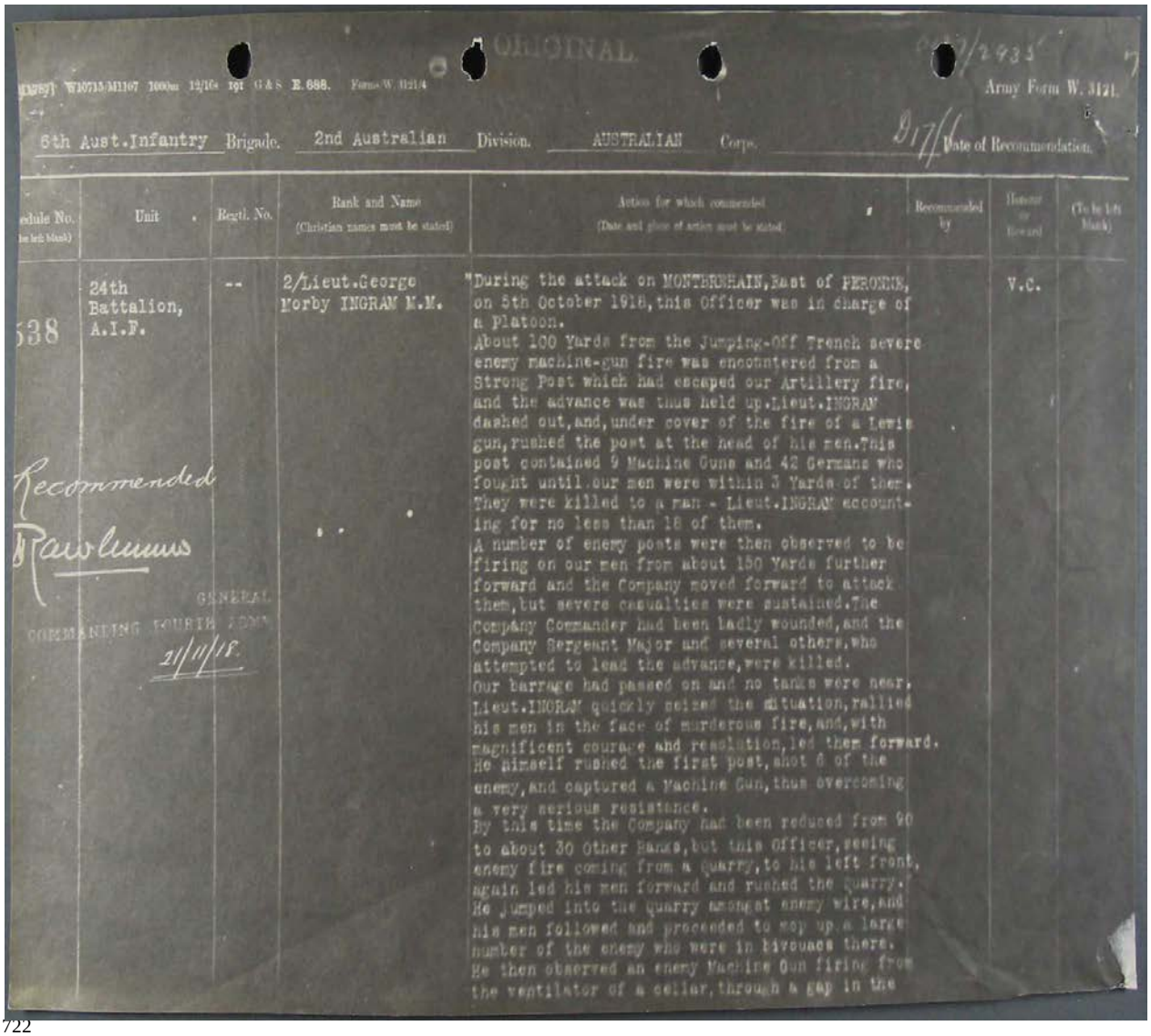
Major General,
C.O.C. Third Australian Division

9,296 BRC

721

[721] AWM28, Honours and Awards, *http://awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 26 May 2009.

Second Lieutenant George M. Ingram, 24th Battalion, 5 October 1918, Successful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross.



ORIGINAL

Army Form W. 3121.

6th Aust. Infantry Brigade. 2nd Australian Division. AUSTRALIAN Corps. 17/11 Date of Recommendation.

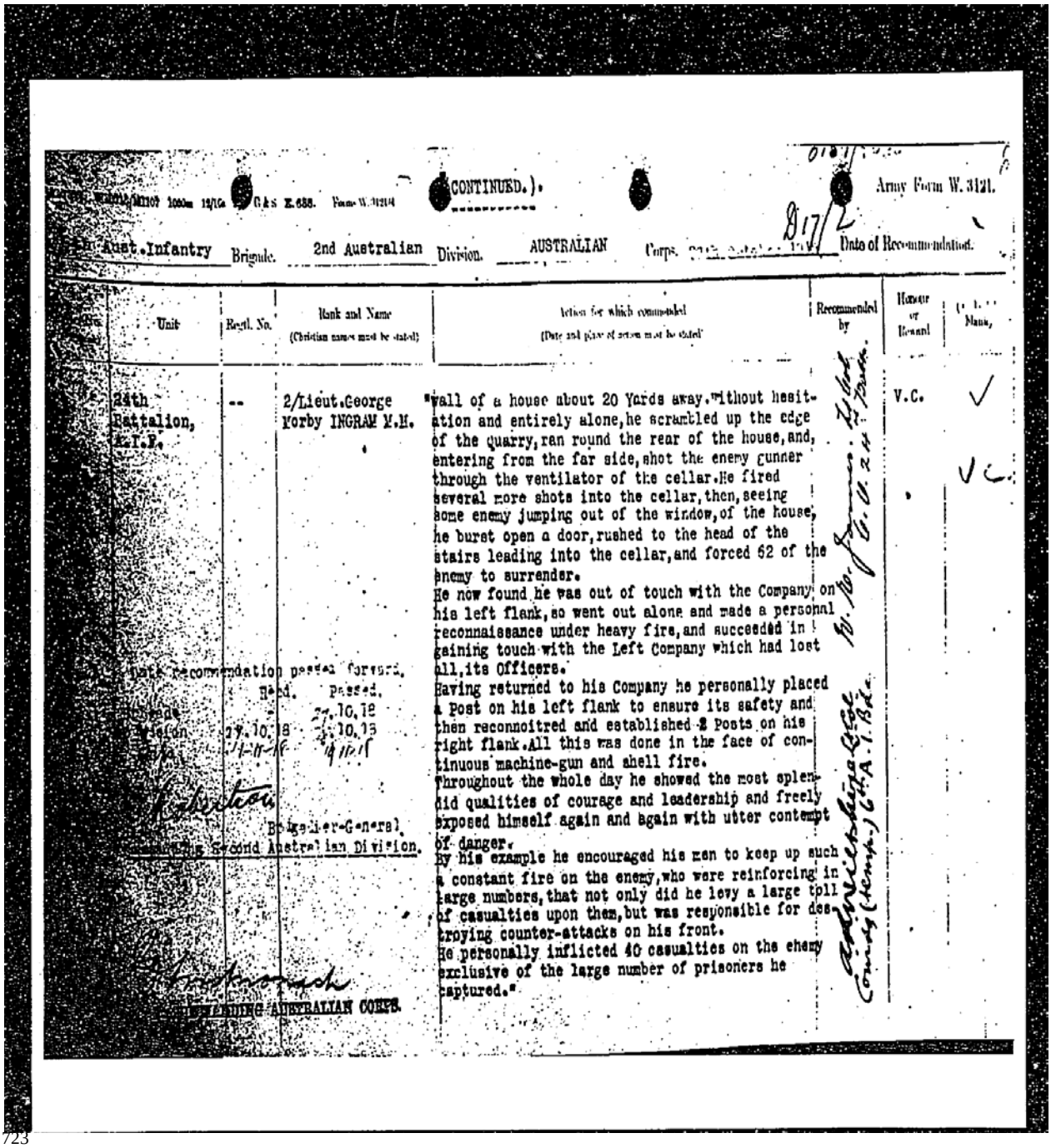
Schedule No. (to be left blank)	Unit	Regtl. No.	Rank and Name (Christian names must be stated)	Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
538	24th Battalion, A.I.F.	--	2/Lieut. George Norby INGRAM M.M.	"During the attack on MONTBRUHAIN, East of PERONNE, on 5th October 1918, this Officer was in charge of a Platoon. About 100 Yards from the Jumping-Off Trench severe enemy machine-gun fire was encountered from a Strong Post which had escaped our Artillery fire, and the advance was thus held up. Lieut. INGRAM dashed out, and, under cover of the fire of a Lewis gun, rushed the post at the head of his men. This post contained 9 Machine Guns and 42 Germans who fought until our men were within 3 Yards of them. They were killed to a man - Lieut. INGRAM accounting for no less than 18 of them. A number of enemy posts were then observed to be firing on our men from about 150 Yards further forward and the Company moved forward to attack them, but severe casualties were sustained. The Company Commander had been badly wounded, and the Company Sergeant Major and several others, who attempted to lead the advance, were killed. Our barrage had passed on and no tanks were near. Lieut. INGRAM quickly seized the situation, rallied his men in the face of murderous fire, and, with magnificent courage and resolution, led them forward. He himself rushed the first post, shot 6 of the enemy, and captured a Machine Gun, thus overcoming a very serious resistance. By this time the Company had been reduced from 90 to about 30 Other Ranks, but this Officer, seeing enemy fire coming from a Quarry, to his left front, again led his men forward and rushed the Quarry. He jumped into the quarry amongst enemy wire, and his men followed and proceeded to mop up a large number of the enemy who were in bivouacs there. He then observed an enemy Machine Gun firing from the ventilator of a cellar, through a gap in the		V.C.	

Recommended
Rawlinson
GENERAL
COMMANDING FOURTH ARMY
21/11/18.

722

722 AWM28, Honours and Awards, *http://awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp*, date consulted 26 May 2009.

Second Lieutenant George M. Ingram, 24th Battalion, 5 October 1918, Successful Recommendation for the Victoria Cross (negative copy).



(CONTINUED.)

Army Form W. 3121.

Aust. Infantry Brigade. 2nd Australian Division. AUSTRALIAN Corps. Date of Recommendation.

Unit	Regtl. No.	Rank and Name (Christian names must be stated)	Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	Name
24th Battalion, A.I.F.	--	2/Lieut. George Morby INGRAM M.M.	"wall of a house about 20 Yards away. Without hesitation and entirely alone, he scrambled up the edge of the quarry, ran round the rear of the house, and, entering from the far side, shot the enemy gunner through the ventilator of the cellar. He fired several more shots into the cellar, then, seeing some enemy jumping out of the window, of the house, he burst open a door, rushed to the head of the stairs leading into the cellar, and forced 62 of the enemy to surrender. He now found he was out of touch with the Company on his left flank, so went out alone and made a personal reconnaissance under heavy fire, and succeeded in gaining touch with the Left Company which had lost all, its Officers. Having returned to his Company he personally placed a Post on his left flank to ensure its safety and then reconnoitred and established 2 Posts on his right flank. All this was done in the face of continuous machine-gun and shell fire. Throughout the whole day he showed the most splendid qualities of courage and leadership and freely exposed himself again and again with utter contempt of danger. By his example he encouraged his men to keep up such a constant fire on the enemy, who were reinforcing in large numbers, that not only did he levy a large toll of casualties upon them, but was responsible for destroying counter-attacks on his front. He personally inflicted 40 casualties on the enemy exclusive of the large number of prisoners he captured."		V.C.	✓

Date recommendation passed forward.

	Recd.	Passed.
Brigade	-	27.10.18
Division	27.10.18	27.10.18
Corps	11-11-18	11-11-18

Brigadier-General,
Commanding Second Australian Division.

Commanding AUSTRALIAN CORPS.

723

723 AWM28, Honours and Awards, http://awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp, date consulted 26 May 2009.

APPENDIX D: *Citations of AIF Victoria Cross Recipients from the Western Front*[724]

Rank and Name: Private John William Alexander Jackson
Unit: 17 Battalion
Date: 25-26 June 1916
Place: South-east of Bois Grenier, near Armentières, France

No. 588 Pte. William Jackson, Aus. Infy.
For most conspicuous bravery. On the return from a successful raid, several members of the raiding party were seriously wounded in no man's land by shell-fire. Private Jackson got back safely and, after handing over a prisoner whom he had brought in, immediately went out again under a very heavy shell-fire and assisted in bringing in a wounded man. Hen then went out again, and with a Serjeant[725] was bringing in another wounded man when his arm was blown off by a shell and the Serjeant was rendered unconscious. He then returned to our trenches, obtained assistance, and went out again to look for his two wounded comrades. He set a splendid example of pluck and determination. His work has always been marked by the greatest coolness and bravery.[726]

Rank and Name: Private John Leak
Unit: 9 Battalion
Date: 23 July 1916
Place: Pozières, France

No. 2053 Pte. John Leak, Aus. Infy.
For most conspicuous bravery. He was one of a party which finally captured an enemy strong point. At one assault, when the enemy's bombs were outranging ours, Private Leak jumped out of the trench, ran forward under heavy machine-gun fire at close range, and threw three bombs into the enemy's bombing post. He then jumped into the post and bayoneted three unwounded enemy bombers. Later, when the enemy in overwhelming numbers was driving his party back, he was always the last to withdraw at each stage, and kept on throwing bombs. His courage and energy had such an effect on the enemy that, on the arrival of reinforcements, the whole trench was recaptured.[727]

[724] General notes derived from Staunton, *Victoria Cross.*
[725] Note: Sergeant spelt in the *London Gazette* from 1915 to 1919 is Serjeant and as such this is the way it is spelt in all citation listed in this appendix.
[726] *London Gazette* Iss. 29740, 9 September 1918, p. 2 of edition 8 September 1916, [p. 8870 of 1918].
[727] *London Gazette* Iss. 29740, 9 September 1918, p. 3 of edition 8 September 1916, [p. 8871 of 1918].

Rank and Name: Lieutenant Arthur Seaforth Blackburn
Unit: 10 Battalion
Date: 23 July 1916
Place: Pozières, France

2nd Lt. Arthur Seaforth Blackburn Aus. Infy. (incorrect rank)
For most conspicuous bravery. He was directed with fifty men to prise the enemy from a strong point. By dogged determination he essentially captured their trench after personally leading four separate parties of bombers against it, many of whom became casualties. In face of fierce opposition he captured 250 yards of trench. Then after crawling with a Serjeant to reconnoitre, he returned, attacked, and seized another 120 yards of trench, establishing communication with the battalion on his left.[728]

Rank and Name: Private Thomas Cooke
Unit: 8 Battalion
Date: 24-25 July 1916
Place: Pozières, France

No. 3055 Pte. Thomas Cooke, late Aus. Infy.
For most conspicuous bravery. After a Lewis gun had been disabled, he was ordered to take his gun and gun-team to a dangerous part of the line. Here he did fine work, but came under very heavy fire, with the result that he was the only man left. He still stuck to his post and continued to fire his gun. When assistance was sent he was found dead beside his gun. He set a splendid example of determination and devotion to duty.[729]

Rank and Name: Sergeant Claud Charles Castleton
Unit: 5 Machine Gun Company
Date: 28 July 1916
Place: Pozières, France

No. 1352 Sjt. Claude Charles Castleton, late Aus. Machine Gun Coy. (incorrect spelling)
For most conspicuous bravery. During an attack on the enemy's trenches the infantry was temporarily driven back by the intense machine-gun fire opened by the enemy. Many wounded were left in no man's land lying in shell-holes. Serjeant Castleton went out twice in face of this intense fire and each time brought in a wounded man on his back. He went out a third time and was bringing in another wounded man when he was himself hit in the back and killed instantly. He set a splendid example of courage and self-sacrifice.[730]

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[728] *London Gazette* Iss. 29740, 9 September 1918, p. 2 of edition 8 September 1916, [p. 8870 of 1918].
[729] *London Gazette* Iss. 29740, 9 September 1918, p. 2 of edition 8 September 1916, [p. 8870 of 1918].
[730] *London Gazette* Iss. 29765, 26 September 1916, p. 2, [p. 9418 of 1916].

Rank and Name: Private Martin O'Meara
Unit: 16 Battalion
Date: 9-12 August 1916
Place: Pozières, France

No. 3970 Pte. Martin O'Meara, Aus. Infy.
For most conspicuous bravery. During four days of very heavy fighting he repeatedly went out and brought in wounded officers and men from no man's land under intense artillery and machine-gun fire. He also volunteered and carried up ammunition and bombs through a heavy barrage to a portion of the trenches which was being heavily shelled at the time. He showed throughout an utter contempt for danger, and undoubtedly saved many lives.[731]

Rank and Name: Captain Henry William Murray
Unit: 13 Battalion
Date: 4-5 February 1917
Place: Stormy Trench, north-east of Gueudecourt, France

Capt. Henry William Murray, D.S.O., Aus. Infy.
For most conspicuous bravery when in command of the right flank company in attack. He led his company to the assault with great skill and courage and the position was quickly captured. Fighting of a very severe nature followed, and three heavy counter-attacks were beaten back, these successes being due to Captain Murray's wonderful work. Throughout the night his company suffered heavy casualties through concentrated enemy shell-fire, and on one occasion gave ground for a short way. This gallant officer rallied his command and saved the situation by sheer valour. He made his presence felt throughout the line, encouraging his men, heading bombing parties, leading bayonet charges, and carrying wounded to places of safety. His magnificent example inspired his men throughout.[732]

Rank and Name: Captain Percy Herbert Cherry
Unit: 26 Battalion
Date: 26 March 1917
Place: Lagnicourt, France

Capt. Percy Herbert Cherry, V.C., M.C., late Aus. Imp. Force (V.C. incorrectly gazetted)
For most conspicuous bravery, determination, and leadership when in command of a company detailed to storm and clear a village. After all the officers of his company had become casualties, he carried on with care and determination in the face of fierce opposition and cleared the village of the enemy. He sent frequent reports of progress made and when held up by an enemy strong point, he organised machine-gun and bomb parties and captured the position. His leadership, coolness, and bravery set a wonderful example to his men. Having cleared the village, he took

[731] *London Gazette* Iss. 29740, 9 September 1918, p. 3 of edition 8 September 1916, [p. 8871 of 1918].
[732] *London Gazette* Iss. 29978, 10 March 1917, p. 1 of edition 9 March 1917, [p. 2451 of 1917].

charge of the situation and beat off the most resolute and heavy counter-attacks made by the enemy. Wounded about 6.30 am, he refused to leave his post and there remained, encouraging all to hold out at all costs, until, about 4.30 pm, this very gallant officer was killed by an enemy shell.[733]

Rank and Name:	Private Jørgen Christian Jensen
Unit:	50 Battalion
Date:	2 April 1917
Place:	Noreuil, France

No. 2389 Pte. Jorgan Christian Jensen, Inf. Bn., Aus. Imp. Force
For most conspicuous bravery and initiative when, with five comrades, he attacked a barricade behind which were about forty-five of the enemy and a machine-gun. One of his party shot the gunner and Private Jensen, single-handed, rushed the post and threw in a bomb. He had still a bomb in one hand, but taking another from his pocket with the other hand, he drew the pin with his teeth and by threatening with two bombs and by telling them that they were surrounded, he induced them to surrender. Private Jensen then sent one of his prisoners to order a neighbouring enemy party to surrender, which they did. This latter party were then fired on in ignorance of their surrender by another party of our troops; whereupon Private Jensen, utterly regardless of personal danger, stood on the barricade, waved his helmet, caused fire to cease, and sent his prisoners back to our lines. Private Jensen's conduct throughout was marked by extraordinary bravery and determination.[734]

Rank and Name:	Captain James Ernest Newland
Unit:	12 Battalion
Date:	8 April and 15 April 1917
Place:	West of Boursies and Lagnicourt, France

Capt. James Ernest Newlands [*sic*], Inf. Bn., Aus. Imp. Force.
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty in the face of heavy odds on three separate occasions. On the first occasion he organised the attack by his company on a most important objective, and led personally, under heavy fire, a bombing attack. He then rallied his company, which had suffered heavy casualties, and he was one of the first to reach the objective. On the following night his company, holding the captured position, was heavily counter-attacked. By personal exertion, utter disregard of fire, and judicious use of reserves, he succeeded in dispersing the enemy and regaining the position. On a subsequent occasion, when the company on his left was overpowered and his own company attacked from the rear, he drove off a combined attack which had developed from these directions. These attacks were renewed three or four times and it was Captain Newland's tenacity and disregard for his own safety that

[733] *London Gazette* Iss. 30064, 11 May 1917, p. 1, [p. 4587 of 1917].
[734] *London Gazette* Iss. 30122, 8 June 1917, p. 5, [p. 5705 of 1917].

encouraged the men to hold out. The stand made by this officer was of the greatest importance and produced far-reaching results.[735]

Rank and Name: Sergeant John Woods Whittle
Unit: 12 Battalion
Date: 8 April and 15 April 1917
Place: West of Boursies and Lagnicourt, France

No. 2902 Sjt. John Woods Whittle, Inf. Bn., Aus. Imp. Force
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty on two occasions. When in command of a platoon, the enemy, under cover of an intense artillery barrage, attacked the small trench he was holding. Owing to weight of numbers the enemy succeeded in entering the trench, and it was owing to Serjeant Whittle personally collecting all available men and charging the enemy that the position was regained. On a second occasion when the enemy broke through the left of our line, Serjeant Whittle's own splendid example was the means of keeping the men well in hand. His platoon were suffering heavy casualties, and the enemy endeavoured to bring up a machine-gun to enfilade the position. Grasping the situation he rushed alone across the fire-swept ground and attacked the hostile gun crew with bombs before the gun could be got into action. He succeeded in killing the whole crew and in bringing back the machine-gun to our position.[736]

Rank and Name: Private Thomas Bede Kenny
Unit: 2 Battalion
Date: 9 April 1917
Place: Hermies, France

No. 4195 Pte. Thomas James Bede Kenny, Inf. Bn., Aus. Imp. Force
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when his platoon was held up by an enemy strong point and severe casualties prevented progress. Private Kenny, under very heavy fire at close range, dashed alone towards the enemy's position and killed one man in advance of the strong point who endeavoured to bar his way. He then bombed the position, captured the gun crew, all of whom he had wounded, killed an officer who showed fight, and seized the gun. Private Kenny's gallant action enabled his platoon to occupy the position, which was of great local importance.[737]

[735] *London Gazette* Iss. 30122, 8 June 1917, Supplement, p. 2, [p. 5702 of 1917].
[736] *London Gazette* Iss. 30122, 8 June 1917, p. 4, [p. 5704 of 1917].
[737] *London Gazette* Iss. 30122, 8 June 1917, p. 5, [p. 5705 of 1917].

Rank and Name: Lieutenant Charles Pope
Unit: 11 Battalion
Date: 15 April 1917
Place: Louverval, France

Lt. Charles Pope, late Inf. Bn., Aus. Imp. Force
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when in command of a very important picquet post in the sector held by his battalion, his orders being to hold this post at all costs. After the picquet post had been heavily attacked, the enemy in greatly superior numbers surrounded the post. Lieutenant Pope, finding that he was running short of ammunition, sent back for further supplies. But the situation culminated before it could arrive, and in the hope of saving the position this very gallant officer was seen to charge with his picquet into a superior force, by which it was overpowered. By this sacrifice, Lieutenant Pope not only inflicted heavy loss on the enemy, but obeyed his order to hold the position to the last. His body, together with those of men, was found in close proximity to eighty enemy dead – a sure proof of the gallant resistance which had been made.[738]

Rank and Name: Corporal George Julian Howell
Unit: 1 Battalion
Date: 6 May 1917
Place: Bullecourt, France

No. 2445 Cpl. George Julian Howell, Inf. Bn., Aus. Imp. Force
For conspicuous bravery. Seeing a party of the enemy who were likely to outflank his battalion, Corporal Howell, on his own initiative, single-handed, and exposed to heavy bomb and rifle-fire, climbed to the top of the parapet and proceeded to bomb the enemy, pressing them back along the trench. Having exhausted his stock of bombs, he continued to attack the enemy with his bayonet. He was then severely wounded. The prompt action and gallant conduct of this non-commissioned officer in the face of superior numbers was witnessed by the whole battalion and greatly inspired them in the subsequent successful counter-attack.[739]

Rank and Name: Lieutenant Rupert Vance Moon
Unit: 58 Battalion
Date: 12 May 1917
Place: Near Bullecourt, France

Lt. Rupert Vance Moon, Inf. Bn., Aus. Imp. Force
For most conspicuous bravery during an attack on an enemy strong point. His own immediate objective was a position in advance of the hostile trench, and thence against a hostile trench itself, after the capture of which it was intended that his men should cooperate in a further assault

[738] *London Gazette* Iss. 30122, 8 June 1917, p. 3, [p. 5703 of 1917].
[739] *London Gazette* Iss. 30154, 26 June 1917, p. 2, [p. 6382 of 1917].

on a strong point further in rear. Although wounded in the initial advance, he reached his first objective. Leading his men against the trench itself, he was again badly wounded and incapacitated for the moment. He nevertheless inspired and encouraged his men and captured the trench. Lieutenant Moon continued to lead his much diminished command in the general attack with the utmost valour, being badly wounded, and the attack was successfully pressed home. During the consolidation of the position, this officer was again badly wounded, and it was only after the fourth and severe wound through the face that he consented to retire from the fight. His bravery was magnificent and was largely instrumental in the successful issue against superior numbers, the safeguarding of the flank of the attack, and the capture of many prisoners and machine-guns.[740]

Rank and Name:	Private John Carroll
Unit:	33 Battalion
Date:	7-11 June 1918
Place:	St Yves, Belgium (battle of Messines Ridge)

No. 1804 Pte. John Carroll, Aus. Infy.
For most conspicuous bravery. During an attack, immediately the barrage lifted, Private John Carroll rushed the enemy's trench and bayoneted four of the enemy. He then noticed a comrade in difficulties, and at once proceeded to his comrade's assistance and killed one of the enemy. He continued working ahead with great determination until he came across a machine-gun and team of four men in a shell-hole. Single-handed he attacked the entire team, killing three of the men and capturing the gun. Later on, two of his comrades were buried by a shell, and, in spite of very heavy shelling and machine-gun fire, he managed to extricate them. During the ninety-six hours the battalion was in the line, Private Carroll displayed most wonderful courage and fearlessness. His magnificent example of gallantry and devotion to duty inspired all ranks in his battalion.[741]

Rank and Name:	Captain Robert Cuthbert Grieve
Unit:	37 Battalion
Date:	7 June 1917
Place:	Messines, Belgium

Capt. Robert Cuthbert Grieve, Aus. Infy.
For most conspicuous bravery. During an attack on the enemy's position, in the face of heavy artillery and machine-gun fire, and after all his officers had been wounded and his company had suffered very heavy casualties, Captain Grieve located two hostile machine-guns which were holding up his advance. He then, single-handed, under continuous fire from these two machine-guns, succeeded in bombing and killing the two crews, reorganised the remnants of his company, and gained his original objective. Captain Grieve, by his utter disregard of danger and his

[740] *London Gazette* Iss. 30130, 12 June 1917, p. 1, [p. 5865 of 1917].
[741] *London Gazette* Iss. 30215, 2 August 1917, p. 2, [p. 7906 of 1917].

coolness in mastering a very difficult position, set a splendid example, and when he finally fell wounded, the position had been secured and the few remaining enemy were in full flight.[742]

Rank and Name: Second Lieutenant Frederick Birks
Unit: 6 Battalion
Date: 20 September 1917
Place: Glencorse Wood, east of Ypres, Belgium

2nd Lt. Frederick Birks, late Aus. Imp. Force
For most conspicuous bravery in attack when, accompanied by only a corporal, he rushed a strong-point which was holding up the advance. The Corporal was wounded by a bomb, but Second Lieutenant Birks went on by himself, killed the remainder of the enemy occupying the position, and captured a machine-gun. Shortly afterwards he organised a small party and attacked another strong point which was occupied by about twenty-five of the enemy, of whom many were killed and an officer and fifteen men captured. During the consolidation this officer did magnificent work in reorganising parties of other units which had been disorganised during the operation. By his wonderful coolness and personal bravery, Second Lieutenant Birks kept his men in splendid spirits throughout. He was killed at his post by a shell while endeavouring to extricate some of his men who had been buried by a shell.[743]

Rank and Name: Private Reginald Roy Inwood
Unit: 10 Battalion
Date: 20-21 September 1917
Place: Polygon Wood, east of Ypres, Belgium

No. 506 Pte. Reginald Roy Inwood, Aus. Imp. Force
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during the advance to the third objective. He moved forward through our barrage alone to an enemy strong post and captured it, together with nine prisoners, killing several of the enemy. During the evening he volunteered for a special all-night patrol, which went out 600 yards on front of our line, and there, by his coolness and sound judgement, obtained and sent back very valuable information as to the enemy movements. In the early morning of the 21st September, Private Inwood located a machine-gun which was causing several casualties. He went out alone and bombed the gun and team, killing all but one whom he brought in as a prisoner with the gun.[744]

[742] *London Gazette* Iss. 30215, 2 August 1917, p. 1, [p. 7905 of 1917].
[743] *London Gazette* Iss. 30372, 6 November 1917, p. 2, [p. 11568 of 1917].
[744] *London Gazette* Iss. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 4 of edition 26 November 1917, [p. 12330 of 1917].

Rank and Name: Sergeant John James Dwyer
Unit: 4 Machine Gun Company
Date: 26 September 1917
Place: Zonnebeke, Belgium

No. 2060 Sjt. John James Dwyer, Aus. M.G. Corps, Aus. Imp. Force
For most conspicuous bravery when in attack, Serjeant Dwyer in charge of a Vickers machine-gun, went forward with the first wave of the brigade. On reaching the final objective, this non-commissioned officer rushed his gun forward in advance of the captured position in order to obtain a commanding spot. Whilst advancing he noticed an enemy machine-gun firing on the troops on our right flank and causing casualties. Unhesitatingly he rushed his gun forward to within thirty yards of the enemy gun and, totally ignoring the snipers from the rear of the enemy position, carried it back across the shell-swept ground to our front line and established both it and his Vickers gun on the right flank of our brigade. Serjeant Dwyer commanded these guns with great coolness and when the enemy counter-attacked our positions, he rendered great assistance in repulsing them. On the following day, when the position was heavily shelled, this non-commissioned officer took up successive positions. On one occasion his Vickers gun was blown up by shell-fire, but he conducted his gun team back to headquarters through the enemy barrage, secured one of the reserve guns, and rushed it back to our position in the shortest possible time. During the whole of the attack his contempt of danger, cheerfulness, and courage raised the spirits of all who were in his sector of the line.[745]

Rank and Name: Private Patrick Joseph Bugden
Unit: 31 Battalion
Date: 26-28 September 1917
Place: Polygon Wood, near Ypres, Belgium

No. 3774 Pte. Patrick Bugden, late Aus. Imp. Force
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when on two occasions our advance was temporarily held up by strongly defended ‘pillboxes’. Private Bugden, in the face of devastating fire from machine-guns, gallantly led small parties to attack these strong points and, successfully silencing the machine-guns with bombs, captured the garrison at the point of the bayonet. On another occasion, when a corporal who had become detached from his company had been captured and was being taken to the rear by the enemy, Private Bugden, single-handed, rushed to the rescue of his comrade, shot one enemy, and bayoneted the remaining two, thus releasing the corporal. On five occasions he rescued wounded men under intense shell and machine-gun fore, showing an utter contempt and disregard for danger. Always foremost in volunteering for any dangerous mission, it was during the execution of one of these missions that this gallant soldier was killed.[746]

[745] *London Gazette* Iss. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 2 of edition 26 November 1917, [p. 12328 of 1917].
[746] *London Gazette* Iss. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 3 of edition 26 November 1917, [p. 12329 of 1917].

Rank and Name: Sergeant Lewis McGee
Unit: 40 Battalion
Date: 4 October 1917
Place: East of Ypres, Belgium

No. 456 Sjt. Lewis McGee, late Aus. Imp. Force
For most conspicuous bravery when, in the advance to the final objective, Serjeant McGee led his platoon with great dash and bravery, though strongly opposed, and under heavy shell-fire. His platoon was suffering severely and the advance of the company was stopped by machine-gun fire from a 'pill-box' post. Single-handed, Serjeant McGee rushed the post armed only with a revolver. He shot some of the crew and captured the rest, and thus enabled the advance to proceed. He reorganised the remnants of his platoon and was foremost in the remainder of the advance, and during consolidation of the position he did splendid work. This non-commissioned officer's coolness and bravery were conspicuous, and contributed largely to the success of the company's operation. Serjeant McGee was subsequently killed in action.[747]

Rank and Name: Lance Corporal Walter Peeler
Unit: 3 Pioneer Battalion
Date: 4 October 1917
Place: Broodseinde, east of Ypres, Belgium

No. 114 L./Cpl. Walter Peeler, Aus. Imp. Force
For most conspicuous bravery when with a Lewis gun accompanying the first wave of the assault, he encountered an enemy party sniping the advancing troops from a shell-hole. Lance Corporal Peeler immediately rushed the position, accounted for nine of the enemy, and cleared the way for the advance. On two subsequent occasions he performed similar acts of valour, and each time accounted for a number of the enemy. During the operations he was directed to a position from which an enemy machine-gun was being fired on our troops. He located and killed the gunner, and the remainder of the enemy party ran to a dug-out close by. From this shelter they were dislodged by a bomb, and ten of the enemy ran out. These he disposed of. This non-commissioned officer actually accounted for over thirty of the enemy. He displayed an absolute fearlessness in making his way ahead of the first wave of the assault, and the fine example which he set ensured the success of the attack against most determined opposition.[748]

[747] *London Gazette* Iss. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 2 of edition 26 November 1917, [p. 12328 of 1917].
[748] *London Gazette* Iss. 30400, 23 November 1917, p. 3 of edition 26 November 1917, [p. 12329 of 1917].

Rank and Name: Captain Clarence Smith Jeffries
Unit: 34 Battalion
Date: 12 October 1917
Place: Passchendaele, Belgium

Capt. Clarence Smith Jeffries, late Australian Imperial Force
For most conspicuous bravery in attack, when his company was held up by enemy machine-gun fire from concrete emplacements. Organising a party, he rushed one emplacement, capturing four heavy machine-guns and thirty-five prisoners. He then led his company forward under extremely heavy enemy artillery barrage and enfilade machine-gun fire to the objective. Later, he again organised a successful attack on a machine-gun emplacement, capturing two machine-guns and thirty more prisoners. This gallant officer was killed during the attack, but it was entirely due to his bravery and initiative that the centre of the attack was not held up for a lengthy period. His example had a most inspiring influence.[749]

Rank and Name: Sergeant Stanley Robert McDougall
Unit: 47 Battalion
Date: 28 March 1918
Place: Dernancourt, France

Sjt. Stanley Robert McDougall, A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when the enemy attacked our line and his first wave succeeded in gaining an entry. Serjeant McDougall, who was at a post n a flank company, realised the situation and at once charged the enemy's second wave single-handed with rifle and bayonet, killing seven and capturing a machine-gun which they had. This he turned on to them, firing from the hip, causing many casualties and routing that wave. He then turned his attention on those who had entered, until his ammunition ran out, all the time firing at close quarters, when he seized a bayonet and charged again, killing three men and an enemy officer who was just about to kill one of our officers. He used a Lewis gun on the enemy, killing many and enabling us to capture thirty-three prisoners. The prompt action of this non-commissioned officer saved the line and enabled the enemy's advance to be stopped.[750]

Rank and Name: Lieutenant Percy Valentine Storkey
Unit: 19 Battalion
Date: 7 April 1918
Place: Hangard Wood, France

Lt. Percy Valentine Storkey, Aus. Imp. Force
For most conspicuous bravery, leadership and devotion to duty when in charge of a platoon in attack. On emerging from the wood the enemy trench line was encountered and Lieutenant

[749] *London Gazette* Iss. 30433, 18 December 1917, p. 2, [p. 13222 of 1917].
[750] *London Gazette* Iss. 30667, 3 May 1918, p. 2 of edition 30 April 1918, [p. 5354 of 1918].

Storkey found himself with six men. While continuing his move forward a large enemy party, about 80 to 100 strong, armed with several machine-guns, was noticed to be holding up the advance of the troops on the right. Lieutenant Storkey immediately decided to attack this party from the flank and rear, and while moving forward in the attack was joined by Lieutenant Lipscomb and four men. Under the leadership of Lieutenant Storkey, this small party of two officers and ten other ranks charged the enemy position with fixed bayonets, driving the enemy out, killing and wounding about thirty, and capturing three officers and fifty men, also one machine-gun. The splendid courage shown by this officer in quickly deciding his course of action, and his skilful method of attacking against such great odds, removed a dangerous obstacle to the advance of the troops on the right, and inspired the remainder of our small party with the utmost confidence when advancing to the objective line.[751]

Rank and Name: Lieutenant Clifford William King Sadlier
Unit: 51 Battalion
Date: 24-25 April 1918
Place: Villers-Bretonneux, France

Lt. Clifford William King Sadlier, A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery during a counter-attack by his battalion on strong enemy positions. Lieutenant Sadlier's platoon, which was on the left of the battalion, had to advance through a wood where a strong enemy machine-gun post caused casualties and prevented the platoon from advancing. Although himself wounded, he at once collected his bombing section, led them against the machine-guns, and succeeded in killing the crews and capturing two of the guns. By this time Lieutenant Sadlier's party were all casualties, and he alone attacked a third enemy machine-gun with his revolver, killing the crew of four and taking the gun. In doing so he was again wounded. The very gallant conduct of this officer was the means of clearing the flank, and allowing the battalion to move forward, thereby saving a most critical situation. His coolness and utter disregard of danger inspired all.[752]

Rank and Name: Corporal Phillip Davey
Unit: 10 Battalion
Date: 28 June 1918
Place: Merris, France

No. 1327 Corporal Philip Davey, M.M., A.I.F. (incorrect spelling)
For most conspicuous bravery and initiative in attack. In a daylight operation against his position, his platoon advanced 200 yards, capturing part of the enemy line and, whilst the platoon was consolidating, the enemy pushed a machine-gun forward under cover of a hedge and opened fire from close range, inflicting heavy casualties and hampering work. Alone Corporal Davey moved forward in the face of a fierce point-blank fire and attacked the gun with hand-grenades,

[751] *London Gazette* Iss. 30733, 7 June 1918, p. 1 of edition 4 June 1918, [p. 6775 of 1918].
[752] *London Gazette* Iss. 30790, 11 June 1918, p. 2 of edition 9 June 1918, [p. 8156 of 1918].

putting half the crew out of action. Having used all available grenades, he returned to the original jumping-off trench, secured a further supply, and again attacked the gun, the crew of which in the meantime had been reinforced. He killed the crew, eight in all, and captured the gun. This very gallant non-commissioned officer then mounted the gun in the new post and used it in repelling a determined counter-attack, during which he was severely wounded. By his determination, Corporal Davey saved the platoon from annihilation, and made it possible to consolidate and hold a position of vital importance to the success of the whole operation.[753]

Rank and Name:	Sergeant William Ruthven
Unit:	22 Battalion
Date:	19 May 1918
Place:	Ville-sur-Ancre, France

No. 1946 Sjt. William Ruthven, A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and initiative in action. During the advance Serjeant Ruthven's company suffered numerous casualties, and his company commander was severely wounded. He thereupon assumed command of this portion of the assault, took charge of the company headquarters, and rallied the section in his vicinity. As the leading wave approached its objective, it was subjected to heavy fire from an enemy machine-gun at close range. Without hesitation, he at once sprang out, threw a bomb which landed beside the post, and rushed the position, bayoneting one of the crew and capturing the gun. He then encountered some of the enemy coming out of a shelter. He wounded two, captured six others in the same position, and handed them over to an escort from the leading wave, which had now reached the objective. Serjeant Ruthven then reorganised the men in his vicinity and established a post in the second objective. Observing enemy movement in a sunken road nearby, he, without hesitation and armed only with a revolver, went over the open alone and rushed the position, shooting two enemy who refused to come out of their dug-outs. He then, single-handed, mopped up this post and captured the whole of the garrison, amounting in all to thirty-two, and kept them until assistance arrived to escort them back to our line. During the remainder of the day this gallant non-commissioned officer set a splendid example of leadership, moving up and down his position under fire, supervising consolidation, and encouraging his men. Throughout the whole operation he showed the most magnificent courage and determination, inspiring everyone by his fine fighting spirit, his remarkable courage, and his dashing action.[754]

[753] *London Gazette* Iss. 30849, 17 August 1918, p. 1 of edition 16 August 1918, [p. 9659 of 1918].
[754] *London Gazette* Iss. 30790, 11 June 1918, p. 2 of edition 9 June 1918, [p. 8156 of 1918].

Rank and Name: Lance Corporal Thomas Leslie Axford
Unit: 16 Battalion
Date: 4 July 1918
Place: Vaire and Hamel Wood, France

No. 3399 L./Cpl. Thomas Leslie Axford, M.M., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and initiative during operations. When the barrage lifted and the infantry advance commenced, his platoon was able to reach the first enemy defences through gaps which had been cut in the wire. The adjoining platoon, being delayed in uncut wire, enemy machine-guns got into action, and inflicted many casualties, including the company commander. Lance Corporal Axford, with great initiative and magnificent courage, at once dashed to the flank, threw his bombs amongst the machine-gun crews, jumped into the trench, and charged with his bayonet. Unaided, he killed ten of the enemy and took six prisoners: he threw the machine-guns over the parapet, and called out to the delayed platoon to come on. He then rejoined his own platoon and fought with it during the remainder of the operations. Prior to the incidents above mentioned, he had assisted in the laying-out of the tapes for the jumping-off position, which was within 100 yards of the enemy. When the tapes were laid, he remained out as a special patrol to ensure that the enemy did not discover any unusual movement on our side. His initiative and gallantry undoubtedly saved many casualties and most materially assisted towards the complete success of his company in the task assigned to it.[755]

Rank and Name: Private Henry Dalziel
Unit: 15 Battalion
Date: 4 July 1918
Place: Hamel Wood, France

No. 1936 Driver Henry Dalziel, A.I.F. (incorrect rank)
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when in action with a Lewis gun section. His company met with determined resistance from a strong point which was strongly garrisoned, manned by numerous machine-guns, undamaged by our artillery fire, and was also protected by strong wire entanglements. A heavy concentration of machine-gun fire caused many casualties and held up our advance. His Lewis gun having come into action and silenced enemy guns in one direction, an enemy gun opened fire from another direction. Private Dalziel dashed at it and, with his revolver, killed or captured the entire crew and gun and allowed our advance to continue. He was severely wounded in the hand, but carried on and took part in the capture of the final objective. He twice went over open ground under heavy enemy artillery and machine-gun fire to secure ammunition, and though suffering from considerable loss of blood, he filled magazines and served his gun until severely wounded through the head. His magnificent bravery and devotion to duty was an inspiring example to all his comrades and his dash and unselfish courage at a critical time undoubtedly saved many lives and turned what would have been a serious check into a splendid success.[756]

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[755] *London Gazette* Iss. 30849, 17 August 1918, p. 2 of edition 16 August 1918, [p. 9660 of 1918].
[756] *London Gazette* Iss. 30849, 17 August 1918, p. 2 of edition 16 August 1918,[p. 9660 of 1918].

Rank and Name: Corporal Walter Ernest Brown
Unit: 20 Battalion
Date: 6 July 1918
Place: Villers-Bretonneux, France

No. 1689A Corporal Walter Ernest Brown, D.C.M., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and determination when with an advanced party from his battalion which was going into the line in relief. The company to which he was attached carried out during the night a minor operation resulting in the capture of a small system of enemy trench. Early on the following morning an enemy strong point, about seventy yards distant, caused the occupants of the newly captured trench great inconvenience by persistent sniping. Hearing that it had been decided to rush this post, Corporal Brown, on his own initiative, crept out along the shadow trench and made a dash towards the post. An enemy machine-gun opened fire from another trench and forced him to take cover. Later he again dashed forward and reached his objective. With a Mills grenade in his hand he stood at the door of a dug-out and called on the occupants to surrender. One of the enemy rushed out, a scuffle ensued, and Corporal Brown knocked him down with his fist. Loud cries of 'Kamerad' were then heard, and from the dug-out an officer and eleven other ranks appeared. This party Corporal Brown brought back as prisoners to our line, the enemy meanwhile from other positions, bringing heavy machine-gun fore to bear on the party.[757]

Rank and Name: Lieutenant Albert Chalmers Borella
Unit: 26 Battalion
Date: 17-18 July 1918
Place: Villers-Bretonneux, France

Lt. Albert Borella, M.M., A.I.F. (middle name not included)
For most conspicuous bravery in attack. Whilst leading his platoon with the first wave, lieutenant Borella marked an enemy machine-gun firing through our barrage. He ran out ahead of his men into the barrage, shot two German machine-gunners with his revolver, and captured the gun. He then led his party, now reduced to ten men and two Lewis guns, against a very strongly held trench, using his revolver, and later a rifle, with great effect, causing many enemy casualties. His leading and splendid example resulted in the garrison being quickly shot or captured. Two large dug-outs were also bombed and thirty prisoners taken. Subsequently, the enemy twice counter-attacked in strong force, on the second occasion outnumbering Lieutenant Borella's platoon by ten to one, but his cool determination inspired his men to resist heroically, and the enemy were repulsed with heavy losses.[758]

[757] *London Gazette* Iss. 30849, 17 August 1918, p. 1 of edition 16 August 1918, [p. 9659 of 1918].
[758] *London Gazette* Iss. 30903, 16 September 1918, p. 1 of edition 13 August 1918, [p. 11075 of 1918].

Rank and Name: Lieutenant Alfred Edward Gaby
Unit: 28 Battalion
Date: 8 August 1918
Place: East of Villers-Bretonneux, France

Lt. Alfred Edward Gaby, late A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and dash in attack, when, on reaching the wire on front of an enemy trench, strong opposition was encountered. The advance was at once checked, the enemy being in force about forty yards beyond the wire and commanding the gap with machine-guns and rifles. Lieutenant Gaby found another gap in the wire and, single-handed, approached the strong point while machine-guns and rifles were still being fired from it. Running along the parapet, still alone, and at point-blank range, he emptied his revolver into the garrison, drove the crews from their guns and compelled the surrender of fifty of the enemy with four machine-guns. He then quickly reorganised his men and led them on to his final objective, which he captured and consolidated. Three days later, during an attack, this officer again led his company with great dash to the objective. The enemy brought heavy rifle and machine-gun fire to bear upon the line, but in the face of this heavy fire Lieutenant Gaby walked along his line of posts, encouraging his men to quickly consolidate. While engaged on this duty, he was killed by an enemy sniper.[759]

Rank and Name: Private Robert Matthew Beatham
Unit: 8 Battalion
Date: 9 August 1918
Place: Rosières, east of Amiens, France

No. 2742 Pte. Robert Matthew Beatham, late 8th Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and self-sacrifice during the attack north of Rosières, east of Amiens, on 9th August 1918. When the advance was held up by heavy machine-gun fire, Private Beatham dashed forward and, assisted by one man, bombed and fought the crews of four enemy machine-guns, killing ten of them and capturing ten others, thus facilitating the advance and saving many casualties. When the final objective was reached, although previously wounded, he again dashed forward and bombed a machine-gun, being riddled with bullets and killed in doing so. The valour displayed by this gallant soldier inspired all ranks in a wonderful manner.[760]

[759] *London Gazette* Iss. 30982, 30 October 1918, p. 2 of edition 29 October 1918, [p. 12802 of 1918].
[760] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 7 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14779 of 1918].

Rank and Name: Sergeant Percy Clyde Statton
Unit: 40 Battalion
Date: 12 August 1918
Place: Near Proyart, France

No. 506 Sjt. Percy Clyde Statton, M.M., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and initiative in action when in command of a platoon which reached its objective, the remainder of the battalion being held up by heavy machine-gun fire. He skilfully engaged two machine-gun posts with Lewis gun fire, enabling the remainder of his battalion to advance. The advance of the battalion on his left had been brought to a standstill by heavy enemy machine-gun fire, and first of our assaulting detachments to reach the machine-gun posts were put out of action in taking the first gun. Armed only with a revolver, in broad daylight, Serjeant Statton at once rushed four enemy machine-gun posts in succession, disposing of two of them and killing five of the enemy. The remaining two posts retired and were wiped out by Lewis-gun fire. Later in the evening, under heavy machine-gun fire, he went out again and brought in two badly wounded men. Serjeant Statton set a magnificent example of quick decision, and the success of the attacking troops was largely due to his determined gallantry.[761]

Rank and Name: Lieutenant William Donovan Joynt
Unit: 8 Battalion
Date: 23 August 1918
Place: Herleville Wood, near Chuignes, France

Lt. William Donovan Joynt, 8th Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during the attack on Herleville Wood, near Chuignes, Péronne, on 23rd August 1918. His company commander having been killed early in the advance, he immediately took charge of the company, which he led with courage and skill. On approaching Herleville Wood, the troops of the leading battalion, which his battalion was supporting, suffered very heavy casualties and were much shaken. Lieutenant Joynt, grasping the situation, rushed forward under very heavy machine-gun and artillery fire, collected and re-organised the remnant of the battalion, and kept them under cover pending the arrival of his own company. He then made a personal reconnaissance and found that the fire from the wood was checking the whole advance and causing heavy casualties to troops on his flanks. Dashing out in front of his men, he inspired and led a magnificent frontal bayonet attack on the wood. The enemy were staggered by this sudden onslaught, and a very critical situation was saved. Later, at Plateau Wood, this very gallant officer again with a small party of volunteers rendered valuable service and after severe hand-to-hand fighting turned a stubborn defence into an abject surrender. His valour and determination was conspicuous throughout, and he continued to do magnificent work until badly wounded by a shell.[762]

[761] *London Gazette* Iss. 30922, 27 September 1918, p. 2 of edition 24 September 1918, [p. 11430 of 1918].
[762] *London Gazette* Iss. 31034, 27 November 1918, p. 2 of edition 26 November 1918, [p. 14040 of 1918].

Rank and Name: Lieutenant Lawrence (Laurence) Dominic McCarthy
Unit: 16 Battalion
Date: 23 August 1918
Place: Near Madame Wood, west of Vermandovillers, France

Lt. Lawrence Dominic McCarthy, 16th Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery, initiative, and leadership on the morning of 23rd August 1918, in attack near Madame Wood, east of Vermandovillers (north of Chaulnes). Although the objectives of his battalion were attained under serious opposition, the battalion on the left flank was heavily opposed by well-posted machine-guns. Lieutenant McCarthy, realising the situation, at once engaged the nearest machine-gun post, but still the attacking troops failed to go forward. This officer then determined to attack the nearest post. Leaving his men to continue the fight, he, with two others, dashed across the open and succeeded in reaching the block. Although single-handed, as he had out-distanced his comrades, and despite serious opposition and obstacles, he captured the gun and continued to fight his way down the trench, inflicting heavy casualties and capturing three more machine-guns. At this stage, being some 700 yards from his starting point, he was joined by one of his men, and together they continued to bomb up the trench until touch was established with an adjoining unit. Lieutenant McCarthy, during this most daring advance, single-handed, killed twenty of the enemy and captured in addition five machine-guns and fifty prisoners. By this gallant and determined action he saved a critical situation, prevented many casualties, and was mainly, if not entirely, responsible for the final objective being taken.[763]

Rank and Name: Lance Corporal Bernard Sidney Gordon
Unit: 41 Battalion
Date: 27 August 1918
Place: Fargny Wood, east of Bray, France

No. 23 L./Cpl. Bernard Sidney Gordon, M.M., 41st Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty on 26th-27th August 1918, east of Bray. He led his section through heavy shell-fire to the objective which he consolidated. Single-handed he attacked an enemy machine-gun which was enfilading the company on his right, killed the man on the gun, and captured the post, which contained one officer and ten men. He then cleaned up a trench, capturing twenty-nine prisoners and two machine-guns. In cleaning up further trenches, he captured twenty-two prisoners, including one officer, and three machine-guns.[764]

[763] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 4 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14776 of 1918].
[764] *London Gazette* Iss. 31082, 26 December 1918, p. 2 of edition 24 December 1918, [p. 15118 of 1918].

Rank and Name: Private George Cartwright
Unit: 33 Battalion
Date: 31 August 1918
Place: Road Wood, south-west of Bouchavesnes, near Péronne, France

No. 726 Pte. George Cartwright, 33rd Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery on the morning of 31st August 1918, during the attack on Road Wood, south-west of Bouchavesnes , near Péronne. When two companies were held up by machine-gun fore from the south-western edge of the wood, without hesitation Private Cartwright moved against the gun in a most deliberate manner under intense fire. He shot three of the team and, having bombed the post, captured the gun and nine enemy. His gallant deed had a most inspiring effect on the whole line, which immediately rushed forward. Throughout the operation Private Cartwright displayed wonderful dash, grim determination, and courage of the highest order.[765]

Rank and Name: Private Robert Mactier
Unit: 23 Battalion
Date: 1 September 1918
Place: Mont St Quentin, north of Péronne, France

No. 6939 Pte. Robert Mactier, late 23rd Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty on the morning of 1st September 1918, during the attack on the village of Mont St Quentin. Prior to the advance of the battalion, it was necessary to clear up several enemy strong points close to our line. This the bombing patrols sent forward failed to effect, and the battalion was unable to move. Private Mactier, single-handed, and in daylight, thereupon jumped out of the trench, rushed past the block, closed with and killed the machine-gun garrison of eight men with his revolver and bombs, and threw the enemy machine-gun over the parapet. Then, rushing forward about twenty yards, he jumped into another strong point held by a garrison of six men who immediately surrendered. Continuing to the next block through the trench, he disposed of an enemy machine-gun which had been enfilading our flank advancing troops, and was then killed by another machine-gun at close range. It was entirely due to this exceptional valour and determination of Private Mactier that the battalion was able to move on to its jumping-off trench and carry out the successful operation of capturing the village of Mont St Quentin a few hours later.[766]

[765] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 7 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14779 of 1918].
[766] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 6 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14778 of 1918].

Rank and Name: Sergeant Albert David Lowerson
Unit: 21 Battalion
Date: 1 September 1918
Place: Mont St Quentin, north of Péronne, France

Sjt. Albert David Lowerson, 21st., Bn. A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and tactical skill on 1st September 1918, during the attack on Mont St Quentin, north of Péronne, when very strong opposition was met with early in the attack, and every foot of ground was stubbornly contested by the enemy. Regardless of heavy enemy machine-gun fire, Serjeant Lowerson moved about fearlessly directing his men, encouraging them to still greater effort, and finally led them on to the objective. On reaching the objective he saw that the left attacking party was held up by a strong post heavily manned with twelve machine-guns. Under the heaviest sniping and machine-gun fire, Serjeant Lowerson rallied seven men at a storming party, and directing them to attack the flanks of the post, rushed the strong-point and by effective bombing captured it, together with twelve machine-guns and thirty prisoners. Though severely wounded in the right thigh, he refused to leave the front line until the prisoners had been disposed of and the organisation and consolidation of the post had been thoroughly completed. Throughout a week of operations his leadership and example had a continual influence on the men serving under him, whiles his prompt and effective action at a critical juncture allowed the forward movement to be carried on without delay, thus ensuring the success of the attack.[767]

Rank and Name: Lieutenant Edgar Thomas Towner
Unit: 2 Machine Gun Battalion
Date: 1 September 1918
Place: Mont St Quentin, north of Péronne, France

Lt. Edgar Thomas Towner, M.C., 2nd Bn., Aus. M.G. Corps
For most conspicuous bravery, initiative, and devotion to duty on 1st September 1918, in the attack on Mont St Quentin, near Péronne, when in charge of four Vickers guns. During the early stages of the advance he located and captured, single-handed, and enemy machine-gun which was causing casualties, and by turning it on the enemy, inflicted severe losses. Subsequently, by the skilful, tactical handling of his guns, he cut off and captured twenty-five of the enemy. Later, by fearless reconnaissance under heavy fire, and by the energy, foresight and promptitude with which he brought fire to bear on various enemy groups, he gave valuable support to the infantry advance. Again, when short of ammunition, he secured an enemy machine-gun which he mounted and fired in full view of the enemy, causing the enemy to retire further, and enabling our infantry to advance. Under intense fire, although wounded, he maintained the fire of this gun at a very critical period. During the following night he steadied and gave valuable support to a small detached post, and by his coolness and cheerfulness, inspired the men in a great degree. Throughout the night he kept close watch by personal reconnaissance on the enemy movements and was evacuated exhausted thirty hours after being wounded. The valour and resourcefulness

[767] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 5 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14777 of 1918].

of Lieutenant Towner undoubtedly saved a very critical situation, and contributed largely to the success of the attack.[768]

Rank and Name: Private William Matthew Currey
Unit: 53 Battalion
Date: 1 September 1918
Place: Near Péronne, France

No. 1584A Pte. William Matthew Currey, 53rd Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and daring in the attack on Péronne on the morning of 1st September 1918. When the battalion was suffering heavy casualties from a 77 mm field gun at very close range. Private Currey, without hesitation rushed forward under intense machine-gun fire and succeeded in capturing the gun single-handed after killing the entire crew. Later, when the advance on the left flank was checked by an enemy strong point, Private Currey crept around the flank and engaged the post with a Lewis gun. Finally, he rushed the post single-handed, causing many casualties. It was entirely owing to his gallant conduct that the situation was relieved and the advance enabled to continue. Subsequently he volunteered to carry orders for the withdrawal of an isolated company and this he succeeded doing despite shell and rifle fire, returning later with valuable information. Throughout the operations his striking example of coolness, determination, and utter disregard of danger, had a most inspiring effect on his comrades and his gallant work contributed largely to the success of the operations.[769]

Rank and Name: Corporal Arthur Charles Hall
Unit: 54 Battalion
Date: 1-2 September 1918
Place: Péronne, France

No. 2631 Cpl. Arthur Charles Hall, 54th Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery brilliant leadership, and devotion to duty during the operations at Péronne on 1st and 2nd September, 1918. During the attack on 1st September, a machine-gun post was checking the advance. Single-handed, he rushed the position, shot four of the occupants, and captured nine others and two machine-guns. Then crossing the objective with a small party, he afforded excellent covering support to the remainder of the company. Continuously in advance of the main party, he located enemy posts of resistance and personally led parties to the assault. In this way he captured many small parties of prisoners and machine-guns.[770]

[768] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 3 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14775 of 1918].
[769] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 7 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14779 of 1918].
[770] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 6 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14778 of 1918].

Rank and Name: Temporary Corporal Alexander Henry Buckley
Unit: 54 Battalion
Date: 1 September 1918
Place: Péronne, France

No. 1876 Pte. (T.Cpl.) Alexander Henry Buckley, late 54th Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and self-sacrifice at Péronne during the operations on 1st and 2nd September 1918. After passing the first objective his half-company and part of the company on the flank were held up by an enemy machine-gun nest. With one man he rushed the post, shooting four of the occupants and taking twenty-two prisoners. Later on, reaching a moat, it was found that another machine-gun nest commanded the only available foot-bridge. Whilst this was being engaged a flank, Corporal Buckley endeavoured to cross the bridge and rush the position, but was killed in the attempt. Throughout the advance he had displayed great initiative, resource, and courage, and by his effort to save his comrades from casualties he set a fine example of self-sacrificing devotion to duty.[771]

Rank and Name: Temporary Corporal Lawrence Carthage Weathers
Unit: 43 Battalion
Date: 2 September 1918
Place: North of Péronne, France

No. 1153 L./Cpl. (T./Cpl.) Lawrence Carthage Weathers, 43rd Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty on 2nd September, 1918, north of Péronne, when with an advanced bombing party. The party having been held up by a strongly held enemy trench, Corporal Weathers went forward alone under heavy fire and attacked the enemy with bombs. Then, returning to our lines for a further supply of bombs, he again went forward with three comrades and attacked under very heavy fire. Regardless of personal danger, he mounted the enemy parapet and bombed the trench, and, with the support of his comrades, captured 180 prisoners and three machine-guns. His valour and determination resulted in the successful capture of the final objective and saved the lives of many of his comrades.[772]

Rank and Name: Sergeant Maurice Vincent Buckley (served as Gerald Sexton)
Unit: 13 Battalion
Date: 18 September 1918
Place: Near Le Verguier, north-west of St Quentin, France

No. 6594 Sjt. Gerald Sexton, 13th Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery during the attack near Le Verguier, north-west of St Quentin, on 18th September 1918. During the whole period of the advance, which was very seriously opposed, Serjeant Sexton was to the fore dealing with enemy machine-guns, rushing enemy

[771] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 6 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14778 of 1918].
[772] *London Gazette* Iss. 31082, 26 December 1918, p. 2 of edition 24 December 1918, [p. 15118 of 1918].

posts, and performing great feats of bravery and endurance without faltering of for a moment taking cover. When the advance had passed the ridge at Le Verguier, Serjeant Sexton's attention was directed to a party of the enemy manning a bank, and to a field gun causing casualties and holding up a company. Without hesitation, calling to his section to follow, he rushed down the bank and killed the gunners of the field gun. Regardless of machine-gun fire, he returned to the bank and, after firing down some dug-outs, induced about thirty of the enemy to surrender. When the advance was continued from the first to the second objective, the company was again held up by machine-guns on the flanks. Supported by another platoon, he disposed of the enemy guns, displaying boldness which inspired all. Later, he again showed the most conspicuous initiative in the capture of hostile posts and machine-guns and rendered invaluable support to his company digging in.[773]

Rank and Name:	Private James Park Wood
Unit:	48 Battalion
Date:	18 September 1918
Place:	Near Le Verguier, north-west of St Quentin, France

No. 3244A Pte. James Park Woods, 48th Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty near Le Verguier, north-west of St Quentin, on 18th September 1918, when, with a weak patrol, he attacked and captured a very formidable enemy post, and subsequently, with two comrades, held the same against heavy enemy counter-attacks. Although exposed to heavy fire of all descriptions, he fearlessly jumped on the parapet and opened fire on the attacking enemy, inflicting severe casualties. He kept up his fire and held up the enemy until help arrived, and throughout the operations displayed a splendid example of valour, determination, and initiative.[774]

Rank and Name:	Major Blair Anderson Wark
Unit:	32 Battalion
Date:	29 September – 1 October,1918
Place:	Bellicourt to Joncourt, France

Maj. Blair Anderson Wark, D.S.O., 32nd Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery, initiative, and control during the period 29th September to 1st October 1918, in the operations against the Hindenburg Line at Bellicourt and the advance through Nauroy, Etricourt, Magny-la-Fosse, and Joncourt. On 29th September, after personal reconnaissance under heavy fire, he led his command forward at a critical period and restored the situation. Moving fearlessly at the head of, and at times far in advance of, his troops, he cheered his men on through Nauroy, thence towards Etricourt. Still leading his assaulting companies, he observed a battery of 77 mm guns firing on his rear companies and causing heavy casualties. Collecting a few of his men, he rushed the battery, capturing four guns and ten of the crew. Then

[773] *London Gazette* Iss. 31067, 14 December 1918, p. 5 of edition 13 December 1918, [p. 14777 of 1918].
[774] *London Gazette* Iss. 31082, 26 December 1918, p. 3 of edition 24 December 1918, [p. 15119 of 1918].

moving rapidly forward with only two non-commissioned officers, he surprised and captured fifty Germans near Magny-la-Fosse. On 1st October 1918, he again showed fearless leading and gallantry in attack, and without hesitation and regardless of personal risk, dashed forward and silenced machine-guns which were causing heavy casualties. Throughout he displayed the greatest courage, skilful leading, and devotion to duty, and his work was invaluable.[775]

Rank and Name: Private Edward John Francis Ryan
Unit: 55 Battalion
Date: 30 September 1918
Place: Near Bellicourt, France

No. 1717 Pte. John Ryan, 55th Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during an attack against the Hindenburg defences on 30th September 1918. In the initial assault on the enemy's positions, Private Ryan went forward with great dash and determination and was one of the first to reach the enemy trench. His exceptional skill and daring inspired his comrades and, despite heavy fire, the hostile garrison was soon overcome and the trench occupied. The enemy then counter-attacked, and succeeded in establishing a bombing party in the rear of the position. Under fire from front and rear, the position was critical, and necessitated prompt action. Quickly appreciating the situation, he organised and led the men near him with bomb and bayonet against the enemy bombers, finally reaching the position with only three men. By skilful bayonet work his small party succeeded in killing the first three Germans on the enemy's flank, then, moving along the embankment, Private Ryan alone rushed the remainder with bombs. He fell wounded after he had driven back the enemy, who suffered heavily as they retired across no man's land. A particularly dangerous situation had been saved by this gallant soldier, whose example of determined bravery and initiative was an inspiration to all.[776]

Rank and Name: Lieutenant Joseph Maxwell
Unit: 18 Battalion
Date: 3 October 1918
Place: Beaurevoir Line, near Estrées, France

Lt. Joseph Maxwell, M.C., D.C.M., 18th Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and leadership in attack on the Beaurevoir – Fonsomme Line near Estrées, north of St Quentin, on the 3rd October 1918. His company commander was severely wounded early in the advance, and Lieutenant Maxwell at once took charge. The enemy wire when reached under intense fire was found to be exceptionally strong and closely supported by machine-guns, whereupon Lieutenant Maxwell pushed forward single-handed through the wire and captured the most dangerous gun, killing three and capturing four of the enemy. He thus enabled his company to penetrate the wire and reach the objective. Later, he again pushed

[775] *London Gazette* Iss. 31082, 26 December 1918, p. 1 of edition 24 December 1918, [p. 15117 of 1918].
[776] *London Gazette* Iss. 31082, 26 December 1918, p. 3 of edition 24 December 1918, [p. 15119 of 1918].

forward and silenced, single-handed, a gun which was holding up a flank company. Subsequently, when with two men only he attempted to capture a strong party of the enemy, he handled a most involved situation very skilfully, and it wad due to his resource that he and his comrades escaped. Throughout the day Lieutenant Maxwell set a high example of personal bravery, coupled with excellent judgment and quick decision.[777]

Rank and Name:	Lieutenant George Mawby (Morby) Ingram
Unit:	24 Battalion
Date:	5 October 1918
Place:	Montbrehain, east of Péronne, France

Lt. George Morby Ingram, M.M., 24th Bn., A.I.F.
For most conspicuous bravery and initiative during the attack on Montbrehain, east of Péronne, on 5th October 1918. When, early in the advance his platoon was held up by a strong point, Lieutenant Ingram, without hesitation, dashed out and rushed the post at the head of his men, capturing nine machine-guns and killing forty-two after stunning resistance. Later, when the company had suffered severe casualties from enemy posts, and many leaders had fallen, he at once took control of the situation, rallied his men under intense fire, and led them forward. He himself rushed the first post, shot six of the enemy and captured a machine-gun, thus overcoming serious resistance. On two subsequent occasions he again displayed great dash and resource in the capture of enemy posts, inflicting many casualties and taking 62 prisoners. Throughout the whole day he showed the most inspiring example of courage and leadership, and freely exposed himself regardless of danger.[778]

Rank and Name:	Lance Corporal Albert Jacka
Unit:	14 Battalion
Date:	19-20 May 1915
Place:	Courtney's Post, Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey

No. 465 Lance-Corporal Albert Jacka, 14th Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.
For most conspicuous bravery on the night of the 19th-20th May 1915 at Courtney's Post, Gallipoli Peninsula. Lance Corporal Jacka, while holding a portion of our trench with four men, was heavily attacked. When all except himself were killed or wounded, the trench was rushed and occupied by seven Turks. Lance Corporal Jacka at once most gallantly attacked them single-handed and killed the whole party, five by rifle fire and two with the bayonet.[779]

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[777] *London Gazette* Iss. 311108, 6 January 1919, p. 3 of edition 3 January 1919, [p. 307 of 1919].
[778] *London Gazette* Iss. 311108, 6 January 1919, p. 2 of edition 3 January 1919, [p. 306 of 1919].
[779] *London Gazette* Iss. 29240, 24 July 1915, p. 1 of edition 23 July 1915, [p. 7279 of 1915].

APPENDIX E: *Summary Details of AIF Victoria Cross Recipients from the Western Front in relation to Home State and Categorising the Victoria Cross Deed.*

	Name & Rank	Home State	Categorising VCs	
1	Pte John Jackson (William)	NSW	Humanitarian	**1916**
2	Pte John Leak	QLD	Offensive	
3	Lt Arthur Blackburn	SA	Offensive	
4	Pte Thomas Cooke	VIC	Defensive	
5	Sgt Claud Castleton	NSW	Humanitarian	
6	Pte Martin O'Meara	WA	Humanitarian (Secondary: ammunition)	
7	Capt Henry Murray	TAS	Offensive (Symbolic: rally troops)	**1917**
8	Capt Percy Cherry	TAS	Offensive	
9	Pte Jørgen Jensen	NSW	Offensive	
10	Capt Ernest Newland	TAS	Symbolic (rally troops)	
11	Sgt John Whittle	TAS	Defensive	
12	Pte Thomas Kenny (Bede)	NSW	Offensive (Symbolic: capture enemy weapon)	
13	Lt Charles Pope	WA	Defensive	
14	Cpl George Howell	NSW	Offensive	
15	Lt Rupert Moon	VIC	Symbolic (rally troops)	
16	Pte John Carroll	WA	Offensive (Symbolic: capture enemy weapon)	
17	Capt Robert Grieve	VIC	Offensive (Symbolic: rally troops)	
18	2nd Lt Frederick Birks	VIC	Offensive (Symbolic: rally troops & capture enemy weapon)	
19	Pte Reginald Inwood (Roy)	SA	Offensive (Secondary: reconnassiance)	
20	Sgt John Dwyer	TAS	Symbolic (capture enemy weapon & Offensive)	
21	Pte Patrick Bugden	NSW	Offensive (Symbolic: capture enemy weapon & Humanitarian)	
22	Sgt Lewis McGee	TAS	Offensive	
23	L/Cpl Walter Peeler	VIC	Offensive	
24	Capt Clarence Jeffries	NSW	Symbolic (rally toops & capture enemy weapon)	
25	Sgt Stanley McDougall	TAS	Offensive	**1918**
26	Lt Percy Storkey	NSW	Offensive (Symbolic: rally troops & capture enemy weapon)	
27	Lt Clifford Sadlier	WA	Symbolic (rally toops & capture enemy weapon)	
28	Cpl Phillip Davey	SA	Offensive	
29	Sgt William Ruthven	VIC	Offensive (Symbolic: rally troops & capture enemy weapon)	
30	TL/Cpl Thomas Axford	WA	Offensive	
31	Pte Henry Dalziel	QLD	Symbolic (captured enemy weapon & allowed group to advance)	
32	Cpl Walter Brown	TAS	Offensive	
33	Lt Albert Borella	SA (NT)	Symbolic (rally troops)	
34	Lt Alfred Gaby	TAS	Offensive (Symbolic: rally troops)	
35	Pte Robert Beatham	VIC	Offensive	
36	Sgt Percy Statton	TAS	Offensive	
37	Lt William Joynt	VIC	Symbolic (rally troops)	
38	Lt Lawrence McCarthy (Laurence)	WA	Offensive (Symbolic: capture enemy weapon)	
39	L/Cpl Bernard Gordon	NSW	Offensive	
40	Pte George Cartwright	NSW	Offensive (Symbolic: capture enemy weapon)	
41	Pte Robert Mactier	VIC	Offensive	
42	Sgt Albert Lowerson	VIC	Symbolic (rally troops)	
43	Lt Edgar Towner	QLD	Offensive (Secondary: reconnassiance)	

	Name & Rank	Home State	Categorising VCs
44	Pte William Currey	NSW	Offensive (Symbolic: capture enemy wepaon)
45	Cpl Arthur Hall	NSW	Offensive (Symbolic: capture enemy weapon)
46	Temp Cpl Alexander Buckley	NSW	Offensive
47	Temp Cpl Lawrence Weathers	SA	Offensive
48	Sgt Maurice Buckley (Gerald Sexton)	NSW	Offensive
49	Pte James Woods	WA	Offensive
50	Maj Blair Wark	NSW	Symbolic (rally troops)
51	Pte Edward Ryan (John)	NSW	Offensive
52	Lt Joseph Maxwell	NSW	Offensive
53	Lt George Ingram	VIC	Symbolic (rally troops & capture enemy weapon & Offensive)

APPENDIX F: *Summary Details of AIF Victoria Cross Recipients from the Western Front in relation to promotions following the award of Victoria Cross.*

	Name & Rank	Were they promoted to officer: N/A means they were either officer already or posthumously awarded		
1	Pte John Jackson (William)	No		**1916**
2	Pte John Leak	No		
3	Lt Arthur Blackburn	N/A		
4	Pte Thomas Cooke	N/A		
5	Sgt Claud Castleton	N/A		
6	Pte Martin O'Meara	No	promoted to Sgt	
7	Capt Henry Murray	N/A		**1917**
8	Capt Percy Cherry	N/A		
9	Pte Jørgen Jensen	No	promoted to L/Cpl, Cpl & Sgt	
10	Capt Ernest Newland	N/A		
11	Sgt John Whittle	No		
12	Pte Thomas Kenny (Bede)	No	promoted to L/Cpl	
13	Lt Charles Pope	N/A		
14	Cpl George Howell	no	Staff Sgt in WWII	
15	Lt Rupert Moon	N/A		
16	Pte John Carroll	No	promoted to L/Cpl	
17	Capt Robert Grieve	N/A		
18	2nd Lt Frederick Birks	N/A		
19	Pte Reginald Inwood (Roy)	No	promoted to L/Cpl, Cpl & Sgt	
20	Sgt John Dwyer	Yes	promoted to RSM in April 1918, 2/Lt in May & Lt August	
21	Pte Patrick Bugden	N/A		
22	Sgt Lewis McGee	N/A		
23	L/Cpl Walter Peeler	No	promoted to Sgt in July 1918	
24	Capt Clarence Jeffries	N/A		
25	Sgt Stanley McDougall	No		**1918**
26	Lt Percy Storkey	N/A		
27	Lt Clifford Sadlier	N/A		
28	Cpl Phillip Davey	No		
29	Sgt William Ruthven	Yes	2/Lt	
30	TL/Cpl Thomas Axford	No	promoted to Cpl & Sgt	
31	Pte Henry Dalziel	No		
32	Cpl Walter Brown	No	promoted to Sgt	
33	Lt Albert Borella	N/A		
34	Lt Alfred Gaby	N/A		
35	Pte Robert Beatham	N/A		
36	Sgt Percy Statton	No		
37	Lt William Joynt	N/A		
38	Lt Lawrence McCarthy (Laurence)	N/A		
39	L/Cpl Bernard Gordon	No		
40	Pte George Cartwright	No		
41	Pte Robert Mactier	N/A		
42	Sgt Albert Lowerson	No		
43	Lt Edgar Towner	N/A		

	Name & Rank	Were they promoted to officer:	
44	Pte William Currey	No	
45	Cpl Arthur Hall	No	promoted to T/Sgt
46	Temp Cpl Alexander Buckley	N/A	
47	Temp Cpl Lawrence Weathers	No	
48	Sgt Maurice Buckley (Gerald Sexton)	No	
49	Pte James Woods	No	
50	Maj Blair Wark	N/A	
51	Pte Edward Ryan (John)	No	
52	Lt Joseph Maxwell	N/A	
53	Lt George Ingram	N/A	

APPENDIX G: *AIF Casualty Figures and Victoria Cross Figures*

AIF Enlistment Figures for the First World War, 1914-1918 per State

	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918
NSW	20761	69353	42168	17903	13845
VIC	14847	45112	33878	11326	7236
QLD	6150	22503	19745	6065	3242
SA	4812	13597	10043	4298	2209
WA	4096	10230	12845	3989	1071
TAS	1895	5117	5673	1520	1280

[780]

A Comparison of Western Front Battlefield Cost versus Victoria Crosses

	Casualties	VCs		% Casualties	% VCs
Jan-Mar 1916	17	0	Jan-Mar 1916	0	0
Apr-Jun 1916	2988	1	Apr-Jun 1916	1.6	1.9
Jul-Sep 1916	32128	5	Jul-Sep 1916	17.7	9.4
Oct-Dec 1916	8242	0	Oct-Dec 1916	4.5	0
Jan-Mar 1917	9396	2	Jan-Mar 1917	5.2	3.8
Apr-Jun 1917	26692	9	Apr-Jun 1917	14.6	17
Jul-Sep 1917	16067	4	Jul-Sep 1917	8.8	7.5
Oct-Dec 1917	23389	3	Oct-Dec 1917	12.8	5.7
Jan-Mar 1918	10522	1	Jan-Mar 1918	5.8	1.9
Apr-Jun 1918	20744	4	Apr-Jun 1918	11.4	7.5
Jul-Sep 1918	29320	22	Jul-Sep 1918	16.1	41.5
Oct-Dec 1918	2795	2	Oct-Dec 1918	1.5	3.8
TOTAL:	182250	53			

[781]

[780] Beaumont, *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, pp. 108-110.
[781] Beaumont, *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, pp. 274-275; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 51-196.

Cost of War Compared to number of VCs
% of AIF Casualties on the Western Front, 1916-1918 % of VCs

Year	1916	1917	1918	Total:
Casualties	43325	75544	63381	182250
VCs	6	18	29	53

Year	1916	1917	1918
% Casualties/year	24	41	35
% VCs/year	11	34	55

[782]

However, AIF Casualty figures in total do include soldiers from all Fronts as listed below:

AIF Casualties per Theatre of War, 1914-1918

	Death	Wounded	POW
Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (Gallipoli)	8159	17924	102
Western Front	46960	131406	3853
Egyptian Expeditionary Force	1282	2617	129
United Kingdom	1938	1	N/A

[783]

[782] Beaumont, *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, pp. 274-275; & Staunton, *Victoria Cross*, pp. 51-196.
[783] Beaumont, *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, p. 277.

Appendix H: 1917 *Recruitment Poster identifying the Victoria Cross.*

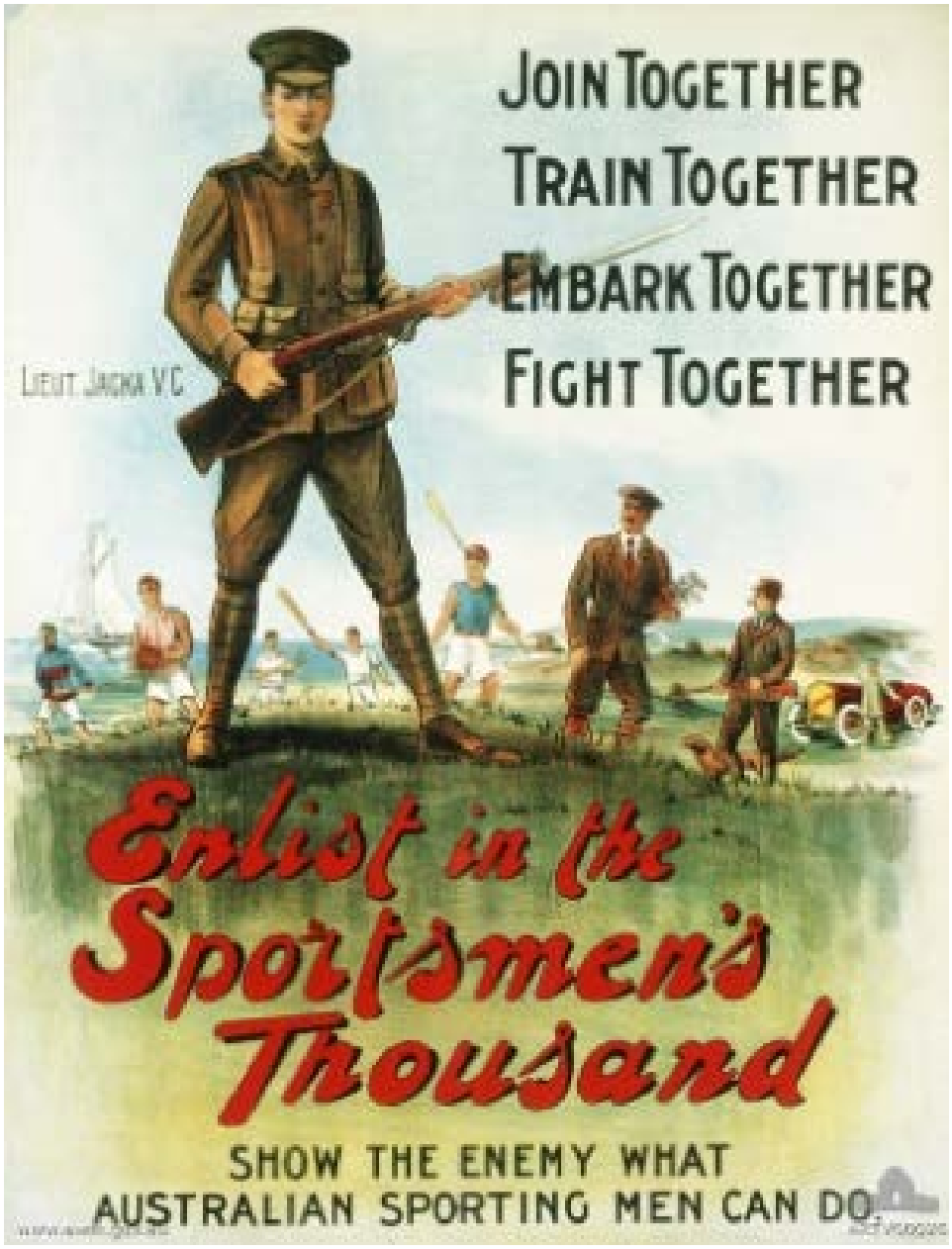
'Man you are wanted!'

[784]

[784] *AWM Collections Database*, ARTV05005, www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp, date consulted: 9 October 2008.

Appendix I: 1917 *Recruitment Poster identifying Albert Jacka, VC.*

'Join together, train together, embark together, and fight together … Enlist in the Sportsman's Thousand … Show the enemy what Australian sporting men can do'



785

[785] *AWM Collections Database*, ARTV00026, AWM, www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp, date consulted: 9 October 2008.

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UNPUBLISHED OFFICIAL RECORDS

AUSTRALIA

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA. A range of items under the following series, in reading rooms in both Canberra and Melbourne were examined:

Canberra Reading Room

Series A2	Correspondence files, annual single number series.
Series A435	Class 4 Correspondence files relating to Naturalisation.
Series A457	Correspondence files, multiple number series, first system.
Series A458	Correspondence files, multiple number series, second system.
Series A461	Correspondence files, multiple number series (third system).
Series A462	Correspondence files, multiple series, fourth system.
Series A463	Correspondence files, annual single number series with occasional 'G' (General Reps).
Series A471	Courts Martial files [including war crimes trials], single number series.
Series A649	Correspondence files, multiple series, Classes 600-602 (unclassified).
Series A659	Correspondence files, class 1 (general, passports).
Series A664	Correspondence files, multiple series (Class 401).
Series A705	Correspondence files, multiple number (Melbourne) series (Primary numbers 1-323).
Series A981	Correspondence files, alphabetical series.
Series A1194	Library Material, Single Accession Number Series with Decimal Classification.
Series A1566	Applications for Tasmanian Trade Marks.
Series A1838	Correspondence files, multiple number series.
Series A1861	Application for Artistic Copyright (with exhibits).
Series A2481	Correspondence files, annual number system with ‘A’ prefix (mainly relating to the administration of repatriation schemes).
Series A2487	Correspondence files, annual single number series.
Series A2654	Volumes of Military Orders, Australian Army Orders and Military Board Instructions.
Series A3211	Correspondence files, annual single number series.
Series A3688	Correspondence files, multiple series with 'R' (Army HQ, Canberra) infix.
Series A4940	Menzies & Holt Ministries - Cabinet files 'C' single number series.
Series A5954	The Shedden Collection' (Shedden / Dept of Defence & researching history of Aust Defence Policy).
Series A6006	Folders of copies of Cabinet papers.
Series A6661	Correspondence and printed matter arranged according to subject (‘Special Portfolio’).

Series A8681	Public Relations Bulletins from the Department of Air, Directorate of Public Relations.
Series A11731	Applications for Registration of Victorian Trade Marks.
Series A11803	Governor General's correspondence relating to the war of 1914-1918 (War files).
Series A11804	General Correspondence of Governor-General (excluding war files).
Series B883	Second Australian Imperial Forces Personnel Dossiers, 1939-1947.
Series B884	Citizen's Military Forces Personnel Dossiers, 1939-1947.
Series B2455	First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1920.
Series CP30/3	Correspondence of Joseph Aloysius Lyons as Prime Minister.
Series M1415	Correspondence of John Curtin as Prime Minister, general alphabetical series.
Series M3580	Diaries, appointment books and notebooks of Sir Joseph and Dame Mary Cook.
Series SP112/1	General correspondence files.

Melbourne Reading Room

Series A2023	Correspondence files, multiple number series 'A', 'B', 'D' or 'E' prefix.
Series B73	Personal case files, World War I.
Series B1535	Correspondence files, multiple number series.
Series MP151/1	Correspondence files, multiple number series ('201' series).
Series MP169/5	Index to Units of the Australian Imperial Force.
Series MP367/1	General Correspondence Files.
Series MP390/5	AIF Orders.
Series MP390/6	Card Subject Index to AIF Orders.
Series MP508/1	General Correspondence files, multiple number series.
Series MP727/1	Group (Army Formations) correspondence files, multiple number series with 'Gp' prefix.
Series MP742/1	General and civil staff correspondence files and Army personnel files, multiple number series.
Series MP927/1	General & civil staff correspondence files & Army personnel files, multiple number series.
Series MP1049/1	Secret & confidential correspondence files, annual single number series with 'O' infix.
Series MT1131/1	General and civil staff correspondence files and Army personnel files, multiple number series.
Series MT1384/2	Registers of Issued Medals & Badges 1939/45 War, 1914/18 War.
Series MT1487/1	Service Records & Correspondence concerning Australians serving with other Imperial forces, WW1.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL, CANBERRA. A range of items under the following series were examined:

Official Records

Series AWM 4	Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries, 1914-1918 War.
Series AWM 16	Australian War Records Section registry files and register of file titles.
Series AWM 18	Australian Imperial Force Administrative Headquarters registry, 'Records Registry' files.
Series AWM 21	Records of the Assistant Provost Marshal, 1914-18 War.
Series AWM 25	Written records, 1914-1918 War.
Series AWM 27	Records arranged according to AWM Library subject classification.
Series AWM 28	Recommendation files for honours and awards, AIF, 1914-1918 War (*Note:* AWM 28 has been digitised in a mostly complete state. Consequently not all items in this series were sighted. All relevant recommendations for honours and awards [notably Victoria Cross] were consulted on the database available on the Australian War Memorial website).
Series AWM 38	Official History, 1914-18 War: Records of C E W Bean, Official Historian.
Series AWM 62	Southern Command registry files.
Series AWM 92	Private Records.

Private Records

3DRL 2222	Pearce, Sir George Foster.
3DRL 2316	Monash, Sir John (General) KCMG, KCB, 1865 – 1931.
3DRL 2574	Ferguson, Sir Ronald M (Governor General).
3DRL 2600	Hobbs, Joseph John Talbot (General, Sir, b.1864 d. n1938) KCB, KCMG, VD, GOC Australian Corps.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA, CANBERRA. A range of items under the following series were examined:

Manuscripts and Microfilm

Mfm G1228 – 1239	Papers of Ronald Crauford Munro Ferguson, 1912 – 1935.
Mfm PRO 7230 – 7250	Records relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, 1860 – 1954 Registered papers, general series [WO 32], 1860 – 1954.
MS 1884	Papers of Sir John Monash.
MS1538	Papers of William Morris Hughes, 1875 – ca. 1979.
MS 5172	Papers of Cyril Brudenell B. White.
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15 June 1917.
27 June 1917.
28 June 1917.
6 July 1917.
11 July 1917.
10 November 1917.
27 November 1917.
22 December 1917.
8 June 1918.
19 August 1918.
17 December 1918.
28 December 1918.
6 January 1919.
8 January 1919.

West Australian, 13 September 1916.
12 July 1918.
19 August 1918.
12 July 1918.
2 November 1918.
16 December 1918.
17 December 1918.
28 December 1918.

WEBSITES

The following websites were examined:

The AIF Project, http*://deepthought.hass.adfa.edu.au:8080/index.htm* and www.aif.adfa.edu.au:8080/showPerson?key=surname/initials/service number (date consulted: 7 May 2006)

ASAC Australia: Medals, http://www.asacaustralia.com/medals.htm (date consulted: 26 April 2005)

Australian Dictionary of Biography – Online Edition: John Wren (1871-1953) www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A120651b.htm (date consulted: 14 January 2009)

Australian War Graves Photographic Archive, First World War 1914-1918, http://www.australianwargraves.org/worldwarone.html (date consulted: 31 May 2006)

AWM Collections Database, www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp, (date consulted: 9 October 2008)

AWM Encyclopaedia, http://awm-public/encyclopaedia/vic_cross.htm, (date consulted: 24 April 2005)

AWM 28, Honours and Awards (Recommendations: First World War), www.awm-public/database/awm28/index.asp, (date consulted 22 April 2007)

Bravery Awards at Gallipoli, www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/bravery.html (date consulted: 21 May 2006)

History of the Victoria Cross, http://www.victoriacross.org.uk/aahistor.htm (date consulted: 11 May 2006)

The Victoria Cross Reference http://www.victoriacross.net/medal.asp *(date consulted: 6 November 2005)*

Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, http://www.vvaa.org.au/med-vc.htm (date consulted: 31 May 2006)

ORAL HISTORY

The following personal interviews were conducted to assist in the research for this thesis:

Interview:	Mr. Anthony Staunton	Commemorations Group, Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs and expert in Australian Victoria Crosses. Date: 12 October 2006.
Interview:	Dr. Peter Stanley	Director of the Centre for Historical Research National Museum of Australia. Date: 21 December 2007 & 3 September 2008.
Interview:	Mr. Graham Wilson	Staff Officer Policy Research, Directorate of Honours and Awards, Australian Government Department of Defence. Date: 12 October 2006.