

War Office,
18th December 1917.

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

Lt.-Col. Arthur Drummond Borton, D.S.O., Lond. R.

For most conspicuous bravery and leadership. Under most difficult conditions, in darkness and in an unknown country, he deployed his battalion for attack, and at dawn led his attacking companies against a strongly held position.

When the leading waves were checked by a withering machine-gun fire, Lt.-Col. Borton showed an utter contempt of danger, and moved freely up and down his lines under heavy fire. Reorganising his command, he led his men forward, and captured the position.

At a later stage of the fight, he led a party of volunteers against a battery of field guns in action at point-blank range, capturing the guns and the detachments.

His fearless leadership was an inspiring example to the whole Brigade.

Maj. Alexander Malins Lafone, late Yeo.

For most conspicuous bravery, leadership and self-sacrifice when holding a position for over seven hours against vastly superior enemy forces. All this time the enemy were shelling his position heavily, making it very difficult to see. In one attack, when the enemy cavalry charged his flank, he drove them back with heavy losses. In another charge they left fifteen casualties within twenty yards of his trench, one man, who reached the trench, being bayoneted by Maj. Lafone himself.

When all his men, with the exception of three, had been hit and the trench which he was holding was so full of wounded that it was difficult to move and fire, he ordered those who could walk to move to a trench slightly in the rear, and from his own position maintained a most heroic resistance. When finally surrounded and charged by the enemy, he stepped into the open and continued the fight until he was mortally wounded and fell unconscious.

His cheerfulness and courage were a splendid inspiration to his men, and by his leadership and devotion he was enabled to maintain his position, which he had been ordered to hold at all costs.

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 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.

Lieutenant Robert Shankland, Canadian Infantry.

For most conspicuous bravery and resource in action under critical and adverse conditions.

Having gained a position he rallied the remnant of his own platoon and men of other companies, disposed them to command the ground in front, and inflicted heavy casualties upon the retreating enemy. Later, he dispersed a counter-attack, thus enabling supporting troops to come up unmolested.

He then personally communicated to Battalion Headquarters an accurate and valuable report as to the position on the Brigade frontage, and after doing so rejoined his command and carried on until relieved.

His courage and splendid example inspired all ranks and coupled with his great gallantry and skill undoubtedly saved a very critical situation.

Lieutenant Henry Strachan, M.C., Can. Cav.

For most conspicuous bravery and leadership during operations.

He took command of the squadron of his regiment when the squadron leader, approaching the enemy front line at a gallop, was killed. Lt. Strachan led the squadron through the enemy line of machine-gun posts, and then, with the surviving men, led the charge on the enemy battery, killing seven of the gunners with his sword. All the gunners having been killed and the battery silenced, he rallied his men and fought his way back at night through the enemy's line, bringing all unwounded men safely in, together with 15 prisoners.

The operation—which resulted in the silencing of an enemy battery, the killing of the whole battery personnel and many infantry, and the cutting of three main lines of telephone communication two miles in rear of the enemy's front line—was only rendered possible by the outstanding gallantry and fearless leading of this officer.

2nd Lieutenant Clement Robertson, late R. W. Surrey R., Special Reserve (T./Lieutenant, A./Captain, Tank Corps).

For most conspicuous bravery in leading his Tanks in attack under heavy shell, machine-gun and rifle fire, over ground which had been heavily ploughed by shell fire. Captain Robertson, knowing the risk of the Tanks missing the way, continued to lead them on foot, guiding them carefully and patiently towards their objective, although he must have known that his action would almost inevitably cost him his life.

This gallant officer was killed after his objective had been reached, but his skilful leading had already ensured successful action.

His utter disregard of danger and devotion to duty afford an example of outstanding valour.