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The Publicized Victoria Cross: A History of the Meaning of Heroism, Institutional Honor and the Medal of the People

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Abstract: A change in the nature and character of the Victoria Cross recipient, as presented to the public, is evident with a focus on the publications surrounding each newly awarded hero. The following research follows this presentation, that of the warlike hero to British society, through the lens of *The London Gazette* and other outlets of the commercial press. While similar academic literature focuses on certain time periods of the award's history, this study combines all temporal focus points, in order to display the rate of and eventual gravity of change. Analysis of the change in tone of the many different outlets of Victoria Cross publication also allows comparison to the increasing mortality rate in war. The Victoria Cross soldier is simultaneously subject to more effective efforts of extermination, and to a public more interested in the full story of the soldier's life. The difference between the public figure of the Victoria Cross recipient from the nineteenth century is compared to that of the public figure of this century, with a focus on the development of the press throughout the short history of the Victoria Cross. The study of the change of this public figure attempts to provide an understanding of the effects that multiple twentieth century wars and technological developments had on the idea of the hero.

“Lieutenant Cecil W. Buckley, Lieutenant Hugh T. Burgoyne, and Mr. John Roberts, gunner, volunteered to land alone, and fire the stores, which offer I accepted knowing the imminent risk there would be in landing a party in presence of a superior force, and out of gun-shot of the ships.”¹ These words of Captain Lyons were published in an 1857 issue of *The London Gazette*. Lyons had recommended these men for a Victoria Cross, a new medal awarded reserved for the most gallant of heroes. The foundational document, “The Original Warrant Instituting the Victoria Cross,” deemed it the most prestigious of all other medals, to be placed higher in rank than all others.² Alongside this designation were the logistics behind the institution, which included the provision that anyone witnessing an act of ‘bravery in Action or distinction before an enemy’ could recommend someone for the Victoria Cross so long as they submitted the recommendation to the person in command.³ It also mandated that for each new Victoria Cross recipient a citation must appear in the official government register of *The London Gazette*.⁴ Buckley’s citation is the first to appear in the *Gazette*, in a long list of eighty-five other recipients. These citations set the precedent for Victoria Cross writing in *The London Gazette*. Since 1857, all other citations have built upon what was established with the first mention. What, then, were the defining characteristics of this first mention of Victoria Cross heroism?

Lyons, the witness, was referred to twice in the issue, connecting these three men to a single action. And just as Captain Lyons was cited as a witness, all other Victoria Cross recipients printed in this issue also refer to a witness.⁵ The witness’ words were used to register the actions. Buckley, Burgoyne and Roberts, were observed as heroes by a person on the front lines, and this is made very clear to the reader. Another important characteristic to note is that Buckley’s citation, the first to appear

¹ William Buckley, "No. 21971". *The London Gazette*. (24 February, 1857). pg. 649

² From, “Original Warrant Instituting the Victoria Cross, 29 January 1856,” as printed in Melvin Charles Smith, *Awarded for Valour: A History of the Victoria Cross and the Evolution of British Heroism*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008) pg. 207

³ See especially Clause 8, “Original Warrant Instituting the Victoria Cross, 29 January 1856,” as printed in Melvin Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 207-208

⁴ See Clause 3, “Original Warrant Instituting the Victoria Cross, 29 January 1856,” as printed in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*

⁵ See the rest of the same issue, "No. 21971". *The London Gazette*. 24 February 1857. p. 649-663

in the issue, is the longest of the eighty-five other Victoria Cross recipients, but it also mentions the names of other recipients who come later in the issue. Burgoyne and Roberts appear directly after Buckley's mention, receiving one sentence each; the reader is referred back to the longer first report.⁶ His longer story serves as a synopsis of the event which earned the other men their Victoria Cross. Some passages that follow are longer, but like the long report of Buckley, these name other participants and refer to previous persons' citations.⁷ In the first mentions of the Victoria Cross in *The London Gazette*, the witness is always named, and most of the eighty-five recipients received short citations of one to two sentences.

1. Introduction

The following is an examination of the way in which heroism has changed since this first public mention of the Victoria Cross in 1857. The passages from *The London Gazette* here are short, and the extra information in Buckley's passage serves only to establish facts: the recommending witness, the names of other soldiers involved, the sequence of events. The first ever Victoria Cross publication was one way heroism was elaborated in this time. A tradition of honor and award already existed and was tied to heroism, but these eighty-five passages set a foundation for a new medium of heroic writing, the Victoria Cross. All future publications of the Victoria Cross have built off of the foundation of this original list. Not only the *Gazette*, but other commercial press sources, like other, non-government affiliated newspapers, have contributed to the institution of the Victoria Cross. Through its artistic depiction, through its publication in newspapers and books, and through its appearance in film, the Victoria Cross has been associated with a type of heroism defined by commercial press sources as well as by the government register of the *Gazette*. This date, 1857, marks a beginning from which all

⁶ See the next page of the same issue, "No. 21971". *The London Gazette*. 24 February 1857. pg. 650

⁷ See the rest of the same issue, "No. 21971". *The London Gazette*. 24 February 1857. p. 649-663

succeeding styles of Victoria Cross reporting can be analyzed. From Buckley's first, very factually based, Victoria Cross citation, to the Victoria Cross medals awarded today, a historical development of heroism can be observed within the institution of the Victoria Cross.

The *Gazette* and the commercial press combined during the history of the Victoria Cross to establish a characteristic definition of heroism. In order to reach a broader perspective on the definition and image of heroism generally, it is necessary to answer the question of how these two sources changed over time. How did the style of writing change in the Victoria Cross citations of *The London Gazette*? How did the commercial press report on Victoria Cross recipients? How did the two compare, and did they have a relationship? Combining the answers with the existing scholarly body of work allows the asking of broader questions about the evolution of heroism. Who had the power to describe and define heroism? What type of relationship did the hero have with the creators of these descriptions of heroism? What kind of relationship did the hero have with the public? How have these power structures and relationships changed? In what ways did the definition of bravery, gallantry, and what it meant to be a hero change over the short, almost one-hundred and fifty year period of the Victoria Cross's existence? The two major sources from the time, the *Gazette* and the commercial press, can be used to reflect on the way heroism was defined in different periods of time since the creation of the Victoria Cross. First, though, the history of the Victoria Cross as an institution must be understood. In the next section a brief history of the Victoria Cross will be established. After the institutional history of the Victoria Cross has been introduced, the press sources which worked to affect the meaning of heroism attached to the medal will be introduced.

2. Methodology and Background to Analysis

As mentioned above, the "Original Warrant" established the Victoria Cross. As the defining document of the institution, the "Original Warrant" provides the foundation upon which it is further defined by

the *Gazette* and by the commercial press. In addition to the recommendation procedure and the mandate for *The London Gazette*, it included rules regarding the Victoria Cross in fifteen clauses. Among these are basic provisions: the small bronze style, the color of the ribbon from which the Cross is fixed, the short inscription ‘For Valour’ on each Cross.⁸ The warrant contained the provision for a second act of heroism. If anyone already honored with a Cross were to again be approved for a Victoria Cross, a bronze bar should be ‘attached to the riband by which the Cross is suspended and for every additional act of bravery an additional Bar may be affixed.’⁹ To date, only three men were awarded a bar to the Victoria Cross, all of whom are mentioned in later chapters.

The “Original Warrant” also included provisions that were subject to greater criticism. The seventh clause of the document allowed for a high ranking Admiral or Commanding General Officer to confer the award on the spot.¹⁰ The power of field confirmation was asserted for the first time when a soldier of the Indian Rebellion awarded the Victoria Cross by his commanding officer, who just so happened to be his father.¹¹ The recommendation procedure was subject to approval by every level of the chain of command, including by the Queen herself.¹² This first test of the field recommendation went through without being reversed, as did the majority of all Victoria Cross recommendations. Most recommendations before the First World War were eventually approved for the Victoria Cross; a fact evidenced by examining the historical change in the rate of awards.

The two highest periods of award were the nineteenth century and World War One. In the years preceding the First World War 522 Crosses were awarded; World War I surpassed this with 628 Victoria

⁸ From, “Original Warrant Instituting the Victoria Cross, 29 January 1856,” as printed in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 207

⁹ See Clause 4, “Original Warrant Instituting the Victoria Cross, 29 January 1856,” as printed in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 207

¹⁰ See Clause 7, “Original Warrant Instituting the Victoria Cross, 29 January 1856,” as printed in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 208

¹¹ Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 43-74

¹² See Clause 6 and 7, “Original Warrant Instituting the Victoria Cross, 29 January 1856,” as printed in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 208

Cross awards given in a far shorter expanse of time.¹³ These high numbers mean that a high number of recommendations were being approved for the Victoria Cross, they do not speak for levels of rejection of the award. What is clear, though, is that whatever the level of rejection was during this period, the period from 1857 to the close of the First World War, rejection became a stronger force within the recommendation procedure. After WWI, a 1920 amendment to the “Original Warrant” added the necessity for ‘conclusive proof as far as the circumstances of the case will allow, and; attestation of the act’ in any recommendation.¹⁴ The same amendment also limits the amount of possible Crosses for certain actions. For a unit under the size of one hundred men, only three soldiers could be awarded the medal; for a unit exceeding one hundred but not exceeding two hundred men, four soldiers could receive the award, other actions happening in greater numbers were subject to special consideration by the Crown.¹⁵ This 1920 amendment was a tightening of the recommendation process, and the effect was that the Second World War, a war of greater scale than WWI in terms of number of troops involved, saw considerably less Victoria Crosses, with one-hundred and eighty-two awards given.¹⁶ Since World War Two, only fourteen Victoria Crosses have been awarded.¹⁷

Additional amendments have changed certain provisions of the Victoria Cross since its creation. The “Original Warrant” was amended fourteen times, sometimes in a complete revision of all original clauses, as is the case of the 1920 amendment, and sometimes with the addition of only one point.¹⁸ Such a point was elaborated in 1911, with a warrant that guaranteed the eligibility of native Indian

¹³See the tables listed in, Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. vi

¹⁴ See Clause 8 of, “New Warrant: Superceding All Previous Regulations, 22 May 1920,” as printed in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 217

¹⁵ See Clause 9 of, “New Warrant: Superceding All Previous Regulations, 22 May 1920,” as printed in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 217

¹⁶ Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 188-189

¹⁷ Gary Mead, *Victoria’s Cross: The Untold Story of Britain’s Highest Award for Bravery*, (London: Atlantic Books, 2015) pg. 214, plus one additional award since its publication, see “Joshua Leaky, No. 61154”. The London Gazette, (26 February, 2015) pg. 3466

¹⁸See the entire “Appendix: The Victoria Cross Warrants” as printed in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 207-229

troops of the Indian Army.¹⁹ Before this, native Indian troops were ineligible, and only their white commanding officers could receive the award; one of the first rejected recommendations was the recommendation of Duffadar Gunkut Ras Deokur, who “was ineligible for the Cross because he was eligible for the Indian Order of Merit.”²⁰ Other amendments made similar inclusions, like extending the eligibility of the award to sailors of the East India Company, and to those of the merchant navy.²¹ Alongside all other fourteen amending warrants, the 1920 amendments stands out as the most important. It specifically limited the award by number, and scrutinized the recommendation process. In addition, it also ordained the ability to award the Victoria Cross posthumously.²² Although the award had been awarded before to soldiers who had died during their heroic action, the ability to award the Cross posthumously had never been officially proclaimed. Its official acceptance helps to re-define the Cross as an award linked exclusively to violent action.

The standards set by the “Original Warrant” and the 1920 amendment serve as the basis for all analysis of the media reports on the Victoria Cross. The historical changes in *The London Gazette* and the commercial press will always refer back to these changes in the provisions of the Victoria Cross. Especially evident will be a difference in the hero as defined in the press before 1920, and after. The decision to restrict the award with this amendment should be seen as the catalyzing force behind this change, however; the new hero of the twentieth century has roots in the First World War. It is during the First World War that changes in both the style of *Gazette* citations and of commercial press depictions act together to redefine the meaning of heroism within the institution of the Victoria Cross. These changes become more pronounced during the Second World War and after.

The London Gazette and the commercial press are the sources used to describe the changing

¹⁹See the “Amending Warrant: Native Troops of the Indian Establishment, 21 October 1911” as printed in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 214

²⁰Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 62

²¹See the entire “Appendix: The Victoria Cross Warrants” as printed in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 207-229

²² See Clause 4 of, “New Warrant: Superceding All Previous Regulations, 22 May 1920,” as printed in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 216

nature of the Victoria Cross hero in the following sections. The most important periods are times when changes in the *Gazette* and in the commercial press merge to challenge and re-define the hero. These mergers are organized into chapters. The first chapter will discuss the heroism of the nineteenth century and of the First World War. The second chapter will discuss heroism during the Second World War. The third chapter will discuss heroism after WWII and the heroism of the modern day. Each chapter analyzes the way in which heroism was defined by the merger of these two bodies of Victoria Cross reporting, and they describe the change from the previous period to the next. Analysis of these sources will arrive at conclusion about the definition of heroism in each of the three periods. Institutional changes, like the 1920 amendment, set a foundation on which any discussion of the *Gazette* and the commercial press must take place. In addition to this foundation, a body of scholarly work has also contributed to the understanding of the Victoria Cross, and also factors into this discussion of the hero as defined in the press.

3. Academic Literature

Older histories on the Victoria Cross focused on providing basic narrative; these are histories of single soldiers and how they won the medal. They do not offer analytical input. Peter de la Billière offers a chronological history of Victoria Cross recipients in *Supreme courage: Heroic Stories From 150 Years of the Victoria Cross*.²³ His is a history told first-hand, useful as a source of interviews, but lacking in analytical insight. It moves seamlessly from one witness account to the next. Bryan Perett's *For Valour: Victoria Cross and Medal of Honor Badges* is similar to this work in that it reports only narrative history, but his introduction is insightful for its comparison of the Victoria Cross to the American

²³General Peter de la Billière, *Supreme Courage: Heroic Stories from 150 Years of the Victoria Cross*, (Abacus: London, 2005)

Congressional Medal of Honor Badge.²⁴

A comparison of the Victoria Cross to the Congressional Medal of Honor is useful as a principle primarily because of their simultaneous development in the mechanized warfare of the twentieth century. S. Brock Blomberg, Gregory D. Hess and Yaron Raviv have, in a statistical analysis of the Congressional Medal of Honor, shown how the rate of award of the Congressional Medal of Honor has decreased with time.²⁵ When shown against the exponentially increasing rate of casualties in increasingly mechanized war, the conclusion is that American soldiers of more recent wars are less likely to be awarded for their heroic actions than soldiers from earlier wars.²⁶ This historical development is similar to the changes in award practices of the Victoria Cross, and the transition to mechanized warfare at the beginning of the twentieth century also plays a role in the historical development of heroism and the Victoria Cross.

The most recent and significant academic book to be published, *Victoria's Crosses: The Untold Story of Britain's Highest Award for Bravery*, by Gary Mead, is castigating to the institution, accusing it of a latent policy of arbitrary selection.²⁷ Mead's investigation into the National Archive's original recommendation papers point to some deserving soldiers who never got the Victoria Cross and to the questionable practice of awarding a similar amount of Victoria Crosses during two wars of differing consequence.²⁸ Histories of the Victoria Cross have typically focused on the side of narrative history, which reads more like an interview than a history. Mead's work uses narrative as well, but his analysis is achieved by describing the similarities between Victoria Cross narratives and narratives of soldiers

²⁴Bryan Perett, *For Valour: Victoria Cross and Medal of Honor Badges*, (Cassel: London, 2003)

²⁵S. Brock Blomberg, Gregory D. Hess and Yaron Raviv, "Where have all the heroes gone? A rational-choice perspective on heroism" *Public Choice* 141 (2009)

²⁶Over one thousand more awards were given in the Civil War than in World War Two; the difference in the deployment of troops, however, is at almost a 8:1 ratio, with about 2 million troops deployed during the American Civil War, and 16 million deployed during World War Two. from S. Brock Blomberg, Gregory D. Hess and Yaron Raviv, "Where have all the heroes gone? A rational-choice perspective on heroism" *Public Choice* 141 (2009) pg. 512

²⁷ Gary Mead, *Victoria's Cross: The Untold Story of Britain's Highest Award for Bravery*, (London: Atlantic Books, 2015)

²⁸ Mead, *Victoria's Cross* pg. 214-248

who were never awarded the Cross despite acting bravely in battle. His conclusion is an indictment of the institution for a hidden agenda, for a policy of arbitrary selection. The following is not an indictment of the Victoria Cross for any arbitrary selection processes. Mead does point to a heavily restricted modern day Victoria Cross, which does factor into this discussion of the change in the meaning of history.

A less denouncing point, founded on the analysis and classification of all Victoria Cross recipients, was elaborated a few years earlier by Melvin Charles Smith in *Awarded for Valour: A History of the Victoria Cross and the Evolution of British Heroism*.²⁹ The conclusion of this book points to a major split between the Victoria Cross of the Victorian age, roughly before the onset of WWI, and the Victoria Cross of the twentieth century and beyond. His implication regarding the “Victorian Victoria Cross” will support the analysis of the change in the *Gazette* citations and in the commercial press between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This idea points to a reconstructed image in the twentieth century:

'In the history of the Victoria Cross we see a momentous transformation in the nature of institutional heroism. In the Victorian period the Victoria Cross encapsulated and reified a romantic military ideal with a strong humanitarian component. The same officials responsible for evaluating heroic deeds were, in addition, unable to offer a definition of heroism; like art, like beauty, it was in the eye of the beholder. This changed forever during the First World War as the Cross became inextricably linked to aggressive, enemy-killing actions. By the end of the war military officials could state with confidence that winning the Victoria Cross meant that you had to shoot someone.'³⁰

This statement is supported by the classification of all of the heroic actions of Victoria Cross recipients into categories. The historical second-place category of the humanitarian and life saving awards drops during the First World War, to almost zero in the coming decades.³¹ Smith also elaborates on the 1920 amendment, and its effect of creating a more violent Victoria Cross, linked more often with the death of

²⁹ Melvin Charles Smith, *Awarded for Valour: A History of the Victoria Cross and the Evolution of British Heroism*, (Palgrave Macmillian: Basingstoke, 2008)

³⁰ Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 202

³¹ See the tables listed in, Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. vi

both the enemy and the award recipient.³² Enemy-killing actions are increasingly the only heroic actions that are awarded with the Victoria Cross.

In this work, the changing style of *Gazette* and commercial press publications will be informed by Smith's idea of the "Victorian Victoria Cross." Surrounding his conception of the change from the Victorian-era to the twentieth century is a heroism that is more well known and well defined. The criteria moves from a state that is broad and not pinpointed, to an articulated state associated with violence. Unlike Smith, the following analysis of the Victoria Cross publications will highlight the change in the power of these publications to create and re-define the meaning of heroism. This research will also cover the twentieth century era more significantly; the focus of Smith is on the First World War and before.³³ Finally, this work will differ from Smith in its examination on the commercial press alongside the *Gazette*, an examination which will show how the modern Victoria Cross has been humanized through the increasing presence of its recipients' personal stories and photographs in the media. The analysis of *Gazette* and commercial press publications will use Smith's work largely through the citation of his categorization of each award. This includes the fall of the amount of medical, life saving Victoria Cross awards to those awards given for aggressive action, enemy-killing actions. It will rely on his work to inform each chapter on the trends in award giving patterns of the era, but will differ in its discussion of how these awards were presented by the press to the public.

Lara Kriegel elaborated on the many discrepancies within the award practices of the last one and a half centuries. With her article, "The Transforming Power of the Victoria Cross, 1856-2010" she draws heavily from Smith's book to indicate practices of a seemingly racist or sexist nature.³⁴ She raises concerns with the Victoria Cross never having been awarded to a woman, and the lack of awards

³²Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 188-189

³³Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 185

³⁴Lara Kriegel "The Transforming Power of the Victoria Cross, 1856-2010" in *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, Vol. 56 No. 4, Autumn 2016, (John Hopkins University Press, 2016) pg. 875-893

given to Indian service members and other persons of color in the nineteenth century.³⁵ She quotes Rudyard Kipling, who once exclaimed the democratic good of the medal being that it could be awarded from anyone from a 'duke' to a 'negro.'³⁶ He would be validated, but not immediately. Kriegel notes "colonial troops were ineligible for the honor until 1867, with Indian troops receiving consideration only in 1911."³⁷ Even after their consideration, the democratization of the award to include colonial members of the British service proceeded slowly. Smith also wrote of the "tremendous bias toward the military elite."³⁸ Any bias towards the military elite would easily pass over any non-white service member of a colonial army. Rank-and-file members of colonial armies were always commanded by white British officers.³⁹ Unlike Mead, Kriegel settles for a conclusion which is not openly defamatory, but it does make problematic the democratic value attributed to the Victoria Cross by Kipling. The discrepancies pointed out by Kriegel inform the image of the hero as discussed in this work, by providing an understanding as to why the image of the Victoria Cross hero was personified in, for the majority of its history, a white British officer. Her observations, the observations of other scholars and the institutional history of the Victoria Cross provide the background to which an analysis of the press sources surrounding the award can now be discussed.

³⁵ Kriegel, "The Transforming Power of the Victoria Cross" pg. 875-893

³⁶This is a direct quotation of Kipling, from, Lara Kriegel "The Transforming Power of the Victoria Cross" pg. 876

³⁷Kriegel, "The Transforming Power of the Victoria Cross" pg. 867

³⁸Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 103

³⁹Kriegel, "The Transforming Power of the Victoria Cross" pg. 867

Chapter One: The Victoria Cross to World War I

1. Introduction

From the beginning of its history, the Victoria Cross was associated with a heroism that was described by soldiers on the field of battle, eye-witnesses who would define heroism. Recommendations were often accepted, and this had the effect of empowering soldiers on the field to observe, to describe and ultimately to define heroism. Once accepted, the act of heroism would be published in the register of *The London Gazette* as a short citation of a few sentences per person. As was already noted in Buckley's citation, the recommending witness was also named in the early citations of *The London Gazette*. The inclusion of the witness ceased soon after the Crimean War, for example; an 1860 issue of the *Gazette*, which listed nine Victoria Cross recipients from the Indian Rebellion, included the less personal, 'Elected by the Officers of his Regiment'.⁴⁰ By the First World War, the recommending party had disappeared completely from Victoria Cross citations. Still, the style of the text did not change in the nineteenth century, and still only slightly during the First World War. The texts were rooted in fact. Few words were used to reiterate the subject's heroism, and the bulk of each citation concerned what had actually happened. These short citations reflected the original word, as spoken by the recommending witness.

The short, uncritical citations taken from eyewitness accounts were the only bits of information published by the government regarding the actions of their most prestigious heroes. This is a delegation to the original recommending witness; their observations were published and kept as the record of officially ordained heroism. Outside forces provided greater deliberation on some of these citations. Text and images, published by the commercial press of the nineteenth century, added a greater body of knowledge and understanding to a few of the Victoria Cross recipients. The writings of the news media

⁴⁰Non-Commissioned Officers and Privates were also listed among the recommending parties, from, "Multiple Subjects, No. 22347" *The London Gazette*. (20 January, 1860) pg. 178-179

of the day contributed to the fascination for heroism, in any way in which it might appear. This had the effect of bringing some actions to the forefront, while marginalizing others. Although the soldier was entrusted to define heroism on the spot, the commercial press did not give attention to each story. Some of the forgotten stories reflect the prejudices of Victorian times. Ultimately, the heroes as depicted in the commercial press stood for the broad understanding of the Victoria Cross, and the heroism that was associated with it.

2. The Victoria Cross Before the First World War

The vast majority of citations in *The London Gazette* remained relatively bare during the nineteenth century. Most recipients received only a few sentences, and those citations that were longer usually provided the detail of other recipients as well, like Buckley's. A three-hundred and twenty-five word citation in 1867, for instance, cited five men for their combined action.⁴¹ This passage tells the story of a rescue party, rowing a boat to shore to save soldiers stranded on an island. The primary focus is the action: two separate attempts to navigate dangerous surf to rescue the stranded crew of the ship 'Assam Valley' with a military surgeon manning the bow of the rescue boat alongside privates bailing water and rowing through the strong current.⁴² It is a long and factual story, rooted in the eye-witnesses account of 'the officer who commanded the troops.'⁴³ The citation is characteristic of *Gazette* publications in the nineteenth century, even though it is a longer example. It is mostly an observation, and only sparingly allows the use of a single normative adjective, like gallant and daring. *The London Gazette* makes no attempt here to mold a story from the report, simply letting the original observation stand as the definitive evidence of heroic action. This ground-up ideology prospered because the *Gazette* published short and fact-heavy citations, and also because most recommendations from the front were approved

⁴¹"Multiple Subjects, No. 23333". *The London Gazette*. (17 December, 1867) pg. 6878

⁴²"No. 23333". *The London Gazette*. (17 December 1867) pg. 6878.

⁴³"No. 23333". *The London Gazette*. (17 December 1867) pg. 6878.

for the award. The result is a long list of short, but story-driven, citations from the *Gazette* in this period. Smith has also noted that the citations of the nineteenth century are more varied in their stories than those of the twentieth century; there were more Crosses for symbolic actions, life-saving actions, actions like the small rescue party standing out against heavy seas.⁴⁴ The *Gazette* record acted to print relatively simple, but factual, accounts of all Cross recipients, but many of these citations never reached the amount of public attention as others. This 1867 citation did not receive further attention from national newspapers at the time, but other citations were picked from the long account of the *Gazette*, and became the subject of media deliberation.

One such special case was picked from the register of the *Gazette* by the commercial press: the Victoria Cross citation of Frederick Roberts in 1858. His citation featured around 150 words which focused on his feats during combat.⁴⁵ The short story cited him charging distant enemies on horseback, later killing them by sword.⁴⁶ This short citation is similar to the others of the day in that it appears as one point in a long list of heroes. This single action would also be negligible within the career of Roberts, if it was not the action that won him the Victoria Cross. After his 1858 service in the Indian Rebellion, Frederick Roberts went on to live a decorated and successful military life, becoming a general and commanding other soldiers in Afghanistan, soldiers who eventually became Victoria Cross recipients themselves.⁴⁷ His short *Gazette* citation contrasts with his later career's fame. Roberts received literary mention through the contemporary writing of Rudyard Kipling. He was mentioned in many of Kipling's poems, and he was the namesake for one.⁴⁸ The same man who, according to Kriegel, extolled the democratic nature of the award, worked to emphasize a single Victoria Cross award from the long lists of others in the *Gazette*. Other literary sources would work to pluck him from the columns

⁴⁴See the tables listed in, Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. vi

⁴⁵“Frederick Roberts, No. 22212” *The London Gazette*. (24 December, 1858) pg. 5516

⁴⁶“Frederick Roberts, No. 22212” *The London Gazette*. (24 December, 1858) pg. 5516

⁴⁷Elliot, Major W. J., *The Victoria Cross in Afghanistan, and on the Frontiers of India During the Years 1877, 1878, 1879, & 1880: How it Was Won*, (London: Dear & Son, 1882) pg. 1-29

⁴⁸“Lord Roberts” in, Kipling, Rudyard, *The Works of Rudyard Kipling*, (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1994) pg. 215

of obscure Victoria Cross citations. Late in 1894, Roberts appeared in the periodical *Chums: An Illustrated Paper for Boys* in an article titled “How Lord Roberts Won the Victoria Cross.”⁴⁹ Complete with a centerpiece portrait picture of Roberts, the article discusses 1858, leaving the remainder of his military career for only a short sentence in the final paragraph. Despite having an already long and successful career, only one action received focus. The romanticized and heroic Victoria Cross is more of the subject of the article than is Roberts.

The article goes into far more detail on the 1858 action than his official citation. It notes, 'again the exact date upon which he acquitted himself so gallantly that the Victoria Cross—that modest badge, 'For Valour' which the true soldier covets more than rank— was conferred upon him.'⁵⁰ The rest of the article remains focused on the same day, 2 January, 1858, and is far greater in size and amount of vibrant vocabulary than his official citation in the *Gazette*. Although his portrait is included, the focus is only on his wartime achievements, at times detailing the political backdrop of the British Empire at the time, and Robert's peers in the Army. There is no insight into his childhood education and upbringing, although this is a boy's magazine. The article also recognizes other Victoria Cross recipients, calling the medal itself more important than rank.⁵¹ This is an equation of the Cross to heroism, and a recognition that there are many others within the ranks, just less known. And through the focus of a single wartime accomplishment in Robert's long military career, his life outside of the Victoria Cross is made to be foreign, mystified. He is held up as a pristine example of the apex of human existence, whose Victoria Cross alone evidences his heroic nature. The commercial press, through longer textual deliberations outside of those from the *Gazette*, created an image of the fascinating and romantic wartime hero, a powerful figure that the common citizen was unworthy and

⁴⁹“How Lord Roberts Won the Victoria Cross” *Chums: An Illustrated Paper for Boys*, (London: National Library of Scotland, Wednesday, June 27, 1894) Vol. 2 No. 94, pg.695-696

⁵⁰“How Lord Roberts Won the Victoria Cross” *Chums: An Illustrated Paper for Boys*, (London: National Library of Scotland, Wednesday, June 27, 1894) Vol. 2 No. 94, pg.695

⁵¹“How Lord Roberts Won the Victoria Cross” *Chums: An Illustrated Paper for Boys*, (London: National Library of Scotland, Wednesday, June 27, 1894) Vol. 2 No. 94, pg.695

incapable of knowing and understanding. Not only text, but the utilization of imagery in the commercial press also helped to bring to greater public attention some of the figures of *The London Gazette*.

Although his citation is short and similar to other more obscure Victoria Cross recipients of the same time, George Findlater also had a public following outside of the *Gazette*. His tale was pulled from the pages of the government register to become a romanticized symbol of the Victoria Cross. Findlater was a bag-piping junior piper of the British Army. He was published in the *Gazette* alongside five other recipients.⁵² In no more than fifty words it recounted how he, 'after being shot through both feet and unable to stand, sat up, under a heavy fire, playing the Regimental March to encourage the charge of the Gordon Highlanders.'⁵³ Findlater was one of the nineteenth century's symbolic Victoria Cross recipients, a soldier without any direct effect aggressively or humanely. The commercial press still found his story valuable when publishing for a national audience. Louis Desanges featured Findlater in his series of Victoria Cross paintings, described by Joany Hichberger in the article "Democratising Glory? The Victoria Cross Paintings of Louis Desanges."⁵⁴ The paintings feature the tall figures of several Victoria Cross recipients, not just Findlater, waving rifles and flags in the midst of pitched battles. In his painting, Findlater's figure sits atop a desert hill, bag-piping to the advancing British Highlanders below. Desanges had developed a public following well before his painting of Findlater in 1897.⁵⁵ An 1861 article in *The Observer* reported the inspection of his paintings at the Egyptian Hall in London by the Prince of Wales.⁵⁶ A local Welsh newspaper, *The Usk Observer* also reported on the gallery of Desanges in London, saying: 'In other countries such a collection would be

⁵²"George Findlater, No. 26968" *The London Gazette*. (20 May, 1898) pg. 3165

⁵³"George Findlater, No. 26968" *The London Gazette*. (20 May, 1898) pg. 3165

⁵⁴ Joany Hichberger, "Democratising Glory? The Victoria Cross Paintings of Louis Desanges", from *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 7 No. 2 Photography (1984) pg. 42-51

⁵⁵ Hichberger, "Democratising Glory?" pg. 50

⁵⁶ "Her Majesty's Drawing Room". *The Observer (1791- 1900)*. (London: Guardian News & Media Limited, 23 June, 1861) pg. 4

the result of a Government order, but here a single artist has originated and completed at his own risk an entire exhibition.⁵⁷ The government did not itself pay for the romanticized depiction of Findlater; his *Gazette* citation was short and appeared alongside many others of the same size. Desanges selected only several of the many Victoria Cross recipients of the day. His painting of Findlater added to the short *Gazette* citation an emphasis on a single action on the battlefield. Although Findlater did not directly contribute to the death of the enemy or to the saving of friendly lives, a recommending witness had claimed his action to be heroic, and his word was made to be the truth through an official citation for the Victoria Cross. The commercial press added an image to a persistent, wounded bag-piper. Already deemed a hero by the government, imagery only provided a depiction of how this symbolic action was heroic.

Images were made to represent the nineteenth century heroism of the Victoria Cross more generally. Certain actions were held up as beautiful, romanticized and were always associated with the foreign settings from where they had happened. These images combined with glowing reports to provide a packaged and romanticized version of the Victoria Cross hero for public consumption. Similar pictures printed in magazines constructed an image of a romantic battlefield where British soldiers often stood at the center surrounded by cut-down enemies. See [Figure 1], the centerpiece of which is a sketch published in *The Lady's Newspaper* in 1858. The sketch, which supplemented an article on Victoria Cross recipients of the Crimean War, looks very similar to a Louis Desanges painting: a British soldier standing victorious among the fallen with a drawn sword. Images furthered the association of Victoria Cross recipients with the setting of their actions. These were presented as faraway occurrences, removed from home. The image of the Victoria Cross hero that developed was a foreign one, one that is almost unthinkable for the average citizen at home. Heroism happened on the

⁵⁷“Victoria Cross Gallery”. *The Illustrated Usk Observer and Raglan Herald* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 7 April, 1860) pg. 4

high seas, in the plains and mountains of Asia. It did not happen at home.

The popular image produced by the media of the nineteenth century continued the story of the Victoria Cross heroes where *The London Gazette* left off. Soldiers from the front set the register by defining heroism through observation and report. But only a select few stories would be chosen by the press to symbolize the institution. The commercial press contributed to a longer deliberation on single acts of heroism where it saw fit to do so. Sometimes, their arbitrary choices reflected the prejudices that authors like Smith and Kriegel have associated with the Victorian age.⁵⁸ William Hall was the first black man to be awarded the Victoria Cross, a Canadian citizen who served at Lucknow in 1857.⁵⁹ The citation for Hall's award in the *Gazette* was shared with two other men, who were all “recommended by the late Captain Peel for the Victoria Cross, for their gallant conduct for at a 24-Pounder Gun, brought up to the angle of the Shah Nujjiff, at Lucknow, on the 16th of November, 1857.”⁶⁰ This is the entirety of the story given about Hall and his peers, and reflects the types of short quotations from witness used by the *Gazette* to define heroism in the nineteenth century. It also reflects the general accepting spirit by which recommendations climbed the chain of command, with three accepted Victoria Cross recommendations in one single observation. But they all went generally unnoticed, along with many other great deals of combat awards from India in 1859.

With a great amount of short Victoria Cross citations appearing in the official register, a hands-off attitude toward defining heroism was cultivated. The publication of short observations with clear relation to the factual observations of witnesses deferred the power of definition to the men of the battlefield, witnesses who could be counted on to know it when they see it. Following this attitude, the commercial press would often overlook many Victoria Cross recipients in favor of special cases. Some earned Victorian-era fame with the help of an interested commercial press; otherwise, their story would

⁵⁸See, Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 62, and Kriegel, “The Transforming Power of the Victoria Cross” pg. 870-888

⁵⁹Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 62

⁶⁰“William Hall, No. 22225” *The London Gazette* (1 February, 1859) pg. 414

have ended at *The London Gazette*. Their stories would become symbols of the romanticized definition of heroism in the nineteenth century. This heroism was, as has been pointed out by Smith and Kriegel, often broad in its inclusion of different types of actions, but also prejudiced, favoring the romantic images of white British soldiers.⁶¹ The First World War would mark a turning point.

3. The Victoria Cross in The First World War

Judging by the number of Victoria Crosses from the First World War, the front-line soldier retained the power to define heroism in the First World War. The amount of Victoria Crosses awarded in the war remained high in the tradition of the nineteenth century, in fact; the highest amount of Victoria Cross recipients were awarded during WWI.⁶² Although the rate of award continued at a high level, the War would signal the beginning of a change in the way heroism was defined. Importantly, the native Indian service members were made eligible for the award in 1911.⁶³ This resulted in the Victoria Cross being awarded for the first time to native Indian soldiers fighting in the British Army. A 1914 issue of *The London Gazette* cited the award of the Victoria Cross to Naik Darwan Sing Negi and Khudadad Khan.⁶⁴ The men received little attention in the *Gazette* —their combined citations amount to about one hundred words, short even compared to those of the nineteenth century. An article in *The Times* expanded in a much longer investigation into their story, and it also explained that the two men represented the first two native Indian servicemen to be awarded the Victoria Cross.⁶⁵ In addition to the opening up of the award for Indian soldiers, the Cross was also linked, over the course of the war, to a more aggressive nature rooted in enemy killing. This new, violent version of the Victoria Cross which

⁶¹See, Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 62, and Kriegel, “The Transforming Power of the Victoria Cross” pg. 870-888

⁶²See the tables listed in, Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. vi

⁶³See the “Amending Warrant: Native Troops of the Indian Establishment, 21 October 1911” as printed in Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 214

⁶⁴“No. 28999”. *The London Gazette*. (7 December 1914) pg. 10425

⁶⁵“Two Indian V.C.’s”, *The Times*, (London: Times Newspapers Limited, 27 January, 1915) Issue No. 40762, pg. 7

emerged out of WWI is one of the fundamental points of Smith in his discussion of the demise of the 'Victorian Victoria Cross.'⁶⁶ These simultaneous developments occur alongside another development within the commercial press following in the same period. Due to a greater amount of photographic images appearing in commercial press sources during WWI, the faces of soldiers begin taking the place of their romantic depictions on the field of battle. They are brought closer to home, and this has the effect of humanizing them for a British audience. Their portraits, as well as stories related more to their families and personal lives, accompany an increasingly aggressive award.

Also a new development, the first Bar was awarded to a Victoria Cross holder during WWI, meaning they were awarded twice. Arthur Martin-Leake was awarded the first bar to the Victoria Cross in 1914, during the beginning stages of the First World War.⁶⁷ He had received his first Victoria Cross for his actions as a field medic in the Second Boer War.⁶⁸ Captain Noel Chavasse earned his second Victoria Cross in 1917.⁶⁹ The decision to award the Victoria Cross twice to a single individual is consequential for the meaning of the award. To this day, only one other person was awarded a bar in addition to the Victoria Cross, a combat soldier, Captain Charles Upham during WWII.

Martin-Leake and Chavasse were both not combat soldiers, but medics attached to the Royal Army Medical Corps. Their prestigious positions as the first doubly awarded Victoria Cross recipients accompanies the increasingly violent nature of all other award recipients of this time period. The decision to award the first two Bars to medical troops was a reaffirmation of the broad and unpredictable scope of the Victoria Cross, familiar to the nineteenth century. This reaffirmation came at a time when the Victoria Cross was changing. Smith has recorded how over the course of WWI, the awarding of awards to humanitarian and life saving actions, typically the actions of medical troops,

⁶⁶Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 202

⁶⁷"Arthur Martin-Leakey, No. 29074" *The London Gazette* (16 February, 1915) pg. 1700

⁶⁸"Arthur Martin-Leakey, No. 27433" *The London Gazette* (13 May, 1902) pg. 3176

⁶⁹"Noel Chavasse, No. 30284" *The London Gazette* (14 September, 1917) pg. 9531

dropped significantly and the amount of awards to combat actions rose.⁷⁰ Although it was clear that heroism in WWI came from killing the enemy, the elevation of these two non-combat troops recognizes this problem. Through two qualitative double recognitions, the dwindling quantitative numbers of humanitarian awards is made to be less indicative of a change. Understandably, the two soldiers were celebrated in the commercial media. Chavasse and Martin-Leake were mentioned together in *The Manchester Guardian* in 1917, cited as being among only two with the rare honor.⁷¹ After the death of Chavasse, another article was published describing the ceremony held in his honor. This article recounted the audience, which included his twin brother, the Bishop of Liverpool, claiming that among the others there, 'Mrs. Chavasse, with members of their family, were the principal mourners.'⁷² This article presents the beginning of a movement which would focus on the Victoria Cross recipients as members of society. Where before, Victoria Cross recipients were removed from the ranks of regular civilians, and made to be highly removed in their heroism, the commercial press begins to report on the personal and familial aspects of Victoria Cross recipients in the twentieth century.

A major push towards a humanized and personal Victoria Cross hero came with the introduction of portrait photography in some newspapers. Although newspapers had published illustrations before, these were often exaggerated images, especially of the Victoria Cross recipients. Instead of depicting these heroes as glorious soldiers rising above the brutal combat of the day, newspapers during WWI published photographs of their faces. In 1917, an issue of *The Manchester Guardian* published the picture of a group of people in civilian dress with the caption 'leaving Buckingham Palace after receiving the Victoria Cross from the hands of the King.'⁷³ These photographs changed the tradition of

⁷⁰Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 155-161

⁷¹"The New V.C.'s" *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)*, (Manchester: Guardian News & Media Limited, 15 September, 1917) pg. 6

⁷²"Captain Noel Chavasse, V.C." *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)* (Manchester: Guardian News & Media Limited, 30 August, 1917) pg. 3

⁷³"More V.C.'s Decorated by the King" *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)* (Manchester: Guardian News & Media Limited, 7 February, 1917) pg. 3

associating the Victoria Cross hero with a faraway setting. They were made to be closer to the public through the dissemination of their image. A more personal approach to the Victoria Cross appeared alongside the emergence of a more violent definition of heroism. A recipient photographed in the newspaper issue previously mentioned, was cited in the *Gazette* for doing 'good service in remaining by his gun throughout the action.'⁷⁴ Another recipient of the day, Herbert George Columbine, was cited for keeping a machine-gun 'firing from 9 a.m. till 1 p.m.'⁷⁵ Their recognition evidences a changing style of warfare as much as it does a personalized style of reporting heroism. This humanizing touch to heroism was also achieved through a focus on the personal lives of soldiers.

In several newspapers of the time period, the posthumous occurrences of a Victoria Cross award were presented with a focus on the family left behind. In a 1916 issue of *The Times* an old woman is pictured among several other men in military uniform.⁷⁶ The description places Mrs. Warner at Buckingham Palace, receiving the Victoria Cross from the King on behalf of her son, who died in combat.⁷⁷ The *Abergavenny Chronicle*, a local Welsh newspaper, published a photograph of a mourning old woman, looking at the Victoria Cross, with the subtitle, 'The King has sent to Mrs. Barber at her home at Tring the Victoria Cross awarded to her son...Private Barber [who] was afterwards killed in action.'⁷⁸ The appearance of a related face in place of the deceased hero is one other way the image of the Victoria Cross hero was humanized during the War. The personal struggle of the family is central to these publication, and the solemn tone differs from the romantic version of nineteenth century Victoria Cross recipients. The change in style, from a focus on the fantastical to the realistic in Victoria Cross publications, signals a trend for the rest of the twentieth century. The Victoria Cross heroes gradually became humanized characters as the media began a focus on their individual lives, their relatives and

⁷⁴"Thomas Edwards, No. 25356". *The London Gazette* (21 May, 1884) pg. 2278

⁷⁵"Herbert George Columbine, No. 30667" *The London Gazette*. (30 April, 1918) pg. 5354

⁷⁶"A Dead Son's Victoria Cross" *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)* (Manchester: Guardian News & Media Limited, 17 November, 1916) pg. 3

⁷⁷"Edward Warner, No. 29210" *The London Gazette* (29 June, 1915) pg. 6270

⁷⁸"Her Son's Cross" *Abergavenny Chronicle*, (Aberystwyth : The National Library of Wales, 31 March, 1916) pg. 7

their faces in WWI. This is further exacerbated by similar publications in WWII.

Chapter 2: The Victoria Cross in World War Two

1. Introduction

The Victoria Cross would undergo substantial reconsideration after WWI. Increased selectivity in this time period, well documented by the works of Smith, Mead and Kriegel, was the result of the 1920 amendment to the “Original Warrant.”⁷⁹ The result of greater selectivity meant that the ability to define heroism was restricted. The soldiers from the front now had strict guidelines when compiling a recommendation, and the higher ranks had greater authority to deny recommendations. Part of the transformation during the first half of the twentieth century is this centralization of the power to decide, and thus to define, heroic acts. The image surrounding the Victoria Cross was another part of this transformation.

At the end of World War Two an entirely new image of the Victoria Cross hero is apparent, constructed through developments in the merging forces of *The London Gazette* and the commercial press. By adding greater detail to the three or four line standard, the *Gazette* would opt for essay length features on Victoria Cross recipients. Combining these longer features with increased selectivity contributed to the production of a new type of image for heroism. The new image which prevails is a more individual image, a detailed account of fewer persons instead of shorter accounts of more. The commercial press likewise contributed to the individual image with a newfound focus on the personal side of the Victoria Cross recipients. Newspapers in the U.K. would begin to publish portrait photographs of Victoria Cross recipients, along with the results of investigations into the personal life of the Victoria Cross recipient in question. The war-focused reports of the *Gazette* became the basic framework upon which the individual story would be told. The commercial press might quote the

⁷⁹See, Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 188-189, and Kriegel, “The Transforming Power of the Victoria Cross” pg. 870-888

Gazette to refer to the heroic action of their subject, but their primary story was one of a personal interest. Combined with photographs, the Victoria Cross recipients of the two World Wars became personable and relateable to the common citizen. The faces presented in the newspapers were also disseminated over the new medium of televised news during WWII, further reinforcing the image of the Victoria Cross recipient as a heroic yet neighborly figure. The underlying push was a determined effort by the institution to increase the prestige of the Victoria Cross by restricting it and to centralize the authority to attribute heroism, or not to attribute heroism, to an action. This immediate policy change had the effect of redefining heroism, from a catch-all recognition of heroism in the field, to a premeditated guideline decided by authority figures at home. The image of the hero as a more human figure was another result of this new selective process, a result perpetuated by a commercial press capable of building off of the dictation of *The London Gazette*.

2. The Air Force and the Navy in WWII

The very first Victoria Crosses of WWII went to two members of the Royal Air Force. Flight Officer Donald Edward Garland and his navigator, Sergeant Thomas Gray would be the first, cited in the *Gazette* on June 1940, for leading four other aircraft in an assault on a bridge over the Albert Canal in Belgium.⁸⁰ They shared a single citation in *The London Gazette*, a story of about three hundred words of glowing language which likened exceptional bravery and skill to the men. Their posthumous award would set several precedents for the course of the war. The first was the posthumous award; although twenty-five percent of all First World War Victoria Cross recipients were awarded to the already deceased, posthumous awards were not officially ordained until the 1920 amendment paved the way for the climb to forty-seven percent during the Second World War.⁸¹ The second was a trend toward

⁸⁰ "Donald Edward Garland and Sergeant Thomas Gray, No. 34870". *The London Gazette*, (11 June, 1940) pg. 3516

⁸¹ See, "New Warrant: Superseding all Previous Regulations, 22 May 1920" as published in, Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg.

greater length and flamboyancy to the citations in the *Gazette*. Their shared small passage of three hundred words is only slightly longer than the examples of the nineteenth century and the First World War. The citations of WWII to come would be even longer. The style of how they were written also changes; citations of the Second World War used far more words to affirm the bestowal of heroism on each new recipient of the Victoria Cross. Their citation affirms: 'Much of the success of this vital operation must be attributed to the formation leader, Flying Officer Garland, and to the coolness and resource of Sergeant Gray.'⁸² Phrases like this, ones that attribute qualities such as coolness, resource, gallantry and bravery, deviate from the more factual citations of before, especially with the use of entire sentences to say so. Before, such attributes were assigned through the use of single adjectives, and most of the citation concerned only fact. The citations of World War II became even less rooted in fact and more rooted in the affirmation of heroic qualities as time progressed. Finally, the Victoria Cross would also be awarded in greater numbers to the Royal Air Force, and when this fact is combined with the higher percentage of Victoria Cross recipients going to the Royal Navy, the resulting fact is that the award went more often to soldiers behind the controls of vehicles.⁸³ As indicated by Garland and Gray, vehicle-operating Victoria Cross recipients would not be reported in any less lengthy or flowery detail.

The succession of Victoria Cross recipients from the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy bore with them the same vibrant depictions of heroism as their peers on foot. Shortly after these Victoria Cross recipients were awarded, Commander John Wallace Linton would take actions while commanding a submarine of the Royal Navy.⁸⁴ The citation of his action in the *London Gazette* comprised a far lengthier timeline than the first two Crosses of the Royal Air Force, but his citation was

215-218. For the proportion of posthumous to surviving Victoria Cross recipients in the two World Wars, see the Cost of Courage Tables listed in *Ibid.*, pg. vi

⁸² "Donald Edward Garland and Sergeant Thomas Gray, No. 34870". *The London Gazette*, 11 June 1940. pg. 3516

⁸³ The Royal Navy did receive more Victoria Cross recipients (51) in WWI, but as a percentage, they gained 8% of overall Crosses from WWI as opposed to 13% in WWII. The Royal Air Force went from 2.5% of total Victoria Cross recipients received in WWI to 13% in WWII. From Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 125 & 190

⁸⁴ "John Linton, No. 36028" *The London Gazette*, (25 May 1943) pg. 2329

shorter, just over two hundred words. Where Garland and Gray were awarded the Cross for a momentary rallying charge into the breach of enemy anti-air defenses, Linton's actions lasted from the beginning of the war until 1943, so it is strange that his case received a shorter citation than the hours-long action of Garland and Gray.⁸⁵ The two citations shared in common the most striking development in the style of the *Gazette*, though: a robust language of heroism. According to the *Gazette*, Linton's 'brilliant successes were due to his constant activity and skill, and the daring which never failed him when there was an Enemy to be attacked.'⁸⁶ The primary purpose of at least this excerpt is to affirm the heroic nature of Linton, not simply to report actions from the front. Simple reports could be contained to only a few sentences, as they were in the nineteenth century. The longer citations of the Second World War show this new desire to affirm heroism, not just to report of its occurrence. And they grew even longer. By the next year, all VC citations contained about five hundred words with a lexiconic variety aimed at reinforcing the heroic image. Geoffrey Leonard Cheshire's citation was over six hundred-words long and recounted four years of impressive service not only factually, but with an accent on his heroism:

'Wing Commander Cheshire led his squadron personally on every occasion, always undertaking the most dangerous and difficult task of marking the target alone from a low level in the face of strong defences. Wing Commander Cheshire's cold and calculated acceptance of risks is exemplified by his conduct in an attack on Munich in April, 1944. ... In four years of fighting against the bitterest opposition he has maintained a record of outstanding personal achievement, placing himself invariably in the forefront of the battle. What he did in the Munich operation was typical of the careful planning, brilliant, execution and contempt for danger...'⁸⁷

This account of four years of service for the R.A.F. reads more like an exciting novel than a newspaper passage, and definitely not a government register. These long and detailed passages are so reliant on vibrant vocabulary and gripping narrative, that they have a persuasive quality to them. It is no longer enough for the *Gazette* to report the news of heroic action, but they must supplant themselves as the

⁸⁵ "Donald Edward Garland and Sergeant Thomas Gray, No. 34870". *The London Gazette* (11 June, 1940) pg. 3516

⁸⁶ "John Linton, No. 36028" *The London Gazette*, (25 May 1943) pg. 2329

⁸⁷ "Geoffrey Leonard Cheshire, No. 36693" *The London Gazette*, (5 September, 1944) pg. 4175

deciding body for all actions which have been recommended. It is also notable the kind of qualities which are described. Cheshire, like Garland and like Gray, was cited for his cold and calculated coolness under pressure. A levelheadedness typical of pilots and vehicle operators received newfound praise in the *Gazette*, a medium that before had focused on the violent spontaneous actions observed from the heat of battle. It is of course a sign of the changing modes of warfare, but it is also the sign of a changing power within the British military system. At the time of this publication in 1944, *The London Gazette* had asserted themselves as the primary organization in charge of defining heroism. Citations of the witness are now obsolete. Instead, the original observations are paraphrased. Occasional long tangents, attributing heroic qualities to the recipients, blend together with the fact as recorded. Direct quotations from original recommendations are missing, and a new narrative essay standard, borne through the premeditated editing of the *Gazette*, takes their place. The government, the top of the chain of command had asserted their power to associate heroism with the actions that they deemed worthy through a newly selective award process. As a result, *The London Gazette* would now be the defining body for the definition of heroism, tasked with building a flowing narrative for each new citation. The military elite and the *Gazette* were not the only forces at work in this assertion of power. Changing subject matter within the commercial press of the day also contributed to the government's new role in defining heroism.

During the Second World War, the commercial press published stories on the Victoria Cross recipients which described their personal lives in greater detail, moving away from a focus on their wartime accomplishments. Film and newspaper reports focused on their public appearance at ceremonies, on their lives outside of the service, and on their families. Even in the case of posthumous awards there was a new, heavier focus on the personal side of the Victoria Cross recipients. After Garland and Gray perished in their airborne assault on a Belgian bridge and were cited for some of the first Victoria Cross awards of the war, *The Manchester Guardian* picked up the story. They quote the

bulk the *Gazette*, but at the end of the article they offer a small section of background information which includes where the aviators were born, their education background and even their marital status.⁸⁸ This trend within the commercial press utilized the word of *The London Gazette* as a basic foundation from which to report in greater detail about the Victoria Cross recipients as persons, as human beings. Their new position deviated from the war-only perspective of all nineteenth century news media, further reinforcing the *Gazette*'s new position as the definitive decision maker of heroism, and creating their own function as humanizers —reporters who get the ‘whole scoop’ on the private lives of the Victoria Cross recipients.

By the final months of the war, *The Manchester Guardian* had expanded their subject matter regarding Victoria Cross stories. An article on Linton's posthumous Victoria Cross ceremony described his fourteen year-old son receiving the VC on his behalf.⁸⁹ This short article does not concern itself with the detail of the heroic action that was awarded with a Victoria Cross, but instead focuses on the family and on the somber atmosphere of the posthumous ceremony. In this case, the personal feeling was the more important point to report. Should the reader of *The Manchester Guardian* be interested, they could consult the *Gazette* for the valiant tale of heroism. Months later, the same newspaper published a story on Cheshire's Victoria Cross.⁹⁰ Unlike the previous three, Cheshire had survived, and the tone of the article is more upbeat. In addition to quoting at length his *Gazette* citation, the article offers insight into his marriage, his education and even an old bet in which “he went from Oxford to Paris with only 15s. in his pocket to win a wager —a pint of beer.”⁹¹ Why was a major newspaper like *The Manchester Guardian* suddenly interested in these personable anecdotes about war heroes? The

⁸⁸ “R.A.F.'s First V.C.s of the War” *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)* (Manchester: Guardian News & Media Limited, 10 June, 1940) pg. 10

⁸⁹ “Investiture: Four Posthumous V.C.s” *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)* (Guardian News & Media Limited, 26 February, 1944) pg. 7

⁹⁰ “V.C. for Author of ‘Bomber Pilot’” *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)* (Manchester: Guardian News & Media Limited, 9 September, 1944) pg. 3

⁹¹ “V.C. for Author of ‘Bomber Pilot’” *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)* (Manchester: Guardian News & Media Limited, 9 September, 1944) pg. 3

referencing of the official *Gazette* citations is one reason. All three of these articles, minus any quotations from *The London Gazette*, are short. The additional insight into the private lives of the individuals is the only distinctive difference between the commercial press and the government register, and reflects the more consumer related role of *The Manchester Guardian*. The effect of the focus on the personal side of the Victoria Cross recipients is clear, though. It adds an additional human quality to the already established reports of *The London Gazette*. In a reversal of the original division of labor, the new role of the commercial press was to supplement the word of the *Gazette*, the new determining body in defining heroism. Where before longer deliberations by the commercial press added to the short story of heroism in the *Gazette*, those short stories became long and detailed. The commercial press remained at work by humanizing the Victoria Cross recipients, but the true defining body of heroism was now *The London Gazette*.

3. The British Army in WWII

Infantry troops received the vast majority of all Crosses from the Second World War. Although it was clear that definitions of gallantry, valor and bravery on the battlefield could include the decisions taken by men fighting from vehicles like ships, submarines and aircraft, the amount of Royal Air Force and Royal Navy Victoria Cross recipients was dwarfed by that of the British Army. As stated before, selective award practices meant a decrease in the amount of awards given to medical soldiers, and, correspondingly, a change to a more violently defined 'heroism'. The majority of the British Army Victoria Cross awards from WWII went to enemy killing actions.⁹² In addition to infantry, the British Army included paratrooper units, and these units did receive several Victoria Cross awards during the war.⁹³ The British Army also operated armored regiments, regiments which never achieved the level

⁹²Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 189

⁹³See generally, Antony Beevor, *Arnhem: The Battle for the Bridges, 1944*, (Penguin Random House: Ocito, 2018)

of enchantment of the aviator or the seaman, as to date no soldier serving behind the controls of a tank has ever been awarded the Victoria Cross.⁹⁴ This exclusion is confusing, especially alongside the new image built around the Victoria Cross hero. A hero could sit and be recognized in a cold and calculated manner behind the controls of an airplane or a submarine, but not behind those of a tank. The nineteenth century precedent of an active, violent and well-seen war-winner can help to understand why the tank was overlooked. Even behind the controls, a hero in an airplane is faster and much more visible. Armored troops who did receive a Victoria Cross had to disembark to do so, furthering this lesson in visibility.⁹⁵ This does not explain the presence of a great deal of Royal Navy Crosses, who were sometimes hidden away underwater for months. In this case it is necessary to remember that the Royal Navy already had a strong tradition of Victoria Cross awards. For the British Army, the Victoria Cross had always been associated with a widely observed figure, often waving their hands, toting a rocket-launcher, donning bandages and fighting on in clear discomfort. From the ground, this is the type of heroism that was defined during World War Two.

The descriptions in *The London Gazette* and in the commercial press would mimic the developments of the descriptions of the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy. The overall space allotted in the *Gazette* increased over the course of the war, and the style of writing became exciting and varied in word usage. A reoccurring theme in WWII-era *Gazette* citations is a propensity for selfless action. The subjects are often mentioned fighting on in complete disregard for their personal safety, or in a variation of the phrase. The commercial press also focused on emphasizing the personal side of the Victoria Cross hero. In addition to their new style of publication in newspapers, the television news media during WWII also published the faces of Victoria Cross recipients, further portraying them as people rather than mystified legends of faraway battlefields. Throughout this emphasis on the personal

⁹⁴ Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 187

⁹⁵ Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 187

hero, the troops on the ground were subjected to more violent and costly fighting, resulting often in discomfort, injury and death.

Charles Upham was one Victoria Cross recipient who clearly fought on in clear discomfort. In 1945 he joins the ranks of only two other men to ever have been awarded the Cross twice, Surgeon Captain Arthur Martin-Leake, and Captain Noel Chavasse. Upham won his first Victoria Cross in 1941 for attacking enemy positions, navigating the treacherous rocky rolling hills of Greece after having been wounded by shrapnel in the shoulder, and suffering from dysentery.⁹⁶ In 1945 he was cited in the *Gazette* again; he remains to this day the last person to ever wear a Bar, the small medal attachment to the ribbon the original Cross hangs from.⁹⁷ As the first combat soldier to be awarded the Bar, his award marks the increasingly violent nature of the heroism of the Victoria Cross. Chavasse and Martin-Leakey were both medical soldiers and the first two soldiers to be awarded a Bar, but they also experienced a contemporary trend toward the new violent criteria. Their awards were shown in the previous chapter to be reaffirmations of the Cross's broad spectrum heroism, even while more awards went to combat troops. Upham's double award in a time where even fewer awards were given to medical troops can be seen as the final point in the gravitation toward a more violent award. Upham's two citations are incredibly longer than those of Chavasse and Leakey, and offer much more statements about his possession of heroic qualities. The effect of the most recent Bar is the assertion of the violent war-winning Victoria Cross recipient in place of the more diverse recipient of WWI and earlier. The evidence taken from all three double Victoria Cross recipients is this: out of three double Victoria Cross recipients, the one enemy killing recipient was afforded more words than the other two medical Victoria Cross recipients combined. Additionally, *The London Gazette* reaffirms the status of the hero multiple times over the course of the segment. Even in the early stages of war, in 1941, Upham was

⁹⁶ "Charles Upham, No. 35306" *The London Gazette*. (10 October, 1941) pg. 5935–5936

⁹⁷ "Charles Upham, No. 37283" *The London Gazette*. (25 September, 1945) pg. 4779

sited having 'performed a series of remarkable exploits, showing outstanding leadership, tactical skill and utter indifference to danger.'⁹⁸ The other two, as well as the other recipients from before this war, were never written about in as great of length, and were only said to be heroes with the inclusion of the occasional adjective, not with entire sentences. Their new position of reaffirming their power to define heroism came at the cost of changing the definition of heroism, to something more aggressive and violent.

In September of 1944, a bold plan to hasten the end of the war in Europe was approved by Allied Command. Operation Market Garden would drop several entire Airborne Divisions behind German front lines in occupied Netherlands, with the mission to secure bridge crossings, so that the British Armoured XXX Corps could come reinforce the Paratroopers, and secure a foothold in the country.⁹⁹ The British 1st Airborne Division were to secure the bridges furthest into enemy territory, the bridge at Arnhem. A series of fallacies contributed to the loss, including the failure to reinforce the lightly equipped paratroopers with a stronger Armoured Division, the British XXX Corps to the south. In a total of 8 days, about 67 per cent of the 1st Airborne Division's numbers had been killed, wounded, or taken prisoner, and entire Battalions were disbanded following the catastrophe.¹⁰⁰ Five total Victoria Crosses would later be handed out for the battle which only lasted nine days.¹⁰¹

The first Victoria Cross would be awarded to a survivor, later to become the only surviving VC of the Battle. Robert Henry Cain's official citation attributed to him a great deal of heroics, listing feats he accomplished over the course of all eight days. From the setting of the city of Arnhem to a defensive perimeter set up in their withdrawal, Cain was commended for actions taken 'Throughout the whole course of the Battle of Arnhem' all while wearing a bandage over his ear and launching rockets from a

⁹⁸ "Charles Upham, No. 35306" *The London Gazette*. (10 October, 1941) pg. 5935

⁹⁹ Antony Beevor, *Arnhem: The Battle for the Bridges, 1944*, (Penguin Random House: Ocito, 2018) pg. 1-9

¹⁰⁰ Martin Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944: The Airborne Battle*, (Stackpole Books: Mechanicsburg, PA, 2001) pg. 438-439

¹⁰¹ Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944*, pg. 438-439

heavy anti-tank weapon.¹⁰² He was not awarded the Victoria Cross for a single action taken over the course of the Battle, but instead received his decoration for always remaining a powerful and commanding figure during the fighting. Cain earned his Victoria Cross for persistence in spite of bleak chances of survival, and was an the only one of the five other Victoria Cross recipients of the battle to survive.¹⁰³ He is a prime example of the new, more violent, Victoria Cross. Cain's violent accomplishments were published by the *Gazette*, but his personal appeal would be the feature of the commercial press.

Like newspapers of the time, cinematic news reports also aimed to reach a large population, and similarly focused on the individual aspects of the heroes. The British Pathé archive contains film from the period, collected from the old British Pathé news organization and the Reuters news organization.¹⁰⁴ Among their records, several short (1-2 minute) segments exist which show ceremonies of soldiers being presented with the Victoria Cross. Cain personally received the Cross in 1945, during a grand ceremony at London, publicized on television at the time.¹⁰⁵ The short news segment distinguishes only three of several hundred more survivors recognized at Buckingham Palace after the Battle of Arnhem. First among these is Cain. The footage shows only shots of him and the fellow soldiers smiling, and makes it clear from the beginning that the Queen is in attendance, that this is a grand ceremony. Halfway into the video the narrator changes the theme of his message, going from simply reporting the news, to advocating that there be widespread celebration for the heroes. He uses the first personal plural, “We add our voice to the loud public demand that we be given a chance to line the streets and applaud the survivors of Arnhem, that costly but glorious feat of endurance that won the immortal fame for Britain's First Airborne Division.”¹⁰⁶ This invocation of not just the British Pathé

¹⁰² "Robert Henry Cain, No. 36774" *The London Gazette*, (31 October 1944) pg. 501

¹⁰³"Robert Henry Cain, No. 36774" *The London Gazette*, (31 October 1944) pg. 501

¹⁰⁴ British Pathé Archive. United Kingdom. www.Britishpathe.com

¹⁰⁵ British Pathé Archive. “Men of Arnhem at Palace”. (British Pathé) (1944) [Pathé newsreel] United Kingdom

¹⁰⁶ British Pathé Archive. “Men of Arnhem at Palace”. (British Pathé) (1944) [Pathé newsreel] United Kingdom

news organization's demand for, but to a British-wide demand for public applause, is understandable. The British fought one of the costliest battles of the war at Arnhem, their 'immortal fame' a fame 'won' from defeat. But the major difference between the call for recognition here and the call for recognition in the late nineteenth century, is the compartmentalized approach to recognition. Everybody was on the same list in the nineteenth century, with, at best, a few more sentences for the Victoria Cross recipients than for the others. Cain's *Gazette* citation is four hundred and sixty words long; the citation for the second highest medal in the list on this edition, The Distinguished Conduct Medal, received less than fifty words, and no explanation of the action.¹⁰⁷ In this newsreel, Cain and two other men are also made critical to the report by being the only names reported, out of the several hundred survivors; the focus on him directs celebration at his heroism. His award is made to serve as a tool with which to celebrate all heroism, though the select consumption of his image and narrative.

Chapter 3: The Victoria Cross in the Modern Day

1. Introduction

The post-war Victoria Cross is one of a mediated image. Expectations for the actions are now set, and are rarely deviated from. The vast majority of Victoria Crosses today are given for actions taken to neutralize an enemy with violent action. A governmental citation is given which presents about five-hundred words of narration for the single action in question. The subjects of the Victoria Cross are almost exclusively war-winners concerned with violent combat; life-saving attempts are much less frequent and have not been given for actions during the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The individuals are, if they are alive, to appear frequently to the public, either by means of public dissemination of their photograph, or televised ceremonies and documentaries featuring details of their private lives and their families. At all times the information is presented with much emphasis on relateable personality traits.

¹⁰⁷ "Robert Henry Cain, No. 36774" *The London Gazette*, (31 October 1944) pg. 501

Their disposition to heroic action is presupposed, with their *Gazette* feature being the bedrock, the framework citing their instances of heroism upon which all other stories are told. The commercial press chooses stories related to the personal lives of the stories, relying on the established framework to act as the only support for their status of heroes. Increasingly, heroism is rooted in violent actions, and when vibrant and detailed reports of violent action are then added to with attention to the human character behind them, a new modern and mediated heroism is invoked.

Public news media of the day continued to opt for shots of portraits and profiles, without emphasis on war settings. Instead, the setting is home. The Victoria Cross recipients are documented when they are among the citizens of the nation, away from the front lines. The film and photographic documentation also presents shots of friendly faces to the public, at a disconnect between the mostly violent heroes described by *The London Gazette*. Meetings and ceremonies are described where the heroes interact with other people, and their friendly interactions result in a hero that is visibly similar to anyone else. They laugh and follow the rules of public ceremony, they talk about their lives outside of the political war strategy of Britain. Violent heroism is normalized. The soldiers are seen as similar to the common person. But they are also understood as violent under conditions of war, and they are understood to possess a rare call for heroic duty that not every human being does. The only thing that separates them is their heroism, and for this they don the Cross, and meet with the Queen a short while. They are depicted gladly receiving the Cross from the Queen and continue on their way back to the front lines, speaking only of their personal lives in a way removed from political bias. Their humanly demeanor and perceived removal from politics during the nineteen fifties and sixties becomes increasingly at odds with greater anti-war sentiment.

The first Victoria Cross recipients awarded after the Second World War went to soldiers of the Korean War. The citations and articles printed in *The London Gazette* and in the commercial press during the Korean war were very similar to what was printed of the Victoria Cross in WWII. These

familiar stories of heroism were published without change during a time when opposition to war was increasing. Paul Addison summed up this Britain, tottering on pride, patriotism, conservatism, in his work *No Turning Back: The Peacetime Revolutions of Post-War Britain*.¹⁰⁸ Of even greater importance to the reception of the later awards are the developments in the anti-war movement during the nineteen sixties, but Addison's own record the nineteen-fifties is one of a country already faltering in its classical acceptance of warfare. The country, he says, was vindicated in its conservatism by the winning of the war.¹⁰⁹ And although the nineteen fifties continued a tradition of heroism familiar to the war, Addison warned of a sizable undercurrent developing that believed British society was 'wrong about many things,' wrong to believe in the benevolence government, fighting just wars and rewarding soldiers of true merit, 'Wrong to believe ... that the English were best' he says.¹¹⁰ This undercurrent underlies the Victoria Cross citations of the nineteen fifties, and grow in size and power during the Vietnam War. The institution of the Victoria Cross remained true to its form, though, in all cases after the Second World War relying on vibrant language to praise soldiers for their gallant wartime accomplishments, often accomplishments that ended the lives of the enemy. In this way, the stories of *The London Gazette* remain the same as those of WWII. The commercial press also remained in its style of the new personalized Victoria Cross recipient, increasingly reporting on the lives of the award recipients rather than on their wartime accomplishments. The grand language of heroic tales from the *Gazette* and the increasing attention the personal stories of Victoria Cross recipients are given in the commercial press, simultaneously progress through the later twentieth century alongside a new undercurrent of anti-war counterculture.

¹⁰⁸ Of particular interest to the 1950s are the chapter 3 and 4 in, Paul Addison. *No Turning Back: The Peacetime Revolutions of Post-War Britain*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford: 2010)

¹⁰⁹ Addison, *No Turning Back*, pg. 130

¹¹⁰ Addison, *No Turning Back*, pg.129

2. The Victoria Cross Citations of the Post-War Era

The policy of *The London Gazette* by the Korean War was to offer entire pages worth of commentary on each Victoria Cross award. Private William Speakman appeared in the 25 December, 1951 issue of the *Gazette*. His citation is long and full of language aimed at establishing him beyond any doubt as a hero. His citation is an engaging story, describing his throwing of multiple grenades, and his charge at the enemy line, as 'inspiring' 'beyond praise' and lacking regard 'for his own personal safety.'¹¹¹ This type of praise was not uncommon by the Korean War, and had frequently appeared in citations before this. Speakman was awarded the last Victoria Cross of the Korean War, and two out of the three others were also cited for lacking regard for their personal safety.¹¹² His long citation maintains the *Gazette's* trend since the Second World War of focusing on establishing the Victoria Cross as a hero, rather than simply reporting the facts as told by the witnesses. The three year long Korean war resulted in four Victoria Cross recipients, who were praised in the *Gazette* multiple times as heroes, and whose citations were greater than five hundred words each.¹¹³ The focus on single violent actions by soldiers in the *Gazette* was reciprocated by a commercial press that published stories only related to these few men, symbols of a greater military body serving abroad.

One Victoria Cross recipient from Korea, Bill Speakman, was thrust into public attention in such a way as to normalize the concept of heroism in a patriotic war. Upon his arrival in England from the Korean front, *The Manchester Guardian* reported on Speakman's leave in a series of three articles. The first of which, a front-page article, is primarily concerned not with Speakman's otherworldly

¹¹¹ "William Speakman, No. 39418" *The London Gazette* (25 December, 1951) pg. 6731

¹¹² Beyond the details of their wartime actions, these four men of the Korean War were ascribed similar normative and moral attributes, the obvious: gallantry, heroism, valor. With the exception of Philip Curtis, each *Gazette* citation also speaks of disregard for personal safety. Although Curtis, who continued to fight after being wounded, was killed in the action for which he was awarded, and the disregard for his own safety can be seen to be implied by this story. From *The London Gazette*; "Philip Curtis, No. 40029". *The London Gazette*. (27 November, 1953). pg. 6513; "James Carne, No. 39994". *The London Gazette*. (23 October 1953). pg. 5693; "Kenneth Muir, No. 39115". *The London Gazette*. (5 January, 1951). pg. 133–134.

¹¹³ "Philip Curtis, No. 40029". *The London Gazette*. (27 November, 1953). pg. 6513; "James Carne, No. 39994". *The London Gazette*. (23 October 1953). pg. 5693; "Kenneth Muir, No. 39115". *The London Gazette*. (5 January, 1951). pg. 133–134.

heroism, but his very human plans for his future, whether or not he will find a job or re-enlist with the army.¹¹⁴ Upon his arrival, Speakman attends a ceremony where he is given the Victoria Cross. The ceremony is reported on in a follow-up article, where, among the thousands in attendance, the writer observes, “Not royalty, not even a Cup-winning football team, always does so well. What caught the public imagination so strongly, perhaps, was the success --always rare, never rarer than to-day -- of the ordinary man.”¹¹⁵ In addition to describing the public spectacle and its attendance by an award winner, the article even recognizes the potential of such public appearances to humanize heroism. The spectacle, although otherworldly in its grandeur, reflects the very human subjects of the Victoria Cross. They simply did their duty, and did it well: that is the criteria satisfied for the Victoria Cross. A final article also provides a follow-up, publishing Speakman’s decision to re-enlist, and his return to the front in Korea.¹¹⁶ *The Manchester Guardian* introduces his wife, the first South-Korean woman to be married to a British soldier on the front, and only reiterates in short detail the actual wartime actions of Speakman. The articles shy away from the wartime account, in favor of a personal story. This type of personal approach has the effect of bringing each new Victoria Cross to greater public attention. The heroism is made to be a given, thanks to the more highly detailed *London Gazette*. Heroism is made to be the underlying and unspoken trait, a foundation that the popular news media builds upon with emotion, personality and human relationships. A vicarious relationship is allowed to develop between the reader and the soldiers on the front. Of utmost importance to the story is their personal lives, something the public can relate to and recognize as similar to their life, with the unspoken acceptance that supreme heroism and valor walk alongside the rest of the public on the city streets, not necessarily in a juxtaposed way. The human touch to heroism is established in front of a backdrop of devotion and

¹¹⁴“Troopship Two Days Late”. *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)* (Manchester: Guardian News & Media Limited, 19 December, 1952) pg. 1

¹¹⁵“Home Again in Triumph” *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)* (Manchester: Guardian News & Media Limited, 31 January, 1952) pg. 7

¹¹⁶“PTE. Speakman on Way Back to Korea” *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)* (Manchester: Guardian News & Media Limited, 13 March, 1952) pg. 10

duty to the strategy and mission of the British government, in the nineteen fifties. The focus was clearly on fewer individuals. Their passages serve to symbolize the personal sacrifice of many more than just themselves. The increase and focus on single stories makes for a more exciting, a more readable and even a more personal and emotional story, which would increase interest in war. This drumming up of interest occurs despite a growing anti-war movement after the Second World War. A disconnect between the still-gallant Victoria Cross reporting and increasing anti-war feelings becomes especially evident during the Vietnam War.

The British had limited involvement in the region during the Vietnam War. Four Victoria Crosses were awarded to Australians, however, a Commonwealth country which had committed troops to Vietnam in support of the American forces. The citations for the Australian troops were all published in *The London Gazette*. The citations are long, and they credit the Australian soldiers with heroism to the highest degree. Through their very appearance in the British paper they support a definition of heroism that is rooted to the original values of the Victoria Cross, service to the Empire at large, dedication to the decisions of the British government, patriotism at its root. Simultaneous to the appearance of these four soldiers in the *Gazette*, Anti-War movements were greatly increasing in popularity at the time.¹¹⁷ Popular upheaval in opposition to the Vietnam War is contrary to the maintained and groomed sense of heroism in combat, defined by *The London Gazette*. Cited in 1969, Ray Simpson's *Gazette* feature depicts a man

“Disregarding the dangers involved...At the risk of almost certain death he made several attempts to move forward towards his Battalion Commander's body but on each occasion he was stopped...From his position he fought on and by outstanding courage and valour was able to prevent the enemy advance...Simpson's repeated acts of personal bravery in this operation were an inspiration to all Vietnamese, United States and Australian soldiers who served with him”¹¹⁸

His *Gazette* feature was longer than five hundred words, exciting and deliberate in its emphasis on his

¹¹⁷Addison, *No Turning Back*, pg. 133-168

¹¹⁸ “Rayene Stewart Simpson, No. 44925”. *The London Gazette*. (26 August, 1969). pg. 8873

heroism. The discrepancy between the public image of these Victoria Cross recipients and the ever more popular public outcry against war cannot be understated. On the one side, a classical story is adopted, their gallant actions reported in detail, and *The London Gazette* dictating the definition of heroism through its long investigations into the soldiers doing their patriotic duty against the backdrop of an unwilling public. Additionally, the Victoria Cross subjects of the Vietnam War are all Australian and not British. The British public, already with strong anti-war aspects, are given the message that heroism is still recognized when a soldier does his duty, even in an unpopular war. The commercial press in the post-war era was responsible for further humanizing the Victoria Cross recipients in the eyes of the public. The stories covered by the press rely on the images of the soldiers in their material far more frequently in post-war media, and detail the personal lives of the Victoria Cross recipients instead of recapping the events which got them the Victoria Cross. It has the result of bringing the Victoria Cross recipients to the same level as the citizenry, but it also bridges the discrepancy caused by the *Gazette's* vibrant prose in favor of the Victoria Cross heroes, and a public's growing distaste for war.

Two of the four Victoria Cross recipients from Australia, Kevin Arthur Wheatley and Reyne Stewart Simpson, appeared in two front page briefs of *The Guardian* after their award and citation in the *Gazette*, in 1966 and 1969, respectively.¹¹⁹ The articles rely on the already published essays in *The London Gazette* as the evidence for the heroic nature of the men. Of the two, only Simpson's portrait was published. Additionally, Simpson appeared in a short one-minute news segment from Reuters in 1969.¹²⁰ The footage here is also concerned with only the portrait of Simpson, and his relationship with other servicemen; on a personal note, he is shown at the end of the clip enjoying a beer with another serviceman. The personal approach was still favored in reporting the Vietnam Victoria Cross recipients,

¹¹⁹ Wheatly's: "Posthumous Victoria Cross for Australian." *The Guardian (1959-2003)* (London: Guardian News & Media Limited, 15 December, 1966) pg. 1, and Simpson's: "Australian Victoria Cross" *The Guardian (1959-2003)* (London: Guardian News & Media Limited, 22 August, 1969) pg. 1

¹²⁰ "Saigon: Australian Soldier Awarded the Victoria Cross" from *British Pathé Archive, (British Pathé)* (1969) [Reuters newsreel] United Kingdom

although the disconnect between a British newspaper's audience and its unpopular Vietnam War subject matter is visible in these cases. In 1967 *The Guardian* published another small article offering a critique of this kind of media focus on the individual.¹²¹ The article raised concerns over the TV program 'Inside Australia,' aired the night before. The author's concerns were over the lack of dissenting voices in the program and over the assumed justification of the war as a defense of Australia from a Communist Invasion. An Australian sergeant interviewed for the show was quoted discussing the Vietcong, saying 'They've got endurance, as per the Asian person in general.'¹²² This article places the classical focus of *The London Gazette* and its gallant soldiers in perspective. During unprecedented anti-war movements in the U.K., the *Gazette* offered four pages, one for each Vietnam Victoria Cross, providing their wartime actions with focus on the exceptional heroism involved in each of them.¹²³ At the same time, the personal touch to Victoria Cross personalities in the news could not be expected to work during an unpopular war, and one with which the British Army wasn't involved. Instead, the Australians were depicted as a far-away cousin fighting a war of their own, "the outback's wallah heroes of the Englishman's Australia," according to *The Guardian's* critique of 'Inside Australia.'¹²⁴ The enemy was spoken of in terms reminiscent of an older style of thinking, generalizing the Vietcong for their Asian-ness, for their endurance, attributing a level of respect to the enemy in a chivalrous reflection on warfare which is more similar to British Military discourse of the nineteenth century than with the upheaval and dissent during the Vietnam War. The type of heroism which emerges from this is a personal type of heroism, one seen as emerging from very human characters, but one that is associated with patriotic devotion to duty, even in instances of great public backlash to war, like in the

¹²¹ Stanley Reynolds, "Television" from *The Guardian* (London: Guardian News & Media Limited, 26 October 1967) pg. 6

¹²² Direct quotation from Reynolds, "Television", *The Guardian* (London: Guardian News & Media Limited, 26 October 1967) pg. 6

¹²³ "Kevin Wheatley, No. 44198". *The London Gazette*, (15 December, 1966). pg. 13567, "Peter Badcoe, No. 44431". *The London Gazette*, (17 October, 1967). pg. 11273, "Rayene Simpson, No. 44925". *The London Gazette*, (26 August, 1969). pg. 8873, "Kieth Payne, No. 44938". *The London Gazette*, (19 September, 1969). pg. 9703

¹²⁴ Direct quotation from Reynolds, "Television", *The Guardian* (London: Guardian News & Media Limited, 26 October 1967) pg. 6

nineteen sixties.

3. Falklands, Middle East and the Present

Since the Vietnam debacle, five more Victoria Crosses were awarded to members of the British Army. More Victoria Cross recipients have been awarded within the new Victoria Cross institutions of the Commonwealth countries, but these new institutions deserve their own examinations. The Victoria Cross recipients at the end of the last century, and its present form today remains an exciting institution. On the one side, there is more attention to the Victoria Cross today than ever before. The faces of Victoria Cross soldiers are well known, their faces receiving widespread public dissemination in the form of media and ceremony. Their story, now the priority of the *The London Gazette*, is well documented, detailed and lengthy. Often times the record of heroism is referred to by civilian media — their intentions being coverage of the more personal side of the Victoria Cross— but the government record of wartime heroism is the omnipresent foundation that all personal biographies, interviews and films are built off of. The War Office maintained the well-defined heroism of the twentieth century in their publications of the two Falkland Victoria Cross recipients and the four other Victoria Cross recipients of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars to date. With these awards, it is increasingly evident that Victoria Cross heroism is married to the individual; the hero's indubitably valiant nature is kept apolitical and untainted, even when their new public image might offer the chance at political influence. Such a political spectacle was seen with the critiques of Sara Jones, the widow of Herbert Jones, who appeared in several newspaper articles defaming the British war policy in the Falklands after his award. Her very politically motivated appearance in public testifies to the new focus of the personal and familial Victoria Cross by the commercial press, but the inability for her political statements to tarnish the wartime record of her late husband also suggest an institution that is fundamentally removed from political discourse. The Victoria Cross remains a recognition of heroism, a heroism rooted in patriotic

war-fighting, a heroism that stands alone and is uninterrupted by political debate. While anti-war movements have remained, the institution of the Victoria Cross is not affected in the present era, and operates with its own convictions. It is seen as a recognition of an individual story, and unconcerned with the politics that dictate it and the wars to which it is interested.

The two months of fighting during the Falkland Islands dispute in 1982 resulted in the award of two Victoria Crosses. The Victoria Cross recipients from the short war were both posthumous, Ian McKay and Herbert Jones both died in combat.¹²⁵ The awards had the effect of propelling their widowed brides to near stardom. Sara Jones may well have entered politics after the death of her husband and her receiving the Victoria Cross from Queen Elizabeth II. In a front page article in *The Guardian*, Jones declined any intention to run for election, claiming it would be wrong to benefit directly from the death of her husband.¹²⁶ Rumors began after an invitation from a friend to attend a debate on defense in Parliament, and no previous indication of her running existed before the posthumous Victoria Cross. The rumor is made all the more serious by its appearance in the front page of *The Guardian*. These woman, and their husbands, should they have survived, never would have left obscurity without the Victoria Cross. Their appearances in commercial press newspapers is similar to the appearances of the mothers of Victoria Cross recipients in World War I. By the time of this war, the commercial press reported exclusively on the human sides of the heroes cited in the *Gazette*. The personal opinions and the family photos of Ian McKay also appeared following his posthumous Victoria Cross. Alongside a picture of him, his widowed bride and their two young children, Maria McKay expresses mixed feelings about the award, among those: “It does not help to cope with life without him, but it is lovely for other people, especially his family.”¹²⁷ The most important aspect of

¹²⁵ "Ian McKay, No. 49134" *The London Gazette* (8 October, 1982) pg. 12831–12832, and "Herbert Jones, No. 49134" *The London Gazette*, (8 October, 1982) pg. 12831

¹²⁶ Wainwright, M. “Victoria Cross's Widow Scotches Tory Poll Rumours”, *The Guardian (1959-2003)*, (London: Guardian News & Media Limited, 7 March, 1983) pg. 1

¹²⁷ “Falklands Victoria Cross's Widow Speaks of 'Mixed Feelings'” . *The Guardian (1959-2003)* (London: Guardian News &

these Victoria Cross widows, though, is that they were allowed to ascend to the pedestal. The attention on the personal backstory of these two soldiers was so great as to allow their widowed brides chances in politics.

Of the two, Jones expressed much more criticism toward the government's involvement in the Falklands region, also appearing in *The Times* at several instances.¹²⁸ Both families were presented with unexpected levels of fame following the war, each appearing in several major news stories of the day, and holding audience with the Queen. In both instances, their personal critiques of the government were held to be individual convictions, and were somewhat artificially separated from the heroism in wartime which precluded the Victoria Cross. The heroism, the valor, was the unquestioned by any political discussion. Heroism was held up as a devotion to duty in extreme pressure, a patriotic accomplishment that stands alone and above dissent and discussion. It was defined solely by the War Office and the *Gazette*, and all public discussion only built on the human side of any hero from battle.

The last four Victoria Crosses to be awarded in the present day are all Victoria Cross recipients of the twenty-first century, for actions taken in the US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The longer of the two, the War in Afghanistan, has seen three Victoria Crosses awarded, two of those posthumous. The War in Iraq resulted in a single award to Johnson Beharry of the British Army. Similar to the Victoria Cross recipients of the twentieth century, Beharry's Victoria Cross citation is long and detailed. The *Gazette* of the twenty-first century is also the most readable to date, the primary focus of Beharry's supplement is clearly on the text, as the coat of arms familiar to the publication has been resized to fill only a corner of the page, and the text changed to a finer font with greater amounts of blank space between lines, between characters and along the margins.¹²⁹ This current format suggests an evolution

Media Limited, 10 November, 1982) pg. 3

¹²⁸*The Times*, (London: The Times Digital Archive, Saturday, March 28, 1992), Issue 64292, pg.1. And, *The Times* (London: The Times Digital Archive, November 2, 1983), Issue 61679, pg.3.

¹²⁹ "Johnson Beharry, No. 57587". *The London Gazette* (18 March, 2005) pg. 3369–3370

in style due to far more readership for the supplements alone. Beharry's Victoria Cross was also heavily reported by other media outlets. The reports of this recent Victoria Cross have been increasingly personal in the modern era, in a 2005 article from *The Times*, he appeared among his family in a photograph.¹³⁰ Beharry's photograph is included in [Figure 2]. Its primary intention is very clearly on the soldier and his personal life. It is one of the modern examples of how the violent combat award for heroism, which is now the Victoria Cross, has become humanized for a national audience. Their human lives exist outside of the war, outside of even political leanings and anti-war sentiment. They are recognized for heroism within the institution, their heroic action defined by *The London Gazette* and there rest of their lives becomes a spectacle for the British public. They symbolize the personal side to a British military that is still revered for its classical, gallant and heroic nature.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This analysis is concerned primarily with the public image and perception of Victoria Cross heroes, and the associated perception of heroism. After the age of the Victorian Victoria Cross, the rate of award drops, which is undoubtedly important, but the expectation of the awardees also changes, it is amplified. The amplification is two-fold, evidenced by the image presented to the public by *The London Gazette* and by the commercial press. The tone and the length of *Gazette* publications change during the First World War, and are, during the Second World War, made into government-sponsored odes to individual heroism. Outside of the *Gazette*, Victoria Cross recipients of the later twentieth century are subsequently forced into a much more sure, much less tentative public spotlight. That is to say, whereas pre-WWI Victoria Cross recipients may or may not have gained a popular public following, the

¹³⁰“I'll soon be fit enough to serve again – probably in Afghanistan, says new Victoria Cross” *The Times*, (London: The Times Digital Archive, Monday, March 21, 2005) Issue 68340, p.35.

Victoria Cross recipients of the twentieth century were subjected to public spectacle no matter what. In the nineteenth century, the public latched onto select stories, like Piper Findlater, or the celebrated Frederick Sleight Roberts of Kipling's short stories and poems.¹³¹ However, many others went relatively unnoticed. The spectacle of the Queen ceremoniously donning the Victoria Cross on the deserving was not yet televised. Attempts at publicizing images of Victoria Cross recipients were mostly limited to paintings, such as those of Louis Desanges, or sketches appearing in newspapers. The amount of time a painting takes in comparison to a photograph would have made the greater numbers of nineteenth century Victoria Cross recipients difficult to represent in their entirety. By the First World War, the importance of paintings and sketches shrink, and the circulation of photography increases. This type of press continues throughout the entire twentieth century.

Heroism is, in the Second World War to be much more rare, but much closer to home. Through the image created by a livelier tone in writing and by the greater prevalence of images and video, the Victoria Cross heroes are brought to a personal level. The final claim of Smith's *Awarded for Valour* is the comparison of the 'Victorian Victoria Cross' to the modern version. After the two World Wars, the Cross emerges as a different species altogether, he claims. Where before, the Victoria Cross embodied a romantic military ideal, the Victoria Cross emerging after the First World War was one of aggressive, brutal enemy-killing soldiers. The nineteenth century officials who recommended acts for award, according to Smith, were unable to define heroism, according an art and a beauty to the actions.¹³² In the twentieth century there is an assessment of power to define heroism by the same forces that had

¹³¹One of Kipling's last poems was a tribute to Roberts, titled "Lord Roberts." Roberts was also written into Major W. J. Elliot's *The Victoria Cross in Afghanistan*, where Robert's is a secondary character, but during this time, already a successful commanding general. He was also famous, in addition to the Victoria Cross, because of his decorated military career. From Major W.J. Elliot, *The Victoria Cross in Afghanistan and the Frontiers of India During the Years 1877, 1878, 1879 & 1880: How It Was Won*, (London: Dean & Son, 1882) pg. 1-28, Kipling's final poem is available in, Rudyard Kipling, *The Collected Poems of Rudyard Kipling*, (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1994) pg. 215

¹³²For Smith's conclusion regarding the Victorian Victoria Cross, and the twentieth century differences, see, Melvin Charles Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 202. Also, Smith's conclusion is especially evident upon inspection of his history of the Victoria Cross in the Indian Mutiny. The recommendations passed along to higher command were almost never rejected. It was during this time that the most amount of Victoria Cross recipients were later confiscated for a felony action occurring after award.

originally deferred to the witnesses in the field. This position is best documented in the restrictions to the recommendation procedure in the 1920 amendment. But the restriction also had the effect of bringing less Victoria Cross recipients into a greater public attention. The combined assertion of power by *The London Gazette* to define a more violent heroism, and the increase in publication of personal stories of the award recipients by the commercial press has the effect of normalizing a violent heroism. The hero is understood to be a violent individual, but is still brought to the same level as common civilians. The normalization, the bringing of the hero to the public level, is another instance of this change of the criteria of the Victoria Cross, the definition of heroism itself. Instead of a mystical and faraway feeling to the reports of heroism from the front, the Victoria Cross soldier of the twentieth century is examined in every instance, their accomplishments published at length and their images given the majority of space in newspapers and distributed on film.

The current image of the Victoria Cross recipient is one of a celebrity. More attention than ever is given to the award recipient of the modern day, with attention always on the personal affairs of the hero. The *Gazette* very clearly adopted a policy of detailed and edited publication, and the public followed suit, albeit with a newfound interest for the personal touch. With so few awards in the modern day, each one became that much more of a highlight. In the modern day, each new recipient is given attention to the point of celebrity; every story is viable news in the life of a Victoria Cross recipient, even their family affairs. Such an award has also displayed the ability to propel the recipient, or their family, to podiums of political power. Such is clear by the news appearances of Sara Jones after her husband's posthumous Victoria Cross award. In every case, though, the personal life and politics are separated from the wartime heroics of the Victoria Cross recipient. They are mutually exclusive; one may not contaminate the other.

In *The London Gazette*, a paper which used to be a laundry-list account of military hierarchy and government formalities, increased the length and language documenting the Victoria Cross steadily,

adding detail in the First World War, and adding entire essays in the Second World War. The tone of the citations evolves alongside the growth, reflecting the heroic properties of the Cross in every instance; you would be hard-pressed to discover a post-WWI Victoria Cross citation in the *Gazette* without the phrase 'with disregard for safety' or something of the like. WWII style-citations become the norm in the recent more than half-century since the Second World War. The most recent Victoria Cross recipients given since the Afghanistan War have been limited, but out of the three, two of them contain a reiteration of the phrase 'with complete disregard for safety.'¹³³ The other Victoria Cross awarded for action in Afghanistan was to Corporal Bryan Budd, whose Victoria Cross citation was also detailed and full of praise for his heroic quality.¹³⁴ No post-WWI citation is different. From the Victoria Cross recipients given to the Indian troops under British command, troops formerly barred from receiving the Cross, to the Australian-only award winners during the Vietnam war, these names are published in essays detailing explicitly their accomplishment and alluding to their heroic stock.

Alongside the greater detail written about the Victoria Cross recipients during the twentieth century wars, were new methods of communicating their image. The prevalence of portrait pictures in British newspapers since the First World War has been noted. The distribution of films, like those from British Pathé, continued in WWII with footage of ceremonies presenting the award. As the faces of the individuals are made to be accessible, relateable, and shown without the mythical and heroic figures of Louis Desanges. The idea of heroism, which is so critical to the criteria of the Victoria Cross, has been redefined through the image presented, and through the necessities of the twentieth century. Heroism has been both elevated in meaning, made to be more rare due to numbers, and also made to be more understandable. The life, story, character of a hero is in the twentieth century knowable.

The *Gazette* has taken it upon themselves to reinforce the meaning of the Victoria Cross, and

¹³³From the citations for Lance Corporal Ashworth and Lance Corporal Leakey (all source numbers ordered respectively) in *The London Gazette*, Nos. 60455 and 61154, 22 March 2013 and 26 February 2015, pg. 5735 and pg. 3466

¹³⁴“Bryan Budd, No. 58182”, *The London Gazette*, (15 December, 2006) pg. 17351-17352

critical to that meaning is the very definition of heroism, valor, gallantry. The definition of these terms has changed from the transcendental feeling of heroism which persisted in the nineteenth century. The *Gazette* of this time period was content to allow heroism to appear in a long running list. The real power to define heroism would be the original authors of these observations. The pages of the *Gazette* provided only the official register. The commercial press of the nineteenth century possessed the real power to pluck a recipient from the list and define his contribution to the definition of heroism more specifically. With a more exact definition elaborated through detailed coverage of each award, heroism is today held as the shining example to all others of the distinct possibilities within any serving member of the armed forces. It is just hardly ever given, anymore. To those whom it is given, the greatest in heroism is recognized, and they are catapulted to the public eye, from very similar beginnings. Heroism is now defined as knowable, personal, and also, at its highest level, outstanding and incredibly rare. Also, in the words of Smith, the modern definition of heroism is understood in that, 'By the end of the war [WWI] military officials could state with confidence that winning the Victoria Cross meant that you had to shoot someone.'¹³⁵ Symbolic actions, like waving the flag or playing the regimental march on the bagpipes were out, as were humanitarian actions in the form of saving lives. The Victoria Cross has been tightened over the course of the twentieth century, with a much more strictly defined set of criteria to it, and with a unspoken layer of necessary public reception to it. Opposed to the Victorian Victoria Cross, the modern day version delights in its readily defined criteria. It is a medal that is won for sacrificing oneself in order to win a war. It is a medal that is familiar, no longer painted in a romantic style or discovered at an entranced young age within a copy of *The Boy's Own Paper*. It is now repeated, personal. Heroism appears on the television and is smiling. The Victoria Cross spectacle remains, but the actual recipients are neighborly in their humility.

¹³⁵Smith, *Awarded for Valour*, pg. 202

6. Appendices

Figure 1

60 THE LADY'S NEWSPAPER. [JANUARY 23, 1868.]

THE EXPLOSION OF THE POWDER MAGAZINE IN MAYENCE.

Most of our readers who have visited Germany know the city of Mainz, on the Rhine. Few places are more beautifully situated or offer greater inducements for a visit than this city. From its earliest period it has occupied a distinguished position in the history of Germany. Here our readers are aware that Gutenberg first erected his printing press, and Faust and Schaeffer brought to perfection that mighty engine, the press, which was destined in after times to play so important a part in the history of mankind. During the wars of the French republic it suffered very severely, and passed into the hands of the French, and at the peace was made over to the Duke of Hesse Darmstadt. It is a Bundesfestung, or fortress of the German Confederation, and is garrisoned by equal numbers of Prussian and Austrian troops. It is very strongly fortified, and has four principal gates besides the quay. Just outside one of the gates, the Gauthor, the powder magazine was situated, which contained a very great quantity of powder, nearly twenty tons, about 1,000,000 percussion caps, 600 shells, and 700 fire balls. About three o'clock in the afternoon of the 18th November, a terrific explosion started the town, and showers of stones, slates, and beams of wood fell upon the terrified inhabitants; scarcely a whole pane of glass remained in the town, the furniture in the houses was thrown down, and the place tottered as though an earthquake had shaken the foundations of the city. When the first moment of alarm was passed, everybody rushed out to know what had happened. It was quickly ascertained that the magazine had exploded. The scene which presented itself was fearful in the extreme, the whole of the houses in the neighbourhood were a mass of ruins. It momentarily happened that the explosion took place as it did, for that part of the town which suffered most is inhabited by the poorer classes, and the greater number of these persons were from home, and, considering the frightful nature of the circumstance, but comparatively few were killed, forty-six being the number; a very great many were wounded, and it is feared that many will be maimed for life. It is supposed to have been the work of an incendiary, an Austrian artilleryman. This man was seen to go into the powder magazine some short time before the explosion. It was also rumored that it was intended to destroy the whole of the staff of the fortress and the Austrian officers. There was to have been a sort of coronation held by the officers, about one hundred of whom were expected to be present, but fortunately it was put off only a short time previous to the hour of meeting, owing to the unpropitious state of the weather. So great was the report that it was heard distinctly at Bingen, beyond the range of the Taunus mountains, and even at Fulda, in Hesse Cassel, Arolsen, Kissingen, and places in Wurtemberg.

THE VICTORIA CROSS.

The Gazette of Friday notifies Her Majesty's intention to confer the decoration of the **Victoria Cross** on Lieutenant Joseph P. H. Crowe, of the 78th Regiment (late Captain of the 10th Regiment), "for being" (in the words of Sir H. Havelock's telegram) "the first to enter the redoubt at Bourzooke Chowke, the entrenched village in front of the Basherah-gunge, on the 15th of August;" and on Lieutenant Henry Marshman Havelock, of the 10th Regiment (late Captain of the 18th Regiment), for gallantry, thus described in his father's despatches: "In the combat at Cawnpore, Lieutenant Havelock was my aide-de-camp. The 64th Regiment had been much under-

mastered by a rush of the 64th." Privates Thomas Hancock and John Pucelli, of the 9th Lancers, are also to receive the Cross. Their services are thus briefly narrated in a letter from Brigadier Grant, dated "Camp, Delhi, June 22." "The guns, I am happy to say, were saved, but a waggon of Major Scott's battery was blown up. I must not fail to mention the excellent conduct of a Sowar of the 4th Irregular Cavalry, and two men of the 9th Lancers, Private Thomas Hancock and John Pucelli, who, when my horse was shot down, remained by me throughout. One of these men and the Sowar offered me their hands, and I was dragged out by the Sowar's horse. Private Hancock was severely wounded, and Private Pucelli's horse was killed under him. The Sowar's name is Hooper Khan."

her horse, has gained one step from which she could likely ever to backslide. And if accountable for the soul—the better part—so also for the body. Hence, with advanced knowledge, we are all now beginning to recognize—some with the stolid assent of materialism, and some with the Christian's holy wonder at this human machine, made too wonderfully to be made for racking, and by no one—how mysteriously soul and body set and react upon one another; how one half of the shortcomings of a body springs from mere bodily causes; and how a healthy soul can stimulate even the poorest and most ungodly dwelling-house of flesh and blood into something of its own beauty and divineness. "And yet there is a saying that one sometimes hears, and sees silently in action, perpetually—'Anything will do for the servants.' Kitchen and parlour are placed on quite a different footing; not only with regard to coarser food—reasonable enough, however, when the parlour has also or sickly tastes, and the kitchen is blessed with the wholesome consciousness of hard work and an easy mind—but in the regular routine of daily life. 'Late to bed and early to rise,' yet still expected to be 'both healthy and wise' compels to sleep in damp, hot, unventilated, or ill-ventilated—anything is good enough for a servant's bedroom; allowed no time for personal attention, sewing, or mending, yet required to be always 'tidy'; kept at work constantly, without regard to how much and what sort of work each person's strength can bear; yet supposed to be capable of working on for ever; without that occasional intermission of 'play'—not idleness, but wholesome amusement—without which every human being, young, full, spirited, falls into ill health, and finally, into ill-health. Truly it often makes one's heart ache to think of the life of even well-meaning their servants lead; and it is curious, were it not so melancholy, to pause and consider, if in all one's acquaintance there are half-a-dozen ladies under whom, did fate compel, one would choose to 'go into service.' "My dear madam—who may be opening your eyes widely at this heterodox view of the question—you have no right to keep a servant at all unless you can keep her comfortable. You did not buy her, did you? Like a negro slave; you only took her on hired service, to fulfil certain duties, which you must exact from her kindly and firmly, for her good as well as your; but you have no right to any more. Except so far as nature and education have instituted a difference between you, you are not justified in placing either her enjoyment or acquisition on a lower level than your own. The same sanitary laws, of physical and mental well-being, apply to you both; and neither can break them, or be allowed to break them, with impunity. "Moral laws, also. Mrs. Smith thinks it is against her that poor Sally Haines should be the master of the bonnet. Foolish Mrs. Smith! Suppose you were to purchase at Swan and Edgar's that hundred-guinea Cashmere labelled 'the Queen's choice'—whom would you have, Her Majesty or yourself? So, when your Emma or Betsy buys a silk-gown and a twelve-shilling herself. She loves her own self-respect by striving to maintain a false position; wastes in shabby showiness the money that she ought to lay out in kindness, or marriage, and the happy duty of helping others; loses the simple sweetness, befitting the respectable and the simple, and becomes ridiculous as the sham fine lady."—From "A Woman's Thoughts about Women."

THE EXPLOSION OF THE POWDER MAGAZINE AT MAYENCE.

artillery fire, from which it had severely suffered. The whole of the infantry were lying down in line, when perceiving that the enemy had brought on the last reserved gun, a 24-pounder, and were rallying round it, I called up the regiment to rise and advance. Without any other word from me, Lieutenant Havelock placed himself on his horse, in front of the centre of the 64th, opposite the muzzle of the gun. Major Stirling, commanding the regiment, was in front, dismounted, but the Lieutenant continued to move steadily on in front of the regiment at a foot pace, on his horse. The gun discharged about until the troops were within a short distance, when they fired grape. In went the corps, led by the Lieutenant, who still stood steadily on the gun's muzzle until it was

A MISTRESS'S RESPONSIBILITIES.

"Therefore, in any disputed point, I, as being probably the more educated, older, if not wiser of the two, feel bound as much as possible to put myself in her place, to try and understand her feelings and character, before I judge her, or legislate for her. I try in all things to set her an example to follow, rather than abuse her for faults and failings which she has sense enough to see I am just as liable to as she. I would rather help her in the right way, than drive her into it, whip in hand, and strike another road myself. "A fine lady who can once be made to feel that, so far as any human soul can be made responsible to another, she is responsible for that of every domestic who enters

to you both; and neither can break them, or be allowed to break them, with impunity. "Moral laws, also. Mrs. Smith thinks it is against her that poor Sally Haines should be the master of the bonnet. Foolish Mrs. Smith! Suppose you were to purchase at Swan and Edgar's that hundred-guinea Cashmere labelled 'the Queen's choice'—whom would you have, Her Majesty or yourself? So, when your Emma or Betsy buys a silk-gown and a twelve-shilling herself. She loves her own self-respect by striving to maintain a false position; wastes in shabby showiness the money that she ought to lay out in kindness, or marriage, and the happy duty of helping others; loses the simple sweetness, befitting the respectable and the simple, and becomes ridiculous as the sham fine lady."—From "A Woman's Thoughts about Women."

Figure 1: The soldier on horseback stands above the defeated forces falling away from him. An article on the Victoria Cross supplements the picture.136

136" The Victoria Cross" *The Lady's Newspaper & Pictorial Times*, (London: The Lady's Newspaper and Pictorial Times, 23

Figure 2

THE TIMES MONDAY MARCH 21 2005

ZWC

WORLD NEWS

I'll soon be fit enough to serve again – perhaps in Afghanistan, says new VC



Private Johnson Beharry, VC

From James Bone
in Diego Piece, Grenada

PRIVATE Johnson Gideon Beharry, the first soldier in the British Army to win the Victoria Cross in 23 years, comes from a family so poor that his father eked out a living tending a neighbour's cow because he could not afford his own.

As word of his heroism spreads in his Caribbean home, Private Beharry's family are waiting to meet the Queen. Already they have been feted by the Royal Navy and the British High Commissioner in Grenada with a private visit to the destroyer *HMS Liverpool*, which is on anti-drug patrol off Grenada.

Florette Beharry, 50, his mother, said: "We would like to say thanks to everyone in Britain who supported him, and especially the Queen and the Government. We feel happy that they accepted him because they know he is not British. We feel proud."

Private Beharry has been calling his family from the base in Germany of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, where he is recovering from wounds he sustained during an ambush in Iraq, and his family are hoping for an invitation to



Commander Gerry Northwood, of *HMS Liverpool*, with some of Private Beharry's family after they were shown around the ship

meet the Queen. "I would love to see the Queen, it would be a wonderful experience for me," his sister, Jill, who is training to become an accountant, said.

Private Beharry, 25, is the fourth of eight children — all, like him, with names beginning with J: Jude, Jackie, Jill, Jamila, Jeffrey, Jefon and Jade. The eldest is 30 and the youngest 14.

When he was a boy, his family could not even buy bottled gas to heat their stove and had to forage for wood from coconut trees. His father, Michael Bhola, 52, survives now by making cement breeze-blocks that he sells for 50p each

in his yard in the village of Diego Piece.

His 85-year-old grandmother, Elain, had ten children herself and boasts of having more than fifty grandchildren.

Although Diego Piece now has electricity, the Beharrys get water from a standpipe. The clan is still recovering from Hurricane Ivan last year, when the tin roof was ripped from their house and their belongings drenched. The roof of the dwelling where Private Beharry grew up has been replaced, but several electrical appliances were lost.

Private Beharry's VC, awarded for courage under fire

in two ambushes in southern Iraq, which put him in a coma, has brought great pride and a flurry of visitors to this remote corner of the globe.

As a child he attended school in the village, but left at around 13 to become a house-painter and odd-job man. Neighbours remember him as a dutiful and peaceful boy who liked to ride his bicycle.

At 18, he left for Britain, where one of his sisters also lives, hoping to go to college. However, after working as a builder, he followed a friend into the Army. A year later he sent for his teenage sweetheart, Lynthia, from a nearby village

to join him in Britain, where they were married. He told his mother that he was going to Iraq only the day before his departure. "I was not happy; I was just numb," she said.

Despite his injuries, Private Beharry said yesterday that he planned to return to active duty. "I will get back on my feet and serve again," he said. "I will be fine, and need to look out for my wife. My injuries have not put me off serving abroad.

One of my bosses wants me to go to Afghanistan to train soldiers there. That is ideally what I would like to do. The Army is what I know and love; so it's the only career for me."

Namibia lead stands down

Sam Nujoma, the rebel leader who forced South Africa to give Namibia independence will step down as President of the African nation today after 15 years in charge. Mr Nujoma, 75, who is standing down voluntarily after three terms, will hand the reins to Hifikepunye Pohamba, 65, who has registered to do a master's degree in geology at the University of Namibia.

Corruption trial

Paris: The trial begins today of forty-seven defendants linked to President Chirac's centre-right party, including four former ministers, over alleged bribes totalling £50 million for public building contracts. Presidential immunity spared M Chirac from being questioned.

State sacrifice

Belgrade: Vinko Pandur, 45, a Bosnian Serb general indicted for genocide for part in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, is to give himself to war crimes investigators. He went into hiding in 1995. The Government of Serbia said his decision was "to the State". (AP)

UN council of war

New York: Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General, called for an expansion of the Security Council from 15 to 24 members, along with new guidelines laying out the reasons that could allow nations to go to war, as part of a sweeping package of reforms. (AFP)

Pope stays silent

Rome: A tired-looking Pope waved an olive branch from his window overlooking St Peter's Square yesterday at the end of Palm Sunday services in which he played an active role for the first time in 26 years. The pontiff, 84, handed over his duties for Easter week to six cardinal

Figure 2: Beharry and his family are the clear subjects of this example of a modern piece from the commercial press.¹³⁷

Jan. 1858), p. 60.

¹³⁷ "I'll soon be fit enough to serve again – probably in Afghanistan, says new Victoria Cross" *The Times*, (London: The Times Digital Archive, Monday, March 21, 2005) Issue 68340, p.35.

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