

FOR VALOUR



THE UNVEILING OF A VICTORIA CROSS
COMMEMORATIVE PAVING STONE IN
HONOUR OF

Acting Major Brett Mackay Cloutman VC

59th Field Company, Royal Engineers

TUESDAY 6 NOVEMBER AT 11AM

HORNSEY WAR MEMORIAL
HORNSEY CENTRAL NEIGHBOURHOOD
HEALTH CENTRE, PARK ROAD,
LONDON N8



The Victoria Cross

The Victoria Cross medal was created in 1856 by Queen Victoria. It stemmed from the Crimean War which was one of the first wars to be covered by journalists who gave eyewitness accounts of battles in their newspapers. They wrote of the heroism of all ranks of the serving military personnel. The Order of the Bath existed for gallant officers but no such award was available to acknowledge the bravery of ordinary British servicemen and women.

The original royal warrant for the Victoria Cross stated the award should be:

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

With mounting public support in 1856, Queen Victoria ordered the War Office to strike a new medal to recognise the acts of bravery of all the military, regardless of rank. The award was backdated to 1854 in order to recognise the acts of bravery of service personnel in the Crimean War. Since its inception, the medal has been awarded 1,358 times to 1,355 individual recipients.

The VC ribbon is crimson, 1 1/2" (38 mm) wide. The original (1856) specification for the award stated that the ribbon should be red for army recipients and dark blue for naval recipients. The dark blue ribbon, however, was abolished soon after the formation of the Royal Air Force on 1 April 1918. On 22 May 1920, King George V signed a warrant that stated all recipients would now receive a red ribbon and the living recipients of the naval version were required to exchange their ribbons for the new colour. Although the army warrants state the colour as being red it is defined by most commentators as being crimson or 'wine-red'.



First World War VCs

In 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government announced that as part of the forthcoming national Remembrance events marking the First World War, all recipients of the Victoria Cross awarded between 1914 and 1918, will have a memorial stone unveiled in their honour in the borough associated with the recipient. Where possible, each VC memorial stone should be unveiled on the 100th anniversary date of when the VC was awarded.

Haringey was formed in 1965 of the boroughs of Hornsey, Tottenham and Wood Green, there are four such recipients for Haringey, all falling in 2018.

Each paving stone will be laid at the war memorial for the borough at the time of the war– this means two at the Tottenham Memorial and two at the Hornsey Memorial. The reason for this choice is while none of the recipients were killed during the great war these are visible landmarks where Haringey people remember those that died in the World Wars and recent conflicts.

Haringey's four Victoria Cross recipients were among an astonishing 628 VCs awarded throughout the First World War.

This Victoria Cross was the last to be awarded in the First World War and is the fourth and last commemorative

stone unveiling in Haringey.

This morning we stand together to remember the heroic action of Acting Major Brett Cloutman VC and just like the other service memorials, we shall reflect on the incredible courage displayed by Brett in the face of the enemy one hundred years ago.



*b. 09/04/1887 Muswell Hill, London. d.
15/08/1971 Highgate, London.*

Brett Mackay Cloutman was born on 9th April 1887 in Muswell Hill, London, the son of Alfred Benjamin Cloutman and Clarissa Jane Cloutman. Brett was educated at Berkhamsted School, Bishop's Stortford College and London University where he was a member of the Royal Engineers contingent of the university's Officers' Training Corps.



As clarinetist in the school orchestra of Bishop's Stortford College

At the outbreak of World War I Brett Cloutman enlisted as a Rifleman in the Rangers (12th Battalion, London Regiment), reached the rank of Lance-Corporal, and in 1915 was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Kent (Fortress) Engineers, a Territorial Force unit. In 1916, whilst on leave he married Margaret Hunter.

Cloutman, by then Acting Major in command of the 59th Field Company, Royal Engineers was awarded the Military Cross for an action in September 1918 at Banteux, France, when he made a personal reconnaissance under heavy machine-gun fire to ascertain the possibilities of bridging the Canal de L'Escaut.

A few weeks later the action took place for which Cloutman was awarded his VC.

On the 6th November, 1918, at Pont-sur-Sambre. Major Cloutman, after reconnoitring the river crossings, found the Quartes Bridge almost intact but prepared for demolition. Leaving his party under cover he went forward alone, swam across the river, and, having cut the "leads" from the charges, returned the same way, despite the fact that the bridge and all approaches thereto were swept by enemy shells and machine-gun fire at close range. Although the bridge was blown up later in the day by other means, the abutments remained intact.

The bridge had been prepared for demolition by the Germans, and was well defended. By cutting the wires, Cloutman prevented the enemy from blowing it up at the time. He was seen at the bridge, however, and escaped under an intense fire from its guards. The fact that the abutments were not destroyed later meant that the bridge could be more quickly replaced by the Allies.

This was the last act to be awarded a VC in the First World War.

After the war Cloutman became a lawyer and was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn in 1926.

In World War II he served again in the Royal Engineers and received a mention in despatches. He became a King's Counsel in 1946 and in 1947 he was appointed Senior Chairman of the War Pensions Tribunal. He was Senior Official Referee of the Supreme Court

of Judicature (now the Senior Courts of England and Wales) 1954-63. He was knighted in the Queen's Birthday Honours of 1957. He was Master of the Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers 1939-40 and 1965-66.



Cloutman died aged 80 on the 15th August 1971 in Highgate, London, and was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium. His ashes were interred in his brother's grave at Norfolk Cemetery on the Somme.

His medal group including the VC, MC, British War Medal 1914-20, Victory Medal 1914-19, 1939-45 Star, Africa Star, Italy Star, Defence Medal 1939-45, War Medal 1939-45 with Mentioned in Despatches oakleaf, King George VI Coronation Medal 1937 and Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Medal 1953, are held by the Royal Engineers Museum, Chatham.



Major Cloutman is also memorialised in Golders Green Cemetery, as one of the 14 VC recipients cremated there



Programme

10.45am: Guests and public to meet at Hornsey War Memorial

11.00 am

Opening Address by Councillor Gina Adamou, the Worshipful Mayor of Haringey

Lieutenant General Tyrone Urch to respond

The Victoria Cross citation read by Lance Corporal Clark, Royal Engineers

Action: 6 November 1918, Pont-sur-Sambre, France

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Mayor to announce the unveiling of the VC memorial stone to Major Brett Cloutman

Paving stone is unveiled by Mayor and Lieutenant General Tyrone Urch, both to step forward

Blessing of the VC memorial stone to Major Brett Cloutman by local clergy

Hymn – O God, our help in ages past

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

On Completion

The Exhortation (Act of Remembrance)

read by Brian Dee, Chairman, Muswell Hill and
Highgate Branch Royal British Legion

They shall grow not old
as we that are left grow old
Age shall not weary them
nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun
and in the morning
We will remember them.

All present will repeat: **We will remember them**

The Last Post

One minute silence

Reveille

Blessing and closing words by local clergy

The National Anthem

God save our gracious Queen!
Long live our noble Queen!
God save the Queen!
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the Queen.

After the service, everyone is invited for tea and coffee on level 2 inside the medical centre

Standards to lead off. Mayor Lt Gen Urch, Deputy Lieutenant and everyone else to follow.

